

Daily Report
Thursday, 26 January 2017

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 26 January 2017 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:32 P.M., 26 January 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

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Capital Investment

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[\[60573\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much his Department has spent on large capital projects in each of the last six years; and if he will make a statement.

Margot James:

The Department's capital expenditure on projects within the Government Major Projects Portfolio (GMPP) in each of the last 6 years is set out in the table below. The figures for 2016/17 are forecast figures. The annual totals are broken down between Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) and Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), the two former departments which merged in 2016 to create BEIS.

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17 (FORECAST)	TOTAL (IN MILLIONS £)
Ex-DECC	155.0	929.7	305.5	678.3	1826.1	1590.0	5484.5
Ex-BIS	442.1	485.0	1098.5	345.7	48.7	47.7	2467.6
Combined	597.1	1414.7	1403.9	1023.9	1874.8	1637.7	7952.1

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Staff

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[\[60572\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many additional staff his Department plans to employ to work on the proposed Great Repeal Bill; and if he will make a statement.

Margot James:

The Repeal Bill will end the authority of EU law, so that Parliament will be free to amend, repeal and improve any law it chooses, and convert the body of existing EU law into domestic law. The Department will continue to ensure there is an appropriate level of resource to support the work on the Bill.

Deidre Brock:

[\[60881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many officials of his Department are working full-time on preparations for the UK leaving the EU; and what proportion of his Department's staff that number represents.

Margot James:

The Department's Europe Directorate employs a dedicated team of full-time officials (currently 101 full-time equivalents) who work on European policy issues and negotiations. This involves work on existing legislative and non-legislative measures as well as the arrangements for exit and our future relationship with the EU.

Officials in other teams in the Department also carry out EU exit-related work as part of their broader responsibilities.

■ **Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate: Finance****Tim Farron:**[\[61285\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the budget of the Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate has been in each of the last six years.

Margot James:

YEAR	FUNDING
2010/11	£932,000 (actual spend)
2011/12	£697,631 (actual spend)
2012/13	£551,461 (actual spend)
2013/14	£532,032*
2014/15	Not available **
2015/16	£500,000*

* This is the budget allocated for these financial years, as actual spend is not available.

**The Employment Agency Standards budget was held at a higher level of aggregation and managed across a number of different programmes, so we are unable to provide a figure for that financial year.

■ **Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate: Prosecutions****Tim Farron:**[\[61286\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many prosecutions have been brought by the Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate in each of the last six years.

Margot James:

The table below sets out the total number of successful prosecution cases brought by Employment Agency Standards (EAS) since 2010-11 **and** the number of defendants.

YEAR	PROSECUTION CASES	DEFENDANTS
2011/12	-	-
2012/13	4	7
2013/14	2	4
2014/15	2	3
2015/16	-	-
2016/17	1	2

EAS are currently investigating 11 cases (21 defendants) that may lead to prosecution proceedings. EAS publishes its prosecution figures in its Annual Reports.

■ Energy: Prices

Dawn Butler:

[\[61220\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the Government plans to bring forward legislative proposals to require energy companies to give the lowest tariff to their customers.

Jesse Norman:

The Government is carefully considering the recommendations of the Competition and Market Authority report on the energy sector, and will be setting out its response in due course.

■ Horizon 2020

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[60680\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how the Government plans to provide support to small and medium-sized enterprises that benefit from the EU Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme.

Joseph Johnson:

The Autumn Statement announcement of an extra £2 billion a year in research and development by 2020- 21 underlines the place of science and innovation at the heart of this Government's long term economic plan. This funding will help ensure British business remains at the cutting edge of scientific and technological discovery.

Furthermore, the Government has announced that UK businesses and universities, including small and medium-sized enterprises should continue to bid for competitive EU funds, such as Horizon 2020, while we remain a member of the EU and we will work with the Commission to ensure payment when funds are awarded. The Treasury will underwrite the payment of such awards, even when specific projects continue beyond the UK's departure from the EU.

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[60681\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what funding the Government provided to the EU Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme in each of the last five years.

Joseph Johnson:

The Government contributes to the EU budget as a whole, not to individual programmes. The Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme is in turn funded by the EU budget.

■ Legal Profession

Kate Hoey:

[\[60929\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will assess the potential merits of bringing forward legislative proposals to amend the Employment Rights Act 1996 to include paralegals in the statutory list of relevant advisers in respect of compromise agreements.

Margot James:

Settlement agreements (previously known as compromise agreements) provide the ability for workers or employees to contract out of certain aspects of the Employment Rights Act 1996. Therefore it is important that individuals entering into these agreements have appropriate independent advice.

In 1998 Parliament amended the list of people who could give such advice, which was previously restricted to qualified lawyers. The list now includes trade union officials, employees or members and those who work or volunteer at advice centres provided that the trade union or advice centre, respectively, has authorised them as being able to do so. If a paralegal fell in to one of these categories they would be able to provide such advice.

The Government has no current plans to extend further the list of relevant independent advisors for the purposes of settlement agreements.

■ Lime: EU Emissions Trading Scheme

Nic Dakin:

[\[61110\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the border adjustment mechanism proposed by the European Parliament ENVI Committee for the EU Emissions Trading Scheme on lime manufacturers in the UK.

Jesse Norman:

The use of Border Adjustment Mechanisms in the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS) could potentially have a number of serious negative effects on the world trade system. For this reason, the Government supports the provision of free allowances as the best way to protect industries from the risk of carbon leakage.

■ Local Growth Deals

Diana Johnson:

[\[61250\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Northern Powerhouse Growth Deal allocations announced on 23 January 2017, if he will publish similar information relating to each Growth Deal allocation made under the Autumn Statement 2016 for each local enterprise partnership in other parts of the UK.

Margot James:

In the Autumn Statement, my rt. hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced regional Growth Deal awards worth £1.8 billion across England. Individual awards for Northern Powerhouse Local Enterprise Partnerships were announced on 23 January. We plan to announce all remaining Local Enterprise Partnership Growth Deal awards over the coming weeks.

■ Nuclear Reactors

Chi Onwurah:

[\[61276\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will publish a road map for the development of small nuclear reactors.

Jesse Norman:

Policy development is under way for small modular reactors. Phase One of the competition remains open, and plans for the future of the competition will be shared with the House in due course.

■ Post Offices: Rural Areas

Dr Sarah Wollaston:

[\[61093\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of progress in securing the future of rural post offices; and if he will make a statement.

Margot James:

The Government understands the important role post offices play in communities across the country, especially in the more remote, rural areas. This is why in our manifesto we committed to secure the future of 3,000 rural post offices.

Thanks to Government investment the UK's network of 11,600 branches is at its most stable in decades, with over 98% of the UK population in rural areas within 3 miles of a post office. The investment is offering real improvements to customers, including an extra 200,000 opening hours every week and over 4,200 post offices open on a Sunday.

The Government's recent consultation will help us understand what the public and businesses expect from the Post Office and to understand more fully what subsidy is needed and what it should be used for.

■ Renewable Energy: Scotland**Callum McCaig:** [\[59850\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the level of investment in renewable electricity generation in Scotland was in each of the last five years.

Jesse Norman:

In Delivering UK Energy Investment: Low Carbon Energy March 2015 [\[1\]](#), it is estimated that since 2010 £6 billion was invested in renewable electricity technologies across Scotland.

[\[1\]https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419024/DECC_LowCarbonEnergyReport.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419024/DECC_LowCarbonEnergyReport.pdf)

■ Small Businesses: West Midlands**Mr Jim Cunningham:** [\[61248\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 20 January 2017 to Question 60473, what estimate he has made of the number of businesses in the West Midlands in receipt of funding from the British Business Bank; what the value of that funding is; and if he will make a statement.

Margot James:

The British Business Bank is supporting £625.1m of finance to 2,632 SMEs in the West Midlands region. These figures exclude Start-up Loans, which have supported 3,820 West Midlands businesses (with £23.4m of finance) since inception in 2012.

■ Space Technology**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[61117\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions officials from the UK Space Agency have had since June 2016 with (a) his Department, (b) the Ministry of Defence, (c) the Department for Exiting the European Union and (d) the Department for International Trade on access to space programmes initiated by the European Space Agency and funded by EU programmes.

Joseph Johnson:

The UK Space Agency is working closely with businesses to understand their concerns and working with colleagues across Government to make sure we understand all of the potential risks and opportunities across the economy. This will continue to inform our approach as we seek to shape our future relationship with Europe.

CABINET OFFICE**■ Government Departments: Females****Jake Berry:**[\[60786\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what proportion of full-time equivalent employees are women in the gross salary bands (a) £150,000 to £155,000, (b) £155,000 to £160,000, (c) £160,000 to £165,000, (d) £165,000 to £170,000, (e) £170,000 to £175,000, (f) £175,000 to £180,000, (g) £180,000 to £185,000, (h) £185,000 to £190,000, (i) £190,000 to £195,000, (j) £195,000 to £200,000 and (k) £200,000 and above for each government Department and Office.

Chris Skidmore:

[Holding answer 24 January 2017]: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the UK Statistics Authority. I have asked the Authority to reply.

Attachments:

1. UKSA Letter to Member - Women Salary [PQ 60786 v.02.pdf]

■ Office for National Statistics: Equal Pay**Philip Davies:**[\[60545\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the (a) mean and (b) median gender pay gap is for (i) part-time and (ii) full-time staff at the Office for National Statistics.

Chris Skidmore:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA Letter to Member - Gender Pay Gap [PQ 60545 v.02.pdf]

■ Pay: Ashfield**Gloria De Piero:**[\[61153\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the average salary for (a) men and (b) women in Ashfield constituency was in each year since 2014.

Chris Skidmore:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA Letter to Member - Average Salary Men/Women [PQ 61153.pdf]

■ Public Sector: Ethnic Groups**Dan Jarvis:**[\[61291\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether a dedicated unit has been established to undertake the audit of public services to reveal racial disparities.

Dan Jarvis: [\[61292\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, on what date the Government plans to publish its audit of public services to reveal racial disparities.

Dan Jarvis: [\[61293\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many full-time equivalent staff the Government has employed to work on the audit of public services to reveal racial disparities.

Dan Jarvis: [\[61294\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Government plans to publish the metrics which are being used in its audit of public services to reveal racial disparities.

Ben Gummer:

The purpose of the Race Disparity Audit is to reveal, for the first time, comprehensive information on the disparate outcomes people of different racial groups experience when accessing public services. We will make public the outcome of the Audit clearly and openly for every citizen in Summer 2017. This will include clear and accessible data on a digital platform, following extensive data assurance and user testing. The methodology followed will be published on the platform.

A dedicated unit to undertake the Audit was established jointly by the Cabinet Office and the Department for Communities and Local Government in September 2016. The unit currently has 11 full-time equivalent staff, though it is supported by staff in every Government department and by the Office for National Statistics.

TREASURY

■ Cash Dispensing: Surcharges

John Mann: [\[61283\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent steps he has taken to protect consumers from high levels of surcharging when they withdraw cash from their accounts.

Simon Kirby:

Rules governing ATM surcharging are currently set by the LINK scheme, a commercial arrangement that manages the network that connects the UK's ATMs.

LINK statistics show that the number of free-to-use ATMs is at an all-time high of over 53,000 and over 98% of all ATM cash withdrawals by UK cardholders in the UK are made free of charge.

LINK runs a financial inclusion programme which subsidises free to use ATMs in areas without existing access. LINK has identified 1,694 rural and/or deprived 'target' areas, and 87% of these areas are now served by 916 subsidised cashpoints, up from 171 in 2007.

■ Employee Ownership

Rebecca Long Bailey: [61132]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people received income tax relief for share incentive plans in (a) 2014-15 and (b) 2015-16.

Jane Ellison:

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) publishes information on the amount of income tax relief related to shares appropriated through Share Incentive Plans (SIP) at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/share-incentive-plan>.

It is not possible to calculate the unique number of employees receiving income tax relief on SIP shares. Some employees may hold more than one type of SIP share simultaneously or may be awarded shares more than once a year and will therefore be recorded on the HMRC SIP tax return multiple times.

■ Profit Sharing

Rebecca Long Bailey: [61131]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people received income tax relief for approved company share option plans in (a) 2014-15 and (b) 2015-16.

Jane Ellison:

Latest statistics on Company Share Option Plans can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/company-share-option-plans>.

The number of employees that received income tax relief for shares awarded in relation to Company Share Option Plans in 2013-14 was 35,000. Data for 2014-15 and 2015-16 is not currently available.

■ Tax Allowances

Rebecca Long Bailey: [61133]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many (a) people or (b) businesses received each tax relief listed in the HM Revenue and Customs document Estimated Costs of Principal Tax Reliefs, published on 30 December 2016, in (a) 2014-15 and (b) 2015-16.

Rebecca Long Bailey: [61243]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many (a) people and (b) businesses benefitted from each tax relief listed in HM Revenue and Customs's publication of 30 December 2016, entitled Minor Tax Expenditures and Structural Reliefs in (i) 2014-15 and (ii) 2015-16.

Jane Ellison:

HM Revenue and Customs publishes statistics providing estimates of the cost of tax reliefs for 2012-13 to 2016-17 for principal and minor tax reliefs. Information on the number of people or businesses who claim these reliefs is not available for the full list of reliefs in these tables.

The bulletin that accompanies the tables has recently been extended to provide links to other statistical information on tax reliefs. In some cases this includes numbers of claimants, where this is currently available. This is available at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/579690/Dec16_Reliefs_bulletin_Final.pdf

■ Venture Capital

Rebecca Long Bailey: [61130]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people received income tax relief for venture capital trusts in (a) 2014-15 and (b) 2015-16.

Jane Ellison:

The number of people claiming income tax relief on investments in Venture Capital Trusts (VCT) in 2014-15 was 12,920. HM Revenue and Customs has not yet published statistics for the number of claims in 2015-16; these will be published by the end of 2017, as part of the regular schedule of VCT statistics.

■ Welfare Tax Credits

Alison Thewliss: [60739]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many times deductions have been made from a person's child tax credit payment to service outstanding arrears from working tax credits in each year since 2010.

Jane Ellison:

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

■ Whisky: Scotland

Ian Murray: [61150]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent estimate the Government has made of the economic contribution of the Scotch whisky industry to the (a) Scottish and (b) UK economy.

Jane Ellison:

The Government has not made an independent assessment of the contribution of Scotch whisky to the Scottish or UK economies. However, the Scotch Whisky Association estimates that the industry contributes over £5 billion to the UK economy, supporting over 40,000 jobs.

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**■ Garden Communities: Construction****Grant Shapps:****[60070]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, whether his Department plans to compensate residents living in the vicinity of proposed new garden cities, towns and villages.

Gavin Barwell:

[Holding answer 20 January 2017]: The planning and development control system considers whether a proposal would unacceptably affect amenities and the existing use of land and buildings which ought to be protected in the public interest. Where such matters are material considerations, they must be taken into account and weighed against the merits of the proposed development.

■ Housing: Construction**Diana Johnson:****[60931]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if he will list each of the councils receiving the New Home Bonus where there has been an increase in the number of new homes built in those areas by (a) 0.4 per cent or below and (b) above 0.4 per cent in each year since 2011-12.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The attached table is a list of the councils receiving New Home Bonus where there has been an increase in the number of new homes built in those areas by (a) 0.4 per cent or below and (b) above 0.4 per cent in each year since 2011-12. The Government has introduced a baseline to ensure that the New Homes Bonus is focussed on local authorities demonstrating a stronger than average commitment. The 0.4% baseline below which the Bonus will not be paid, reflects a percentage of housing that would have been built anyway and is about half of historic levels of housing growth. Over 75% of authorities have achieved growth of above 0.4% in each year rewarded since the introduction of the Bonus in 2011, and for payments in 2016/17 90% of authorities achieved a growth rate of 0.4% or more.

Attachments:

1. Attachment to Question 60931 [New Homes Bonus LAs under and over 0.4% performance on growth.pdf]

■ Solar Power: Non-domestic Rates**Julie Cooper:****[59610]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if he will make it his policy to deem solar panels as excepted plant and machinery for the purposes of business rates in a similar way to gas-powered combined heat and power boilers.

Julie Cooper: [59611]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if he will take steps to ensure that proposed changes in business rates do not have an adverse effect on the solar industry.

Julie Cooper: [59612]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if he will make it his policy to make the microgeneration exemption from business rates permanent in order to assist companies in investing in clean energy.

Mr Marcus Jones:

[Holding answer 13 January 2017]: Business rates are based on valuations from the Valuation Office Agency and we do not intervene in their independent assessments. We have put in place a £3.6 billion transitional relief scheme for England to ensure no ratepayer is unfairly penalised at the 2017 revaluation.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Department for Culture, Media and Sport and Ofcom

Chi Onwurah: [61275]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, if she will publish an organisational chart for (a) her Department and (b) Ofcom.

Matt Hancock:

Details of our senior Management team can be found on our Gov.uk entry, here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-culture-media-sport>

Ofcom, as an independent body, is responsible for deciding whether or not to publish its own organisational chart. It currently does not do so.

■ Disclosure of Information

Louise Haigh: [61256]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment she has made of the effectiveness of measures to prevent the sharing of personal data for commercial purposes without explicit consent.

Matt Hancock:

The Government takes both the protection of personal data and the right to privacy extremely seriously. Where personal data is being processed, consent is not necessarily the only processing condition available to companies under the Data Protection Act- the processing of personal data for commercial purposes may be necessary for the performance of a contract to which the data subject is party, or it may be necessary for the legitimate interests of the organisation collecting the data (or others to whom it is made available).

■ Information Commissioner

Louise Haigh: [61252]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate she has made of the number of complaints to the Information Commissioner on the sharing of sensitive personal data in each year since 2010.

Matt Hancock:

Complaints raised and dealt with by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) in respect of data protection, data sharing and nuisance calls are published in the ICO's annual reports which can be found on its website at <https://ico.org.uk/about-the-ico/our-information/annual-reports/>

Louise Haigh: [61253]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate she has made of the number of complaints to the Information Commissioner on unsolicited calls and emails in each year since 2010.

Matt Hancock:

Complaints raised and dealt with by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) in respect of data protection, data sharing and nuisance calls are published in the ICO's annual reports which can be found on its website at <https://ico.org.uk/about-the-ico/our-information/annual-reports/>

Louise Haigh: [61254]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions she has had with the Information Commissioner on the trading of sensitive personal and financial data.

Matt Hancock:

The Department does not hold estimates on the number of companies that trade personal data that are not registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). The Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) requires every data controller who is processing personal information to register with the ICO unless they are exempt. Failure to do so is a criminal offence. Information on registration can be found on the ICO's website at: www.ico.org.uk

Louise Haigh: [61255]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what recent estimate she has made of the number of companies which trade personal data and which are not registered with the Information Commissioner's Office.

Matt Hancock:

The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and other Departmental Ministers have met with the Information Commissioner to discuss a range of relevant policy issues.

■ Public Libraries: Closures

Tim Farron: [\[59269\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, how many public libraries have closed since February 2016.

Mr Rob Wilson:

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport monitors proposed changes to library service provision throughout England, however the Department does not hold complete figures on total public library closures since February 2016.

DEFENCE**■ Armed Forces**

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[61198\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the (a) target and (b) actual (i) inflow, (ii) outflow and (iii) voluntary outflow rate of each pinch point trade was in the last 12 months.

Mark Lancaster:

This information is being withheld for the purpose of safeguarding national security. Its disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the capability, effectiveness and security of the Armed Forces.

■ Armed Forces: Furs

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[60918\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many bearskins are (a) in use and (b) unaccounted for; and whether he is taking steps to procure additional bearskins.

Harriett Baldwin:

There are currently 1,400 bearskins in use/stock, all of which are accounted for. The requirement for new bearskins is kept to a minimum, with their procurement on-going based on need and the availability of material.

■ Armoured Fighting Vehicles

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[61101\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what his plans are for the incorporation of Foxhound vehicles into future force structures being developed by Army 2020 Refine.

Harriett Baldwin:

Plans for the incorporation of Protected Mobility into future force structures, including Foxhound vehicles, are still being developed under Army 2020 Refine.

■ AWE: Industrial Disputes

Kirsten Oswald:

[\[60871\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the effect of the recent industrial action by Atomic Weapons Establishment staff on the delivery of his Department's nuclear weapons programme.

Harriett Baldwin:

Trade union members at the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) have been undertaking industrial action since 14 November 2016 in relation to proposed changes to the AWE Pension Scheme by AWE plc. Robust measures are in place to manage any impact of this industrial action.

■ Defence

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[61116\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what discussions officials from his Department have had since June 2016 with the Departments for (a) Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, (b) Exiting the European Union and (c) International Trade on labour requirements for the aerospace, defence and security sectors.

Harriett Baldwin:

Ministry of Defence officials have regular engagement on a range of issues with counterparts in the Departments for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Exiting the European Union, and International Trade. Many of the issues and opportunities following the referendum are common to a range of sectors.

■ Defence Business Services: Liverpool

Mrs Louise Ellman:

[\[61152\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many staff are employed in the Defence Business Service at its office in Liverpool; what consultations have been carried out in relation to such people's future employment at that office; and if he will make a statement.

Mark Lancaster:

276 staff are employed by Defence Business Services in Liverpool. Walker House in Liverpool is included in the Ministry of Defence (MOD) Estate Optimisation Strategy and there is a strategic plan to vacate this site in 2023. Civilian personnel will be expected to honour their 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. Formal Trades Union consultation will occur well in advance of any closure.

■ Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft

Douglas Chapman: [\[61025\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the US Department of Defense Director, Operational Test and Evaluation 2016 Annual Report on the F35 Joint Strike Fighter, how much his Department has allocated in funding to Follow on Modernization requirements for the Autonomous Logistics Information System on the F35 Joint Strike Fighter.

Harriett Baldwin:

The Ministry of Defence has made a funding allocation for future development of the Automatic Logistics Information System, as part of the F-35 follow on modernisation programme. The requirements underpinning this development have been agreed with all of the other F-35 Partner Nations and align closely with our operating procedures and known upgrades to the aircraft. I am withholding details of this funding as its disclosure would prejudice commercial interests

■ Ministry of Defence: Staff

Deidre Brock: [\[60876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many officials of his Department are working full-time on preparations for the UK leaving the EU; and what proportion of his Department's staff that number represents.

Mike Penning:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 25 October 2016 to Question 50276 to the hon. Member for East Renfrewshire (Mrs Oswald).

Attachments:

1. 50276 - WQnA extract on MOD Staff
[20161031_WQnA_extract_50276_MOD_Staff.docx]

■ Nuclear Weapons

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[60913\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to ensure that defence personnel with essential nuclear skills are retained by the Royal Navy.

Harriett Baldwin:

The Royal Navy use a variety of measures to encourage retention of military personnel with essential nuclear skills. These range from accelerated apprenticeship schemes, prioritising training opportunities, offering extensions of service, and the payment of targeted Financial Retention Incentives or Recruiting and Retention Pay.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[60917\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to ensure that the defence industry maintains the people with nuclear skills required for his Department's nuclear-based programmes.

Harriett Baldwin:

The Ministry of Defence remains fully committed to its relationship with the wider defence industry and other Government Departments to ensure its people have the required nuclear skills. This includes membership and chairmanship of a number of skills forums alongside companies such as BAE Systems, Rolls-Royce, Babcock and the Atomic Weapons Establishment. Recent examples of this work include the Nuclear Skills Strategy which was published in December 2016, and the Building our Industrial Strategy green paper, published in January 2017.

■ Prestwick Airport**Ian Murray:**[\[61148\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will publish information relating to the costs to the public purse of his Department's use of Prestwick Airport.

Harriett Baldwin:

Prestwick Airport is used by the RAF as a stopping point en route to North America and for training purposes. In the current financial year, to date, it is estimated that approximately £326,000 has been spent on landing and handling fees.

The airport is also used infrequently by other parts of defence, such as Joint Helicopter Command, but information regarding this usage is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

■ Submarine Delivery Body**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[60914\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he expects a permanent Chief Executive Officer of the new Submarine Delivery Body to be appointed.

Mr Kevan Jones:[\[60919\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what budget has been allocated to the new Submarine Delivery Body.

Harriett Baldwin:

The Job Advertisement for Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the new Submarine Delivery Body closed on 23 January 2017. We will appoint the CEO as soon as the process allows. The operating cost budget for the new body has yet to be determined and Ministry of Defence (MOD) officials are working to ensure that an appropriate level of funding is provided to allow the Delivery Body to deliver its responsibilities effectively.

■ Syria: Overseas Aid**Charlotte Leslie:**[\[60818\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment the Government has made of using the Joint Precision Airdrop System to provide aid to besieged Syrian civilians.

Mrs Madeleine Moon:

[\[60826\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the utility of the Joint Precision Aerial Delivery System for delivering humanitarian aid; and if he will make a statement.

Mike Penning:

The UK does not possess a Joint Precision Airdrop System (JPADS) capability. Our assessment is that, although JPADS is relatively precise, the size and weight of the system and the risk of collateral damage are such that it is not generally suitable for use in a populated environment. We continue to work with allies and partners on potential options for delivering aid but the most effective means remains road deliveries of large quantities, organised by Humanitarian agencies and coordinated with authorities on the ground.

■ **Trident Missiles: Testing**

Patrick Grady:

[\[61249\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether any video footage for potential media release was taken of the Trident missile test firing of June 2016.

Patrick Grady:

[\[61282\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, on how many occasions footage of test firings of Trident missiles has (a) been made available to the media and (b) not released to the media following each such test firing in each year for which records are available.

Sir Michael Fallon:

This is decided on a case by case basis dependent on security considerations at the time. Footage of the 2005 and 2012 Demonstration and Shakedown Operations firings was released.

John Woodcock:

[\[61258\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many tests of UK Trident missiles have been carried out by each Vanguard class submarine (a) since 2010 and (b) in the last 20 years; and how many tests of US Trident missiles have been carried out in those same time periods.

Sir Michael Fallon:

Demonstration and Shakedown Operations (DASOs) are undertaken prior to the initial deployment of a ballistic missile submarine and also following long overhaul periods. To date there have been eleven UK DASO firings of the Trident II D5 missiles - all resulted in the submarine successfully being certified to return to the operational cycle.

Details of the date of the missile firing and the submarine involved are given below;

26 May 1994 - HMS Vanguard

19 June 1994 - HMS Vanguard

24 July 1995 - HMS Victorious

22 August 1995 - HMS Victorious

10 October 1997 - HMS Vigilant

10 October 1997 - HMS Vigilant

21 September 2000 - HMS Vengeance

10 October 2005 - HMS Vanguard

26 May 2009 - HMS Victorious

23 October 2012 - HMS Vigilant

20 June 2016 - HMS Vengeance

We do not hold records of US DASOs, but there have been over 160 successful test flights of Trident II D5 missiles since 1989.

Patrick Grady:

[\[61281\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether journalists or media representatives were (a) informed in advance or (b) present for the Trident missile test firing of June 2016.

Sir Michael Fallon:

No journalists or media representatives were given advance information or were invited to the Trident D5 Missile Demonstration and Shakedown Operation in June 2016.

Ms Margaret Ritchie:

[\[61284\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how he and the Prime Minister are routinely informed of the results of scheduled tests of the Trident missile system; and what the average length of time is between such tests being carried out and he and the Prime Minister being so informed.

Sir Michael Fallon:

The Prime Minister and I are routinely informed of the outcome of Demonstration and Shakedown Operations.

EDUCATION

■ Antisemitism

Kirsten Oswald:

[\[60505\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to work with the devolved administrations to combat anti-Semitism and holocaust denial in schools, colleges and on university campuses.

Caroline Dineneage:

The Department for Education takes antisemitism extremely seriously. There is no place in any education institution for hatred or any form of harassment, discrimination or racism, including antisemitism.

In particular, we believe that young people should be taught the history of the Holocaust and the lessons it teaches today. We are committed to supporting and funding Holocaust education in schools.

The department's responsibilities extend to England only.

Education: Finance**Gordon Marsden:**[\[61229\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she intends to issue an Annual Grant Letter to the Office for Students setting out funding available and Government priorities for its use.

Joseph Johnson:

We will issue annual guidance to the Office for Students, including the allocation of Government grant in aid and Government priorities for higher education for the following academic year. It is likely that this guidance will take the form of a letter.

Higher Education**Gordon Marsden:**[\[61228\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether it will be compulsory for new higher education providers to be included on the Office for Students register of providers.

Joseph Johnson:

Registration is voluntary and providers are free to operate outside of the register if they wish. If, however, providers want to obtain the benefits of delivering recognised higher education courses, including receiving direct or indirect financial support from the Government and the taxpayer, they will be required to register with the Office for Students. In return, they will be required to meet conditions imposed by the Office for Students so that students, employers and the taxpayer can be assured that all providers on the register meet the necessary standards and requirements commensurate with the benefits they will receive.

Gordon Marsden:[\[61230\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when she plans to commence consultation on a new regulatory framework for higher education providers.

Joseph Johnson:

Subject to the passage of the Bill, the consultation on the new regulatory framework for higher education will take place in autumn 2017, so the new regulatory body, the Office for Students, can begin accepting and assessing applications from new and existing providers in 2018, in time for the 2019-20 Academic Year.

■ Higher Education: Qualifications

Gordon Marsden:

[61232]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 16 January 2017 to Question 60187, how many of the 56 per cent of students in 2014-15 were studying for (a) honours degrees, (b) Level 4 qualifications and (c) any other higher education qualification.

Joseph Johnson:

Information on higher education enrolments at Alternative Providers (APs) in England designated for student support is collected and published by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). The latest statistics refer to the 2014/15 Academic Year and are available at: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/news/15-06-2016/sfr235-alternative-providers>

Analysis of HESA's AP Record shows that in Academic Year 2014/15, there were 28,230 undergraduate students aged over 25 enrolled in APs designated for student support and with 50 or more students. Of these:

(a) 7,635 were on first degrees and

(b) 20,595 were on other undergraduate courses[1], of which 970 were on level 4 qualifications[2].

[1] This includes students on HND/HNC courses and those on other undergraduate courses, as defined in the HESA AP publication at <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/news/15-06-2016/sfr235-alternative-providers>

[2] Level 4 includes Certificate of higher education (CertHE), Higher national certificate (HNC), Level 4 award, Level 4 certificate, Level 4 diploma and Level 4 NVQ.

■ Pre-school Education

Dan Jarvis:

[61109]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many early-learning and childcare settings Ofsted has inspected in each of the last five years, by type of setting.

Caroline Dineneage:

Ofsted is the non-ministerial Government Department responsible for the regulation of childcare providers and publishes a regular series of statistics relating to inspection of early years provision on its website, including those specifically requested in this question. These can be viewed from the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/early-years-and-childcare-statistics>

■ Students: Loans

Stephen Timms: [61177]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 18 January 2017 to Question 59626, what the average annual student loan repayment is for a person studying a degree course in medicine.

Joseph Johnson:

Information at the level requested is not available without disproportionate cost.

■ Universities: Admissions

Ian Austin: [60557]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, for what reasons the Director of Fair Access can issue fines to universities.

Ian Austin: [60577]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many universities did not meet widening participation targets agreed with the Office for Fair Access in (a) 2013-14 and (b) 2014-15.

Ian Austin: [60578]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many fines the Director of Fair Access has issued to universities that have not met widening participation targets in each year since the establishment of that office.

Joseph Johnson:

The Office for Fair Access (OFFA) publishes information on universities' performance against their widening participation targets as part of its annual monitoring of access agreements, approved by the Director of Fair Access (DfA) to Higher Education.

The 2014-15 monitoring publication '*Outcomes of Access Agreement Monitoring 2014-15*', can be found at: www.offa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/2016.04-Outcomes-of-access-agreements-monitoring-1.pdf

The variation in the number, focus and ambition of targets set by an institution means that caution should be taken in using the summary data to make direct comparisons between individual institutions.

Prior to 2013-14 OFFA reported on targets at sector level rather than institutional level. Full monitoring returns can be found at: www.offa.org.uk/publications/monitoring

The DfA can direct the Higher Education Funding Council for England to impose specified financial requirements on the governing body of an institution if it has failed, in the DfA's view, to comply with the requirements in its approved plan. No fines have been imposed on universities using this power.

The legislation makes clear that where the governing body can show that it has taken all reasonable steps to comply with its access agreement, this will not be considered as failure.

This approach has been successful with record numbers of disadvantaged students in higher education, including in high tariff institutions, and the highest rates of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) participation in higher education.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Agriculture: Finance

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[\[61247\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 23 January 2017 to Question 60585, whether she plans to replace all funding from EU sources paid to UK farmers and growers after 2020 from the public purse; and if she will make a statement.

George Eustice:

We have been able to provide early certainty on payments to 2020 with the guarantees of funding. No decisions have yet been taken about future support beyond 2020. Before issuing detailed proposals, we will shortly be publishing for consultation two Green Papers setting out our ambitions for food, farming, and the environment. We look forward to working with industry, rural communities, and the public to shape our plans for the future outside the EU.

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Staff

Neil Parish:

[\[61158\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many additional civil servants her Department has employed since 23 June 2016.

George Eustice:

The number of additional staff the Department has employed on both fixed term and a permanent basis since 23 June 2016 until 23 January 2017 is 215.

This figure includes internal transfers and Civil Servants from Other Government Departments.

■ Flood Control

Tim Farron:

[\[61146\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much of the £170 million announced for flood defence and resilience measures in the Autumn Statement 2016 has been spent; and on what projects that funding has been spent.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

Three schemes will benefit from the £20 million allocated for new flood defence investment announced in the Autumn Statement 2016.

The three schemes are as follows;

- £17 million for Burton Upon Trent Flood Alleviation Scheme (Staffordshire),
- £2 million for Otley Flood Alleviation Scheme (Yorkshire); and
- £1.7 million for Stainforth Dunston Hill Flood Alleviation Works (Yorkshire).

In total the schemes will better protect 5,000 properties (4,100 home and 900 non-residential properties).

£150 million of the funding is intended to improve the resilience of roads and rail infrastructure in areas that experienced severe flooding last winter. The Department for Transport will announce further details of the investment in due course.

EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION

■ Business

Mrs Sheryll Murray:

[\[908412\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the UK leaving the EU on businesses in (a) the UK and (b) the EU.

Mr Robin Walker:

The Department for Exiting the European Union, working with officials across government, continues to undertake a wide range of data analysis covering the entirety of the UK economy and our trading relationships with the EU. We are looking at over 50 sectors as well as cross-cutting regulatory issues. This will inform the UK's position for the upcoming negotiations with our EU partners. We want to ensure that British businesses have the maximum freedom to trade with and operate within European markets – and to let European businesses do the same in Britain.

■ Defence and Security: EU Action

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[61118\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what discussions officials from his Department have had with (a) the Department for International Trade and (b) the Ministry of Defence on (i) access to and (ii) influence in collaborative defence and security programmes run by the EU.

Mr David Jones:

The Prime Minister is clear that we will continue to work with our European partners on defence and security policy. European leaders have welcomed this commitment. This is the right approach: working closely on defence and security with our closest geographical partners makes our citizens safer. The Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union has regular discussions with Ministerial colleagues on this issue.

■ Department for Exiting the European Union: Costs and Staff

Tom Brake:

[61140]

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, (a) how much his Department cost to set up, (b) how many staff his Department employs and (c) what the estimated cost of running the Department is for the next three years.

Mr David Jones:

a) Costs of setting up dept

The total expenditure of the Department for Exiting the European Union will be set out in the Annual Report and Accounts at the end of the financial year as is standard practice.

b) Number of staff

The Department for Exiting the European Union now has over 300 staff, plus the expertise of over 120 officials in Brussels from the UK Permanent Representation to the EU, and is growing fast.

c) Cost of running dept for next three years

The Autumn Statement announced additional funding of up to £51m in 2016-17 and up to £94m per year from 2017-18 until the UK's exit is complete. The full budget for the department will be presented to Parliament at the Supplementary Estimate as is standard practice.

■ EU Nationals

Will Quince:

[908407]

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what priority he plans to accord to the future status of EU nationals in the UK during negotiations on the UK leaving the EU.

Mr David Jones:

The Prime Minister was clear in her speech that she wants to guarantee the status of EU citizens already in Britain, and our nationals in the EU, as early as she can. She told other EU leaders that we could give people the certainty they want straight away, and reach such a deal now. Resolving this challenge as soon as possible is the right and fair thing to do. Other EU leaders recognise the importance of reaching a reciprocal deal. This includes the Polish Prime Minister Szydlo who discussed this with the Prime Minister in November.

■ Law and Order

Henry Smith:

[61295]

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the priority to be accorded to future cooperation with law enforcement agencies in the EU during negotiations on the UK leaving the EU.

Mr David Jones:

The Secretary of State and I have regular discussions with Cabinet colleagues on this issue. The safety of the British public is a top priority. As the PM has made clear, one of the twelve objectives for the negotiations ahead will be to establish a new relationship which enables the UK and EU to continue practical cooperation with other Member States to tackle cross-border crime and to keep our people safe.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE■ **Cameroon: Violence****Richard Burden:**[\[60699\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he and officials of his Department have made to the government of Cameroon on reports of violence against anglophone Cameroonians; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The British High Commission Yaoundé is closely following the situation in Cameroon. We are engaged with the Government of Cameroon and will continue to raise this with them. Respect of the rule of law, and the right to peaceful demonstrations are critical tenets of democracy.

The UK believes that all parties have a responsibility to uphold and protect the peace and stability of Cameroon and that legal and peaceful means should be used to voice any grievances. We support the AU Commission's call for restraint and encouraging a continuation of the dialogue initiated by the Government in order to find a solution to the social, political and economic issues motivating the protests.

■ **Democratic Republic of Congo: Constitutions****Stephen Gethins:**[\[60752\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo on its commitment not to hold a referendum on further constitutional change in 2017.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

We welcome the political deal signed on 31 December between the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the main political parties, which included the commitment to not hold a referendum on further constitutional change in 2017. We applaud the perseverance of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Congo (CENCO) in achieving this. As I said in my statement of 6 January, it is imperative that this deal is implemented as soon as possible so that elections can take place this year.

Both the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for International Development James Wharton MP and I visited the DRC last year and met with senior government

and opposition figures. We pressed the need for the government to respect the constitution and hold elections, as well as respecting human rights. We continue to encourage the government and the opposition to cooperate and consolidate the progress they have already made.

The UK has earmarked £11.4 million to support a transparent electoral process provided that a realistic budget and timetable are released, and all the conditions set out in the Constitution and in UN Security Council Resolution 2277 are met. The EU and a number of nations, including the US have made similar pledges.

■ **Democratic Republic of Congo: Elections**

Stephen Gethins:

[60524]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo on President Joseph Kabila's commitment not to seek re-election in 2017.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

We welcome the political deal signed on 31 December between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the main political parties, which included the commitment by President Kabila to step down in 2017. We applaud the perseverance of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Congo (CENCO) in achieving this. I said in my statement of 6 January, it is imperative that this deal is implemented as soon as possible so that elections can take place this year.

I visited the DRC last year with Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for International Development, James Wharton MP and met with senior government and opposition figures. We both pressed the need for Kabila to step down and hold elections, as well as respecting human rights. We continue to encourage the Government and the opposition to cooperate and consolidate the progress they have already made.

The UK has earmarked £11.4 million to support a transparent electoral process provided that a realistic budget and timetable are released, and all the conditions set out in the Constitution and in UN Security Council Resolution 2277 are met. The EU and a number of nations, including the US have made similar pledges.

■ **Libya: Emigration**

Daniel Kawczynski:

[60568]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what information his Department holds on the number of migrants who have died crossing the Mediterranean from Libya to Europe.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The Department does not hold this information centrally. Data collected by the International Organization for Migration reports that, as of 18 January 2017, there have been 209 deaths of migrants at sea crossing the Central Mediterranean sea route.

■ Libya: Human Rights

Kirsten Oswald: [\[60656\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what report he has received on alleged human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law against residents of Benghazi and other Libyan cities by forces allied to Khalifa Haftar.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The UK remains deeply concerned at alleged human rights violations and abuses and violations international humanitarian law against residents of Benghazi and other Libyan cities. It is clear from the reports written by human rights organisations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, as well as by the UN OHCHR and UN Special Mission to Libya, that civilians continue to suffer inexcusably from ongoing conflict in Libya. We condemn the loss of civilian lives caused by indiscriminate attacks by armed groups on all sides, including alleged attacks by LNA forces. We welcome the ICC Office of the Prosecutor's determination to prioritise investigations into this unacceptable situation in 2017.

■ Libya: Military Intervention

Daniel Kawczynski: [\[60569\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the cost of intervention in Libya since 2011.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

Since 2011 we have supported post intervention stabilisation and reconstruction planning in Libya, aiming to promote political participation, strengthen security, justice and defence, and expand the economy. During this period, the UK has spent over £48m through the Conflict Pool, over £11m from the Arab Partnership, and nearly £3m on stabilisation through the new Conflict, Stability and Security Fund. Libya still faces challenges and we continue to help the people of Libya achieve the stability and security they need.

■ Libya: Terrorism

James Cartlidge: [\[60888\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to the oral evidence of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs to the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee of 22 March 2016, Question 397, what progress has been made by the Libyan Government of National Accord in establishing a committee to study the case of victims of IRA terrorism; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The current instability in Libya has effectively stalled further progress on the resolution of legacy issues. No Libyan committee has been set up to study victims of IRA terrorism. The current political, security and economic situation in Libya makes it difficult for victims, their families and representatives to pursue their claims, and

makes it unlikely that Libya might be able to settle claims in the near future. We continue to emphasise to the Libyan Government the importance we attach to the issue of compensation for victims of IRA terrorism, but given the significant challenges facing Libya, rapid progress remains unlikely.

James Cartlidge:

[60893]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, when the Libya Reconciliation Unit last discussed with the Libyan Government of National Accord the matter of compensation for victims of IRA terrorism where Semtex and weapons were supplied by Libya.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

At every opportunity, we continue to stress to the Libyan authorities that the resolution of legacy issues is a priority. The Foreign Secretary and Mr Ellwood raised the issue of compensation during their respective meetings with Prime Minister Serraj and Deputy Prime Minister Maiteq during the London Ministerial on 31 October 2016. We will continue to encourage the Libyan authorities to engage with UK victims, and their legal representatives, seeking redress, including those seeking compensation.

James Cartlidge:

[60894]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he plans to take to assist victims of IRA terrorist attacks where Semtex and weapons were supplied by Libya in securing compensation from the Libyan government; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The issue of provision of assistance to victims of IRA terrorism goes wider than the FCO's remit alone; this answer will therefore focus on the bilateral relationship between the UK and Libya. The UK Government position remains that we are not able to negotiate with the Libyan Government on individual compensation claims, as these are not government-to-government claims. HMG considers these compensation claims to be private matters, best pursued directly with the Libyan Government. We believe that the best approach is to facilitate contacts between victims and the relevant Libyan authorities so that the claims can be settled directly. We continue to emphasise to the Libyan Government the importance we attach to resolution of these matters and continue to raise the issue of compensation to victims of IRA terrorism with the Libyan Government. However, the current instability in Libya has effectively stalled progress on the resolution of legacy issues and rapid progress remains unlikely.

James Cartlidge:

[60996]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, when he last discussed with the Libyan Government of National Accord the matter of compensation for victims of IRA terrorism where Semtex and weapons were supplied by Libya; and what plans he has for further such discussions.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

We have made clear to the Libyan authorities that resolution of legacy issues remains a priority for us. The Foreign Secretary, my Rt Hon Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Mr Johnson) and I raised the issue of compensation during our respective meetings with Prime Minister Serraj and Deputy Prime Minister Maiteq during the London Ministerial on 31 October 2016. We will continue to encourage the Libyan authorities to engage with UK victims, and their legal representatives, seeking redress, including those seeking compensation.

■ Nigeria: Abduction**Jim Shannon:**[\[60610\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to assist the Nigerian government recover children kidnapped by Boko Haram.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The UK is resolute in its support for Nigeria in the fight against Boko Haram and the search for all those who have been abducted.

We are providing a substantial package of intelligence, military and development support to Nigeria, including training and advice for Nigerian armed forces and £5 million to support the Multinational Joint Task Force, a regional force against Boko Haram.

To date over 22,500 Nigerian military personnel have received UK training; of those, at least 6,500 have been deployed on counter-insurgency operations in north east Nigeria.

With France and the US, we also support a Nigerian intelligence analysis and planning cell focused on the North East and based in Abuja.

■ Norfolk Island**Catherine West:**[\[61147\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Australian counterpart on the constitutional status and sovereignty of Norfolk Island.

Alok Sharma:

Foreign and Commonwealth Office Ministers have not discussed Norfolk Island with their Australian counterparts. Norfolk Island has been a Territory of Australia since 1914 and its governance is a matter for Australia.

■ North Korea: Politics and Government

Sir Hugo Swire:

[\[60631\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his counterparts in (a) Japan, (b) South Korea and (c) China on the political and human rights situation in North Korea.

Alok Sharma:

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, My Rt Hon Friend the member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Mr Boris Johnson) has spoken with his counterparts from Japan, the Republic of Korea and China about the political and human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). We hold regular discussions with partners on DPRK political and human rights issues, including discussions on the implementation and enforcement of UN Security Council Resolutions 2270 and 2321. We also worked closely together on the recent UN General Assembly Third Committee Resolution on DPRK human rights. During conversations with the Chinese government, the Foreign Secretary has reiterated the UK's concerns about the DPRK's pursuit of its nuclear and ballistic missile programme and has pressed China to exert its influence on the regime. I also raised our concerns about DPRK security and human rights issues with my Chinese counterpart Liu Haixing during my recent visit to Beijing. In addition, the UK government has asked the Chinese authorities to respect the fundamental principle of non-refoulement and raised the matter at the UK-China Human Rights Dialogue on 27 and 28 October 2016.

Sir Hugo Swire:

[\[60636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what plans he has to discuss the political and human rights situation in North Korea with the incoming US administration.

Alok Sharma:

The British Government looks forward to working with the incoming US administration on a number of areas, including issues related to the political and human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

■ Seeta Kaur

Nusrat Ghani:

[\[61175\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations the Government has made to the government of India on the death of Seeta Kaur.

Alok Sharma:

Firstly, let me express my deepest sympathies for the family of Seeta Kaur following her tragic death in India in 2015.

So called "honour killings" are abhorrent, and this Government opposes "honour killings". In this case the Indian police were unable to confirm the cause of Seeta's

death as murder due to lack of evidence. In January 2016 the Indian police closed their investigation as no further evidence was forthcoming. We informed Ms Kaur's family and the Metropolitan Police of this at the time.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office staff have provided assistance to Ms Kaur's family, both in India and the UK, and will continue to do so in whatever way they can. However, it is not for the British Government to interfere in the legal processes of another country, just as we would not expect any country to interfere in ours.

■ Syria: Armed Conflict

Daniel Kawczynski:

[\[60567\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many rebel groups are fighting President Assad in Syria; and what the names of those rebel groups are.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The number of opposition groups fighting against the Asad regime in Syria has fluctuated throughout the conflict. There are hundreds of different groups, but many of these are very small and based only in a particular area, or are sub-units of larger groups. Groups frequently appear, disappear, merge or split. It is therefore not possible to specify a number.

The UK continues to work in support of a lasting political settlement based on political transition. A key part of this is our support for the moderate opposition which is committed to working towards a negotiated settlement. Many of the groups fighting the Asad regime are affiliated to the opposition umbrella organisation the High Negotiations Committee, which has set out a moderate and constructive vision for political transition, including respect for human rights and protection of all components of Syrian society.

■ UN Resolutions: Israel

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[60521\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 16 January 2017 to Question 58877, which Ministers were made aware of the text of the UN Security Council Resolution 2334 (2016) before the vote on that resolution took place.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

As with all policy decisions, Ministers were consulted on the UK's position. We supported UN Security Council Resolution 2334 because it is in line with UK policy.

■ Yemen: Peace Negotiations

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[60616\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to help bring about a ceasefire and peace talks in Yemen.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

A political solution is the best way to bring long-term stability to Yemen and end the conflict. The UK continues to strongly support the work of UN Special Envoy, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, and his tireless efforts in working with all parties to bring about peace in Yemen.

Through the "Quad" initiative, the UK has brought together leading Coalition members, the US and UN to make meaningful progress towards a peaceful solution to the conflict. The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Mr Johnson) hosted the first Quad meeting in London in July and the format has reconvened on an almost monthly basis since. I attended the last meeting in Riyadh on 18 December, during which it was agreed that the UN peace proposals represent an outline for a comprehensive agreement which the Yemeni parties need to negotiate the details of.

We continue to call on all parties to the conflict to renew their commitment to the Cessation of Hostilities for the sake of the people of Yemen.

HEALTH**■ Accident and Emergency Departments****Jonathan Ashworth:**[\[61121\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what information his Department holds on the average travel distance for patients to (a) Type 1, (b) Type 2 and (c) Type 3 accident and emergency units in each English region.

Mr Philip Dunne:

This information is not held centrally.

Determining the location of services is a matter for clinical commissioning groups, based on their clinical expertise and the providers in their local health economy.

■ Accident and Emergency Departments: Finance**Jonathan Ashworth:**[\[61122\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how much NHS funding was allocated to Type 3 accident and emergency units in (a) 2010-11 and (b) 2015-16.

Mr Philip Dunne:

This information is not held centrally.

■ Alcoholic Drinks and Smoking**Mr Laurence Robertson:**[\[61113\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate he has made of the cost to the NHS of (a) smoking-related and (b) alcohol-related diseases in the most recent year for which figures are available.

Nicola Blackwood:

Treating smoking-related illnesses cost the National Health Service in England an estimated £2.7 billion in 2006/07. These estimates are being updated as part of the development of the tobacco control plan.

Figures of the cost to the NHS of alcohol misuse are not available on an annual basis.

The most recent estimate from Public Health England (PHE) for 2014 is that alcohol costs the NHS around £3.5 billion per annum. The Department estimates that just under half of that is due to alcohol related inpatient admissions to hospital.

PHE's report "*Alcohol and drugs prevention, treatment and recovery: why invest?*, Public Health England" can be found at:

www.nta.nhs.uk/uploads/why-invest-2014-alcohol-and-drugs.pdf

■ **Dermatitis****Jim Shannon:**[\[60607\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether there are plans for the development of NICE guidelines on the management of atopic dermatitis in adults.

Nicola Blackwood:

There are currently no plans for the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) to develop a guideline on the management of atopic dermatitis in adults.

NICE published a clinical guideline on the diagnosis and management of atopic eczema (dermatitis) in under 12s in December 2007.

■ **Emergency Calls: Nuisance Calls****Jim Shannon:**[\[60611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what recent steps his Department has taken to prevent nuisance calls to 999.

Mr Philip Dunne:

It is the responsibility of providers of 999 services to manage nuisance calls locally.

■ **General Practitioners****Jonathan Ashworth:**[\[61123\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many GPs were working in each English region in (a) 2010-11 and (b) 2015-16.

David Mowat:

NHS Digital publishes data on general practices annually in the General and Personal Medical Services, England census as at September in each year.

The attached tables provide the total number of general practitioners including registrars and retainers by headcount working in each English region as at September 2010 and September 2015. Respectively, the data is broken down by

strategic health authority and primary care trust, and by NHS England region geography and clinical commissioning group.

Locums have been excluded from the data for purposes of comparability between 2010 and 2015.

Attachments:

1. PQ61123 attached document [PQ61123 attached document.xlsx]

Jonathan Ashworth:

[61124]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many GP surgeries existed in each English region in (a) 2010-11 and (b) 2015-16.

David Mowat:

The information is not held in the format requested.

Changes in the number of practices can be for a variety of reasons, including mergers, federations, takeovers and co-locations.

■ **General Practitioners: Finance**

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[61112]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how much funding has been provided to GP practices in (a) Gloucestershire and (b) England in the last 10 years for which figures are available.

David Mowat:

The information requested is in the document attached.

Attachments:

1. PQ61112 attached document [PQ61112 attached document.xlsx]

■ **Health Services**

Mrs Cheryl Gillan:

[60526]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the timetable is for the NHS England 2018-19 specialised commissioning annual prioritisation process; and if he will make a statement.

David Mowat:

NHS England expects to publish its prioritisation decisions for specialised services for the financial year 2017/18 in the spring of 2017.

Clinical policy propositions that were not funded on grounds of affordability in the 2016/17 prioritisation round will have the opportunity to be considered again alongside new proposals being put forward for prioritisation in 2017/18.

Mrs Cheryl Gillan:

[60527]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what policy proposals the Clinical Priority Advisory Group assigned priority level (a) 1, (b) 2, (c) 3, (d) 4 and (e) 5 to the specialised commissioning re-prioritisation process for 2016-17, announced on 4 December 2016.

David Mowat:

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

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

The final outcomes of the 2016-17 prioritisation were as follows:

RECOMMENDED FOR ROUTINE COMMISSIONING	NOT RECOMMENDED FOR ROUTINE COMMISSIONING
- Pegvisomant for acromegaly as a third-line treatment for adults	- Eculizumab for treatment of recurrence of C3 glomerulopathy post-transplant
- Auditory brainstem implants for congenital abnormalities of the auditory nerves or cochleae	- Riociguat for pulmonary arterial hypertension
- Haematopoietic stem cell transplant for Lymphoplasmacytic lymphoma /Waldenstrom's Macroglobulinaemia (adults)	- Second allogeneic haematopoietic stem cell transplant for relapsed disease
- Everolimus for subependymal giant cell astrocytoma (SEGA) associated with tuberous sclerosis complex	
- Rituximab for immunoglobulin-G4 related disease (IgG4-RD)	
- Microprocessor controlled prosthetic knees	
- Tolvaptan for hyponatraemia secondary to the Syndrome of Inappropriate Antidiuretic Hormone (SIADH) for patients who require cancer chemotherapy	
- Ivacaftor for children (2-5 years) with cystic fibrosis (named mutations)	
- Sodium oxybate for symptom control for narcolepsy with cataplexy (children)	
- Pasireotide for Cushing's Disease	

Jonathan Ashworth:**[61119]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, (a) how many and (b) which (i) Type 1 accident and emergency units, (ii) Type 2 accident and emergency units, (iii) Type 3 accident and emergency units and (iv) GP surgeries have closed in each English region since 2010-11.

Mr Philip Dunne:

Information regarding accident and emergency units is not held in the format requested.

With regard to information on general practitioner surgeries, I refer the hon. Member to the answer my Hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (David Mowat) gave to the hon. Member on 26 January 2017 to Question [61124](#).

Health Services: Greater London**Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[60576\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment has been made of the potential effect of the implementation of the Sustainability and Transformation Plan for North West London on the provision of health services in that area.

David Mowat:

While they are supported by NHS England and NHS Improvement, Sustainability and Transformation Plans are locally led and designed to reflect the priorities of each footprint. As such it is for individual areas to assess the effect of implementing the plans. No changes to services will be made without local consultation.

Hospital Beds: Eating Disorders**Luciana Berger:**[\[61127\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the net change has been in the number of in-patient eating disorder beds since 2010.

Nicola Blackwood:

Data is not available to show the number of inpatient eating disorder beds since 2010. There are currently 232 specialist children's eating disorder beds and 415 adult inpatient eating disorder beds in England.

Hospitals: Non-domestic Rates**Justin Madders:**[\[61115\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate he has made of the additional potential amount payable in business rates by NHS hospitals following the most recent re-evaluation of business rates rules.

Mr Philip Dunne:

No such assessment has been made. The Valuation Office Agency is responsible for setting rateable values for business rates, from which local authorities calculate the business rates bill.

Mental Health Services: Smoking**Steve McCabe:**[\[61163\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what his Department's policy is on smoking on the premises of mental health units.

Nicola Blackwood:

The Department supports the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence and Public Health England both of which have issued guidance on introducing smokefree mental health units.

■ Mental Health Services: West Midlands**Mr Jim Cunningham:**[\[61157\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the average occupancy rate of acute inpatient mental health care wards across Coventry and Warwickshire was in each month in the last five years; and if he will make a statement.

Nicola Blackwood:

This information is not collected in the format requested.

■ National Foetal Anti-convulsant Syndrome Association**Alison Thewliss:**[\[61240\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, when he last met with representatives of the Foetal Anti-Convulsant Syndrome Association; and what issues were discussed at that meeting.

Nicola Blackwood:

My hon. Friend the former Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Life Sciences (George Freeman) met with representatives of the Foetal Anti-Convulsant Syndrome Association and representatives of professional bodies and the voluntary sector on 13 June 2016. At that meeting they discussed ongoing work to raise awareness of the risks of valproate in pregnancy and activities to monitor the effectiveness of the action taken.

■ NHS Trusts: Temporary Employment**Justin Madders:**[\[61246\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many times NHS trusts have breached the agency cap due to exceptional safety grounds in each of the last 12 months for which figures are available.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The rules on agency spending were designed with patient safety in mind. To ensure patient safety, providers are allowed to pay an additional rate or use a non-framework agency on exceptional patient safety grounds. Each trust is required to have their own policy that identifies when it is appropriate to use the override, and an internal escalation process to ensure that the use of the clause is appropriate. The table

below sets out the number of overrides, for both clinical and non-clinical staff groups, since the price cap was set at 55% above basic rate on 1 April 2016.

APRIL 2016	292,405
May 2016	347,993
June 2016	283,325
July 2016	285,791
August 2016	331,328
September 2016	272,154
October 2016	338,576
November 2016	269,398
December 2016	242,792

■ NHS Walk-in Centres: Private Sector

Gareth Thomas:

[\[61108\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many private sector organisations have won a contract to provide NHS walk-in centre services in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Philip Dunne:

National Health Service walk-in centres are commissioned by local clinical commissioning groups rather than as part of a central procurement process. Information about the providers of such services is not collected or held centrally.

■ NHS: Cleaning Services

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[60678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many cleaners were employed in the NHS in each year from 2006-07 to 2015-16.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The information is not available in the format requested. The information that is available is set out in the following table.

YEAR	TOTAL NUMBER OF CLEANING STAFF
	WHOLE TIME EQUIVALENT
2006/07	50,523.5
2007/08	38,267.4
2008/09	38,343.3
2009/10	38,814.4
2010/11	39,166.6
2011/12	41,045.7
2012/13	38,867.4
2013/14	38,652.9
2014/15	38,737.6
2015/16	38,390.9

Data is collected annually in the Estates Return Information Collection from the National Health Service on the total number of cleaning staff as a whole time equivalent. It includes both directly employed and contracted out staff. The data is provided as received from the NHS and has not been amended centrally.

From 2006/07 to 2009/10, the number of cleaning staff was not a mandatory field for foundation trusts so the annual totals provided will not necessarily be a true reflection of the actual number.

■ NHS: Drugs

Daniel Zeichner: [\[60514\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many NICE-approved medicines evaluated through the Highly Specialised Technology programme have had a quality adjusted life year measure of £100,000 or less since the programme was established.

Daniel Zeichner: [\[60515\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment his Department has made of how the introduction of the proposed fast-track NICE technology appraisal process for promising new technologies that fall below an incremental cost-effectiveness ratio of £10,000 per quality adjusted life year will affect the review timings for products that are not fast-tracked.

Daniel Zeichner: [\[60516\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment his Department has made of the appropriateness of introducing the £100,000 quality adjusted life year threshold for evaluating highly specialised technologies.

Nicola Blackwood:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's (NICE) methods for the development of highly specialised technology (HST) guidance do not currently require the calculation of a cost per Quality Adjusted Life Year (QALY).

A final decision on whether it is appropriate to implement the proposed threshold for HST evaluations will be taken in light of the comments received in response to the recent consultation.

The proposed fast-track technology appraisal process would not affect the timescales for appraisals of technologies that are considered through the standard technology appraisal process. Wherever possible, NICE would continue to aim to publish draft guidance on new drugs and significant license extensions for existing drugs appraised through the standard technology appraisal programme within six months of the product receiving its marketing authorisation in the United Kingdom.

Mr Laurence Robertson:**[61111]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the total cost of drugs provided by the NHS has been in (a) Gloucestershire and (b) England in the last 10 years for which figures are available.

Nicola Blackwood:

The estimated cost of drugs in England, 2010/11 to 2015/16 is given in the table below. A combined and consistent time series is not available prior to 2010/11.

Due to changes to the National Health Service organisational structure, the lowest level of data available from 1 April 2013 is NHS Area Teams. These were superseded from 1 April 2015 by NHS England Regions. However data for 2013/14, 2014/15 and 2015/16 have been shown at the lower NHS Area Team Level for consistency. Regional level data prior to April 2013 are not available on a consistent basis. Data have been provided for the Bath, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire Area Team.

Costs exclude any discounts that may have been negotiated, and exclude payments made by pharmaceutical companies as part of the Pharmaceutical Price Regulation Scheme.

FINANCIAL YEAR	ENGLAND	OF WHICH BATH, GLOUCESTERSHIRE AND WILTSHIRE AREA TEAM
	TOTAL COST (£ MILLION)	COST (£ MILLION)
2010/11	13,000.6	
2011/12	13,213.7	
2012/13	13,396.5	
2013/14	14,407.6	352.3
2014/15	15,541.0	381.6
2015/16	16,788.1	414.3

Source: ePACT; IMS HEALTH 2016: Hospital Pharmacy Audit Index

Stephen Timms:

[\[61234\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what his policy is on the NHS providing the global standard of care in medicines for patients; and if he will make a statement.

Nicola Blackwood:

National Health Service commissioners are legally required to fund treatments recommended by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) through its technology appraisal and highly specialised technologies programmes. This is reflected in the NHS Constitution as a right to drugs and treatments that have been recommended by NICE.

■ **NHS: Labour Turnover**

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[60677\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate he has made of the wastage rates among (a) medical staff not including doctors or nurses and (b) non-medical staff in the NHS over the last 10 years.

Mr Philip Dunne:

Information is not available in the format requested.

■ **NHS: Managers**

Fiona Mactaggart:

[\[60571\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what proportion of members of health trust boards are women.

Mr Philip Dunne:

All National Health Service trusts and foundation trusts are subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty and must annually publish evidence of compliance. NHS Improvement is currently undertaking a data collection exercise which will enable it to begin publishing information about the diversity of trust boards later this year.

■ NHS: Motor Vehicles

Mary Creagh:

[\[61013\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many vehicles operated by the NHS have been found to be fitted with emissions defeat devices; and how many of those devices have been removed from such vehicles.

Nicola Blackwood:

The information requested is not held centrally.

■ NHS: Per Capita Costs

Luciana Berger:

[\[61257\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 20 January 2017 to Question 60414, what the real term percentage change in the funding his Department allocates to the NHS per capita will be in each financial year up to 2020-21.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The table below reflects planned cash and real terms spending growth per capita on health over the period 2016-17 to 2020-21.

YEAR	DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH (£)	CASH GROWTH %	DH REAL TERMS GROWTH PER CAPITA (%)	NHS ENGLAND (£)	CASH GROWTH %	NHS ENGLAND REAL TERMS GROWTH PER CAPITA (%)
2016-17	2,184	2.1%	0.7%	1,919	4.6%	3.2%
2017-18	2,223	1.8%	0.3%	1,965	2.4%	0.9%
2018-19	2,254	1.4%	-0.7%	1,995	1.5%	-0.6%
2019-20	2,287	1.5%	-0.3%	2,035	2.0%	0.2%
2020-21	2,340	2.3%	0.4%	2,093	2.9%	0.9%

Real terms growth calculations uses gross domestic product deflators updated on 23 December 2016.

■ Nurses: Labour Turnover

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[60621\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate he has made of the wastage rates school support staff in each of the last 10 years (a) in total and (b) for each type of support staff.

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[60679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate he has made of the wastage rate of NHS nurses in each of the last 10 years; and what estimate he has made of the (a) one, (b) five and (c) 10 year retention rate of NHS nurses in each of the last five years.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The information is not available in the format requested.

■ **Nusinersen: Clinical Trials**

Steve McCabe:

[\[61164\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if his Department will run trials of the drug Nusinersen.

Nicola Blackwood:

Biogen Ltd submitted a marketing authorisation application for Nusinersen to the European Medicines Agency (EMA) in October 2016. The application has been approved for accelerated assessment by the Committee for Medicinal Products for Human Use who examine the evidence of the safety, efficacy and quality of new medicines proposed for licence in the European Union and is under assessment. Approval for accelerated assessment allows for faster assessment by EMA's scientific committees (within up to 150 days rather than up to 210 days).

The Department's National Institute for Health Research is currently in the pre-contracting stage of commissioning a Single Technology Appraisal on Nusinersen for treating infant or child spinal muscular dystrophy. The appraisal is due to begin in October 2017.

■ **Out-patients: Attendance**

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[\[61114\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate he has made of the cost to the NHS of missed appointments in (a) Gloucestershire and (b) England in the most recent year for which figures are available.

Mr Philip Dunne:

This information is not held centrally. However, the most recently published data from the Department's annual collection of reference costs from National Health Service trusts and foundation trusts estimated the national average unit cost of a consultant-led outpatient attendance at £156 for a first appointment and £125 for a follow-up appointment in 2015-16.

■ **Paediatrics**

Ruth Cadbury:

[\[60726\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether the initial findings of the NHS England paediatric critical care and specialised surgery in children service review are still expected to be published in winter 2016-17.

Mr Philip Dunne:

NHS England still intends to publish initial findings from the Review this winter.

■ **Roaccutane**

Luciana Berger:

[\[61129\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many prescriptions for Roaccutane were dispensed in each year since 2010.

David Mowat:

The information requested is shown in the following table. Information is provided for the total of isotretinoin, of British National Formulary (BNF) 13.6.2, and is shown by the brand Roaccutane and the non-branded isotretinoin.

NUMBER OF PRESCRIPTION ITEMS FOR ISOTRETINOIN, WITHIN BNF 13.6.2, BY TYPE OF DRUG, WRITTEN IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND DISPENSED IN THE COMMUNITY IN ENGLAND (000S)

Year	Roaccutane	Isotretinoin	Total ¹
2010	17.7	4.4	22.1
2011	18.1	4.3	22.4
2012	16.4	10.8	27.1
2013	16.7	14.8	31.5
2014	15.7	21.1	36.8
2015	11.5	32.7	44.2

Source: Prescription Cost Analysis system data provided by NHS Digital

¹ Total figure may not sum due to rounding

■ **Roaccutane: Side Effects**

Luciana Berger:

[\[61128\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many people prescribed Roaccutane have reported depressive side effects in each year since 2010.

Nicola Blackwood:

Reports of 'suspected' Adverse Drug Reactions (ADRs) are collected by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and Commission for Human Medicines (CHM) through the spontaneous reporting scheme, the Yellow Card Scheme. The scheme collects suspected ADR reports from the whole of the United Kingdom in relation to all medicines and vaccines. Reporting to the Yellow Card Scheme is voluntary for healthcare professionals and members of the public. There is however also a legal obligation for pharmaceutical companies to report all serious ADRs for their products that they are aware of.

MHRA has received 138 UK spontaneous reports of depressive disorders, depressed mood or depressive symptoms suspected to be associated with isotretinoin between 1 January 2010 and 31 December 2016. A breakdown of the reports received by year is displayed in the table below. This data includes all reports for isotretinoin irrespective of the brand name, which in some cases will not have been provided by the reporter.

UK, spontaneous reports of depressive ADRs suspected to be associated with isotretinoin between 1 January 2010 and 31 December 2016

YEAR REPORT RECEIVED	NUMBER OF REPORTS
2010	11
2011	8
2012	37
2013	26
2014	24
2015	22
2016	10

* Data extracted from MHRA's Yellow Card Database of spontaneous case reports received in the UK .

It is important to note that Yellow Card reports are not proof of a side effect occurring but only a suspicion by the reporter that the medicine may have caused the side effect. Yellow Card reports may therefore relate to true side effects of the medicine, or they may be due to coincidental illnesses that would have occurred in the absence of medicine.

■ Sanofi Aventis

Alison Thewliss:

[\[61238\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, when he last met representatives of Sanofi-Aventis; and what issues were discussed at that meeting.

Nicola Blackwood:

There have been no recent official meetings between the company and Ministers in the Department. The Director of the Office for Life Sciences met with representatives of the company on 15 October 2016 to discuss issues affecting the company and the life sciences sector more generally.

■ Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust: Surgery

Gloria De Piero: [61154]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many operations were cancelled by Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust on the day they were scheduled to take place in 2016.

Gloria De Piero: [61155]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many operations were cancelled by Nottingham University Hospitals Trust on the day they were scheduled to take place in 2016.

Mr Philip Dunne:

NHS England collects and publishes the number of operations cancelled at the 'last minute' for non-clinical reasons on a quarterly basis. Data for cancelled elective operations, by provider, up to quarter 2 of 2016-17 can be found at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/cancelled-elective-operations/cancelled-ops-data/>

NHS England does not collect the total number of cancelled operations, a breakdown of the type of operations that have been cancelled, or the specific reason for the cancellation. Operations cancelled for clinical reasons are not collected as the patient is not available for the operation. A last minute cancellation is defined as when a patient's operation is cancelled by the hospital on or after the day of admission (including the day of surgery) for non-clinical reasons.

■ Sodium Valproate

Alison Thewliss: [61239]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, when he plans to implement in full the recommendations of European Medicines Agency's review into sodium valproate.

Nicola Blackwood:

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) initiated and led the European Medicines Agency's (EMA) review of the risk of developmental disorders associated with valproate, which completed in November 2014. MHRA has fully implemented the recommendations of the review to update the Summary of Product Characteristics and Package Leaflet with strengthened warnings and to provide educational materials in the form of booklets aimed at ensuring prescribers and patients have the information they need to make an informed choice. The outcome of the EMA review was communicated in a letter to healthcare professionals accompanied by a guide for healthcare professionals and a booklet for patients in January 2015 through the Central Alerting System (a web based cascade system for issuing alerts to the National Health Service) and the MHRA's Drug Safety Update bulletin.

MHRA has, in addition, worked with professional bodies, voluntary organisations and patient groups to expand on the educational materials agreed by the EMA review and

has developed a valproate toolkit which comprises booklets for healthcare professionals and a checklist for prescribers, a reminder card to be provided by pharmacists to patients when the product is dispensed, a guide for women and clear package labelling carrying a prominent warning about use in pregnancy. It was widely disseminated to relevant healthcare professionals from February 2016 including through the Central Alerting System and the MHRA's Drug Safety Update bulletin and in hard copy from the marketing authorisation holders. Electronic copies of the toolkit are hosted on several websites including the Electronic Medicines Compendium.

In order to monitor the effectiveness of the valproate toolkit, the MHRA continues to work with all stakeholders to gather feedback that demonstrates the toolkit materials are being used. This includes working with voluntary organisations and patient groups to produce online patient surveys to measure awareness of the risks among patients. Furthermore, MHRA is conducting a study using the Clinical Practice Research Datalink to track changes in prescribing of valproate to women and girls following the communications to healthcare professionals and patients on the risks of valproate in pregnancy. The marketing authorisation holder is conducting Europe-wide studies to measure the changes in patterns of prescribing and the awareness of healthcare professionals of the risks. The available data will be brought together in a regularly updated dashboard that will be used to track the impact of the communications on patient and professional awareness over time.

■ Tongue-tie

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[61259\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many babies were diagnosed with ankyloglossia in each year since 2009-10.

Nicola Blackwood:

The table below provides counts of finished admission episodes where there was a primary or secondary diagnosis of ankyloglossia ("tongue-tie") for 2009-10 to 2015-16 broken down by patient age.

For clarity the table breaks down our response into the following age categories, under 1 – 28 days, 29 - 90 days, 91 - 181 days, 182 – 364 days and 1 – 4 years. The table excludes patients older than four years.

AGES	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
0-28 days (1 month approx)	5,234	7,451	9,689	10,938	13,646	17,171	19,531
29-90 days (1-3 months approx)	686	1,016	1,218	1,018	1,214	1,182	1,103

AGES	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
91-181 days (3-6 months approx)	238	319	320	318	427	413	413
182-364 days (6-12 months approx)	317	390	346	347	319	334	283
1-4 years	1,619	1,636	1,819	1,741	1,709	1,696	1,423
All Ages (0-4 years)	8,094	10,812	13,392	14,362	17,315	20,796	22,753

Tulip Siddiq:[\[61260\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the average (a) age of babies diagnosed with ankyloglossia and (b) waiting time for treatment for ankyloglossia for babies was for each year since 2009.

Nicola Blackwood:

The table below shows the mean and median time waited for an elective admission with a primary or secondary diagnosis of ankyloglossia, with a start age between 0 and 4, for the years from 2009-10 to 2015-16.

MEAN WAITING TIMES (DAYS)							
	2009 -10	2010 - 11	2011 - 12	2012 - 13	2013 - 14	2014 - 15	2015 -16
0-28 days	5	5	5	6	7	7	5
29-90 days	13	10	9	12	15	15	13
91-181 days	31	29	32	25	23	28	25
182-364 days	59	57	59	61	58	58	60
1-4 years	72	72	75	75	75	78	79
All Ages (0-4 years)	47	40	38	42	43	46	45

This is a count of the number of admissions, not a count of people, as one or more person may have been admitted more than once during the each financial year.

The average ages were calculated using the Hospital Episode Statistics 'Startage_Calc' field. This is a derived field which does not contain the exact age for each record, but instead uses midpoint values for patients in each age band under one year old. Therefore the calculated age values shown are only an approximation due to the limitations of the data.

HOME OFFICE

■ Asylum: Females

Kirsten Oswald: [\[60513\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the level of gender-based and sexual violence experienced by women and girls held in transit on journeys to seek asylum in the UK.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

We recognise that those who travel illegally to seek asylum in the UK are vulnerable to exploitation and at risk of harm in transit, including from gender-based and sexual violence.

That is why those who need protection should claim asylum in the first safe country they reach – as that is the fastest route to safety. We provide safe and legal routes to the UK through our resettlement schemes and family reunion provisions.

■ EEA Nationals: Deportation

Stephen Timms: [\[61235\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people removed for rough sleeping under Operation Adoze had previously been granted permanent residency in the UK.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The Home Office does not hold data on the number of EEA nationals who were removed under Operation Adoze who had previously been granted documentation certifying a permanent residence status in the UK.

The Home Office will only pursue the administrative removal of an EEA national who has a permanent right of residence where there is a serious abuse of rights under the EEA Regulations.

■ Firearms: Licensing

Jim Shannon: [\[61267\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions she has had with shooting organisations on EU proposals on gun control.

Brandon Lewis:

Home Office Ministers and officials have meetings with a wide variety of international partners, as well as organisations and individuals in the public and private sectors, as part of the process of policy development and delivery. Details of these meetings are published on the Cabinet Office website on a quarterly basis at:

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/cabinet-office

Honour Based Violence: British Nationals Abroad**Nusrat Ghani:****[61174]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what representations her Department has received on the investigation on prosecution of incidents of honour-based violence involving British nationals in other countries.

Sarah Newton:

There is no 'honour' in so called 'honour-based' violence (HBV), and we will not allow political or cultural sensitivities to get in the way of tackling these crimes. The Home Office regularly engages with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on representations on the investigation and prosecution of incidents of HBV, including as part of the work of the joint Home Office-FCO Forced Marriage Unit.

Hunt Saboteurs: Clothing**Jim Shannon:****[61266]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to bring forward legislative proposals to regulate the wearing of face coverings by hunt saboteurs; and if she will make a statement.

Brandon Lewis:

Face coverings can be worn in public places for a variety of legitimate reasons, and there are already preventative and reactive police powers to remove face coverings in public order situations, including hunts. In particular, under section 60AA of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, a police officer in uniform can require any person to remove any item which the officer reasonably believes is being worn wholly or mainly for the purpose of concealing their identity. Section 60AA also enables a police officer in uniform to seize any item which they reasonably believe any person intends to use to conceal their identity

These powers only apply in the locality and for the period for which an authorisation under section 60 or section 60AA of the Act has been given by a police officer of the rank of inspector or above. An inspector's authorisation lasts for a maximum period of 24 hours, unless a police officer of the rank of superintendent or above authorises their use for a further 24 hours

A refusal to remove an item when required to do so under section 60AA is punishable by a fine of up to £1,000 and/or one month's imprisonment. The Policing and Crime Bill, which will receive Royal Assent shortly, strengthens the reactive ability of the

police by amending section 60AA to provide for an inspector to give an oral authorisation where it is not practicable to give a written authorisation.

■ **Police: North West**

Mr Mark Hendrick: [56721]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much each constabulary in the North West raised through police auctions in 2015.

Brandon Lewis:

The Home Department does not hold this information centrally; Forces sell cars locally usually through auctions or other disposal routes, but we do not collect the Management Information on this nationally. Interested parties would need to contact forces locally.

■ **Police: Southwark**

Ms Harriet Harman: [61102]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of (a) police officers operating and (b) people under 25 years of age in the London Borough of Southwark are from black and ethnic minority backgrounds.

Brandon Lewis:

The Home Office collects and publishes data annually on the ethnicity of the police workforce in each Police Force Area. Data are not collected at lower levels of geography, such as London Boroughs.

The latest available data are published in the "Police Workforce, England and Wales, 31 March 2016" statistical bulletin:

www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-workforce-england-and-wales-31-march-2016

The data can also be found on the police.uk website:

www.police.uk/metropolitan/E05000614/performance/diversity/

Population data are published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). The 2011 Census data include breakdowns of the population by age and ethnicity. These can be found here:

www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates

■ **Prisons: Fire and Rescue Services**

Christina Rees: [61010]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, on how many occasions fire service vehicles have been called out to prisons in each of the last five years.

Brandon Lewis:

All of our published information on incidents attended by fire and rescue services (FRSs) can be found on this page - www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fire-statistics-data-tables

Table 0301 on the above page includes information on the locations of fire, grouped by broad categories. Fires in prisons are included within the "Other public buildings and services" category.

Refugees: Children**Stephen Timms:****[61233]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she plans to take in the next three months to support child refugees who arrived from Syria.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

All unaccompanied asylum seeking and refugee children in the UK receive care and support from a local authority, regardless of nationality or how they arrived in the country.

On 1 November 2016, the Immigration Minister and the Minister for Vulnerable Children and Families announced that the Government would publish a safeguarding strategy for unaccompanied asylum seeking and refugee children. The detail of the strategy can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/safeguarding-unaccompanied-asylum-seeking-and-refugee-children>

Children resettled under our Syrian Vulnerable Person's Resettlement scheme or our Vulnerable Children's Resettlement scheme are provided with education, housing, medical or social care as required.

Mike Wood:**[61245]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent progress the Government has made in accepting into the UK from other EU countries unaccompanied children claiming asylum from Syria.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

In 2016, we transferred over 900 unaccompanied children to the UK from Europe, including more than 750 from France. Approximately 200 of these children met the criteria for section 67 of the Immigration Act.

Under section 67 of the Immigration Act in France, we considered all those aged 12 and under, all children referred to us by the French authorities assessed as being at a high risk of sexual exploitation, and those nationalities most likely to qualify for refugee status in the UK, aged 15 or below, including Syrian nationals. All children, including Syrian nationals, who have close family in the UK were considered for transfer under the Dublin Regulation, regardless of age or nationality.

More eligible children will be transferred from Europe, in line with the terms of the Immigration Act, in the coming months and we will continue to meet our obligations

under the Dublin Regulation. The process and criteria for the transfer of children from Europe under section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 will be published in due course.

■ **Syria: Al Qaeda**

Stephen Gethins:

[\[60224\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effect of the Syrian crisis on al-Qaeda's ability to use that country as a base.

Mr Ben Wallace:

Al-Qaeda's presence in Syria predates the present conflict. The Assad regime historically tolerated the group as a means of destabilising Iraq and preventing the group targeting his regime.

Since the start of the conflict, al-Qaeda, primarily through their affiliate Jabhat Fatah al-Sham, have exploited areas where there is a lack of effective governance to control pockets of territory, promote a radical ideology and attempt to undermine efforts to resolve the conflict.

Despite nominally disaffiliating in July 2016, we assess that Jabhat Fatah al-Sham (JFS) retain strong links to al-Qaeda. This is reflected in HMG's proscription of JFS as an alias of al-Qaeda. By establishing itself as an effective opposition force through Jabhat Fatah al-Sham and other sympathetic groups, al-Qaeda has managed to populate significant areas of north-west Syria, likely increasing their ability to plan, train and develop capability for external attacks.

By establishing itself as an effective opposition force through Jabhat Fatah al-Sham and other sympathetic groups, al-Qaeda has managed to populate significant areas of north-west Syria with supportive networks, establishing and improving its operational capability. This is likely providing al-Qaeda with safe areas of operating space to plan, train and develop capability for external attacks, as well as access to numerous potential operatives.

■ **Syria: Proscribed Organisations**

Stephen Gethins:

[\[60750\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the risks associated with the links between al-Qaeda and Jabhat Fatah al-Sham in Syria.

Stephen Gethins:

[\[60751\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the strength of al-Qaeda in Syria.

Mr Ben Wallace:

Al-Qaeda's presence in Syria predates the present conflict. The Assad regime historically tolerated the group as a means of destabilising Iraq and preventing the group targeting his regime.

Since the start of the conflict, al-Qaeda, primarily through their affiliate Jabhat Fatah al-Sham, have exploited areas where there is a lack of effective governance to control pockets of territory, promote a radical ideology and attempt to undermine efforts to resolve the conflict.

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INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

■ Department for International Development: Sick Leave

Luciana Berger:

[\[60803\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how many senior civil servants in her Department were on a leave of absence from work due to mental illness in each month of each year since the Department's creation.

Rory Stewart:

The numbers related to absence due to mental illness for senior civil servants are so low that providing this information could potentially identify individuals.

■ Developing Countries: Renewable Energy

Charlotte Leslie:

[\[61028\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps her Department is taking to encourage investment in renewable energy in the least-developed countries; and if she will make a statement.

James Wharton:

The UK Government is encouraging investment in renewable energy to improve energy access by poor people and promote economic development, in both the on-grid and off-grid energy sectors. Through our Energy Africa campaign we are also seeking to accelerate the expansion of the household solar market in Africa, removing policy and regulatory barriers to market expansion through compacts with partner countries.

In addition, CDC, the UK's Development Finance Institution, invests in renewable energy supporting a portfolio of 5.75 GW of capacity already in operation or currently under construction.

■ **Zambia: Energy**

Mr Virendra Sharma:

[\[61105\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what representations she has received on Zambia's diversification of its energy mix.

James Wharton:

The Secretary of State has not received any representations on Zambia's energy mix. The UK is playing an active role alongside other partners to help Zambia diversify its energy mix given its high reliance on hydroelectricity.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ **Department for International Trade: Departmental Responsibilities**

Tom Brake:

[\[61139\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, (a) how much his Department cost to set up, (b) how many staff his Department employs and (c) what the estimated cost of running the Department is for the next three years.

Mark Garnier:

The Department for International Trade (DIT) will detail our total spend in the annual reports and accounts.

As of 12 January 2017, DIT headcount is 2,841.

DIT is in the process of establishing budgets for the next four years and these will be provided to Parliament, in the supplementary estimates, later this financial year.

■ **Department for International Trade: Sick Leave**

Luciana Berger:

[\[60778\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many senior civil servants in his Department were on a leave of absence from work due to mental illness in each month since January 2010.

Mark Garnier:

Since the department's creation as a legal employer from 9th November 2016, no Senior Civil Servants have had a leave of absence due to mental illness.

■ Innovation: Trade Promotion

Barry Gardiner:

[60946]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps his Department is taking to increase awareness of the UK tech and innovation industry abroad; and what assistance his Department is providing to businesses to build their brands abroad.

Mark Garnier:

The Department for International Trade promotes and showcases UK's leading tech capability and world class eco-system at major industry events globally, and through our extensive overseas network, working closely with industry partners such as Tech City UK, Tech UK and London & Partners. Companies have the opportunity to take part in focused trade missions, key tech industry events such as Mobile World Congress and meet with potential buyers. In addition, we have created the new "great.gov.uk" platform to help small and large businesses connect with global demand and promote their brands overseas. UK Export Finance is available to support UK exporters in winning business overseas.

■ Trade Agreements

Barry Gardiner:

[60897]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to his Department's news story of 9 January 2017, what criteria his Department used to determine which countries were included in the priority markets for growing UK trade.

Mark Garnier:

The Department for International Trade has a rigorous framework for analysing where Government interventions can add the most value for the benefit of the whole of the UK, and we target our effort in those areas. This includes where we can most effectively support businesses.

We currently have 200 priority areas for export promotion, known as 'High Value Campaigns'. The High Value Campaigns take a market/sector approach and are determined by considering the forecast value of exports that will be won with Government support over a rolling five year period. The process takes place annually.

Barry Gardiner:

[60938]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if he will take steps to ensure that the agendas and minutes of all meetings held by the (a) Australia-UK trade working group, (b) UK-New Zealand trade policy dialogue and (c) Norway-UK trade dialogue are published.

Mark Garnier:

In line with normal practice for international engagement such as this, the Government has no plans to publish agendas or minutes relating to these meetings.

■ Trade Fairs

Barry Gardiner: [\[60954\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether his Department's decision to offer financial support to companies wishing to attend a trade show is determined by the location of that trade show.

Mark Garnier:

The events approved for inclusion in the programme are determined with Department for International Trade (DIT) officials, Industry representatives and with Trade Challenge Partner, who are DIT accredited delivery partners, to ensure the events included in the programme benefit UK companies irrespective of location.

■ Trade Fairs: USA

Barry Gardiner: [\[60781\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if his Department will make funding available to help businesses attend the Craft Brewers Conference and BrewExpo in Washington DC on 13 April 2017; and if he will make a statement.

Mark Garnier:

We are working with our delivery partners to agree the 2017/18 Tradeshow Access Programme. Funding for the Craft Brewers Conference and BrewExpo in Washington will be considered as part of the Department for International Trade's Business Forecasting process.

■ World Trade Organisation

Barry Gardiner: [\[60782\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Written Statement of 5 December 2016, HCWS316 on the UK's commitments at the World Trade Organisation (WTO), what assessment he has made of the effect of the draft WTO schedules on the cost efficiency of the UK toy manufacturing industry.

Mark Garnier:

As set out in the Written Ministerial Statement, we will draft schedules which replicate as far as possible our current obligations. The Government seeks to ensure continuity for business as we leave the EU.

JUSTICE

■ Community Rehabilitation Companies

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[60501\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what representations her Department has received on the adequacy of funding for community rehabilitation companies (CRCs) after 1 April 2017; and what recent estimate her Department has made of the level of future funding for CRCs.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

We are currently conducting a comprehensive review of the probation system to make sure it is reducing reoffending, cutting crime and preventing future victims. The review is currently considering whether any adjustments are required to performance mechanisms, payment mechanisms and Through the Gate services in the light of experience and learning gained over the first eighteen months of the reforms. In considering changes, the review team are having regard to the HMIP, PAC and NAO reports as well as representations by CRCs. We will set out our plans after the review concludes in the spring.

■ **Legal Aid Scheme: Wales****Liz Saville Roberts:**[\[60511\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that there is more than one housing legal aid provider in each legal aid procurement area in (a) England and (b) Wales.

Liz Saville Roberts:[\[60512\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that there is more than one housing legal aid provider in each provider area in Wales.

Liz Saville Roberts:[\[60517\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, who the housing legal aid providers are in (a) the Dwyfor Meirionydd constituency and (b) each provider area in Wales.

Sir Oliver Heald:

The Legal Aid Agency (LAA) reviews the provision of housing advice across England and Wales each quarter with a view to ensuring sufficient capacity in each area. Tenders for legal aid contracts are run in regular cycles, as well as on an ad hoc basis should any accessibility issue be identified in the interim.

The constituency of Dwyfor Meirionydd is located within the LAA's North West Wales Housing Procurement Area. Shelter Cymru have three contracted offices in this procurement area, from where they deliver Housing advice. The table below shows the number of provider offices which hold a legal aid contract for housing in each procurement area in Wales.

PROCUREMENT AREA ('PA')	PROVIDER	NUMBER OF OFFICES IN PA
Bridgend, Cardiff and the Vale	DUNCAN LEWIS SOLICITORS LTD	1
Bridgend, Cardiff and the Vale	RIVERSIDE ADVICE LTD	1
Bridgend, Cardiff and the Vale	WELSH HOUSING AID LTD TA SHELTER CYMRU	3
Central Wales	WELSH HOUSING AID LTD	3

PROCUREMENT AREA ('PA')	PROVIDER	NUMBER OF OFFICES IN PA
	TA SHELTER CYMRU	
Neath Port Talbot and Swansea	GOLDSTONES SOLICITORS LTD	1
Neath Port Talbot and Swansea	T. A. LAW	1
Neath Port Talbot and Swansea	WELSH HOUSING AID LTD TA SHELTER CYMRU	3
North East Wales	ALLINGTON HUGHES LTD	1
North East Wales	WELSH HOUSING AID LTD TA SHELTER CYMRU	4
North West Wales	WELSH HOUSING AID LTD TA SHELTER CYMRU	3
Rhondda Cynon Taff & Merthyr Tydfil	WELSH HOUSING AID LTD TA SHELTER CYMRU	3
South East Wales	HARDING EVANS LLP	1
South East Wales	WELSH HOUSING AID LTD TA SHELTER CYMRU	4
South West Wales	WELSH HOUSING AID LTD TA SHELTER CYMRU	3

■ Personal Injury: Compensation

Christina Rees:

[61125]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether she intends to undertake further consultation on reforming the soft tissue injury (whiplash) claims process.

Sir Oliver Heald:

The Government's consultation, *Reforming the Soft Tissue Injury ('whiplash') Claims Process – A Consultation on arrangements concerning personal injury claims in England and Wales*, began on 17 November 2016 and closed on 6 January. The Government has undertaken to publish its response to the consultation by 7 April.

■ Prisons: Unmanned Air Vehicles

Richard Burden:

[\[60657\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps her Department is taking to support the prison service on reporting problems and sharing best practice on preventing the misuse of drones around prisons.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

We remain vigilant to all incidents involving drones and take the threat they pose to prison security very seriously. A range of methods to counter the threat posed by drones are being trialled and evaluated for their effectiveness across the prison estate. This includes the use of technology to detect and block drones, the enhancement of physical security and working with drone manufacturers.

Officials in the National Offenders Management Service (NOMS) provide support to prisons on how to report drone related incidents alongside other key security incidents. A new reporting category for drones was introduced on the Incident Reporting System (IRS) in October 2016 to support clearer reporting. The introduction of a specific reporting category was accompanied by an educational piece on how prisons should report incidents and for what purpose in order to help inform the developing threat picture and advise the national response.

Best practice is also shared regularly through security nudges direct to prison mailboxes, senior leader bulletins and frequent prison visits to promote practical support.

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ Northern Ireland Office: Sick Leave

Luciana Berger:

[\[60804\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, how many senior civil servants in his Department were on a leave of absence from work due to mental illness in each month of each year since its creation.

Kris Hopkins:

The Northern Ireland Office holds absence data from February 2011. Fewer than five civil servants were on a leave of absence from work in the Northern Ireland Office due to mental illness in any month from this date. A full answer would risk the identification of individuals and is therefore not provided.

SCOTLAND■ **Scotland Office: Sick Leave****Luciana Berger:**[\[60772\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, how many senior civil servants in his Department were on a leave of absence from work due to mental illness in each month since January 2010.

David Mundell:

The Scotland Office does not employ staff directly. Detailed absence records are retained by the employing departments.

TRANSPORT■ **Airports****Mr Gavin Shuker:**[\[60519\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much his Department has spent on improving surface access to each airport in the South East of England since 2010; and if he will make a statement.

Mr John Hayes:

This Government's multi-billion investment programmes for our national road and rail networks, and funding for local authority transport improvements, includes many transport schemes that benefit people travelling to and from an airport.

However, due to the number of schemes and the mixture of capital and resource funding, information on total spending on surface access schemes improving accessibility to airports in the South East of England airports is not readily available in the format requested.

Government has, however, provided significant investment for projects which improve access to airports in the South East, for example, the £14.8 billion Crossrail scheme which will serve Heathrow airport; the £6.5 billion Thameslink Programme which increases capacity and improves reliability for passengers travelling to Gatwick and Luton airports, along with a new £53 million platform at Gatwick airport station; and the over £300 million investment on the M1 between junction 10 and 13, and the £30 million enhancements to junction 10a of the M1 that improve access to Luton airport.

Investment has also been committed for upgrades to the M4 motorway (around £750 million) near Heathrow, as well as up to £250 million on improvements to sections of the M23 serving Gatwick, and up to £25 million on improvements to the M11 improving access to Stansted airport.

■ Aviation: Safety

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[61120\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when officials from his Department last met officials from the European Aviation Safety Agency to discuss the implications for aviation safety as a result of the outcome of the EU referendum.

Mr John Hayes:

The Department for Transport and Civil Aviation Authority are in continuous dialogue with European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) in the regular course of their business. The UK has been, and is, an active and influential EASA member and UK expertise has contributed significantly to the high standards of aviation safety in Europe. It is the Government's intention to maintain consistently high standards of aviation safety once we have left the EU.

■ Bus Services

Jon Trickett:

[\[61160\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what (a) representations he has received and (b) discussions he has had with the relevant local authority on support or extra funding for people affected by closure of the number 30 bus route in Hemsworth constituency; and what provision his Department makes available for (i) people and (ii) local communities affected by the discontinuance of (A) rural or (B) other local bus fare provision.

Andrew Jones:

I am not aware of any representations or discussions with myself or my Department on the number 30 bus service in Hemsworth.

However, where a commercial bus operator decides to discontinue a particular service, it is open to the local authority to decide to support that service itself and to invite other bus operators to tender to run that service in future. My department devolves over £2 million of funding to West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive each year under the Bus Service Operators Grant system, which can be used by the authority to support bus services, including those which are under threat of closure.

I understand that the West Yorkshire Combined Authority has now decided to support this service itself, and that the number 30 will continue but run by another operator.

■ Department for Transport: Sick Leave

Luciana Berger:

[\[60805\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many senior civil servants in his Department were on a leave of absence from work due to mental illness in each month of each year since its creation.

Mr John Hayes:

Records in the current reporting system go back to the beginning of 2009. Since this date, fewer than five senior civil servants have taken leave of absence for reasons

related to mental health. Due to the low number of instances this figure cannot be broken down any further.

■ **Electric Vehicles**

James Cartlidge: [\[60997\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what information his Department holds on the number of electric vehicle charging points and devices; and how information is made available to the public.

Mr John Hayes:

I refer my Hon Friend to my answer of 25 January 2017, UIN 60812.

■ **M1: Exhaust Emissions**

Mr Clive Betts: [\[61159\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of levels of (a) nitrogen dioxide, (b) particulate and (c) other pollution between junctions 33 and 34 of the M1 motorway; what he plans those levels to be at that location once the M1 becomes a Smart motorway there; and what estimate he has made of the potential for reduction in those levels from planned mitigation measures.

Mr Clive Betts: [\[61236\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what mitigation measures his Department has assessed for the purposes of nitrogen dioxide and particulate pollution reduction between junctions 33 and 34 on the M1; and of those measures which have been assessed as viable and are under consideration for implementation.

Mr Clive Betts: [\[61237\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when the Smart Motorway between junctions 32 and 35a of the M1 is due to open; and whether any speed limits are to be imposed on that section of the M1.

Mr Clive Betts: [\[61251\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to reduce nitrogen dioxide and particulate pollution levels between junctions 33 and 34 of the M1 to the level set down as acceptable in relevant EU directives; and over what timescale he plans to make those reductions.

Mr John Hayes:

Smart Motorways are at the core of Highways England's £15bn investment programme to transform England's Strategic Road Network, helping to ease congestion and improve traffic flow. Keeping traffic moving reduces stop-start decelerations and accelerations, which in itself has air quality benefits.

Highways England will announce any measures to improve air quality on the M1 between junctions 32-35a when the Smart Motorway scheme opens, which is expected to be in March 2017.

Highways England has undertaken environmental assessments of the scheme during the design and construction. These are available on Highways England's website.

■ **Pedicabs: Greater London**

Mark Field: [\[61241\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with Transport for London on regulation of pedicabs.

Andrew Jones:

Ministers and officials have regular meetings with representatives of Transport for London at which various subjects are discussed, including pedicabs. The Department has been working closely with Transport for London on proposals for legislation to enable the Mayor of London to regulate the pedicab trade.

Mark Field: [\[61242\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of unlicensed pedicabs on London's reputation as a tourist destination.

Andrew Jones:

The Department for Transport has received representations from a number of businesses located in the West End of London who are concerned about the impacts of pedicabs on their customers, mainly in respect of congestion and anti-social behaviour. We are working with Transport for London to develop legislation to allow the Mayor of London to regulate the pedicab trade.

■ **Volkswagen**

Richard Burden: [\[60872\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the oral contribution of the Minister of State for Transport of 12 January 2017, Official Report, column 451, what assessment he has made of the implications for his Department's policies of any group litigation action by owners of Volkswagen vehicles.

Mr John Hayes:

We understand that many consumers are seeking independent legal advice on the Volkswagen issue and are prepared to provide any reasonable assistance to consumers who seek compensation directly from Volkswagen. We have engaged with legal firms who are representing consumers.

The Government wants to ensure that Volkswagen address consumers concerns and that their rights are protected; we are continuing to consider how best to do this. We have not ruled out opening our own investigation.

WORK AND PENSIONS■ **Atos Healthcare****Rosie Cooper:**[\[61277\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether Atos reimburses GP practices for any costs incurred when GPs have employed a staff member to deal with the administration of requests relating to personal independence payment claims.

Penny Mordaunt:

GPs are paid a prearranged fee of £33.50 by assessment providers for each completed further evidence request, as the information requested is not included in their contractual agreement.

The Department does not prescribe GPs with criteria on how they should handle these requests. That is purely a decision for the GP surgery.

Rosie Cooper:[\[61278\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what quality assurance systems Atos has in place to minimise the number of reports wrongly sent to GP practices that do not relate to patients within those practices.

Penny Mordaunt:

Atos does not send reports to GPs but it does send requests for medical information which is intended for use to support the assessment process. The GP details used by Atos for correspondence purposes are provided to them by the claimant.

Rosie Cooper:[\[61280\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether his Department has made an assessment of the amount of time GP practices' staff spend compiling correct evidence for the proper assessment of their patients' personal independence payment claims due to inaccuracies in Atos reports; and if he will make a statement.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Department has not made any assessment of the amount of time GP practice staff spend compiling evidence for patients making claims for Personal Independence Payment (PIP). GPs are only required to provide clinical information and not to make an assessment of their patient's PIP claim as this is the role of the Department's Case Manager.

If a healthcare professional working on behalf of the Department requires clinical information from a GP they will request it directly from the GP and the GP is able to claim a fee. If a claimant requests a reconsideration of their claim, the Case Manager may ask the claimant if they have any additional evidence, which may include medical evidence to support their claim. A claimant may choose to ask their GP for evidence at this stage or at an appeal stage if they feel it supports their claim.

In the Improving Lives Green Paper, we are currently consulting on the sharing of data between the two assessments for Employment Support Allowance/ Universal

Credit and PIP. We are also exploring how the assessment process could use data already gathered by the NHS or local authority to ensure people do not have to provide the same information.

■ **Child Maintenance Service: Training**

Angela Crawley: [\[60564\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what training is provided for staff at the Child Maintenance Service to assist victims of domestic violence.

Caroline Nokes:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer I gave the Hon. Member for Edinburgh North and Leith on 20 December 2016 to Question [57806](#).

■ **Jobcentres: Glasgow**

Carol Monaghan: [\[61107\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the criteria are for the equality analysis being carried out on the use of Anniesland Jobcentre.

Damian Hinds:

The criteria for equality analysis requires us to pay due regard to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and enables us to consider equality as part of our decision making processes. We are legally required to consider the equality impacts of policies and processes on people who share protected characteristics and provide evidence that this has been taken into account. This helps us comply with our Public Sector Equality Duty as part of the Equality Act 2010, which covers the protected characteristics of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and civil partnership - in respect of eliminating unlawful discrimination only.

We will be undertaking an equality analysis as part of the detailed planning for service reconfiguration. This will include feedback from public consultation in those locations where this applies.

Alison Thewliss:

[\[61176\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 19 January 2017 to Question 60016, what criteria are used to allocate claimants to a particular jobcentre.

Damian Hinds:

Customers are usually assigned to their nearest Jobcentre according to their postcode when making a claim, however claimants can elect to change the Jobcentre they attend.

Where we are proposing changes to our estate we have provided details of the future locations of our sites so that our claimants can understand the impact on their travel arrangements.

■ Pensioners: Social Security Benefits

Debbie Abrahams:

[\[61134\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reasons his Department plans to spend less on pensions and pensioner benefits in 2018-19 than in 2017-18.

Richard Harrington:

In nominal terms, we expect to spend more in 2018/19 than in 2017/18 (£120,084M in 2017/18 compared with £121,870M in 2018/19). However, when adjusted for inflation (i.e. in real-terms), the Department will be spending slightly less on pensioner benefits in 2018/19 than in 2017/18 (2016/17 prices: £118,365M in 2017/18 compared with £117,632M in 2018/19 – 0.6% less).

This is because of rising State Pension age for women during that period which means that fewer women are moving from working age to become eligible for State Pension and other pensioner benefits. This also affects some men, as some benefits, such as Pension Credit, have eligibility age linked to female State Pension age. As a result, the number of people claiming pensioner benefits is forecast to be slightly lower in 2018/19 compared to 2017/18.

Once the rise in State Pension age to 66 is complete in October 2020, increasing longevity means that the number people over State Pension age is projected to grow, resulting in a corresponding growth in forecast real-terms pensioner benefit expenditure.

The Pension Act 2014, section 27, commits the Government to a structured review of State Pension age every 6 years to ensure that the costs of increasing longevity are shared fairly between the generations, and to provide greater clarity around how State Pension age will change in the future. The first Government review of State Pension age is underway and will be published before 7 May 2017.

■ Personal Independence Payment

Rosie Cooper:

[61279]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential effect of the claims process on the physical and mental health of personal independence payment claimants.

Penny Mordaunt:

We have consulted and engaged widely, and continue to do so, with disabled people, carers and representative organisations to ensure the claiming process for PIP works smoothly and efficiently for all claimants, regardless of their condition or disability. In addition we have recently undertaken research with a range of PIP claimants examining their experiences of the PIP claims process. The results from this research are being analysed and will be published in due course.

■ Universal Credit: Scotland

Ian Murray:

[61149]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people in Scotland received the carer element of universal credit in each of the last two years for which information is available.

Damian Hinds:

The information requested is not currently available. The Department updated its strategy for releasing official statistics on Universal Credit (UC) in December 2016. As outlined in the strategy, officials are currently assessing the data for UC and will only release information once the necessary quality assurance work has taken place. These statistics will be published in accordance with the relevant protocols in the Code of Practice for official statistics.

Universal Credit official statistics and the Departments release strategy can be found at:

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

Ian Murray:

[61151]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what proportion of universal credit awards in Scotland are made under split payment arrangements.

Damian Hinds:

This information is not currently available.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

DEFENCE

■ **Armed Forces' Pay Review Body Appointment**

Under Secretary of State, Ministry of Defence (Mark Lancaster): [\[HCWS438\]](#)

I am pleased to announce that I have appointed Janet Whitworth as a member of the Armed Forces' Pay Review Body. Mrs Whitworth will begin her three year appointment on 1 March 2017. This appointment has been conducted in accordance with the guidance of the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

■ **Inspection of the RAF Police by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary**

Under Secretary of State, Ministry of Defence (Mark Lancaster): [\[HCWS440\]](#)

I wish to inform the House that I am laying today, the first report from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) Inspection of the Royal Air Force Police (RAFP).

The Armed Forces Act 2011 places a duty on HMIC to inspect and report to the Ministry of Defence on the independence and effectiveness of investigations carried out by each Service police force, and this is HMIC's first statutory inspection report on the RAF Police.

I consider this report to be a positive endorsement of the RAFP providing assurance from an independent civilian authority that the RAFP is well led overall. Six recommendations have been made and five areas for improvement have been identified. The Royal Air Force accepts the report's findings and work is already under way to address the recommendations and areas for improvement.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

■ **Foreign Affairs Council – 16 January 2017**

The Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Sir Alan Duncan): [\[HCWS436\]](#)

My Right Honourable Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs attended the Foreign Affairs Council on 16 January. The Foreign Affairs Council was chaired by the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini. The meeting was held in Brussels.

Foreign Affairs Council

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

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/fac/2017/01/16/>

Agenda items included the Middle East Peace Process, Syria and a forward look for 2017. Ms Mogherini briefed Foreign Ministers on the recent European Court of Justice

ruling on Morocco. Ms Mogherini also informed Foreign Ministers of the outcome of the previous week's talks in Geneva on the Cyprus settlement.

Syria

Foreign Ministers discussed developments in Syria including the ceasefire agreement announced by Russia on 29 December; and the talks convened by Russia and Turkey to be held in Astana. Ms Mogherini updated Foreign Ministers on: the EU's regional outreach initiative; the EU's Syria strategy; and a roadmap for EU policy on Syria. Ms Mogherini also informed Ministers that the EU would co-host a conference on Syria to follow up the London conference of February 2015. The Foreign Secretary welcomed this and, together with other Ministers, reconfirmed support for post-conflict reconstruction in Syria once a credible political transition was firmly under way.

MEPP

Foreign Ministers had an informal discussion about issues relating to the Middle East Peace Process. The Foreign Secretary reiterated the UK's commitment to a Two State Solution.

Ministers agreed without discussion a number of measures:

- The Council adopted Conclusions on Lebanon
- The Council delisted four entities from the list of persons and entities subject to restrictive measures against Iran.
- The Council approved the delisting of five vessels from the list of persons and entities subject to restrictive measures against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, following the respective delisting by the United Nations Security Council.
- The Council decided on the withdrawal of the European Commission from the EU-level framework in accordance with the recommendation of the UN Committee for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities so as to ensure the independence of the monitoring framework.
- The Council approved the conclusion of the protocol to the Euro Mediterranean Agreement establishing an Association between the EU and Algeria. The protocol contains a Framework Agreement on the general principles for the participation of Algeria in EU programmes and agencies such as Europe's programme for small and medium-sized enterprises COSME, Europe Creative or Horizon 2020.
- The Council approved rules of procedure to be adopted by various trade sub-committees established under the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement.

■ Overseas Security and Justice Assistance Guidance

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Boris Johnson):
[\[HCWS441\]](#)

I would like to inform the House that I have today published revised Guidance concerning Overseas Security and Justice Assistance (OSJA).

The need for UK security and justice assistance overseas is growing. Our expertise is highly valued across the world and improves the standards and capabilities of law enforcement and security agencies operating in the most challenging environments. Through this work we aim to improve the lives of people in the world's most insecure regions, by enhancing the abilities of states to uphold the rule of law. However, it is important that we ensure that the skills and expertise we impart are not used to cause harm. The OSJA Guidance is HMG's tool for assessing the human rights risks of our overseas security and justice assistance work and identifying measures to mitigate those risks.

The OSJA Guidance was first published in December 2011 by my predecessor, the then Foreign Secretary, Lord Hague of Richmond, and revised in 2014. I am proud that the new OSJA process will remain the most comprehensive and demanding tool of its type anywhere in the world. The document I am publishing today renews our commitment to take every reasonable step to identify and reduce the risk that we will inadvertently do harm when assisting overseas. It restates our commitment to proper oversight by Ministers of all assistance projects which carry serious risk.

The revised procedure today draws on five years of experience in applying the Guidance. The changes in this version include a more rigorous risk assessment; clearer guidance on the role of the UK's overseas network and of HMG Departments and agencies outside the FCO; and more detail on how to conduct the process in complex situations, for instance when several Departments are working together on the same project. It also provides for officials already deployed overseas who are caught in exceptional circumstances (such as an unfolding terrorist attack) to act immediately within the spirit of the Guidance to protect the public or safeguard the integrity of evidence provided that the full documentation follows within 24 hours. Finally the new procedure includes measures which will allow more public scrutiny of the OSJA process within this Department's Annual Human Rights Report.

The update will be available on gov.uk. My officials will continue to monitor the implementation of the Guidance and propose revisions from time to time.

Attachments:

1. Guidance concerning OSJA [170126 OSJA Guidance.pdf]

HOME OFFICE

■ Response to the Migration Advisory Committee's Partial Review of the Shortage Occupation List

The Minister of State for Immigration (Mr Robert Goodwill): [\[HCWS437\]](#)

The independent Migration Advisory Committee has today published its partial review of the Shortage Occupation List relating to teachers. A copy can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/migration-advisory-committee>. I am grateful to the Committee for its thorough and detailed study.

The Committee has recommended that maths and physics teachers remain on the Shortage Occupation List; that computer science, Mandarin and science teachers should be added to the list; and that chemistry teachers should be removed from it.

The Government has accepted the Committee's recommendations in full and the necessary changes will be made to the immigration rules to reflect this.

The Government is committed to reducing net migration to sustainable levels, which means the tens of thousands. That means we need to look first to the resident labour market to fill vacancies. The Department for Education is spending over £1.3 billion up to 2020 to attract new teachers into the profession. This includes continuing to offer generous bursaries of up to £30,000 tax free in priority subjects and a £67 million investment in STEM teaching in England to recruit up to 2,500 additional maths and physics teachers, and increase the skills of up to 15,000 existing teachers over the course of this Parliament.

However, we recognise there may be a need to recruit overseas where we continue to have genuine skill shortages or require highly specialist experts. We adjust the Shortage Occupation List from time to time and in line with the Migration Advisory Committee's recommendations to ensure that, where necessary, labour can be sourced from outside the European Economic Area.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Welfare Delivery

Minister of State for Employment (Damian Hinds):

[\[HCWS439\]](#)

DWP is today publishing its proposals for the future of its estate, including Jobcentres and back office sites.

On 31 March 2018 DWP's PFI PRIME (Private Resource Initiative for the Management of the Estate) contract with Telereal Trillium expires. This 20 year contract covers the majority of DWP's current property portfolio of over 900 sites. This gives us an opportunity to review which offices we will need in the future, taking account of the increased use of our online services, the impact of Universal Credit and the anticipated demand on our services.

The roll out of Universal Credit and our reforms of Jobcentre Plus have increased the number of interactions claimants now have with us online. For example, eight out of ten claims for Jobseeker's Allowance are now made online and 99.6% of applicants for Universal Credit full service submitted their claim online.

As a result we only need 80% of the space we currently occupy to continue to deliver our services and make sure that people will always be able to access the support they need to get back to work. Moreover, we are recruiting and expect to have 2,500 more Work Coaches in post by March 2018 compared to today.

For the vast majority of offices there will be no change in location, although the purpose of the building may change. Where we are proposing closing a site we will take all

possible precautions to minimise disruption for claimants, and vulnerable people will receive home visits and postal claims.

All of the planned changes will be made in consultation with staff, taking into account the impact on benefit claimants and DWP staff. We will do everything we can to offer staff affected alternative roles and want to avoid any redundancies wherever possible. However we do recognise that in a small number of cases relocation will not be reasonable or achievable for individuals working in our back office functions and exits may be required.

We have already announced proposals for around 93 sites. I am attaching to this statement a full list of our proposals for all of our remaining Jobcentre and back of house sites. There are a small number of sites which we are still negotiating with landlords. I have indicated these on the list and will update the House when I am able to. I will be writing directly to those Honourable members whose constituencies will be affected by the proposed closures or moves of DWP services announced today. I will also be writing to my counterparts in the Scottish and Welsh Governments.

Attachments:

1. DWP Estates Proposals [DWP Estates Proposals.pdf]