



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Daily Report

Monday, 13 March 2017

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 13 March 2017 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:50 P.M., 13 March 2017). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ Attorney General: Procurement

Jon Trickett:

[\[66990\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, pursuant to the Answer of 6 March 2017 to Question 64992, on Attorney General: procurement, how many civil servants of the Law Officers' Departments have contract management responsibility for external providers.

Robert Buckland:

It is not possible to be precise about the exact number of civil servants who oversee contracts which have been awarded to external providers.

The majority of the 330 lawyers GLD's Litigation Group are engaged in managing contracts, for example instructing expert witnesses and counsel.

12.5 (fte) CPS staff spend more than 50% of their time on commercial work - including 2.0 staff specifically engaged to provide the Government Legal Department purchasing advice.

The Serious Fraud Office (SFO) has a central procurement team of three individuals who oversee SFO procurement including managing high value contracts and advising staff on best practice.

There will be other staff across the LODs that are responsible for overseeing contracts however central records are not currently maintained on each staff member involved.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ British Business Bank

Conor McGinn:

[\[66804\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many businesses in (a) St Helens North, (b) Merseyside, (c) the North West and (d) the UK have received funding from the British Business Bank since its inception.

Margot James:

The British Business Bank (BBB) is a government-owned economic development bank. It manages the UK Government's access to finance programmes for smaller businesses within a single commercially-minded institution. The Bank received State aid clearance to start operating in November 2014. Since this date, BBB has provided funding to the following businesses:

| | ST HELEN'S NORTH | MERSEYSIDE | NORTH WEST | UK |
|------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------|--------|
| No of SMEs | 34 (excl. ENABLE Funding) | 466 (excl. Start-up Loans) | 6,921 | 43,918 |

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Databases

Chi Onwurah:

[\[66726\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will publish the minutes of any meetings Ministers of his Department have had with the Data Sharing Principles Group.

Margot James:

No meetings with the Data Sharing Principles Group have taken place.

■ European Research Council

Caroline Lucas:

[\[66643\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how he plans to ensure that if the UK makes contributions to European Research Council programmes after leaving the EU, the UK will also be able to influence the design and structure of those programmes in the same manner it currently does.

Joseph Johnson:

European Research Council grants are part of the Horizon 2020 programme. This Government wants the UK to be the go-to place for innovators and investors across the world, and we intend to secure the right outcome for the UK research base as we exit the European Union.

As my Rt Hon. Friend the Prime Minister has said, we would welcome an agreement to continue to collaborate with our European partners on major science, research, and technology initiatives. However it is too early to speculate on the UK's future relationship with specific EU research programmes, including Horizon 2020 and successor programmes.

The Government is committed to ensuring the UK remains a world leader in international research and innovation.

■ Fracking

Tom Elliott:

[\[66444\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans to establish a contingency bond to cover the costs of environmental clean up in the event of a shale oil or gas company going into administration.

Jesse Norman:

Government has been clear that shale development must be safe and environmentally sound. In the UK, we have been regulating for gas and oil drilling, both onshore and offshore, for over 50 years and have tough regulations in place to ensure on-site safety, prevent water contamination, and mitigate seismic activity and air pollution.

Projects must be approved by the environmental regulator (in Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Environment Agency) and the Health and Safety Executive. Approval must also be sought from the relevant Mineral Planning Authority (MPA) through the planning system. MPAs are able to set the planning conditions they consider necessary, and some have already chosen to do so for site restoration.

In England, as part of the petroleum licensing process, and prior to awarding a licence, the Oil and Gas Authority (OGA) assesses whether a company has adequate financial capacity for its planned operations. The OGA also checks at the drilling and, where relevant, production stage that the company has sufficient funding and appropriate insurance. The licensing of oil and gas development is devolved to Northern Ireland.

BEIS officials are working with the industry's trade body UK Onshore Oil and Gas to ensure that liabilities for shale wells are addressed in the rare circumstance where all of the companies on a licence became insolvent, and where no rescue mechanism for those companies could be found.

■ Green Deal Scheme**Anne McLaughlin:**[\[67140\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what account the Green Deal Oversight and Registration Body took of the prior business history of company directors before accrediting Green Deal installers.

Jesse Norman:

Green Deal Certification Bodies are responsible for certifying Green Deal Installers. A Green Deal Certification Body is required by the Publicly Available Specification (PAS) 2031 to ensure that an Installer company meets both PAS 2030 (the technical standards governing Green Deal installations) for the energy efficiency measures they wish to install and the Green Deal Code of Practice requirements. These cover, among other things, the business and financial probity of the Installer company and the technical competence of individual installers employed by a company.

■ Horizon 2020**Caroline Lucas:**[\[66638\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will seek to continue UK participation in the Horizon 2020 programme after the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

Joseph Johnson:

This Government wants the UK to be the go-to place for researchers, innovators and investors across the world, and we intend to secure the right outcome for the UK research base as we exit the European Union.

As my Rt hon. Friend the Prime Minister has said, we would welcome an agreement to continue to collaborate with our European partners on major science, research, and technology initiatives. However it is too early to speculate on the UK's future relationship with specific EU research programmes, including Horizon 2020 and successor programmes.

The Government is committed to ensuring the UK remains a world leader in international research and innovation.

Members: Correspondence**Rob Marris:**[\[67129\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when his Department plans to respond to the letter of 24 January 2017 from the hon. Member for Wolverhampton South West on trades unions' political funds, reference ZA6413.

Margot James:

I apologise to the hon. Member. The reply will be sent shortly.

National Grid: North West**David Morris:**[\[66831\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what influence and by what means communities in the North West will have in decision making over how and who progresses the construction of the North West Coast Connection.

Jesse Norman:

As a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project, the proposed North West Coast Connection (NWCC) will require development consent under the Planning Act 2008. This requires developers to carry out extensive consultation on their proposals including with local communities before any formal development consent application is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate. Local communities can also provide their views to the Planning Inspectorate during the examination of any formal application. Further information is available on the National Infrastructure Planning website:

<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/>

The design and implementation of the proposed competitive regime for onshore transmission assets is properly a matter for Ofgem as the independent regulator. As part of Ofgem's decision making process on whether to tender the NWCC project they have run an open consultation which has enabled stakeholders including local communities to put forward their views for consideration. If Ofgem decides to tender the project then this process will run in line with the rules ensuring fair and transparent procurement. It is important to note that regardless of who constructs and

maintains an asset all network operators must be licenced by the regulator and are subject to strict controls to ensure safety, security and reliability.

David Morris:

[\[66832\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether successful bidders to construct any or all of the North West Coast Connection will be held to the same standards as National Grid on the (a) design and technology granted in the consent order, (b) levels of mitigation, such as undergrounding, (c) level of community and stakeholder engagement, (d) mitigating the environmental impacts, (e) impact of traffic and transport and (f) opportunities for local companies to form part of the construction supply chain.

Jesse Norman:

The design and implementation of the proposed competitive regime for onshore transmission assets is properly a matter for Ofgem as the independent regulator. It is important to note that, regardless of who constructs and maintains an asset, all network operators must be licenced by the regulator and are subject to strict controls to ensure safety, security and reliability. Any successful bidders will be held to the same strict standards that the current incumbent network companies operate by, including in regards to industry codes, grid standards and planning requirements.

David Morris:

[\[66833\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if a consumer-based, cost-benefit analysis has been undertaken on the potential benefits and disbenefits of completing all or part of the North West Coast Connection; and if he will make a statement.

Jesse Norman:

The design and implementation of the proposed competitive regime for onshore transmission assets is properly a matter for Ofgem as the independent regulator. This would include any analysis or decision on whether to tender for competition any specific projects, including the North West Coast Connection. It is important to note that Ofgem has extensively consulted with industry on these proposals and intends to undertake an impact assessment on the case to tender all, or part, of the North West Coast Connection.

■ Small Businesses: Credit

Mr Douglas Carswell:

[\[66992\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to support small and medium-sized enterprises in accessing extended credit terms.

Margot James:

Extended credit terms from suppliers can help businesses to meet their working capital needs, as can prompt payment from customers. While payment terms are a matter for each business to negotiate with their trading partners, the Government is

committed to ensuring that all businesses and entrepreneurs across the UK are able to access the finance and support they need to grow and have the right conditions to invest long-term, as set out in the Industrial Strategy Green Paper.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Electronic Government

Cat Smith:

[\[66488\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the HM Revenue and Customs Digital press release of 13 February 2017, Green light for Government Gateway Transformation, how much his Department plans to spend on (a) establishing and (b) maintaining the new verification service.

Ben Gummer:

The 'new verification service' to which this question refers is being developed by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) to replace the Government Gateway as a verification service for business representatives. It will complement GOV.UK Verify, the single identification service for individuals.

HMRC agreed with the Cabinet Office and Department for Work and Pensions to take on responsibility for decommissioning the existing Government Gateway, in line with current contractual arrangements, by March 2018.

HMRC has responded to a previous Parliamentary Question (PQ64720) on the issue of expenditure. The cost of building a replacement verification service for business representatives will be met by HMRC.

■ Government Contracts

Jon Trickett:

[\[66974\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what mechanisms are used to measure the effect of social value on Government contract outcomes.

Jon Trickett:

[\[66978\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many social value outcomes in the public procurement process are quantified.

Ben Gummer:

The Department of Culture, Media and Sport, in partnership with a panel of social value experts from outside government, has recently conducted a review to assess the impact of the Public Services (Social Value) Act on public procurement. This review will be published in due course.

■ Government Departments: Procurement

Jon Trickett: [66971]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many small and medium-sized enterprises have been contracted to supply government services by means of a contract with one or more social value clauses.

Jon Trickett: [66972]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many times the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 has been used in Government public procurement processes in (a) 2014, (b) 2015 and (c) 2016.

Jon Trickett: [66973]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many charities or third sector bodies have been contracted to supply Government services by means of a contract with one or more social value clauses.

Ben Gummer:

This information is not held centrally.

The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 places a requirement on commissioners in England to consider the economic, environmental and social benefits of their approaches to procurement before the process starts, at the pre-procurement stage. Commissioners are not required to report each time they do so.

Jon Trickett: [67070]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what formal guidance civil servants involved in the government procurement process receive on the implications of the Public Services (Social Value Act) 2012 for such procurement.

Ben Gummer:

Guidance on the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 is set out in Procurement Policy Note 10/12:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/79273/Public_Services_Social_Value_Act_2012_PPN.pdf.

■ Politics and Government: Young People

Cat Smith: [66485]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what discussions he has had with the Department for Exiting the European Union on ensuring that young people's voices are articulated in discussions on the UK leaving the EU.

Ben Gummer:

The Government's vision is for a democracy that works for everyone and reaches out to all communities, including young people, to encourage and empower them to have their say, and ensuring no community is left behind. Cabinet Office and the

Department for Exiting the European Union are working closely together as the UK leaves the EU.

TREASURY

■ Cash Dispensing

Tom Elliott:

[\[66445\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will hold discussions with banks and other ATM providers to ensure customers may continue to access cash free of charge.

Simon Kirby:

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

To this end, the Government is engaging with LINK and its members, including banks and Independent ATM Deployers, to ensure that widespread free access to cash is maintained, and is encouraged to hear that LINK's members have committed to further work to find a solution to the dispute.

The Government is also working closely on the issue with the Payment Systems Regulator (PSR), which was established in 2015 to promote competition, innovation, and the needs of end users within payment systems. The PSR is in regular contact with LINK, and is monitoring the situation closely, including assessing the potential effect of any development on the provision of ATMs in the UK.

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

■ Community Interest Companies

John McDonnell:

[\[66834\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many of the community interest companies referred to in the advice given by Treasury officials to Ministers in preparation for the Autumn Statement of 2015 as indicated by the response to the Freedom of Information request to a member of Community Energy England dated 30 September 2016 (reference R52/16) are (a) community benefit societies and (b) co-operative societies.

Jane Ellison:

Advice from HM Treasury officials to ministers was released on 30 September 2016 in response to a Freedom of Information request. The advice provides background to the decision to exclude energy generation as a qualifying activity in the venture capital schemes and Social Investment Tax Relief (SITR). The advice, dated 15 October 2015, stated that around 200 community energy schemes had registered in the year to September 2015. Of the 200, 72 were community benefit societies, and the remainder were community interest companies. Co-operative societies were not included in this analysis because they do not qualify for SITR investment.

■ Concentrix: Complaints

Mr Gregory Campbell: [\[67144\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what sanctions he plans to levy against Concentrix for its failure to meet the 15 and 40 day deadline for dealing with complaints.

Jane Ellison:

The contract between HM Revenue and Customs and Concentrix ended in November 2016 and all financial matters, including sanctions, were settled at that time.

■ EU Grants and Loans

Dan Jarvis: [\[67089\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what consultation he plans to carry out on potential future regional investment funds to replace European Structural and Investments funds, once the UK leaves the EU.

Mr David Gauke:

The government has guaranteed all multi-year European Structural and Investment Fund projects which are signed ahead of the point at which the UK leaves the EU. Departments are working closely with local stakeholders to support them to deliver the current programme. Officials are beginning the long-term work of considering how we can best support our regions following the UK's departure from the European Union. Further details of this work will be announced in due course.

■ Foreign Exchange

Tom Tugendhat: [\[66468\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what progress has been made on the Government's plans to increase transparency in foreign currency transactions.

Tom Tugendhat: [\[66469\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to include provisions relating to (a) transparency and (b) changes in foreign currency transactions in the Payment Services Regulations 2017.

Simon Kirby:

A competitive and transparent financial services sector is vital to ensuring that the UK economy delivers for consumers and businesses.

As with all policy areas, the Government continues to keep transparency of foreign exchange fees under review, and is currently conducting research on the effects of transparency on consumer decisions.

This will help inform the Government's approach to foreign exchange transactions within the Payment Services Regulations, which are currently being consulted on as part of the transposition of the Second Payment Services Directive.

■ Insurance Premium Tax: Charities

Dan Jarvis:

[\[67024\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has considered setting a special rate of insurance premium tax for charitable organisations.

Jane Ellison:

Insurance Premium Tax (IPT) is a tax on the insurer, and there is no obligation to pass the increase on to the customer.

All tax policy is kept under review, however, it would be challenging to implement an exemption for insurance purchased by any specific group. Any such legislation would be very difficult for insurers to implement since this would require them to differentiate between customers who were buying the same type of insurance products.

Charities are a vital part of our society and the Government continues to support them and their donors, including through tax reliefs worth over £5 billion in 2015-16.

■ Insurance: Equality

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[67145\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to publish the review of the principle of equal treatment between men and women in accessing insurance services.

Simon Kirby:

The Equality Act 2010 (Amendment) Regulations 2012 currently require HM Treasury to review the implementation of the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services in respect of insurance services, before 21 December 2017.

■ Multinational Companies: Taxation

Stephen Timms:

[\[67027\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, at how many meetings with Finance Ministers from (a) EU and (b) non-EU countries he has discussed public country-by-country reporting.

Stephen Timms:

[\[67028\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he expects to reach a multilateral agreement under which the UK may adopt public country-by-country reporting.

Stephen Timms:

[\[67093\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to revisit the case for adopting public country-by-country reporting in the UK unilaterally, if a multilateral agreement is not forthcoming.

Jane Ellison:

The Government is supportive of efforts to improve tax transparency.

It initiated the international work on country-by-country reporting, calling on the OECD to develop country-by-country reporting to tax authorities as part of the Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) Project.

The Government has been actively engaged with international partners on a multilateral approach to making this information public, which includes participation in the discussions on a European Commission proposal for public country-by-country reporting.

A multilateral approach is the only way of ensuring an effective model of public country-by-country reporting, one which provides a comprehensive breakdown of information for the jurisdictions in which both domestic and foreign headquartered multinationals operate.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer and other Treasury Ministers continue to meet with their international counterparts on a regular basis, including at the G20 and the European Union, to discuss multilateral actions to counter tax avoidance and promote tax transparency.

■ Social Services: Finance

Stephen Timms: [\[66976\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will take steps to enable the use of older people's housing equity to contribute to the cost of funding social care.

Mr David Gauke:

The government will set out proposals in a green paper to put the social care system on a more secure and sustainable long-term footing.

■ Tax Allowances

Philip Davies: [\[66511\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to ensure everyone receives a tax-free personal allowance.

Jane Ellison:

All taxpayers with incomes below £100,000 will currently receive an income tax personal allowance, and therefore will have benefitted from the sustained increases to this allowance since 2010. Next month, the personal allowance will rise to £11,500, cutting income tax for 31 million people, including taking 1.3 million of the lowest paid out of income tax altogether, compared to 2015-16.

The Personal Allowance taper was introduced by the last Labour government. While the Government recognises that this feature of the income tax system can cause high marginal tax rates, it is required to address the continued pressure on the public finances. We have however, taken action to improve work incentives across the tax and welfare system where possible, including by raising the income tax higher rate threshold to £45,000, cutting the top rate of income tax to 45p, and reducing the Universal Credit taper rate.

We will continue to keep this feature of the tax system under review, in the context of our wider fiscal plans.

■ **VAT: Billing**

Stephen Doughty:

[66965]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many fines were issued for late payment of VAT bills in each local authority area in England and Wales in each of the last three years.

Jane Ellison:

HM Revenue and Customs does not hold data on fines for late payment of VAT bills split by local authority area.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

■ **Peterborough Cathedral**

Mr Stewart Jackson:

[67095]

To ask the right hon. Member for Meriden, representing the Church Commissioners, what progress has been made on addressing the financial difficulties at Peterborough Cathedral; and if she will make a statement.

Dame Caroline Spelman:

In addition to the answer given on 13 October 2016 to question [47672](#), on 6th January 2017 the Bishop of Peterborough issued a visitation charge to the Cathedral Chapter and published his directions to improve governance at the Cathedral. These include:

- A greater degree of accountability for the Chapter
- More involvement of the diocese, especially concerning financial oversight
- The Bishop has the right to attend Chapter meetings, receive meeting minutes and regular financial reporting
- Chapter members will receive increased training to prepare them for their role

The full charge from the Bishop can be found <http://www.peterborough-cathedral.org.uk/userfiles/bishops-charge.pdf>

One of the Cathedral Chapter's actions to address its financial difficulties has been to implement an orderly and phased property sales programme. Several properties are now under offer which will enable Chapter to reduce its borrowings and associated interest payments imminently.

A new Cathedral Management Team has been established to direct business activities and the Cathedral also plans to hold more events to raise income.

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT■ **European Union Solidarity Fund****Holly Lynch:****[66947]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 3 March 2017 to Question 64254, on the European Union Solidarity Fund, what the costs involved in making an application were; and what each constituent element of those costs were.

Andrew Percy:

I refer the Hon Member to my answer on 3 March 2017 to Question UIN 64254 which explains the Commission's assessment of our application.

■ **Housing: Construction****Julie Elliott:****[66309]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if he will take steps to consult on Chapters 3 and 4 of his Department's White Paper, entitled Fixing our broken housing market, Cm 9352, published in February 2017.

Gavin Barwell:

The Government will be consulting on a range of measures in the Housing White Paper. On Chapters 3 and 4, these include:

- A consultation seeking views on planning measures to support an increase in Build to Rent schemes across England. Further details on the consultation and how to respond can be found here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-and-affordable-housing-for-build-to-rent>
- A consultation on the definition of affordable housing for planning purposes and amendments to Starter Homes policy. Further details on the consultation and how to respond can be found here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/fixing-our-broken-housing-market-consultation>
- A commitment to consult on banning lettings agents fees to tenants ahead of legislation.
- A commitment to consult on a range of measures to tackle unfair and unreasonable abuses of leasehold.
- A commitment to bring forward a Green Paper on implementing the new funding model for Supported Housing and the approach to short term accommodation.

■ Non-domestic Rates

Steve McCabe:

[\[66956\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 27 February 2017 to Question 64310, on non-domestic rates, whether local authorities will have to apply for funds from the transitional relief scheme.

Mr Marcus Jones:

Transitional relief is automatically applied to business rates bill by the relevant billing authority. It is not necessary for local authorities to apply for transitional relief funding.

■ Non-domestic Rates: NHS

Steve McCabe:

[\[67120\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 27 February 2017 to Question 64314, on NHS: finance, if he will give NHS bodies priority to transitional relief funds.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The £3.6 billion transitional relief scheme will provide support for those properties which face an increase in business rates as a result of the 2017 revaluation. Relief is applied automatically by billing authorities and there is therefore no need to give priority to any particular group of rate payers.

At the Budget on 8 March the Chancellor announced a £300 million discretionary relief fund for local authorities to help individual rate payers that are having the greatest difficulties paying increased rates bills.

■ Non-domestic Rates: Public Bodies

Steve McCabe:

[\[66855\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 27 February 2017 to Question 64309, on non-domestic rates: public bodies, if he will grant public bodies the same rate relief as that granted to charities.

Mr Marcus Jones:

Buildings occupied by the vast majority of public bodies, including local authorities, have been subject to non-domestic rates since they were introduced in 1990. This is part of delivering a fair and consistent system of non-domestic rates.

■ Non-domestic Rates: Public Houses

Teresa Pearce:

[\[67135\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, with reference to paragraph 3.17 of the Spring Budget 2017, if he will take steps to ensure that public houses in receipt of the proposed business rate discount do not face significant additional charges in 2018-19.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The Government has put in place a £3.6 billion package of transitional relief to help businesses facing increases following revaluation. The Budget on 8 March included a further package to support business. £100 million will be available to assist rate payers, including eligible pubs, losing small business rates relief or rural rates relief as a result of revaluation. In addition, the Government is making available a £300 million discretionary relief fund over the next four years to enable local authorities to help individual businesses that are having difficulties paying increased rates bills.

■ Non-domestic Rates: Tax allowances**Teresa Pearce:****[67188]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how he plans for the discretionary business rate relief announced in paragraph 3.16 of the Spring Budget 2017 to be distributed to local authorities.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The Government has published a consultation on the design and implementation of the locally administered business rate relief scheme. The consultation is available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/598261/Discretionary_Business_Rates_Relief_Scheme_consultation.pdf with responses requested by 7 April.

■ Non-domestic Rates: West Midlands**Steve McCabe:****[66955]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 27 February 2017 to Question 64310, on non-domestic rates, (a) how much and (b) what proportion of the transitional relief scheme funding will be allocated to (i) the West Midlands and (ii) Birmingham.

Steve McCabe:**[67133]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 27 February 2017 to Question 64310, on non-domestic rates, what proportion of the transitional relief will be allocated to (a) the West Midlands and (b) Birmingham.

Mr Marcus Jones:

Details of the transitional relief scheme are set out in the Government's response to the consultation on this issue available at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/572823/Transitional_Relief_consultation_response.pdf

This provides a regional breakdown of the scheme, including for the West Midlands. Details of the scheme below the regional level are not available.

■ Planning: Appeals

Mr Charles Walker:

[\[66944\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, with reference to his letter of 16 July 2015 to Joanne Demetrius of Veolia ES (UK) Ltd, reference APP/M1900/V/13/2192045, if he will place in the Library copies of documents (a) VES/11/1 - Proof of Evidence - Steven Kosky - Planning, (b) VES/11/2 Summary to Proof of Evidence - Steven Kosky - Planning, (c) VES/11/3 Appendices to Proof of Evidence - Steve Kosky - Planning and (d) VES/11/4 Supplementary Proof of Evidence - Steven Kosky - Planning.

Gavin Barwell:

I will deposit these documents in the Library of the House.

■ Regional Planning and Development: North of England

Diana Johnson:

[\[66303\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how he plans to increase economic opportunities for women in the Northern Powerhouse.

Andrew Percy:

The Northern Powerhouse is fundamental to the Government's plan for an economy that works for everyone. That is why we announced our strategy to take forward the Northern Powerhouse at Autumn Statement and in January allocated £556 million of investment to the Northern Powerhouse. The economic opportunities that the Northern Powerhouse is creating will benefit everyone in the North, regardless of gender, age or ethnicity.

■ Right to Manage Companies

Stephen Doughty:

[\[66962\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how many Right to Manage applications were approved in each of the last three years by each local authority area in England and Wales.

Gavin Barwell:

Under the Housing (Right to Manage)(England) Regulations 2012 (RTM) the following notice proposals (applications) were served and accepted by local authorities thereby initiating the statutory process.

- 2014 – No RTM proposal notices served.
- 2015 – 3 RTM proposal notices served and accepted by local authorities; 2 by the London Borough of Southwark; and 1 by the London Borough of Enfield
- 2016 – 3 RTM proposal notices served and accepted by local authorities; 1 each from the London Boroughs of Lambeth, Southwark and Barking and Dagenham.

These regulations cover England only.

■ Social Services: Finance

Teresa Pearce: [67189]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how he plans for the additional money proposed for adult social care in paragraph 5.5 of the Spring Budget 2017 to be distributed to local authorities.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The Department published the allocations for the additional funding for adult social care announced at the Spring Budget 2017 online on 9 March, together with an Explanatory Note.

This is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-allocations-of-the-additional-funding-for-adult-social-care>.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ 21st Century Fox: Sky**

Mr Jim Cunningham: [66922]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what representations she has received on the proposed merger between 21st Century Fox and Sky.

Matt Hancock:

We set out the representations that had been received in the oral statement the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport gave in the House of Commons on Monday 6th March. Hansard of the debate can be found following this link:

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2017-03-06/debates/045187F9-4209-47B1-B7B9-BA1AD6473DCE/Sky21StCenturyFoxProposedMerger#debate-240030>

Representations received since then are being assessed and an update will be given in the week commencing 13th March.

■ Betting Shops: Closures

Conor McGinn: [66805]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment her Department has made of the financial effect on the horse racing industry of one betting shop closing on (a) media and (b) levy payments.

Tracey Crouch:

Media payments are a commercial matter for racing and betting and we do not hold specific figures relating to individual Licensed Betting Offices (LBOs). Payment of the Horserace Betting Levy is based on gross profits and not directly linked to the number of LBOs.

On 7 March we laid a Statutory Instrument to reform the current Levy. This includes extending its scope to betting operators based offshore that are selling to consumers

in Britain. This will ensure a level playing field for betting operators that are based in Britain and offshore operators, and increase funding for racing.

■ **Broadband**

Simon Hart:

[65766]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, how her Department defines (a) rural and (b) urban in the context of the roll-out of superfast broadband.

Matt Hancock:

BDUK's State aid clearance from the European Commission has been given on the basis that deployment will be predominantly in rural and remote areas. These areas are not defined by the Commission, although BDUK has provided information to the Commission on how interventions will be targeted using population densities

The Superfast Broadband Programme aims to maximise coverage within the framework set by the State aid regime. BDUK therefore undertakes an assessment of each project to ensure that it is consistent with the State aid requirements. Projects have not been taken forward in London or Birmingham, and the eligible areas for other projects which include cities within their scope have been assessed on the basis that coverage is targeted at rural and urban fringe areas. BDUK therefore does not measure rural and urban deployment.

■ **Broadband: Infrastructure**

Chi Onwurah:

[66949]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 23 February 2017 to Question 64364, on broadband: infrastructure, if she will ask Ofcom or British Telecom to estimate the amount of copper line (a) laid and (b) refurbished by British Telecom in those years.

Matt Hancock:

Ofcom does not have such an estimate. Levels of investment by BT in its Openreach network will be considered as part of Ofcom's forthcoming Wholesale Local Access market review consultation.

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

Chi Onwurah:

[66725]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, if she will publish the minutes of any meetings Ministers of her Department have had with the Data Sharing Principles Group.

Matt Hancock:

The Data Sharing Principles Group is an important working level group. Details of Ministerial meetings with external stakeholders are available via the Department's transparency returns, which can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/search?q=DCMS+ministerial+meetings>.

Digital Technology: Training

Louise Haigh: [66837]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to page 5 of part two of her Department's 2017 Digital Strategy, when the programme to ensure that adults who lack core digital skills can access specified basic digital skills training free of charge will be rolled out.

Matt Hancock:

The legislation to underpin the new digital entitlement is being progressed as part of an amendment to the digital economy bill. Further timescales will be set out in due course. The Government continues to support adults to improve their basic digital skills, both through the Adult Education Budget for education providers to offer digital training as part of their education offer, and an additional programme with The Good Things Foundation that aims to educate adults with the very basic skills needed to be able to search confidently and safely online and access public services, which has supported 680,000 people since 2014.

DEFENCE**Armed Forces**

Liz Saville Roberts: [66635]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the viability of a transition to all-adult armed forces.

Liz Saville Roberts: [66723]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Concluding Observations on the UK's report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, published in June 2016, whether he plans to implement the recommendations made to his Department in paragraphs 83 to 86 of that publication; and if he will make a statement.

Mike Penning:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 20 February 2017 to Question 63709 to the hon. Member for Birmingham, Hall Green (Mr Godsiff).

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-02-08/63709/>

Attachments:

1. 63709 - WQnA extract on Armed Forces Recruitment [Hansard Extract 20 February 2017 HOC 63709.docx]

Armed Forces Covenant

Julie Elliott: [909209]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to ensure the effective delivery of the Armed Forces Covenant.

Mark Lancaster:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave earlier today to the hon. Members for Rochdale (Simon Danczuk) and Halifax (Holly Lynch).

■ Armed Forces: Ethnic Groups and Females**Mr Jim Cunningham:****[67068]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of trends in the representation of (a) women and (b) people from BAME backgrounds in the armed forces in each of the last five years.

Mark Lancaster:

There has been some excellent work across Defence in the area of diversity and inclusion. However, progress in terms of the representative rates of our people - both military and civilian - has been too slow. Although it is improving, it is clear that there is still much more that we need to do if we are to successfully attract and retain diverse talent both now and in the future.

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) is working towards a target of 15% female recruitment to the Armed Forces by 2020. The Department is also working towards a target of 10% of recruits to come from Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds by 2020.

These are challenging targets, however they will help make the Armed Forces more diverse and reflect the society they serve. Work to meet these targets includes better understanding and greater engagement with the communities we want to recruit from; reviewing recruitment processes and better targeting our marketing and communications.

As at 1 October 2016 recruitment of female military personnel was 11.5% of total intake and recruitment of BAME military personnel was 5.8% of total intake. Full details of the MOD's performance against the 2020 diversity intake targets, including historic trends from September 2013, can be found in our publication 'UK Armed Forces Biannual Diversity Statistics' the latest edition of which (October 2016) is available at the following address:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-armed-forces-biannual-diversity-statistics-2016>

■ Armed Forces: Housing**Dan Jarvis:****[66809]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the quality of (a) service accommodation and (b) service family accommodation.

Mark Lancaster:

The provision of quality accommodation to our Service personnel is of the utmost importance and is at the heart of the Armed Forces Covenant. Currently around 94% of UK Service Family Accommodation (SFA) some 46,230 properties are at the

Decent Homes standard or above. Only SFA at those standards will be allocated to new occupants. Through the Ministry of Defence's (MOD) Single Living Accommodation (SLA) Modernisation (SLAM) project and other projects some 54,000 bed spaces have been delivered across the estate at over 52 locations. The MOD is developing a new SLA management infrastructure system to provide more accurate data on SLA condition, scale and utilisation. This will enable more effective and consistent management and allocation of SLA, and allow the MOD to target its investment more effectively on sites where we have a long-term requirement.

■ **Army: Civil Proceedings**

Jim Shannon:

[\[66750\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will estimate the cost to his Department of responding to vexatious legal challenges to soldiers in each of the last three years.

Mike Penning:

No precise answer is possible, since the Courts do not normally make explicit findings as to whether individual cases are vexatious or not. We estimate however that the Ministry of Defence has spent over £100 million on inquiries' legal costs and compensation relating to the Iraq conflict, a large proportion of which is attributable to allegations brought by the now discredited Public Interest Lawyers.

■ **Ascension Island: Airports**

Wes Streeting:

[\[66515\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent assessment his Department has made of the quality of the surface of the runway on Ascension Island; and if he will make a statement.

Mark Lancaster:

The Ministry of Defence undertakes regular assessments to ensure that the quality of the runway surface at Ascension Island Base continues to meet our operational needs. Where issues are identified we work in conjunction with the US Air Force who own and operate the runway.

■ **Cancer: Armed Forces**

Jim Shannon:

[\[66763\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what discussions he has had with (a) cancer charities and (b) others on Government policies on lawsuits against armed forces (i) personnel and (ii) veterans diagnosed with cancer.

Mark Lancaster:

Ministry of Defence officials have had no meetings with cancer charities or others with regard to the handling of potential lawsuits brought against Armed Forces personnel and veterans diagnosed with cancer.

■ China: Guided Weapons

Mr Douglas Carswell:

[\[66993\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Chinese DF-21D missile.

Mike Penning:

The Department regularly updates its assessments of such programmes, but these are not made public.

■ Defence Medical Services: NHS

Will Quince:

[\[67088\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer to Question 62599, on Ministry of Defence: staff, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Health on the potential merits of armed forces medical personnel assisting the NHS at peak demand periods.

Mike Penning:

There are frequent contacts, at various levels, between the Ministry of Defence and the Department of Health on areas of mutual interest.

The Defence Medical Services (DMS) exists to ensure that the Armed Forces are ready and medically fit to go where they are required throughout the world.

Currently over 90% of DMS secondary care personnel are working in the NHS. The remaining DMS personnel are currently delivering primary care, rehabilitation, mental healthcare, dental care and other medical services to our Armed Forces or their families, or deployed on operations, or preparing to deploy.

■ Defence: Innovation

George Kerevan:

[\[909204\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to encourage innovation in the defence industry.

Harriett Baldwin:

With an equipment plan worth £178 billion over 10 years and a rising defence budget, there are great opportunities for innovative suppliers.

We are spending up to 20% of our science and technology budget on game-changing research, creating a 10-year £800 million innovation fund and have established a defence and security accelerator.

■ EU Defence Policy

Tom Brake:

[\[67112\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the UK will continue to contribute to Common Security and Defence Policy operations after the UK has left the EU.

Mike Penning:

I refer the hon. Member to the oral answer my right hon. Friend the Defence Secretary gave on 30 January 2017 (Official Report, column 649) to the hon. Member for East Ham (Stephen Timms).

Attachments:

1. UK Defence Policy [Hansard Extract 30 January 2017, col 649.docx]

■ Falkland Islands: Business**Wes Streeting:** [\[66513\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Government contracts have been awarded to businesses based in the Falkland Islands in each of the last five years.

Harriett Baldwin:

The Ministry of Defence has awarded nine direct contracts to locally based businesses in the Falkland Islands over the last five years including marine services, waste management, logistics and education.

■ Ministry of Defence: Policy**Philip Davies:** [\[66663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what his Department's main policy priority is for 2017; and if he will make a statement.

Sir Michael Fallon:

I have set four priorities for the Ministry of Defence in 2017:

- achieve success on operations: particularly against Daesh in Iraq and Syria, but also delivering vital Defence and security in the UK and overseas 24/7. This includes the nuclear deterrent, and contingency planning to deal with the increasing threats we face.
- remain outward facing and internationally engaged: through NATO, including our leadership this year of the Very High-Readiness Joint Task Force, with key partners in Europe, with the new US Administration, and with other allies and partners around the world.
- continue to deliver the policies, plans and programmes set out in the SDSR: we will introduce new capabilities, progress the People Programme, embed innovation across the Defence enterprise, publish a refreshed industrial policy, and step up our Defence exports and wider prosperity work.
- keep Defence policy, our commitments, the forward programme and resources in proper balance.

■ Yemen: Military Intervention

Stephen Doughty:

[\[66964\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what UK military technical support or advice is being provided to the UAE for coalition military operations in Yemen.

Mike Penning:

No UK military technical support or advice is being provided to the UAE for coalition military operations in Yemen.

EDUCATION

■ Ada, National College for Digital Skills: Students

Louise Haigh:

[\[66827\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what financial support is available to students from outside London to support them in attending courses at the National College of Digital Skills.

Robert Halfon:

Ada, the National College for Digital Skills, is being set up to deliver the higher level technical skills needed by the sector. The College opened to its first group of students in September 2016, and once fully operational is expected to attract learners from across the country. Funding is being made available from a range of sources, including Advanced Learner Loans. The Government also announced in the March 2017 Budget that maintenance loans for adults undertaking higher-level technical education at level 4+ will be made available for learners attending National Colleges from the 2019/20 academic year.

■ Children: Day Care

Lucy Powell:

[\[67044\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much the Government spent on the 15 hours (a) funded childcare offer for three and four year olds and (b) offer for disadvantaged two year olds in 2015-16 and 2016-17.

Caroline Dinenage:

Central government funding allocations to local authorities for delivering the two, three and four year old entitlements in 2015-16 and 2016-17 are as follows:

| | 2015-16 | 2016-17 (PROVISIONAL) |
|-------------------------|---------|-----------------------|
| 3 and 4 year old | £2.2bn | £2.3bn |
| 2 year old | £0.4bn | £0.5bn |

■ Education: Assessments

Lilian Greenwood: [66862]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance is issued to head teachers by her Department on parent withdrawal of a child from statutory assessments.

Nick Gibb:

Guidance for head teachers on the process for considering whether pupils should be entered for end of Key Stage statutory assessments is provided in the '2017 Assessment and Reporting Arrangements' for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. This was published by the Standards and Testing Agency in October 2016.

These documents set out the statutory requirements for National Curriculum assessment and reporting for the 2016 to 2017 academic year. They make it clear that the responsibility for making the final decision about whether it is appropriate for an individual pupil to be entered for statutory assessments resides with that pupil's head teacher. The head teacher should report their decision to the pupil's parents.

Rachael Maskell: [67181]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much her Department and the Standards and Testing Agency have spent on administering standard attainment tests over each of the last five financial years; and under what headings in each year.

Nick Gibb:

The Standards and Testing Agency (STA) is responsible for the administration of a range of tests and assessments. Information about the overall costs of administering these tests and assessments is provided in the Agency's annual reports, but the STA does not publish or hold a year-by-year breakdown of costs by the different types of tests and assessment that it administers.

Copies of the annual reports published by the STA since its creation in October 2011 are available to view and download at www.gov.uk/government/publications.

■ Foreign Students: EU Countries

Stephen Timms: [67029]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many undergraduate students have studied for their degree at a university in an EU country other than the UK in each year since 2010.

Joseph Johnson:

Latest information available from Eurostat shows that approximately 13,000 students whose country of origin was the UK were enrolled in higher education institutions in EU countries in 2014 (our 2013/14 academic year), and approximately 5,000 were studying for bachelor level degrees. Eurostat publishes these statistics on their website and they can be accessed using the web tool at the following link:

http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=educ_uoe_mobs02&lang=en

Discontinuities in the data collection do not allow for comparable statistics to be provided by Eurostat on enrolments on bachelor level degrees as far back to 2010. However, the total UK enrolments at all levels in EU countries are available back to 2001 (our 2000/01 academic year) at the following link:

<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=tps00064>

■ GCSE

Ian Austin: [66951]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department has taken to help parents of school-age children understand the new numerical GCSE grading system.

Nick Gibb:

The Department continues to work closely with Ofqual, the exam boards and key sector bodies to communicate to key audiences the changes to GCSEs, including the new 9-1 grading scale.

In July 2016, the Department and Ofqual jointly produced a slide pack that was sent to all schools in England to help teachers prepare and explain the changes to parents and pupils.

Ofqual has also issued a series of short videos and social media activities for a variety of audiences including parents.

Ian Austin: [67073]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of the preparedness of schools for the new numerical GCSE grading system.

Nick Gibb:

Ofqual's Perceptions Survey published in June 2016, shows 93% of teachers are aware of the new GCSE grading system. The Department continues to work closely with Ofqual, the exam boards and key sector bodies to communicate to key audiences the changes to GCSEs, including the new 9-1 grading scale.

The National Foundation for Educational Research conducted its Teacher Voice survey in November 2015. It found that around 85% of school leaders said that the start of teaching for new GCSEs in English language, English literature and mathematics – the first to be examined this year - had gone well.

■ Higher Education

Wes Streeting: [66516]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, (a) how many and (b) which universities offer a four-year integrated masters degree course at undergraduate level.

Joseph Johnson:

The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) collects and publishes statistics on enrolments at UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). According to HESA's Student

Record, in the academic year 2015/16 there were 163 publicly funded HEIs in the UK, and 99 of these institutions recorded one or more entrants to integrated masters degrees[1] at undergraduate level. The names of these institutions are included in the accompanying table.

[1] An integrated masters degree is identified by the codes M22, M26 and M28 of the 'courseaim' field in HESA's Student Record. Further information on this variable can be seen at <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c15051/a/courseaim/>

Attachments:

1. ANNEX A [66516 entrants - Annex A 07.03.2017.xlsx]

■ **Overseas Students: EU Nationals**

Caroline Lucas: [66738]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether EU students starting courses in the UK in 2018-19 and 2019-20 will be eligible for (a) home fee status and (b) student loans and grants under the current eligibility criteria.

Joseph Johnson:

EU students make an important contribution to our universities and the Government want that to continue.

Existing student finance rules on fees and student support for eligible EU students who are either currently studying or who will begin courses in academic year 2017/18 will remain in force until students finish their courses.

Government funding support for EU Students in Academic Year 2017/18 has been set out at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/funding-support-for-eu-students>.

The Government will ensure students applying to start courses at UK universities in Academic Year 2018/19 have information on fees and student support in advance of applications opening

■ **Primary Education: Literacy**

Rachael Maskell: [67183]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much her Department has spent on administering the Phonics Screening Check since it was launched in 2012; and under what headings in each year.

Nick Gibb:

The phonics screening check is administered by the Standards and Testing Agency on behalf of the Department for Education. The Agency does not routinely publish or hold a breakdown of costs by the different types of tests and assessments that it administers. It has, however, previously provided figures for the cost of administering the phonics screening check in the last five academic years in response to a freedom of information request. The total cost figure for the period since 2012 provided in that response was £1,230,250 broken down as per the information provided in the table below:

| | 2011-12 | 2012-13 | 2013-14 | 2014-15 | 2015-16 |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Print of materials for schools to administer the check (check materials and guidance) | £43,000 | £73,000 | £75,500 | £74,750 | £69,750 |
| Distribution to schools (including collation, postage and courier costs) | £156,750 | £203,750 | £189,000 | £169,000 | £175,750 |
| Total | £199,750 | £276,750 | £264,500 | £243,750 | £245,500 |

■ Primary Education: Pupils

Lilian Greenwood:

[\[66861\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of pupils in (a) reception, (b) KS1 and (c) KS2 attend an (i) infant, (ii) junior and (iii) a middle school in the current school year.

Nick Gibb:

The number of pupils, with a full age breakdown, in every school, is published in the underlying data of the statistical publication available at:

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

■ Pupil Exclusions

Catherine McKinnell:

[\[66856\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, who has primary responsibility for investigating reports of possible illegal school exclusions.

Edward Timpson:

As part of their legal duties in relation to exclusion, schools must have regard to the statutory guidance issued by the Department for Education. Parents approaching the Department with concerns about an exclusion are informed about the formal routes of challenge available to them and directed to sources of free and impartial advice. If the Department identified that a governing body had acted unlawfully or unreasonably in carrying out its legal duties, and it would be expedient to so, then the Secretary of

State could issue a direction. The Department would also pass to Ofsted any relevant evidence that fell within the inspectorate's remit.

■ Teachers: Employment

Ian Austin:

[66945]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the average unit cost was to a (a) school and (b) local authority of employing a teacher in 2015-16; and what estimates she has made of such costs in (i) 2016-17, (ii) 2017-18, (iii) 2018-19 and (iv) 2019-20.

Nick Gibb:

I would refer the honourable member to my response to PQ60334 which I have laid out below:

Statistics on the average salaries of teachers employed by schools and local authorities in England are published in Tables 9a to 9d of the 'School Workforce in England: November 2015' statistical release which is available at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/school-workforce-in-england-november-2015>

The figures show that the average salary for all full and part-time teachers is £37,800.

The latest data, for November 2015, shows the average salary for a full-time teaching assistant is £19,200.

The Department's pay reforms have given schools greater flexibility to decide how much to pay their teachers and how quickly their pay progresses over time.

Future salaries of teachers will be informed by the annual recommendations of the School Teachers Pay Review Body. The pay of teaching assistants and school support staff are set by schools themselves. The Department does not produce forecasts of future average pay for these staff.

■ Teachers: Recruitment

Stephen Timms:

[66958]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 6 March 2017 to Question 64894, on teachers: recruitment, what plans her Department has to extend the Returners Engagement Programme pilot to other parts of the country.

Nick Gibb:

We will base the decision on whether to extend the Returners Engagement Programme pilot on an assessment of its success at helping teachers find teaching positions. The first cohort started training last month and we are working with the partnered schools to improve and develop the programme further for a second cohort to start training in May. A decision to continue will be taken by September.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS**■ Agriculture: Subsidies**

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[66863\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the number of delayed individual payments which were not paid within the Basic Payment Scheme payment window since January 2016.

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[66880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 6 March 2017 to Question 66174, what information her Department holds on the number of individual payments which were not paid within the Basic Payment Scheme payment window since January 2016.

George Eustice:

Since 1 January 2016, 1,729 claimants have received payments of around £50 million which were made outside the Basic Payment Scheme 2015 window which runs between 1 December 2015 and 30 June 2016.

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[66882\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate her Department has made of the effect of recent fluctuations in the level of the pound on the payments to UK claimants under the CAP Basic Payment Scheme in each month since June 2016; and if she will make a statement.

George Eustice:

CAP Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) payments for England are set in Euros and then converted into sterling. The exchange rate used is an average of the European Central Bank exchange rates set in September each year. There are no monthly variances. The rates used for BPS payments in 2015 and 2016 are:

BPS exchange rate for 2015 was €1 = £0.73129.

BPS exchange rate for 2016 is €1 = £0.85228.

The 2016 basic payment is expected to be around 19% higher than in 2015 for all farm types, reflecting the weaker exchange rate when payment rates in sterling were determined at the end of September 2016.

■ Air Pollution: Lung Diseases

Kerry McCarthy: [\[66923\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps her Department took (a) nationally and (b) in Bristol to ensure that people with a lung condition were aware of how best to protect their health during the high pollution episodes in January 2017.

Kerry McCarthy:

[66924]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps her Department took to (a) ensure that schools and nurseries had information on how to protect children's lungs and (b) notify hospitals to ensure that they were on alert for respiratory patients during the high pollution episode in January 2017.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

During the January 2017 air pollution episode, Defra issued daily tweets from the UK-Air Twitter account, which provided information about current air pollution levels and accompanying health advice. These included details of the affected regions and links to regionalised maps. These are routinely retweeted by Public Health England and are followed by journalists who use the information to inform their reporting, as well as health charities and campaign groups who regularly retweet information to vulnerable populations.

Defra also issued a press release on 23rd January, which was updated on 24th January. This provided details of the episode, including the affected regions and health advice targeted both at the general population and vulnerable people.

Defra also alerted its network of health charities. These alerts provided full details of the nature of the air pollution episode, its geographical location and anticipated duration and links to further information including specific health advice relevant to the episode. The health charities network includes the British Lung Foundation (BLF), who used social media (Twitter and Facebook) to communicate the information, along with the BLF's own health advice, to their subscribers and patient support groups.

■ Countryside Stewardship Scheme

Geoffrey Clifton-Brown:

[66636]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when she plans to notify farmers who applied for the Countryside Stewardship Scheme before 30 September 2016 whether or not they have been successful in their applications.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

We know the importance of the Countryside Stewardship scheme for farmers and for delivering environmental benefits from land management. Natural England will be issuing remaining agreement offers as soon as possible.

■ Exhaust Emissions: Greater London

Sarah Olney:

[67057]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent steps the Government has taken to reduce emissions in London.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The Mayor is responsible for air quality in the capital and has reserve powers under Part IV of the 1995 Environment Act to enable this. Under the Act, the Mayor may

direct the boroughs in the Greater London area concerning how they should assess and prioritise action in their areas.

The Government is firmly committed to improving the UK's air quality and cutting harmful roadside emissions. That is why we have committed more than £2 billion since 2011 to reduce transport emissions and the autumn statement provided a further £290 million to support greener transport.

■ **Fish: Falkland Islands**

Wes Streeting:

[66514]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate her Department has made of the value of fish exports to the EU from the Falkland Islands in each of the last five years.

George Eustice:

The information requested is in the below table. The figures were sourced from the UN Comtrade Website

FALKLANDS FISH EXPORTS (GBP) TO THE EU (28)

| | |
|------|--------------|
| 2011 | £95,505,052 |
| 2012 | £106,320,512 |
| 2013 | £89,833,453 |
| 2014 | £90,405,793 |
| 2015 | £92,916,305 |

■ **Fishing Catches: EU Countries**

Caroline Lucas:

[66720]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate her Department has made of what the total catch of seabass by countries in the EU Common Fisheries Policy will be in 2017.

George Eustice:

An estimate of the total bass catch for 2017 at EU level as a result of the management measures agreed for this year can only be made by the European Commission, as it holds the relevant catch and by-catch data at Member State level.

■ Marine Environment: Microplastics**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[67199\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 27 February 2017 to Question 65236, what plans her department has to prevent the remaining 99.99 per cent to 95.9 per cent of microplastics from entering the marine environment.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

We ran a consultation between 20 December 2016 and 28 February 2017 on proposals to ban microbeads in cosmetics and personal care products. The consultation also sought to gather evidence on the extent of the environmental impacts of microplastics from other sources. We are now reviewing the responses to the consultation and any new evidence will be used to inform future UK actions to protect the marine environment.

Andrew Rosindell:[\[67200\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of microplastics entering the marine environment on (a) wild and (b) non-wild animal welfare.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

We have not made any assessment of the effect of microplastics entering the marine environment on animal welfare. We have funded a study that demonstrated that microplastics can cause harm to marine animals by having an impact on their digestive systems and exposing them to chemicals. In addition we monitor levels of marine litter, including microplastics, both in the sea and along our coastlines to improve our understanding of the levels and impacts of marine litter.

■ Marine Environment: Waste**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[67196\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans her Department has to reduce waste and litter entering the marine environment across the UK.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

We intend to publish the new national Litter Strategy for England this year. We have worked with a range of stakeholders to develop the strategy, including businesses and other organisations such as the Marine Conservation Society. This will build on the existing measures set out in the UK Marine Strategy that contribute to preventing waste and litter entering the marine environment.

■ **Pets: Sales**

Sir David Amess:

[\[66543\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what her Department's policy is on the (a) qualifications and (b) training required by inspectors of businesses and individuals selling animals as pets.

George Eustice:

We are working closely with representatives of local authorities, the pet industry and animal welfare organisations on developing competency standards for animal licensing inspectors as part of the review of local authority animal licensing schemes. The work is at an early stage and will complement the development of new regulations following last month's publication of Defra's Next Steps document on animal licensing.

■ **School Milk: East Midlands**

Mr Graham Allen:

[\[66646\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, (a) how many and (b) what proportion of children aged over five in (i) the Nottingham North constituency, (ii) Nottingham city and (iii) the East Midlands received milk through the European School Milk Scheme in the last year for which figures are available.

George Eustice:

Information by Westminster Constituency or English region on the number of children aged over five receiving subsidised milk under the scheme is not readily available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION

■ **Agriculture**

Julian Sturdy:

[\[66505\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what recent discussions his Department has had with representatives of the agricultural sector on the implications on agriculture of the UK leaving the EU.

Mr David Jones:

Stakeholder engagement is at the core of our plans to build a national consensus around our negotiating position; we are listening and talking to as many organisations, companies and institutions as we can. The Secretary of State and Junior Ministers will aim to visit every sector and every region of the UK.

I have recently heard from a range of stakeholders at meetings on agriculture. These have included meetings with the National Farmers' Union, the Farmers' Union of Wales, the National Pig Association and attendance at DEFRA's stakeholder roundtables, one of which focused on farming and horticulture.

■ Devolution**Dr Paul Monaghan:**[\[66656\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what plans he has to involve the devolved administrations in negotiations on the UK leaving the EU; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Robin Walker:

We have made no decisions yet about the format of the direct negotiations with the European Union. It will be for the Prime Minister to ensure we negotiate the best possible future for the United Kingdom, representing the interests of all of its constituent parts. We have set up the Joint Ministerial Committee on EU Negotiations with the devolved administrations, which will provide oversight of negotiations with the EU.

All of the devolved administrations have outlined to the Government their priorities for our future relationship with the EU. We welcome all proposals and are committed to carefully considering the options put forward.

■ Devolution: Brexit**Richard Arkless:**[\[66930\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, whether he plans to establish an agreed UK position involving the devolved administrations before triggering Article 50.

Mr Robin Walker:

We are committed to working closely with the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Executive to ensure that we get the best possible deal for all parts of the United Kingdom. This is exactly why we have set up a Joint Ministerial Committee on EU Negotiations, which brings together the UK Government and devolved administrations to develop a UK-wide approach. All of the devolved administrations have outlined to the Government their priorities for our future relationship with the EU. We welcome all proposals and are committed to carefully considering the options put forward. But we have been clear that no part of the UK will get a veto.

Richard Arkless:[\[66931\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, whether he will announce the future dates of Joint Ministerial Committee meetings with the devolved administrations on Exiting the EU between now and the triggering of Article 50.

Mr Robin Walker:

Dates for the Joint Ministerial Committee are agreed by consensus across the four governments. Dates of JMC(EN) meetings are not usually publicised in advance.

■ UK Trade with EU

Dr Paul Monaghan:

[\[66657\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what his priorities are on access to the single market during negotiations on the UK leaving the EU; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Robin Walker:

As the Prime Minister set out in her speech on 17 January, we will pursue a comprehensive, bold and ambitious Free Trade Agreement with the European Union, including free-flowing trade in both goods and services. We want to have the greatest possible tariff- and barrier-free trade with our European neighbours and ensure that UK companies have the maximum freedom to trade with and operate within European markets – and to let European businesses do the same in the UK.

■ Universities

Julian Sturdy:

[\[66504\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what steps his Department has taken to engage with UK universities in relation to the negotiations on the UK leaving the EU.

Mr Robin Walker:

The Department for Exiting the EU has engaged with a range of higher education institutions and groups through visits, meetings and forums. Over the coming weeks and months the department will continue to engage with key stakeholders in business and civil society, including universities, through roundtables, bi-laterals and visits across the UK.

We have been clear that we want to create an environment in which the UK as a whole can continue to be a world leader in research, science and the tertiary education sector more broadly. The government has announced that UK researchers can still apply for Horizon 2020 projects and the Treasury will underwrite the payment of such awards, even when specific projects continue beyond the UK's departure from the EU. Equally, existing EU students and those starting courses in 2017/18 will continue to be eligible for student loans and will be for the duration of their course.

Jo Johnson - Minister for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation – has also set up a forum with a number of senior representatives of UK research and innovation organisations to discuss opportunities and issues arising from the UK's exit from the European Union. This group will work with Government to ensure it has the best evidence to keep the UK punching above its weight in research and innovation.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE**■ EU Grants and Loans: Falkland Islands**

Wes Streeting: [\[66512\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how much EU funding the Falkland Islands has received in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement.

Sir Alan Duncan:

The Falkland Islands has received funding from the European Commission's voluntary scheme for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in Territories of European overseas (BEST) Programme and the European Development Fund (EDF).

According to the Falkland Islands Government, over the last 5 years, they have received €491,032 of BEST payments and the following EDF payments:

- 2012: €0
- 2013: €0
- 2014: €1,030,000
- 2015: €925,000
- 2016: €950,000

■ Gambia: International Assistance

Liz McInnes: [\[67184\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his counterparts in other EU member states and representatives of global institutions on assistance for the new Gambian administration.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The UK is at the heart of discussions within the EU and with individual member states about how to best support The Gambia through this transition period. The EU's immediate and concrete engagement to support the Gambia was reflected by the signature of a short-term commitment of €75m by Commissioner Mimica and the announcement of an intended second funding package of €150m for the medium term in February 2017. The British Government is considering in which other areas we may be able to support The Gambia. Discussions continue with other interested parties to ensure maximum impact.

■ Ghana: Foreign Relations

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[67067\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, when he last met his counterpart in Ghana; and what was discussed at that meeting.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

I have not had the opportunity to meet Ghana's Foreign Minister, Shirley Ayorka Botchway, but the Foreign Secretary did meet her when he visited Ghana on 14 February. He also met the President, the Vice-President and other Cabinet Ministers. The Foreign Secretary expressed support for the President's proposals to reform the economy, improve the business environment and tackle corruption.

Iran: Baha'i Faith**Mr Clive Betts:**[\[66859\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will instruct the UK Mission to Geneva to raise a question on the situation of the Baha'is in Iran with the Special Rapporteur on Iran, Ms Asma Jahangir, during her interactive dialogue with member states at the 34th session of the Human Rights Council; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The United Kingdom remains extremely concerned about the persecution and discrimination of religious minorities in Iran. Our statement during the interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Iran will reiterate our serious concerns about the treatment of the Baha'is and freedom of religion in Iran.

Iran: Human Rights**Mr Clive Betts:**[\[66860\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether it is his policy for the UK to co-sponsor a resolution renewing the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Iran at the 34th session of the Human Rights Council; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The human rights situation in Iran is deeply worrying. The UK fully supports the Iran resolution at the Human Rights Council and will co-sponsor. We have been actively lobbying in favour of the resolution and have consistently called on Iran to allow access to the Special Rapporteur so she can carry out her important work.

Israel and Occupied Territories: British Nationals Abroad**Richard Burden:**[\[R\] \[67071\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of recent legislation passed by the Knesset on the ability of (a) UK parliamentarians and (b) other UK citizens to participate in fact-finding visits to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

We are seeking clarification from the Israeli Government on the potential impact on British nationals.

Richard Burden:

[\[67072\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make representations to the Government of Israel to ensure that UK parliamentarians and other UK citizens are granted entry to Israel and through Israel to the Occupied Palestinian Territories for fact-finding purposes.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

It is for the Government of Israel to set and implement visa regulations as a sovereign state.

■ **Libya: Politics and Government**

Tom Elliott:

[\[66446\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the stability of the official Government in Libya; and what recent progress he has made on developing Government relations with Government leaders in Libya.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

Despite the signing of the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA) in December 2015, the political and security situation in Libya remains fragile. A number of players continue to obstruct full implementation of the LPA. The UK remains committed to the LPA and is supportive of current efforts to amend it in order to secure support from those Libyans who have hitherto opposed it. An inclusive government which brings together Libyans from across the country is the best way to restore unity, rebuild the economy and tackle the threats posed by Daesh and illegal migration. The Government of National Accord (GNA) has made some progress, such as agreeing emergency budget measures with the Central Bank and completing operations against Daesh in Sirte. The UK and US co-hosted a meeting on Libya in London on 31 October 2016, where the Foreign Secretary, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Mr Johnson), met with Libyan Prime Minister Fayez Serraj. Whilst our Embassy has yet to reopen, our Ambassador to Libya is now making regular visits to Libya to engage the GNA and political leaders from across the country.

■ **Nuclear Disarmament**

Caroline Lucas:

[\[66495\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether the UK ambassador to the UN in New York, the UK Ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, officials from the UK mission to the UN in New York or other officials of his Department attended the first organisational meeting on negotiating a ban on nuclear weapons in New York in February 2017; and whether he plans to monitor the (a) working papers produced by participating states and (b) negotiations.

Sir Alan Duncan:

The UK did not participate in the organisational meeting on negotiating a treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons on 16 February and will not attend the substantive negotiations starting on 27 March. We do not believe these negotiations will lead to

effective progress on global nuclear disarmament. The best way to achieve this goal is through gradual multilateral disarmament negotiated using a step-by-step approach and within existing international frameworks.

■ Sexual Offences: International Cooperation

Liz McInnes:

[\[67182\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to support the work of the UN Secretary-General's Coordinator for improving the UN's response to sexual exploitation and abuse.

Alok Sharma:

The British Government is committed to tackling sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) as made clear by the Minister of State, my noble Friend, the Rt Hon. the Baroness Anelay of St Johns at the UK hosted UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial in September 2016 where she outlined the importance of working with the UN to eradicate the scourge of SEA, for the credibility of peacekeeping missions, and for the people we serve to protect. The UK has provided £1 million to support the UN's work on SEA, and that of Dr Jane Holl Lute the UN Secretary-General's Special Coordinator for SEA. This support has allowed the Department of Field Support's Conduct and Discipline Unit to enhance pre-deployment vetting and training. It has also helped Dr Holl Lute to coordinate a range of activity across the UN to address fragmentation in the UN system, including producing detailed response manuals for Missions and adopting a victim-centred approach to minimise further harm to the victim.

The British Government also continues to support the Department for Peacekeeping Operations to implement an SEA communications strategy to raise local awareness of SEA and promote redress for victims. Given the history of SEA cases, awareness raising activities such as these are vital for ensuring the trust of the communities in which UN personnel are based.

■ Special Envoy for Gender Equality

Emily Thornberry:

[\[67061\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what the formal responsibilities of his Department's Special Envoy for Gender Equality are; and if he will make a statement.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[67062\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what financial resources have been allocated to support the work of his = Department's Special Envoy for Gender Equality in (a) this financial year and (b) the 2017-18 financial year.

Emily Thornberry:

[67063]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many full-time equivalent members of staff in his Department report directly to his Department's Special Envoy for Gender Equality; and whether he plans to increase that number.

Boris Johnson:

The FCO Special Envoy for Gender Equality, Joanna Roper, will lead the FCO's work in delivering my vision of a foreign policy which consciously and consistently delivers for women and girls and which showcases the UK's leading international reputation in this area. This advocacy and coordinating role is aimed at enhancing the impact of the FCO's network-wide activities in support of gender equality, including through work to promote and protect women's rights and to tackle violence and discrimination against women and girls. The Envoy will work with relevant domestic and international partners to achieve this objective.

The Special Envoy will begin her work on 1 April 2017. A budget of £250,000 has been provisionally agreed for the 2017/18 financial year, to cover salary, travel and other costs connected to delivering results. It is not possible to express the impact of her role in financial terms; Joanna will be responsible for promoting this agenda across the FCO, by encouraging bold and ambitious policy making and programme support.

The Special Envoy will draw from and coordinate existing staff resource and expertise from across the FCO. We are presently considering with the Envoy possible future staffing needs.

■ United Nations: Deployment

Liz McInnes:

[67177]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many (a) military and (b) civilian UK personnel are currently deployed on UN (i) peacekeeping operations and (ii) special political missions; and on which operations such personnel are deployed.

Alok Sharma:

The UK currently deploys 429 military personnel and one civilian adviser to UN peacekeeping operations. Four UK military staff officers are deployed to UN special political missions.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office does not keep additional statistics on the number of British nationals employed directly by the UN as civilian staff serving on missions.

Full statistics on troop and police contributors are published on the UN website: <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/resources/statistics/contributors.shtml>

Liz McInnes:

[67178]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many and what proportion of (a) military and (b) civilian UK personnel are currently deployed on UN (i) peacekeeping operations and (ii) special political missions are women.

Alok Sharma:

The UK currently has 429 military personnel deployed on UN peacekeeping operations, of which 24 are women. One of the three military staff officers deployed to the UN Special Political Mission in Colombia is female.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office does not keep additional statistics on the number of British nationals employed directly by the UN as civilian staff serving on missions.

Full statistics on troop and police contributors (including a breakdown by gender) are published on the UN website:

<http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/resources/statistics/contributors.shtml>

■ **Yahya Jammeh**

Liz McInnes:

[67202]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he is taking to help bring the former Gambian president, Yahya Jammeh, to trial at the International Criminal Court for human rights abuses.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

President Barrow has committed his government to a transitional justice plan with a truth commission at its core. It is the UK's view that there needs to be a thorough investigation into the allegations against former President Jammeh and his administration. Evidence needs to be gathered before a decision is taken on possible prosecution, domestic or otherwise, and that this is a decision for The Gambian Government to make. The Gambian Attorney General asked for UK support to fund a Special Adviser which we have agreed to do for a 3 year period.

HEALTH

■ **Air Pollution**

Kerry McCarthy:

[66925]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment his Department has made of the contribution of air pollution to the increased incidence of hospital admissions for respiratory conditions over the last five years.

Nicola Blackwood:

Exposure to short-lived air pollution episodes (over a few days or weeks) has been associated with increases in respiratory and cardiovascular disease events, potentially leading to increased risk of mortality and hospitalisation, and exacerbation of conditions, such as asthma.

Public Health England looked at the impact of two air pollution episodes (related to particulate matter, PM2.5) over a 10-day period in March and April 2014 (Macintyre et al., 2016). It was found that the total burden of emergency hospital admissions for respiratory and cardiovascular causes associated with short-term exposure to PM2.5 was estimated to be around 1,500 across the United Kingdom (around 3.5% of total emergency respiratory and cardiovascular hospital admissions). Around 785 of these would be expected from more typical pollution levels at this time of year.

■ **Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust**

Rosie Cooper:

[66884]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many settlement agreements Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust has entered into in each of the last three years.

Mr Philip Dunne:

We have been provided with the following information from Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust regarding settlement agreements the Trust has entered into in each of the last three years.

- In 2014/15, 20 individuals exited the Trust under the Mutually Agreed Resignation Scheme (MARS), one individual exited the Trust under compulsory redundancy and one individual exited the Trust under compulsory redundancy following a Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE) dispute.
- In 2015/16, 23 individuals exited the Trust under the MARS and four individuals exited the Trust under compulsory redundancy, one of which was a TUPE dispute
- In 2016/17, there have been no settlement agreements.

Rosie Cooper:

[67078]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many investigations relating to employee relations, such as disciplinary grievance and dignity at work cases, have taken place relating to Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust in each of the last three calendar years; and how many of those investigations resulted in (a) sanctions being given and (b) employees being dismissed by that Trust.

Mr Philip Dunne:

We have been provided the following information from Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust regarding investigations relating to employee relations in each of the last three calendar years.

- In 2014, there were 16 investigations relating to employee relations which included six dignity at work investigations and nine grievance investigations. Seven individuals were sanctioned and five employees were dismissed by the Trust as a result of these disciplinary investigations.
- In 2015, there were 16 disciplinary investigations, which included one dignity at work investigation and nine grievance investigations. Seven individuals were

sanctioned and there were no dismissals as a result of these disciplinary investigations.

- In 2016, there were 21 disciplinary investigations, which included nine dignity at work investigations and six grievance investigations. Seven individuals were sanctioned and one employee was dismissed by the Trust as a result of these disciplinary investigations.

Rosie Cooper:

[\[67136\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, on what date his Department expects Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust to publish its full business case in relation to the Liverpool community health service contract.

Mr Philip Dunne:

In November 2016, NHS Improvement announced Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust as the preferred future provider of Liverpool Community Health NHS Trust's Liverpool services. This was subject to NHS Improvement undertaking detailed financial and regulatory checks on both Trusts' plans before confirming the new arrangements ahead of a start date of 1 July 2017.

Full business cases for such transactions, which may contain commercially sensitive information, are not usually published by NHS Improvement.

On 7 February 2017, NHS Improvement announced it was pausing plans to transfer services from Liverpool Community Health NHS Trust to Bridgewater Community NHS Foundation Trust in order to perform additional evaluation of plans to transfer services.

Rosie Cooper:

[\[67137\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what criteria Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust will have to meet to be able to access an increased Sustainability and Transformation Fund allocation.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The Sustainability and Transformation Fund revenue allocations for 2017/18 remain unchanged and will be allocated in line with the operating plans guidance for 2017/19 published in September 2016.

■ Foot Drop

Luciana Berger:

[\[66967\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many patients diagnosed with dropped foot received functional electrical stimulation treatment in each year since 2010; and what assessment he has made of the availability of treatment for dropped foot.

David Mowat:

Information concerning the total number of people with dropped foot receiving functional electrical stimulation (FES) is not collected and no specific assessment has been made of the availability of this treatment for dropped foot. Data are only

available for FES devices that are surgically implanted during an admitted episode of patient care. The majority of FES devices provided are those that are worn and attached with electrodes to the skin. These are usually provided in outpatient settings, where data are not collected.

The number of finished admission episodes (FAEs) with a primary diagnosis for dropped ankle and foot with a primary or secondary procedure of insertion/application of functional electrical stimulation in England from 2010-11 to 2015-16 can be found in the following table. It should be noted that FAEs do not represent the number of patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the period.

| YEAR | DROPPED ANKLE AND FOOT |
|---------|------------------------|
| 2010-11 | 4 |
| 2011-12 | 4 |
| 2012-13 | 4 |
| 2013-14 | 4 |
| 2014-15 | 6 |
| 2015-16 | - |

Source: Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), NHS Digital

In 2009 the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) published interventional procedure (IP) guidance to support clinicians and commissioners on the use of FES for drop foot of central neurological origin. The guidance advised that evidence on the safety and efficacy FES appeared adequate to support its use, subject to appropriate arrangements being in place for clinical governance, consent and audit. NICE IP guidance makes recommendations on whether procedures are safe and effective, but does not provide guidance on whether the procedure should be funded in the National Health Service.

■ General Practitioners: Newham

Stephen Timms:

[\[66959\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate his Department has made of the number of additional GPs that will be needed in the London Borough of Newham by 2020.

David Mowat:

NHS England is responsible for the provision of primary medical services in England. As such, it is for NHS England to ensure that patients in all areas have access to general practitioner (GP) services. To assess GP service provision in an area and identify future requirements, NHS England works with the Care Quality Commission and local clinical commissioning groups. In terms of overall strategy, the provision of

primary care will be part of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) which is published in each local authority area and reported through the local Health and Well-being Board. The JSNA will identify any gaps and risks in the provision of primary care to the local population which, in turn, will then inform commissioning strategies for that area.

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

■ General Practitioners: West Midlands

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[67065]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether his Department has made an estimate of the number of additional GPs that will be required in (a) Coventry and (b) the West Midlands by 2020; and if he will make a statement.

David Mowat:

NHS England is responsible for the provision of primary medical services in England. As such, it is for NHS England to ensure that patients in all areas have access to general practitioner (GP) services. To assess GP service provision in an area and identify future requirements, NHS England works with the Care Quality Commission and local clinical commissioning groups. In terms of overall strategy, the provision of primary care will be part of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) which is published in each local authority area and reported through the local Health and Well-being Board. The JSNA will identify any gaps and risks in the provision of primary care to the local population which, in turn, will then inform commissioning strategies for that area.

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

■ Gynaecology: Migrant Workers

Luciana Berger:

[66970]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what recent estimate he has made of the number of nationals of other EU countries working in the NHS as gynaecologists; what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the UK leaving the EU on the number of such gynaecologists; and what assessment he has made of the potential effect on NHS productivity of that change in the number of gynaecologists.

Mr Philip Dunne:

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

In November 2016, 24 gynaecologists working in NHS trusts and clinical commissioning groups declared their nationality as other European Union nationals, excluding the United Kingdom.

Staff have been included where their specialty is Obstetrics and Gynaecology and the secondary area of work is Gynaecology.

The November data is the most recent data available.

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

■ Health Services and Social Services: Apprentices

Dr Sarah Wollaston:

[66470]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how much the Government plans to spend on health and social care apprenticeships in each of the next five years.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The new Apprenticeship Levy comes into operation in April 2017 and is set at a rate of 0.5% of an employer's pay bill. Apprenticeship Levy contributions by National Health Service organisations are estimated as £200 million in 2017-18 and will change over the next five years as the NHS pay bill changes. Estimates are not available for social care.

Apprentices are employed and individual employers will decide which apprentices to employ to meet their workforce needs. The Department does not centrally collect the plans of how many apprentices each individual employer intends to recruit by the end of 2020.

The Department is working with a range of partner organisations, including Health Education England, NHS Improvement, Skills for Health and Skills for Care to ensure NHS and social care providers have access to the apprentice standards they need to develop their own workforce and to make full use of the apprentice levy.

■ Hospitals: Waiting Lists

Emma Reynolds:

[67043]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how his Department monitors compliance with government targets on waiting times for treatment.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The Department uses the National Health Service performance data published on a monthly basis by NHS England to monitor compliance with waiting times targets for treatment. This information is available at the following link:

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

Maintaining waiting time performance is a key objective in the Government's Mandate to NHS England. Both NHS England and NHS Improvement are providing support

and challenge to NHS commissioners and providers to reduce waiting times for hospital treatment.

■ Infant Foods

Alison Thewliss:

[\[67139\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what discussions he has had with the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on its 2016 recommendation on implementing the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes.

Nicola Blackwood:

We have had no discussions with the UN Committee on this issue.

■ Maternity Services

Will Quince:

[\[66830\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the level of cold cot availability in maternity units across the NHS.

Mr Philip Dunne:

All bereaved parents should be offered the same high standard of care and support in an appropriate environment.

In 2016, the Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Charity, Sands, published *Audit of bereavement care provision in UK maternity*. The audit found that of the 69 trusts and health boards responding to the survey 91% reported that each of the maternity units they covered have access to at least one cold or cuddle cot.

■ Maternity Services: Bereavement Counselling

Will Quince:

[\[66829\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the level of bereavement support midwife availability in maternity units across the NHS.

Mr Philip Dunne:

All bereaved parents should be offered the same high standard of care and support in an appropriate environment.

In 2016, the Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Charity, Sands, published *Audit of bereavement care provision in UK maternity*. The audit found that of the 66 trusts and health boards which responded, 62% of the maternity units they cover have at least one bereavement support midwife that is based there.

NHS England has commissioned Sands to undertake a project on the role of the bereavement midwife. The project will make recommendations for the remit of the role of the bereavement midwife and also give some guidance on the support structures required around the role. Sands are due to report their finds to NHS England later this year.

■ Medical Treatments: Statistics

Emma Reynolds: **[67042]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what statistics (a) his Department, (b) NHS trusts and (c) clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) hold on referrals to treatment by (i) NHS trusts and (ii) CCGs.

Mr Philip Dunne:

Official statistics are published by NHS England on a monthly basis in respect of waiting times for consultant-led referral to treatment waiting times. These statistics provide the length of time from referral through to elective treatment for 18 high volume specialties. This information is published at both provider and commissioner level. Further information can be found at this link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/rtt-waiting-times/>

■ Mental Health Services: Expenditure

Mr Chuka Umunna: **[67046]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how much the NHS and its agencies spent on mental health services in each year since 2010.

Nicola Blackwood:

The data request is in the following table:

| FINANCIAL YEAR | CLINICAL COMMISSIONING GROUPS (CCG) AND SPECIALISED COMMISSIONING |
|----------------|--|
| | £ billion |
| 2013-14 | 9.60 |
| 2014-15 | 10.08 |
| 2015-16 | 10.81 |

Notes:

1. All figures are given in cash/nominal terms.
2. Figures from 2009-2013 are taken from the Department's accounts and National Health Service programme budgeting data.
3. Data for 2013 onwards is from NHS England and relates to CCG and specialised commissioning spend only.

■ Mental Health Services: Mothers

Luciana Berger:

[67192]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 3 March 2017 to Question 66473, on mental health services: mothers, how much of the £290 million pledged he plans to spend in each of the next four years.

Nicola Blackwood:

The information requested is available in the NHS England publication Implementing the 5 Year Forward View for Mental Health. The document is available at:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/fyfv-mh.pdf>

■ Microplastics

Andrew Rosindell:

[67201]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment his Department has made of the implications of microplastics entering the marine environment for human health.

Nicola Blackwood:

Public Health England has not, to date, conducted an assessment of the implications of microplastics entering the marine environment for human health.

■ Midwives: Recruitment

Stephen Timms:

[67045]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate he has made of the number of midwives to be recruited in (a) the London Borough of Newham, (b) Greater London and (c) the UK up to 2020.

Mr Philip Dunne:

Information relating to the number of midwives to be recruited in the London Borough of Newham and Greater London is not held centrally by the Department.

In the 2016/17 Workforce Plan for England, Health Education England (HEE) estimates the future demand for qualified midwives in England by 2020 will be 24,628.

■ NHS Property Services: Staff

Dr Poulter:

[66995]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many staff at NHS Property Services Ltd are employed in a facilities management role.

Mr Philip Dunne:

NHS Property Services has 3,047 people who perform front-line National Health Service duties, such as cleaners, porters, receptionists, chefs, and maintenance technicians, who come under the auspices of the Facilities Management (FM) directorate.

It also has 206 people throughout England in FM management roles – including construction projects, health and safety and service delivery.

■ NHS: Buildings

Dr Poulter:

[66952]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 6 February 2017 to Question 62813, what the total operating revenue costs for NHS Property Services' properties that were classified as (a) vacant and (b) non-vacant were in each financial year since 2013-14.

Mr Philip Dunne:

Information on total operating revenue costs for NHS Property Services' properties since 2013/14 are shown in the following table.

| | YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2014 (£000's) | | | YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2015 (£000's) | | | YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2016 (£000's) | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|---------|---------------------------------------|----------------|---------|---------------------------------------|----------------|---------|
| | Vacant | Non- Vacant | Total | Vacant | Non- Vacant | Total | Vacant | Non- Vacant | Total |
| Property expenses | 7,710 | 671,183 | 678,893 | 8,072 | 614,517 | 622,589 | 8,547 | 576,004 | 584,551 |
| Admin expenses | 1,366 | 118,957 | 120,323 | 1,454 | 110,749 | 112,203 | 1,731 | 116,629 | 118,360 |
| Total Operating Revenue Expenses | 9,076 | 790,140 | 799,216 | 9,526 | 725,266 | 734,792 | 10,278 | 692,633 | 702,911 |

These figures include the vacant/non-vacant split for direct property and administration expenses only. Other expenses (such as impairments caused by downward revaluations) have not been included.

Dr Poulter:

[66953]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 9 February 2017 to Question 63167, what the capital asset value is of those NHS Property Services' properties that are currently classified as (a) vacant and (b) non-vacant.

Mr Philip Dunne:

Pursuant to the response given to Question 63167, the capital asset value of NHS Property Services' properties that are classified as vacant is shown in the following table. The Company classifies buildings as vacant when 90% or more of the building's area is unused.

| CATEGORY | NUMBER OF PROPERTIES | CAPITAL ASSET VALUE |
|----------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Vacant (90 % or Greater) | 217 | £101 million |
| Non-vacant (Less than 90%) | 2,927 | £3,231 million |
| Total | 3,144 | £3,332 million |

■ NHS: Migrant Workers

Luciana Berger:

[\[66966\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what recent estimate he has made of the number of nationals of other EU countries working in the NHS as carers; what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the UK leaving the EU on the number of such carers; and what assessment he has made of the potential effect on NHS productivity of that change in the number of carers.

David Mowat:

National Health Service carers are defined on a basis consistent with that of healthcare assistants used in the Cavendish Review (DH, 2012). Staff included as carers for this query are Healthcare assistants, Nursing assistants / auxiliaries and Nursing assistants /practitioners.

In November 2016, 5,731 (4.4%) NHS carers working in NHS Trusts and clinical commissioning groups declared their nationality as other European Union nationals, excluding the United Kingdom. This is out of a total headcount of 131,006.

The November data is the most recent data available.

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

Luciana Berger:

[\[67190\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what recent estimate he has made of the number of nationals of other EU countries working in the NHS as cardiologists; what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the UK leaving the EU on the number of such cardiologists; and what assessment he has made of the potential effect on NHS productivity of that change in the number of cardiologists.

Mr Philip Dunne:

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

In November 2016, 330 medical staff with a specialty of cardiology working in NHS trusts and clinical commissioning groups declared their nationality as other European Union nationals, excluding the United Kingdom.

The November data is the most recent data available.

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

Luciana Berger:

[67191]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what recent estimate he has made of the number of nationals of other EU countries working in the NHS as surgeons; what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the UK leaving the EU on the number of such surgeons; and what assessment he has made of the potential effect on NHS productivity of that change in the number of surgeons.

Mr Philip Dunne:

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

In November 2016, 1,191 medical staff in the surgical group in the specified grades below working in NHS trusts and clinical commissioning groups declared their nationality as other European Union nationals, excluding the United Kingdom.

This data refers to staff who are in the surgical group and have a grade of Consultant (including Directors of Public Health), Associate Specialist, Specialty Doctor or Staff Grade.

The November data is the most recent data available.

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

■ NHS: Non-domestic Rates

Steve McCabe:

[67130]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 27 February 2017 to Question 64314, on NHS: finance, if he will make an assessment of (a) the total annual cost of proposed business rates changes to the NHS and (b) the potential effect of those costs on the delivery of patient services.

Steve McCabe:

[\[67134\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 27 February 2017 to Question 64314, on NHS: finance, if the Government will make it its policy to give NHS bodies priority access to transitional relief funds.

Mr Philip Dunne:

Individual National Health Service organisations are responsible for ensuring their current rating assessments are correct, challenging them if necessary and seeking transitional relief. The Department does not routinely collect data from NHS organisations on their business rate charges in order to make an overall national assessment of changes. Business rate changes will be reflected in individual organisation financial plans. We expect plans to balance within the overall NHS budget, and to continue to deliver patient services in line with the objectives of the NHS England Mandate.

An existing Government transitional relief scheme provides £3.6 billion of support for the minority of properties which face an increase in rates as a result of the 2017 revaluation, and applies equally to public bodies such as the NHS.

■ **Nurses: Migrant Workers**

Catherine McKinnell:

[\[67121\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, with reference to the Migration Advisory Committee's recommendation that nurses remain on the shortage occupation list, what assessment he has made of the effect of pay restraints on long-term retention and recruitment rates for NHS nurses.

Catherine McKinnell:

[\[67122\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will assess the potential merits of removing pay restraints for Agenda for Change staff as a result of recent inflation forecasts from the National Institute of Economic and Social Research.

Catherine McKinnell:

[\[67123\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of public sector pay restraints on levels of expenditure by the NHS on agency staff.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The independent NHS Pay Review Body (for Agenda for Change staff) and the Review Body on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration (employed doctors and general and medical and dental practitioners) have been in place for decades and are relied on by government and other stakeholders, for example, National Health Service trades unions, NHS Employers, NHS Providers, NHS Improvement, Health Education England, Health Education England, to consider all the written and oral evidence it receives and to make recommendations on the level of pay award that will enable the NHS to continue to recruit, retain and motivate the staff it needs.

The standing remits of both Pay Review Bodies requires it to consider the Government's inflation target as part of a range of factors in reaching its recommendations:

- the need to recruit, retain and motivate suitably able and qualified staff;
- regional/local variations in labour markets and their effects on the recruitment and retention of staff;
- the funds available to the Health Departments, as set out in the Government's Departmental Expenditure Limits;
- the Government's inflation target;
- the principle of equal pay for work of equal value in the NHS;
- the overall strategy that the NHS should place patients at the heart of all it does and the mechanisms by which that is to be achieved;
- the Review Body may also be asked to consider other specific issues; and
- should take account of the legal obligations on the NHS, including anti-discrimination legislation regarding age, gender, race, sexual orientation, religion and belief, and disability.

The NHS Pay Review Body received evidence on the Migration Advisory Committee's recommendation that nurses remain on the shortage occupation list as part of its consideration for this year's pay round and will be part of its consideration for the next annual pay round.

Both Pay Review Bodies received evidence on inflation forecasts as part of its consideration for this year's pay round and will be part of its consideration for the next annual pay round.

Both Pay Review Bodies received evidence on agency spend for this year's pay round and expect this to feature as part of its consideration for the next annual pay round.

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State introduced a series of radical measures to bring agency spending back under control in 2015, including price caps limiting the amount a trust can pay to an agency for temporary staff. The measures are working as of Quarter 3, 2016/17 the NHS had spent £1 billion less on agency staff than it was projected to had we not taken tough action to bring in controls on agency spending, with further savings forecast for the current financial year.

Both Pay Review Bodies set out very clearly its rationale for the 1% recommendation for 2016/17 which the Government accepted in full.

We have now received both reports for 2017/18, which we will consider very carefully and which we will publish in due course.

■ Paediatrics: Migrant Workers

Luciana Berger:

[\[66969\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what recent estimate he has made of the number of nationals of other EU countries working in the NHS as paediatricians; what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the UK leaving the EU on the number of such paediatricians; and what assessment he has made of the potential effect on NHS productivity of that change in the number of paediatricians.

Mr Philip Dunne:

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

In November 2016, 777 medical staff in the paediatric group working in NHS trusts and clinical commissioning groups declared their nationality as other European Union nationals, excluding the United Kingdom.

Staff have been included who are only in the paediatric group.

The November data is the most recent data available.

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

■ Paramedical Staff: Migrant Workers

Luciana Berger:

[\[66968\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what recent estimate he has made of the number of nationals of other EU countries working in the NHS as paramedics; what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the UK leaving the EU on the number of such paramedics; and what assessment he has made of the potential effect on NHS productivity of that change in the number of paramedics.

Mr Philip Dunne:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 6 March 2017 to Question [66047](#).

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

■ Plastic Surgery

Mr Kevan Jones: [66853]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many procedures the NHS carried out to correct cosmetic surgery or resolve complications resulting from such surgery in (a) 2013-14, (b) 2014-15 and (c) 2015-16.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The information requested is not available. It is not possible to identify corrections to, or complications from, previous cosmetic surgery in Hospital Episodes Statistics data.

Mr Kevan Jones: [66996]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether he plans to establish a clinical audit database for cosmetic surgery as recommended by Professor Sir Bruce Keogh's Review of the regulation of cosmetic interventions, published in April 2013.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The Department commissioned the Royal College of Surgeons (RCS) to set up a cosmetic surgery inter-specialty committee to take forward a number of recommendations made by Professor Sir Bruce Keogh's review. As part of their work, the RCS committee produced recommendations for a future national audit of cosmetic surgical practice in May 2016, which remain under consideration by the Department.

■ Plastic Surgery: Standards

Mr Kevan Jones: [66854]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether he plans to require the Care Quality Commission to rate providers of cosmetic surgery.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The Government published a consultation on 22 August 2016 on the scope of performance assessment of providers regulated by the Care Quality Commission. This included proposals to apply performance ratings to additional provider sectors, including cosmetic surgery providers. The document is available at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/547103/Scope_of_CQC_ratings_Con_Doc_A.pdf

It is our intention to extend performance ratings to this sector by October 2017.

■ Special Care Dentistry

Sir Paul Beresford: [R] [66839]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how much NHS England spent on special care dentistry in the most recent financial year for which figures are available.

Sir Paul Beresford:

[R] [\[66840\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate he has made of the number of people with learning disabilities accessing special care dentistry in England in the latest period for which figures are available.

David Mowat:

Information is not held centrally on NHS England's total spend on special care dentistry or the number of people with learning disabilities accessing special care dentistry.

HOME OFFICE

■ Animal Experiments

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[66510\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that animal testing does not cause undue harm.

Mr Ben Wallace:

Delivery of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986, through the UK's regulatory system, ensures that animal research and testing is carried out only where no practicable alternatives exist, and under controls which keep suffering to the minimum.

This is achieved through robustly applying the principles of the 3Rs (Replacement, Reduction and Refinement) which require that, in every research proposal, animals are replaced with non-animal alternatives wherever practicable; that the number of animals used is reduced to the minimum needed to achieve the results sought; and that, for those animals which must be used, procedures are refined as much as practicable to minimise their suffering.

All applications for animal research are assessed by Home Office Inspectors to assess the harms, benefits and likelihood of delivery, including the effective implementation of the 3Rs. A judgement is then made, in a harm benefit analysis, as to whether the likely harms are justified by the expected benefits. Only after completion of this process will the Home Office consider granting a licence for the proposed work to go ahead. Once a licence is granted, establishments are regularly inspected by Home Office inspectors for compliance with the terms of their licence and the legislation.

■ Asylum: Children

Dr Alasdair McDonnell:

[\[66975\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent steps she has taken to resettle child refugees in (a) the UK and (b) Northern Ireland.

Dr Alasdair McDonnell:

[\[66977\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many unaccompanied asylum-seeking children were resettled in Northern Ireland under the Dubs amendment in the last 12 months.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

Unaccompanied asylum seeking and refugee children are supported by the relevant authorities in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and in accordance with their respective children's legislation. In July last year the Government introduced the National Transfer Scheme to ensure there is a more even distribution of caring responsibilities for unaccompanied asylum seeking and refugee children across the country.

We are working to extend the transfer provisions in the Immigration Act 2016 to the devolved administrations by the draft affirmative procedure. Building upon Northern Ireland's positive contribution to the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement scheme the Home Office continues to be in contact with the Northern Ireland Executive at ministerial and official level including discussions regarding unaccompanied asylum seeking children. We remain open to any offers of NTS places from the relevant authorities in the devolved administrations however no unaccompanied asylum-seeking children have been resettled in Northern Ireland under section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 yet.

■ **Asylum: Hearing Impairment**

Alison Thewliss:

[\[67025\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what additional support her Department provides for people who are deaf and hard of hearing during asylum processes.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

Asylum claims made by those who are deaf or hard of hearing are processed in a way that ensures that claimants are not disadvantaged. Where available, officials will use hearing loops, signers or allow the submission of written evidence. Relevant support groups will also be engaged if appropriate.

■ **Asylum: Palestinians**

Mrs Flick Drummond:

[\[66507\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications for asylum in the UK were made by visiting members of the Palestine Youth Orchestra during its tour of the UK during (a) July and (b) August 2016.

Mrs Flick Drummond:

[\[66508\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications for asylum in the UK were made by people from the Occupied Palestinian Territories during (a) July and (b) August 2016.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The information requested is not held in a readily reportable format. Information on claims is published as part of the Government's Immigration Statistics quarterly release and can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-july-to-september-2016-data-tables>.

■ Deportation: Jamaica**Dawn Butler:****[66926]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Jamaican nationals are scheduled to be deported to Jamaica on the chartered deportation flight on 8 March 2017.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

32 subjects were returned on the Home Office charter to Jamaica on 8th March.

■ Detention Centres**Mr David Burrowes:****[66806]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to publish her Department's plan for the future of the immigration detention estate.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The Department's strategy for the future of the immigration detention estate will be communicated in due course.

Mr David Burrowes:**[67080]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Oral Answer of 6 March 2017, Official Report, column 561 on immigration: indefinite detention, on what date her Department plans to publish its plan for the future of the immigration detention estate.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The Department's strategy for the future of the immigration detention estate will be communicated in due course.

■ Diamond Babamuboni**Philip Davies:****[66492]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether Diamond Babamuboni was deported from the UK after serving a prison sentence for manslaughter.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The Home Office does not comment on individual cases.

■ Free Movement of People

Richard Arkless:

[\[66929\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many times the Government has used freedom of movement controls relating to Directive 2004/38/EC since 2010.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

In accordance with EU law, the Government can restrict free movement rights in individual cases where any of the following conditions apply:

- a) Where the conditions of residence under the Free Movement Directive are not met
- b) On grounds of public policy, public security or public health, or
- c) In the event of abuse or fraud (such as a marriage of convenience)

Published statistics on the number of enforced removals and the total refused entry at port and subsequently departed are available on GOV.UK.

■ Immigrants: Detainees

Mr David Burrowes:

[\[66928\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the oral contribution of the hon. Member for Enfield, Southgate of 6 March 2017, Official Report, column 561, when the current system of detention reviews will be replaced by individual removal assessments and reviews.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

Following publication of the Government's response to Stephen Shaw's Report into the welfare in detention of vulnerable persons on 14 January 2016, work continues on designing and implementing a more effective case management process to replace the existing method of reviewing detention. Case Progression Plans are intended to act as the single caseworking record for all individuals entering immigration detention. These Plans will replace detention reviews and other documentation currently used by the Detention Gatekeeper when assessing suitability for detention, and will ensure that caseworkers focus on progression towards an individuals' return.

Wider rollout of Case Progression Plans is planned for later this year, subject to the findings from the evaluation of the pilot phase.

■ Visas: Hearing Impairment

Alison Thewliss:

[\[67026\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what additional support her Department provides for people who are deaf and hard of hearing during visa application processes.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

Staff are available at visa centres to assist applicants who have a disability (including those who are deaf or hard of hearing). We also encourage applicants who have a disability (or who have accessibility requirements) to bring someone to assist them if needed.

Furthermore, the new Access UK online application system, which aims to replace all existing paper and online application forms has been developed to support users with access needs, particularly in regards to navigation, compatibility with support tools, content and structure.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**■ Department for International Development: Policy****Philip Davies:**[\[66671\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what her Department's main policy priority is for 2017; and if she will make a statement.

Rory Stewart:

As the Prime Minister has said, the Department for International Development has a critical role to play not only in tackling poverty but helping the UK play a confident, engaged and ambitious role in the world. To deliver this, we will drive reform of the entire global development system to further improve its effectiveness. My specific policy priorities for 2017 and thereafter are set out in the Bilateral and Multilateral Development Reviews, published in December 2016.

■ Department for International Development: Staff**Jon Trickett:**[\[66696\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what proportion of Civil Service positions in her Department were vacant for a week or longer in each year since 2010; and what the average turnover rate for civil servants in her Department has been in each year since 2010.

Rory Stewart:

DFID cannot provide information on the proportion of positions vacant for a week or longer. DFID's average annual turnover rate has been around 9% since 2010.

■ Department for International Development: Work Experience**Justin Madders:**[\[66898\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how many people undertook an unpaid work placement in her Department in each of the last five years for which figures are available; and how many such placements lasted for longer than one month.

Rory Stewart:

DFID has not provided unpaid work placements in the last 5 years.

HIV Infection

Kate Osamor: [\[66790\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, with reference to the UN programme on HIV/AIDS, published in June 2016, what discussions she has had with her international counterparts on the decline in global HIV funding by 13 per cent between 2014 and 2015.

Priti Patel:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I provided on 24 November 2016 to Question number 53850.

Procurement: Drugs

Kate Osamor: [\[66788\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what criteria are used to guide procurement decisions on HIV and TB medicines in her Department's bilateral programmes.

Priti Patel:

All bilateral and multilateral procurement of health commodities and medicines follow standard World Health Organisation guidelines to ensure they are global standard approved medicines. All investments are also driven by value for money considerations and best commercial practice.

Somalia: Famine

Kate Osamor: [\[66568\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps she has taken to ensure that food is disbursed to people affected by the famine in Somalia.

Priti Patel:

DFID has allocated £110 million for the 2017 Drought Response in Somalia, making us the largest bilateral donor to the appeal. This support will provide up to one million people with emergency food assistance. We are also providing life-saving assistance to over 600,000 starving children and mothers; safe drinking water and hygiene to one million people and emergency health services to 1.1 million people.

Syria: Humanitarian Aid

Jeremy Lefroy: [\[66835\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what recent assessment she has made of the humanitarian aid need of people in Aleppo.

Rory Stewart:

DFID-funded partners continue to assess and respond to needs across Aleppo city. Significant numbers of those displaced by the fighting at the end of last year are returning to the east of the city. The UN assesses that there is an urgent need for water and electricity, in addition to food, medicine, shelter and protection support. In

the west of the city, our humanitarian partners are providing a range of support to around 398,000 internally displaced persons. Across the city, mains water supply is intermittent due to damage to the Al Khafseh water station. DFID-funded partners are trucking water into Aleppo, installing water tanks, and repairing existing deep wells.

■ **USA: HIV Infection**

Kate Osamor:

[\[66789\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment she has made of the effect of the US Administration's Mexico City policy on levels of funding for the global HIV and AIDS response.

Priti Patel:

The full implications of the reinstated and expanded Mexico City policy on global funding for the HIV response are not yet clear, but we are closely following developments. DFID will consider the implications with our offices, with UK civil society and with donors. The UK has made a £1.1 billion pledge to the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria for the 5th replenishment 2017-2019, increased from £800m for the 4th replenishment. This will boost funding for HIV through the Global Fund and will support the firm commitment to end the AIDS epidemic as a public health threat by 2030.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ **Exports: Internet**

Angus Brendan MacNeil:

[\[66858\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what the (a) click-through rates to export opportunities and (b) conversion rate to exporters was for the Exporting is Great website in each of the last 12 months.

Mark Garnier:

The Exporting is GREAT website has received over 700,000 unique visitors since launch in November 2015, resulting in over 74,000 applications for export opportunities.

The Department for International Trade is currently evaluating the Export Opportunities service. This includes working with HMRC data via the tax return system to determine the definitive number of businesses who export through the service and the resulting export value.

■ **South Africa: Overseas Trade**

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[67197\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when he last met his counterpart in South Africa to discuss bilateral trade between the UK and South Africa.

Mark Garnier:

My Rt hon Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade last met with his South African counterpart, Minister Rob Davies on 24 January in London. Both ministers committed not just to strengthening trade and investment ties between the UK and South Africa, but to working together to identify trade and investment opportunities that will benefit partners across the southern Africa region.

Minister Rob Davies also met with my noble Friend the Minister of State for Trade Policy (Lord Price) on 09 March during the Commonwealth Trade Ministers meeting. They had a constructive meeting where they continued discussions on the importance of strengthening the bilateral trading relationship.

■ **Trade Promotion: Staff****Angus Brendan MacNeil:**[\[66857\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what the turnover rate was for international trade advisers in his Department in (a) 2014, (b) 2015 and (c) 2016.

Greg Hands:

The Department for International Trade was created in July 2016, the transfer of functions order established DIT as a corporation sole on 9 November 2016.

The Department does not directly hold this information as the international trade advisers are employed by our Contractors in the English Regions, who have provided the information in the following table.

| YEAR | 1 ST JANUARY 2014 | 1 ST JANUARY 2015 | 1 ST JANUARY 2016 |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| No. of ITAs in post | 270 | 291 | 279 |
| No. of ITAs leaving post in year | 22 | 37 | 49 |
| No. of ITAs starting in post in year | 35 | 36 | 22 |

JUSTICE■ **Family Procedure Rule Committee****Mr Jim Cunningham:**[\[66879\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when she plans to make a decision on whether to run a recruitment competition for the lay member of the Family Rule Procedure Committee.

Sir Oliver Heald:

Ministers will consider whether to run an external recruitment campaign for the lay member of the Family Procedure Rule Committee, in the coming months.

The decision will take into account the future needs of the Committee and consider factors such as the balance of new and existing members. .

Any future external recruitment campaign will be published on the Cabinet Office's website for public appointments.

■ Ministry of Defence: Legal Aid Scheme**Sir Henry Bellingham:****[56186]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much legal aid has been paid to (a) Public Interest Lawyers and (b) Leigh Day for cases related to (i) the Iraq Historic Allegations Team and (ii) Operation Northmoor.

Sir Oliver Heald:

No legal aid has been paid to represent parties before either IHAT or Operation Northmoor.

■ Modern Slavery Act 2015: Prosecutions**Mr Barry Sheerman:****[66482]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people have been prosecuted for offences under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 since that legislation came into force.

Sir Oliver Heald:

The number of defendants proceeded against at magistrates' courts for offences specifically under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 in England and Wales in 2015 can be found in the 'Criminal Justice Statistics Quarterly: December 2015' on Gov.uk

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-justice-system-statistics-quarterly-december-2015>

Data for calendar year 2016 is planned for publication in May 2017.

■ Prison Accommodation**Alberto Costa:****[66801]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether she has any plans to use the redeveloped Glen Parva Prison to accommodate prisoners from Leicester Prison when it is complete.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

We are investing £1.3bn to build up to 10,000 new prison places with better education facilities and other rehabilitative services. We will close down ageing and ineffective prisons, replacing them with buildings fit for today's demands.

The new prison development at HM Prison and Young Offender Institution Glen Parva will be suitable for category C male prisoners. Prisoners transferring to the new

prison on the Glen Parva site may come from any appropriate prison in the estate depending on their personal and resettlement needs.

■ **Special Educational Needs: Tribunals**

Catherine McKinnell: [66881]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many special educational needs and disability appeals were conceded by local authorities within seven days before the hearing date of the appeal in each of the last five years.

Sir Oliver Heald:

The information requested could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Catherine McKinnell: [66960]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many special educational needs and disability appeals for children with autistic spectrum disorder were (a) decided, (b) withdrawn and (c) granted in the last five years; and what costs were awarded in respect of those appeals.

Sir Oliver Heald:

The information requested at (a) – (c) is published in the Tribunals and Gender Recognition Certificate Statistics Quarterly on gov.uk at the following:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/tribunals-and-gender-recognition-certificate-statistics-quarterly-july-to-september-2016>.

HMCTS only holds management information on costs awarded since September 2014. In the period September 2014 to August 2016 (the last two complete years of the published annual statistics) costs were awarded in 12 of the autistic spectrum disorder cases determined at hearing.

■ **Vehicle Number Plates: Prosecutions**

Sir Hugo Swire: [66639]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prosecutions there have been in each of the last 10 years for improperly displayed vehicle number plates.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The number of defendants proceeded against at magistrates' courts for offences under sections 42 and 59 of the Vehicle Excise and Registration Act 1994 in each year between 2011 and 2015 can be viewed in the table. From centrally collated data, it has only been possible to separately identify offences under individual sections of the Vehicle Excise and Registration Act from 2011 onwards.

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ British Irish Council

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[67146\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what the role of the British-Irish Council is until the Northern Ireland Executive is restored.

Kris Hopkins:

The British-Irish Council's role has not changed following the recent election and its objectives remain to further promote positive, practical relationships among the people of the islands, and to provide a forum for consultation and co-operation.

TRANSPORT

■ A27

Tim Loughton:

[\[66886\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to his announcement of 28 February 2017 to stop work on the A27 Chichester bypass major improvement scheme, what his plans are for the Worthing to Lancing section of the A27 in West Sussex.

Mr John Hayes:

Highways England's delivery of the A27 Worthing to Lancing improvement scheme remains unaffected following the Secretary of State's decision to cancel the A27 Chichester Bypass Improvement scheme and will proceed as planned.

The extent and scale of the improvements are yet to be determined. Highways England is currently conducting a range of surveys and assessment work to give them information about traffic volumes and the local environment. This information will help explore different design options that would meet the aims of the scheme. Highways England is engaging with local authorities and technical stakeholders to take into account their views prior to taking viable options to a public consultation in summer 2017.

■ Abellio Greater Anglia: Standards

Mr Douglas Carswell:

[\[66994\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure that Abellio Greater Anglia meets its franchise commitments related to performance; and if he will make it his policy to use his enforcement powers as the franchising authority in the event that those commitments are not met.

Paul Maynard:

The Department monitors each train operator's overall performance and there are clear actions set out in the franchise agreement should performance drop below what is expected. This regular monitoring includes monthly meetings between my officials

and their senior management where performance figures are scrutinised and challenged.

There are a range of enforcement mechanisms available to the Department in the event of non-compliance.

■ Aviation

Kelly Tolhurst:

[66637]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to commission economic research to provide an update on the General Aviation Strategy published in March 2015.

Mr John Hayes:

The General Aviation Strategy published in March 2015 was supported by research that the Department for Transport commissioned from York Aviation entitled "The Economic Value of General Aviation in the UK" and published on 26 March 2015. We consider this research to still be valid but will keep this under review in light of emerging trends.

■ Aviation: Noise

Tom Tugendhat:

[66489]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 3 March 2017 to Question 65245, on Gatwick Airport night flying, when he plans to establish the Commission on Civil Aviation Noise; which groups he plans to consult on that Commission's remit; and what opportunities he plans to provide for public engagement.

Mr John Hayes:

We will establish an Independent Commission on Civil Aviation Noise (ICCAN) following consideration of the consultation responses regarding its function, structure and governance.

Any group or individual can engage with the consultation and provide responses to our proposals on ICCAN through our current UK Airspace Policy consultation. More details on how to submit a consultation response are available at the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reforming-policy-on-the-design-and-use-of-uk-airspace>

■ Bus Services: WiFi

Louise Haigh:

[66836]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the number of bus (a) franchises and (b) services which provide onboard WiFi.

Andrew Jones:

The Department's annual local bus survey collects information on the local bus sector in Great Britain, including on passenger numbers, mileage and vehicle fleet.

However, no information on the number of bus services which provide on-board WiFi is currently collected as part of the survey.

■ Department for Transport: Senior Civil Servants**Jon Trickett:**[\[66803\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 6 March 2017 to Question 65566, where in the Department for Transport 2015-16 Equality Monitoring report the proportion of senior civil servants in his Department who are disabled is set out.

Mr John Hayes:

The data for all our SCS across the department is contained in the annex of the DfT Equality Monitoring report. The reason for this is that, as SCS numbers in some of our agencies are small, individuals could possibly be identified by their diversity data if it were not all collated together. The data regarding DfT SCS disability is as follows.

Disability status

| | DISABLED | NON-DISABLED | UNKNOWN/PREFER NOT TO SAY |
|----------|----------|--------------|---------------------------|
| % of SCS | 2.5 | 66 | 31.5 |

■ Public Transport: Disability**Andrew Gwynne:**[\[67187\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress has been made on the Accessibility Action Plan since the Progress Update of January 2015.

Andrew Jones:

This Government is committed to continuing to improve disabled people's access to public transport services.

We have been working with the Disabled Person's Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) and disability organisations to refresh the previous Government's Accessibility Action Plan. Our intention is to publish a draft Accessibility Action Plan for consultation in the spring.

Andrew Gwynne:[\[67195\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer to the hon. Member for Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland of 7 February 2017 to Question 62858 on bus services: visual impairment, when his Department plans to launch its consultation on the Accessibility Action Plan.

Andrew Jones:

The Government plans to publish the draft Accessibility Action Plan for consultation in the spring.

■ Road Traffic Offences: Speed Limits

Mr Gregory Campbell: [\[67143\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 28 February 2017 to Question 65327, how much accrued to the public purse in charges for those speed awareness courses under the National Driver Offender Retraining Scheme in (a) 2014, (b) 2015 and (c) 2016.

Andrew Jones:

We have no records of the proportion of speed awareness courses run by public providers rather than private providers. Courses also vary in price across the country. We are therefore unable to say how much money goes into the public purse in any year.

No money from the courses goes into the Consolidated Fund.

The Vehicle Technology and Aviation Bill will, however, lay out in regulations what is being charged, who receives it, and how it is being spent, increasing transparency.

■ Roads: Repairs and Maintenance

Mims Davies: [\[67020\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the adequacy and effectiveness of legislation related to compensation for people whose vehicles are damaged by unreported potholes.

Andrew Jones:

It is for each highway authority to decide on what compensation is provided to those who have a legitimate claim in relation to a defect on the public highway based on the statutory legislation as set out in the Highways Act 1980 (as amended).

Mims Davies: [\[67021\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the effectiveness of the use by local authorities of central government grants to tackle potholes.

Andrew Jones:

The Department's annual road condition statistics suggest that the condition of our roads is improving. The Department's analysis estimated that the Highways Maintenance Block funding to local authorities provided very high value for money, with a Benefit Cost Ratio of just over 7. However no specific evaluation has been undertaken on the effectiveness of the use by local authorities of central government grants to tackle potholes.

■ Roads: Stonehenge

Tim Loughton:

[\[66885\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the merits of the F010 option for a surface road beyond the southern edge of the Stonehenge World Heritage site.

Mr John Hayes:

Highways England reviewed a range of options for improving this section of the A303. The F010 option was assessed on the same basis as those for placing the A303 in a tunnel past Stonehenge using the Transport, Economic Growth, Cultural Heritage and Environment and Community objectives for the scheme.

Whilst option F010 performed better than the tunnel options against the Cultural Heritage objective, it performed worse against the other objectives. In particular, it would have large adverse environmental impacts through the Woodford Valley and would not be effective in relieving rat-running traffic problems in the local communities. The assessments are fully explained in the published consultation material on Highways England's website.

■ Southern: Staff

Jeremy Quin:

[\[66934\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with GTR-Southern on the adequacy of the number of on-board supervisors in their area of operation.

Paul Maynard:

Southern has created a new on-board supervisor (OBS) role for guards. These crew members are passenger-focussed and trained to manage emergencies.

Although operational staffing requirements are for the train operator to manage, the Department is aware that Southern will roster an on-board supervisor (OBS) on all trains which previously had a conductor. In addition, Southern has hired around 90 additional on-board supervisors and those staff are already working to assist passengers on Southern trains.

■ Taxis: Guide Dogs

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[67186\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department supports projects to enable better access to taxi and private-hire vehicles for guide-dog owners.

Andrew Jones:

It is essential that taxi and private hire vehicle (PHV) services are accessible to everyone wishing to use them, and it is unacceptable that a minority of drivers continue to discriminate against owners of assistance dogs.

Our upcoming consultation on revised best practice for licensing authorities will include strengthened recommendations relating to authorities' response to alleged instances of assistance dog refusal.

■ Taxis: Licensing

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[66502\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to address local authority cross-border hiring in relation to taxi and private hire vehicles.

Andrew Jones:

At the request of the Department for Transport, the Law Commission conducted a comprehensive review of private hire vehicle and taxi regulation in England and Wales. The ability to sub-contract private hire work across licensing authority boundaries was a recommendation of the Law Commission. Section 11 of the Deregulation Act 2015 enabled this and has allowed private hire operators to work more flexibly to meet the needs of their passengers.

The Government is currently considering the remaining recommendations in the report, against the background of a rapidly changing industry. We will formally respond to the Law Commission and announce our intentions once that scrutiny is completed.

■ Taxis: Standards

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[66501\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will introduce minimum national standards for taxi and private hire vehicle licenses.

Andrew Jones:

The Government is currently considering the recommendations in the Law Commission report on taxi and private hire services, including those on standard setting. We will formally respond to the Law Commission and announce our intentions once that scrutiny is completed.

■ Vauxhall Motors

Stewart Malcolm McDonald:

[\[66997\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will assess the potential effect of the Peugeot-Citroen deal to buy Vauxhall-Opel on the (a) availability and (b) level of compensation for customers affected by Vauxhall car fires.

Andrew Jones:

A change in corporate ownership has no impact on the responsibilities of the producer/distributor towards the consumer. Compensation for vehicles affected by a safety recall is a matter for the producer/distributor to agree with the individual consumer. Any Vauxhall vehicle that is currently subject to a safety recall will remain so irrespective of a change in corporate ownership.

WALES

■ **Wales Office: Work Experience****Justin Madders:**[\[66905\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, how many people undertook an unpaid work placement in his Department in each of the last five years for which figures are available; and how many such placements lasted for longer than one month.

Guto Bebb:

The number of people who undertook unpaid work placements at the Wales Office in the last five years is set out below:

| YEAR | WORK EXPERIENCE PUPILS (ONE WEEK) | JOB CENTRE PLUS PLACEMENTS(8 WEEKS) | UNDERGRADUATE UNIVERSITY PLACEMENTS(MORE THAN ONE MONTH) |
|------|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| 2012 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2013 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2014 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| 2015 | 4 | 1* | 0 |
| 2016 | 2 | 0 | 2 |

* The duration of this placement was less than one month.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ **Bereavement Allowance: Wakefield****Mary Creagh:**[\[66517\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people in (a) Wakefield constituency and (b) Wakefield Metropolitan District Council area were in receipt of the bereavement allowance in each of the last six years.

Caroline Nokes:

Bereavement allowance statistics are not collated on an annualised basis, however 50 claimants were in receipt of bereavement allowance in the Parliamentary constituency of Wakefield and 160 claimants were in receipt of bereavement allowance in Wakefield Local Authority for the period ending May 2016, which is the latest quarter for which there is statistical information.

The Official Statistics for this period are available at:

http://tabulation-tool.dwp.gov.uk/100pc/bb/ccparlc/cat/a_carate_r_ccparlc_c_cat_may16.html

http://tabulation-tool.dwp.gov.uk/100pc/bb/ccla/cat/a_carate_r_ccla_c_cat_may16.html

For further quarterly time series statistics please refer to the resources below.

The information requested is published and available at:

<http://tabulation-tool.dwp.gov.uk/100pc/tabtool.html>

Guidance for users can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dwp-tabulation-tool-guidance>

Please note that the tabulation tool was last updated in November 2016 and will no longer be available for use after 31 March 2017. Users were informed of this in June 2016 via a statistical notice, available at the following link where you can also read more about our plans to move our statistics onto the Stat-Xplore online tool:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tabulation-tool-questionnaire-statistical-notice>

For February 2017 data, we have published additional supporting tables for each benefit apart from Personal Independence Payment and Universal Credit. The supporting tables include local authority and parliamentary constituency breakdowns as well as information on key out-of-work benefits. This information can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/dwp-statistical-summaries-2017>

■ Bereavement Benefits

Michelle Thomson:

[66640]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what proportion of people who have claimed widowed parent's allowance and bereavement allowance in the last five years would have received less money under the new bereavement support payment scheme.

Caroline Nokes:

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

■ Bereavement Payment: Wakefield

Mary Creagh:

[66519]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people in (a) Wakefield constituency and (b) Wakefield Metropolitan District Council area were in receipt of the bereavement payment in each of the last six years.

Caroline Nokes:

There are no Official Statistics on receipt of bereavement payment but the Department's best estimate from Management Information is that 70 claimants received a bereavement payment in the Parliamentary constituency of Wakefield and 230 claimants received a bereavement payment in Wakefield Local Authority for the 12 months to May 2016. Historic information is not available on bereavement payment.

Please note these are one off payments and therefore do not correspond to latest caseload statistics at:

http://tabulation-tool.dwp.gov.uk/100pc/bb/ccparlc/cat/a_carate_r_ccparlc_c_cat_may16.html

http://tabulation-tool.dwp.gov.uk/100pc/bb/ccla/cat/a_carate_r_ccla_c_cat_may16.html

■ Employment and Support Allowance**Mr Roger Godsiff:****[67041]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 8 March 2017 to Question 66433, what estimate he has made of the number and proportion of employment and support allowance work-related activity group claimants who will only be entitled to a reduced rate who will fall below the poverty line as a result of changes in support for that group.

Mr Roger Godsiff:**[67185]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment his Department has made of the difference in levels of income between employment and support allowance (ESA) claimants who are entitled to the former work-related activity group rate and new ESA claimants who will receive a reduced rate.

Penny Mordaunt:

There will be no cash losers among those who are already in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and we have laid regulations to protect existing ESA claimants, including those who temporarily leave the benefit to try out work and then return to ESA.

The Government published its assessment of the impacts of the change to the work-related activity component on 20 July 2015.

<http://www.parliament.uk/documents/impact-assessments/IA15-006B.pdf>

Peter Grant:**[67069]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many times his Department has written to claimants of contribution-based employment and support allowance requesting details of bank and savings accounts held in each of the last 12 months; and for what reasons that information was requested.

Penny Mordaunt:

We do not require details of bank and savings accounts from claimants of contribution-based Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). When individual contribution claims are due to exhaust we invite a claim to income related ESA and if the claimant makes such a claim, we would request details of their household income and capital in order to assess the claim.

We regret that we are unable to provide details of the numbers of these requests without incurring disproportionate costs, as we would have to look at each individual claim affected.

■ Employment and Support Allowance and Housing Benefit: Young People**Alan Brown:****[67126]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many 18 to 21 year olds jointly claimed employment and support allowance and housing benefit in (a) the UK, (b) Scotland and (c) Kilmarnock and Loudoun constituency in each financial year from 2010-11 to date.

Caroline Nokes:

Information on the caseload of 18-21 year olds claiming Housing Benefit and Employment and Support Allowance in the requested areas is available on [DWP Stat-Xplore](#).

■ Housing Benefit**Conor McGinn:****[67090]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much top-up funding will be provided to each local authority following the introduction of the Local Housing Allowance cap.

Caroline Nokes:

The information requested is not available. We have recently completed a joint DWP/DCLG consultation on the supported housing model with commissioners and providers, developers and investors, residents and those who represent their views. The new model outlined in our consultation will enable local authorities to assess their provision by utilising their local knowledge to drive transparency, quality and value for money from their service providers.

Conor McGinn:**[67091]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate his Department has made of the cost of implementing the Local Housing Allowance cap.

Caroline Nokes:

Local Housing Allowance rates will be introduced into the social rented sector in April 2019. We estimate that this policy will save the Exchequer £235 million in 2019/20.

Conor McGinn:

[67092]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment his Department has made of the effect that a Local Housing Allowance cap will have on other services provided by local authorities.

Caroline Nokes:

To date no assessment has been made of the effect of a Local Housing Allowance cap that will be introduced in the social rented sector from 2019 on other services provided by local authorities as the policy has not been finalised.

Alan Brown:

[67127]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many households claimed housing benefit in (a) the UK, (b) Scotland and (c) Kilmarnock and Loudoun constituency in each financial year from 2010-11 to date.

Caroline Nokes:

The available information for Housing Benefit claims in Great Britain is published at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>

Guidance on how to extract the information required can be found at:

<https://sw.stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

Information for Northern Ireland is the responsibility of the Department for Social Development in Northern Ireland.

http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/index/stats_and_research.htm

■ **Housing Benefit and Jobseeker's Allowance: Young People**

Alan Brown:

[67128]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many 18 to 21 year olds jointly claimed jobseekers support allowance and housing benefit in (a) the UK, (b) Scotland and (c) Kilmarnock and Loudoun constituency in each financial year from 2010-11 to date.

Caroline Nokes:

Information on the caseload of 18-21 year olds claiming Housing Benefit and Jobseeker's Allowance in the requested areas is available on [DWP Stat-Xplore](#).

■ **Housing Benefit: Pensioners**

Luciana Berger:

[67193]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of extending the local housing allowance from pensioners in the private rented sector to those in the social rented sector.

Caroline Nokes:

Local housing allowance rates will not be introduced in the social rented sector for general needs housing until April 2019, and only then where tenancies have been

taken out or renewed on or after 1 April 2016; and the tenant's rent is higher than the Local Housing Allowance rates set for private sector tenants.

Pensioners in the private rented sector have been subject to Local Housing Allowance rates since 2008. It is therefore only right that we bring about parity of treatment across both sectors, but pensioners in the social rented sector are unlikely to be affected unless they are substantially under-occupying their properties or they have high service charges.

Discretionary Housing Payments remain available for those who need help transitioning to the change.

Luciana Berger: [\[67194\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what proportion of pensioners receiving local housing allowance live in the (a) private rented sector and (b) social rented sector.

Caroline Nokes:

According to the latest data (November 2016) there were 143 thousand Housing Benefit claimants aged 65 or over who were subject to the local housing allowance rules in the private rented sector. As the local housing allowance system will not be introduced into the social rented sector until April 2019 figures will not be published until August 2019.

■ Housing Benefit: Young People

John Healey: [\[66598\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of ending the automatic entitlement to housing benefit for 18-21 year-olds on costs for local authorities.

Caroline Nokes:

This policy affects Universal Credit recipients only. There is no direct effect on local authorities.

Vulnerable groups, including care leavers, carers, victims of domestic violence and those unable to live with their parents will be protected as will those working sixteen hours a week or more.

Alan Brown: [\[67003\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what methodology his Department used to estimate how many new claimants will be exempt from the proposed new housing benefit policy for 18 to 21 year olds.

Caroline Nokes:

The Department has modelled the number of claimants potentially in scope for the policy in Universal Credit based on DWP administrative data on caseload of single 18-21 year olds claimants with no children and no caring responsibilities claiming Housing Benefit and Jobseeker's Allowance. The proportion of these exempt through

being in work for at least the last six months has been estimated using the Family Resources Survey. The proportion exempt because they are vulnerable and/or unable to return to the parental home has been estimated using DWP administrative data on the proportion living in the Social Rented Sector.

Alan Brown:

[67019]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many households with claimants aged 18 to 21 were in receipt of housing benefit in (a) 2010-11 and (b) the most recent period for which figures are available; and, of those households, how many received income derived from benefits only in each of those periods.

Caroline Nokes:

Information on housing benefit claims aged 18 to 21 for the requested periods and by whether in work or not is available on [DWP Stat-Xplore](#).

Alan Brown:

[67124]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the oral contribution of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Welfare Delivery of 7 March 2017, Official Report, column 684, on housing benefits, 18 to 21 year olds, how much of the projected savings of £105 million will accrue to the public purse in each region and constituent part of the UK by year.

Caroline Nokes:

No such estimates have been made. Latest information on the savings from this policy is available in Table 2.2 of Spring Budget 2017 documentation.

Alan Brown:

[67125]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the cost to the public purse was of housing benefit expenditure on 18 to 21 year olds for (a) the UK, (b) Scotland and (c) Kilmarnock and Loudoun constituency in each financial year from 2010-11 to date.

Caroline Nokes:

Information on Housing Benefit caseloads and average awards for 18-21 year olds for the requested areas and periods is available on [DWP Stat-Xplore](#), which multiplied together give expenditure.

■ Jobcentres: Glasgow

Alison Thewliss:

[66950]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, on what date his Department plans to publish its response to the public consultation on proposals to close Bridgeton Jobcentre Plus in Glasgow.

Damian Hinds:

We are currently considering our options for publication of the public consultation report for Bridgeton Jobcentre and will provide an update on likely timing in due course. Our priority, at present, is to review carefully the feedback we have received from our consultations.

■ Mesothelioma: Compensation

Mike Kane:

[66649]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether his Department has produced updated estimates of the (a) annual and (b) total number of (i) applicants to and (ii) costs of the Diffuse Mesothelioma Payment Scheme for 2014 to 2024, since changes made to that scheme from February 2015.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Department does not produce projected estimates for the Diffuse Mesothelioma Payment Scheme. The latest report on the Diffuse Mesothelioma Payment Scheme (DMPS) including costs, are produced in the annual review, which can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/diffuse-mesothelioma-payment-scheme-annual-review-2015-to-2016>

An earlier report can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/diffuse-mesothelioma-payment-scheme-annual-review-2014-to-2015>

The Department also produces bi-annual statistics showing the actual number of applicants. The latest publication can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/diffuse-mesothelioma-payment-scheme-statistics>

■ Personal Independence Payment

Mr David Hanson:

[66739]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many personal independence payment assessment appointments have been cancelled by Capita in each year since 2010.

Penny Mordaunt:

From the start of the contract with Capita in 2013 to the latest data available, January 2017, the number of claimants arriving at an assessment centre for their appointment and unable to be seen is:

| | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Number | 25 | 213 | 277 | 274 | 23 |
| Percentage | 0.8% | 0.7% | 0.5% | 0.3% | 0.3% |

The data has been provided by our contracted supplier. The Department does not publish data on the number of Personal Independence Payment assessments cancelled and to check the validity of the data would incur disproportionate cost

Mr Douglas Carswell:

[\[66991\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of Clause 4, Part 2 of the Social Security (Personal Independence Payment) Regulations 2013.

Penny Mordaunt:

The assessment for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is designed to treat people as individuals, considering the impact of their impairment or health condition on their everyday life and how each claimant has personally adapted to living with a disability. Since its inception, the system of assessing claimants' eligibility for PIP has been continually reviewed and refined in order to improve its efficiency and effectiveness. We continue to work extensively with PIP assessment providers and disability representatives to make improvements to guidance, training and audit procedures in order to ensure a quality service is maintained.

■ **Refuges: Finance**

Helen Hayes:

[\[66447\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the effect of the proposed supported housing funding model on the (a) level of funding to and (b) viability of women's refuges.

Caroline Nokes:

In his Ministerial Statement to the House of Commons on 15th September 2016 the Secretary of State confirmed that from 2019/20 we will bring in a new funding model that will ensure that the supported housing sector continues to be funded at current levels, taking into account the effect of Government policy on social rents.

We are confident that this model will meet the needs of the sector but we recognise that there will be some particular challenges that may remain for very short term accommodation such as that which can be offered by women's refuges. We are continuing to work with the sector to develop an appropriate funding mechanism for providers of short term accommodation.

A DWP/DCLG twelve week consultation on supported housing ended on 13 February. We are analysing the responses and we and DCLG aim to jointly publish a Green Paper in the Spring.

■ **Sickness, disability and carers' benefits: Assessments**

Dr James Davies:

[\[66869\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how a person who has undergone an employment and support allowance or personal independence allowance assessment can obtain a copy of the relevant reports.

Penny Mordaunt:

Any evidence used to make a DWP decision that is still held by the Department, will be made available to the claimant on request by telephone, in writing or in person.

Dr James Davies:

[\[66870\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how long individual records of (a) personal independence allowance and (b) employment and support allowance assessments are held electronically before destruction.

Penny Mordaunt:

In line with the DWP data retention policy, any Personal Independence Payment documents or records that do not support any active award of benefit, are destroyed 2 years after the award ends or 2 years after a disallowance decision has been made. For ESA the retention period is 14 months following the end of the award or disallowance decision.

■ Universal Credit

Drew Hendry:

[\[66808\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people are in receipt of (a) live service universal credits and (b) full service universal credits.

Damian Hinds:

The number of people on Universal Credit as of 12 January 2017 was 450,000.

■ Universal Credit (Housing Costs Element for Claimants Aged 18 to 21) (Amendment) Regulations 2017

John Healey:

[\[66567\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether it is his policy that the Universal Credit (Housing Costs Element for claimants aged 18 to 21) (Amendment) Regulations 2017 will apply to homelessness hostels and other supported housing from 2019-20.

Caroline Nokes:

Those living in homeless hostels and other supported accommodation are not affected by these regulations as their housing costs are met through Housing Benefit.

The detail of the funding arrangements for supported housing from 2019-20 onwards are still being worked through but we are very mindful of the needs of providers and the vulnerable young people they support.

■ Universal Credit: Payments

Drew Hendry:

[\[66807\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many regular universal payments were not paid on time in (a) January and (b) February 2017.

Damian Hinds:

The information requested is currently not available.

As outlined in the strategy for releasing official statistics on Universal Credit, officials are currently assessing the data 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: Wales**

Stephen Doughty: [66963]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when universal credit will be fully implemented in each local authority area in Wales.

Damian Hinds:

The full details of when all Local Authorities and Jobcentres will roll out to Universal Credit is published here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/571711/universal-credit-transition-rollout-schedule-phase-4-to-6-2017-to-2018.pdf

■ **Widowed Parents Allowance: Wakefield**

Mary Creagh: [66518]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people in (a) Wakefield constituency and (b) Wakefield Metropolitan District Council area were in receipt of the widowed parent's allowance in each of the last six years.

Caroline Nokes:

Widowed parents allowance statistics are not collated on an annualised basis, however 70 claimants were in receipt of widowed parent's allowance in the Parliamentary constituency of Wakefield and 230 claimants were in receipt of widowed parent's allowance in Wakefield Local Authority for the period ending May 2016, which is the latest quarter for which there is statistical information.

The Official Statistics for this period are available at:

http://tabulation-tool.dwp.gov.uk/100pc/bb/ccparlc/cat/a_carate_r_ccparlc_c_cat_may16.html

http://tabulation-tool.dwp.gov.uk/100pc/bb/ccla/cat/a_carate_r_ccla_c_cat_may16.html

For further quarterly time series statistics please refer to the resources below.

The information requested is published and available at:

<http://tabulation-tool.dwp.gov.uk/100pc/tabtool.html>

Guidance for users can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dwp-tabulation-tool-guidance>

Please note that the tabulation tool was last updated in November 2016 and will no longer be available for use after 31 March 2017. Users were informed of this in June 2016 via a statistical notice, available at the following link where you can also read more about our plans to move our statistics onto the Stat-Xplore online tool:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tabulation-tool-questionnaire-statistical-notice>

For February 2017 data, we have published additional supporting tables for each benefit apart from Personal Independence Payment and Universal Credit. The supporting tables include local authority and parliamentary constituency breakdowns as well as information on key out-of-work benefits. This information can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/dwp-statistical-summaries-2017>

■ Winter Fuel Payments

Simon Hart: [66914]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what criteria are used to set the birthday dates for winter fuel allowance allocation.

Simon Hart: [66915]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the birthday date for qualification for winter fuel allowance is planned to be for (a) men and (b) women in each of the next 15 years.

Richard Harrington:

To receive a winter fuel payment a claimant has to have attained women's State Pension age in or before the qualifying week which is the week beginning on the third Monday of September in that year.

The attached link provides details of the relevant dates as women's State Pension age increases until equalisation with men's State Pension age in November 2018.

Following equalisation entitlement to a winter fuel payment will be determined by having reached State Pension age in or before the September qualifying week.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/310231/spa-timetable.pdf.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

TREASURY

■ ECOFIN: 21 February 2017

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

[\[HCWS526\]](#)

A meeting of The Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN) was held in Brussels on 21 February 2017. EU Finance Ministers discussed the following items:

Early morning session

Ministers were briefed on the outcomes of the 20 February meeting of the Eurogroup, and the European Commission presented an update on the current economic situation following the publication of the Commission's Winter Forecasts on 13 February. Ministers also discussed points of clarification in relation to the intergovernmental agreement on the Single Resolution Fund.

Anti-Tax Avoidance Directive

Ministers reached a general approach to the second Anti-Tax Avoidance Directive (ATAD2).

Current financial service legislative proposals

The Council Presidency provided an update on current legislative proposals in the field of financial services.

Criteria and process leading to the establishment of the EU list of non-cooperative jurisdictions for tax purposes

Following the Council conclusions agreed at ECOFIN on 8 November 2016, Council endorsed a state of play report by the Council Secretariat.

Preparation of the G20 Meeting of Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors on 17-18 March 2017 in Baden-Baden

Ministers mandated the Economic and Finance Committee (EFC) to finalise the EU Terms of Reference for the next meeting of G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors.

Discharge to be given to the Commission in respect of the implementation of the budget for 2015

On the basis of a report from the European Court of Auditors, Ministers approved a Council recommendation to the European Parliament on the discharge to be given to the Commission in respect of the implementation of the 2015 budget.

Budget guidelines for 2018

Ministers adopted Council conclusions on the guidelines for the 2018 budget, which will serve as a point of reference in the forthcoming budgetary cycle.

HOME OFFICE**■ National Crime Agency - Contingencies Fund Advance**

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Amber Rudd): [\[HCWS527\]](#)

The National Crime Agency (NCA) is seeking an advance from the Contingencies Fund under Category D of the Supply Estimates Guidance Manual to meet its cash funding obligations in advance of Royal Assent to the Supply and Appropriation (Anticipation and Adjustments) Bill. Contingencies Fund advances are sometimes used by government departments to manage cashflows, and in this case will be repaid to HM Treasury before the end of the financial year.

Parliamentary approval for additional resources of £14,971,000 and cash of £22,029,000 has been sought in a Supplementary Estimate for the National Crime Agency. Pending that approval, urgent expenditure estimated at £37,000,000 will be met by repayable cash advances from the Contingencies Fund.

WORK AND PENSIONS**■ Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council 3rd March 2017, Brussels**

Minister of State for Employment (Damian Hinds): [\[HCWS525\]](#)

The Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council met on 3rd March 2017 in Brussels. Damian Hinds MP, Minister of State for Employment at the Department for Work and Pensions, represented the UK.

The Council held an orientation debate on the proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council, amending Regulation 883 on the coordination of social security systems, and Regulation 987 laying down the procedure for implementing Regulation 883. The Council also held a policy debate on the European Semester, including on the implementation of country-specific recommendations.

The Council adopted Council Conclusions on the 2017 Annual Growth Survey and Joint Employment report, and adopted the Joint Employment reports. As part of this, the Commission presented the 2017 Country Reports, which had been published on 22 February 2017. The Council adopted Council Conclusions on enhancing the skills of women and men in the EU Labour Market. The Commission and the Presidency gave a joint presentation on the Tripartite Social Summit.

Under any other business, the Commission presented a communication on modernisation of the EU Occupational Safety and Health legislation and policy, and information in follow-up to their recent communication on Investing in Europe's Youth. The Presidency presented the state of play of the legislative proposal on Posting of Workers and a number of member states intervened to set out their views on the proposal.

The Chairs of the Employment Committee (EMCO) and the Social Protection Committee (SPC) detailed their respective work programmes for 2017. The European Institute for

Gender Equality set out the key findings of their study titled “Economic benefits of gender equality in the EU”. Finally, the Portuguese delegation gave information on the upcoming UNECE International Conference "A sustainable society for all ages: Realising the potential of living longer", which will take place in Lisbon on 21-22 September 2017.

■ Universal Credit

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Damian Green): [\[HCWS528\]](#)

Universal Credit Full Service for all types of claimants continues to roll out to plan. It is now being delivered in 50 jobcentres and is the Department's first fully digital service.

We have been exploring how this technology can, for the first time, offer a simple system of explicit consent (to protect the large amounts of claimant personal information held under Universal Credit) but which is easy to use and takes advantage of the opportunities a digital service can offer. Such a system can be used by third parties and stakeholders representing claimants' interests, enhancing the service that they can provide for the most vulnerable.

However, it is clear MPs engaging on their constituents' behalf need constant access to such a system through which they can help their constituents. Today, I have agreed that the implicit consent approach which operates well for all other DWP benefits can be extended to MPs representing the interests of their constituents who are engaging with or directly claiming Universal Credit. We can offer this because of our pre-existing relationships between MPs offices, District Managers and their teams. This is something which cannot pertain for enquiries from other sources.

This means any correspondence – letter, email, or telephone enquiries – from MPs on behalf of a constituent relating to Universal Credit will be answered directly, without a requirement to seek explicit consent from their constituent. This will ensure consistency and clarity for MP offices, no matter what benefit the enquiry is about.

Extending this support for MPs and their constituents will continue to help enable the successful delivery of this key welfare reform programme.