

**Daily Report****Friday, 30 December 2016**

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 30 December 2016 and the information is correct at the time of publication (03:35 P.M., 30 December 2016). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ Criminal Proceedings: Prosecutions

Sir Eric Pickles:

[57705]

To ask the Attorney General, what processes there are by which (a) local residents, (b) victims of crime and (c) others can challenge a decision by the Crown Prosecution Service not to prosecute a criminal case; and if he will make a statement.

Jeremy Wright:

Victims of crime can challenge a Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) decision not to prosecute their case, under the Victims' Right to Review (VRR) scheme. A local resident may be eligible if the individual comes within the scheme's definition of 'victim'.

Further guidance about the VRR scheme can be found here:

http://www.cps.gov.uk/victims_witnesses/victims_right_to_review/index.html

The CPS also operates both Feedback and Complaints schemes to deal with concerns about legal decisions which do not fall within the scope of the VRR scheme.

■ Election Offences: Tower Hamlets

Sir Eric Pickles:

[57698]

To ask the Attorney General, whether the Law Officers are able to review or challenge a decision of the Metropolitan Police and Crown Prosecution Service not to follow-up the court judgment of April 2015 on election offences in Tower Hamlets with criminal prosecutions; and if he will make a statement.

Jeremy Wright:

The police are operationally independent and ministerial responsibility lies with the Home Office. I do not have oversight of their work.

I am accountable to Parliament for the work of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). It too operates independently of government.

If the police approach the CPS for a decision as to whether an individual should be charged with any offence they will consider firstly whether there is a realistic prospect of conviction and, if so, whether a prosecution is needed in the public interest. In this case the police did not ask the CPS for a charging decision although the CPS has given investigatory advice.

There is a protocol which governs the relationship between the Attorney General and the CPS

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/15197/Protocol_between_the_Attorney_General_and_the_Prosecuting_Departments.pdf.

Paragraph 4c makes clear that the Law Officers will not be consulted about prosecution decisions in cases relating to political parties or the conduct of elections.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY**■ Association of Independent Electricity Producers**

Callum McCaig: [57352]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what meetings he has had with the independent electricity producers since his appointment.

Jesse Norman:

All Ministerial meetings with external organisations are published quarterly on the gov.uk website here:

www.gov.uk/government/collections/decc-ministerial-gifts-hospitality-meetings-and-travel.

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: iNHouse Communications

Melanie Onn: [57663]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has had communications with iNHouse Communications Ltd in connection with any current commercial tender process.

Margot James:

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has not had any communications with iNHouse Communications Ltd in connection with any current commercial tender process.

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Staff

Clive Lewis: [57506]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what roles have been created in the communications team within his Department since its creation.

Margot James:

No new communications roles have been created since the creation of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. The department's communications team is a merger of the ex-Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) and Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) communication teams, as per the wider Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy transition process as part of Machinery of Government (MoG) changes.

■ Developing Countries: Carbon Sequestration

Mr Virendra Sharma: [57461]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the November 2016 remarks of Dr Fatih Birol, executive director of the International Energy Agency, on the role of faster deployment of carbon capture and storage (CCS) in forming an integral part of a strengthened global climate response, what assessment he has made of

the potential merits of delivering aid to support the deployment of CCS in developing countries.

Jesse Norman:

In 2012, the Government committed £60 million from its International Climate Fund (ICF), which forms part of the aid budget, to support the development of carbon capture and storage (CCS) technology in emerging economies.

This International CCS Capacity Building Programme continues to work with, and in, emerging economies to develop the technical and institutional knowledge necessary to enable the deployment of CCS technologies.

■ **Energy: Conservation**

Steve McCabe:

[\[57829\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has to develop an integrated national energy efficiency strategy between central and local government, industry, the third sector and local communities.

Jesse Norman:

The Government is committed to tackling climate change and to the UK's Climate Change Act. Improving our energy efficiency and decarbonising buildings will be key to meeting our domestic commitments, as we look towards 2050.

Having set the fifth carbon budget (2028-2032), we are now looking ahead to our emissions reduction plan, which will be published in 2017. This will set out how we will reduce emissions through the 2020s, and will include important roles for central and local government, industry, the third sector, and local communities in delivering energy efficiency.

■ **Energy: Meters**

Callum McCaig:

[\[57522\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 2 December 2016 to Question 55315, what assessment he has made of the total cost of the smart meter roll out in the event that the deadline for that roll out is extended from 2020 to 2021.

Jesse Norman:

The Government is committed to ensuring all consumers are offered smart meters by the end of 2020.

The Government has not assessed the impact of extending the deadline for rollout to 2021.

John Penrose:

[\[57767\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the finding of the Competition Markets Authority in its report of 24 June 2016, Energy market investigation, that 90 per cent of domestic energy customers were not sure whether

they had or had never switched energy supplier, what assessment his Department has made of whether the roll-out of smart meters will create greater engagement with consumers in the energy market.

Jesse Norman:

By monitoring the near-real time and historical data on the In Home Display, consumers should increasingly be able to choose the right tariff for their needs, and will no longer leave consumers to make switching decisions on the basis of estimated bills. The rollout will also enable consumers quickly to share their data with energy services companies and switching sites, via the now-live Data and Communications Company infrastructure.

These benefits have been recognised by the Competition and Markets Authority, with some of their remedies being time-limited to fill the gap between now and the completion of the smart meter roll-out.

■ EU Emissions Trading Scheme

Alex Cunningham:

[\[57730\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what analysis his Department is undertaking of alternative options for regulating sectors covered by the EU Emissions Trading System after the UK leaves the EU; and whether that work includes analysis of the cost implications of alternative options for the affected sectors.

Jesse Norman:

The Department is considering the UK's future participation in the EU Emissions Trading System as part of delivering a wider settlement that is in the best interests of the UK, including those sectors directly involved in the System. There are a wide range of issues and options to consider, and we are assessing these carefully and in consultation with stakeholders.

■ Forestry: Employment

Alan Brown:

[\[57555\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will hold discussions with the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on ensuring the Government's industrial strategy promotes employment opportunities in the forestry sector.

Mr Nick Hurd:

The Industrial Strategy aims to create an economy that works for everyone – with a strong focus on delivering growth in all parts of the country and in all parts of the economy.

■ Fossil Fuels: Industry

Callum McCaig:

[\[57353\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with the oil and gas industry since the Autumn Statement 2016.

Jesse Norman:

My rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State has engaged with Oil and Gas UK, the trade association for the offshore oil and gas industry, and BEIS officials and the Oil and Gas Authority continue to work closely with the industry.

■ Green Investment Bank**Caroline Lucas:**[\[57892\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make it his policy to update Parliament on the proposed terms of any disposal of the Government's shares in the UK Green Investment Bank before such a sale is agreed.

Mr Nick Hurd:

The Government has set out its plans for the sale of the Green Investment Bank in the document "Green Investment Bank: sale of shares" laid before Parliament on 3 March 2016.

The sale process is commercially confidential and Government will not disclose details of our engagement with bidders. The Government has committed to lay a report before Parliament on the sale of the Green Investment Bank, as soon as reasonably practicable after a disposal of shares has taken place, and this is also a requirement in the Enterprise Act 2016.

Caroline Lucas:[\[57914\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 28 November 2016 to Question 54604, if he will make it his policy to publish any commitments made by the new owners of the UK Green Investment Bank to the green purposes of the Bank.

Mr Nick Hurd:

The Government has committed to lay a report before Parliament on the sale of the Green Investment Bank (GIB), as soon as reasonably practicable after a disposal of shares has taken place, and this is also a requirement in the Enterprise Act 2016.

This report must include an assessment of how the Government's objectives for the disposal have been achieved. This includes commitments on maintaining GIB's green values, and the special share to protect GIB's green purposes in the future.

Caroline Lucas:[\[57915\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 28 November 2016 to Question 54041, if he will in due course publish the details of the sale value achieved for the Government's shares in the UK Green Investment Bank.

Mr Nick Hurd:

The Government has committed to lay a report before Parliament on the sale of the Green Investment Bank, as soon as reasonably practicable after a disposal of shares has taken place, and this is also a requirement in the Enterprise Act 2016.

This report must include an assessment of how the Government's objectives for the disposal have been achieved, which includes the objective to secure value for money for the UK taxpayer.

Caroline Lucas:

[57976]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make it his policy to ensure that all the recommendations made in the Second Report of the Environmental Audit Committee, Session 2015-16, HC 536, on the future of the Green Investment Bank are met before a sales agreement is signed with the preferred bidder for the Government's shares in that Bank.

Mr Nick Hurd:

The Government has published its response to the Environmental Audit Committee's report and recommendations, on 2 February 2016 (Cm 9201 "Government response to Environmental Audit Committee report 'The Future of the Green Investment Bank'").

Caroline Lucas:

[57977]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to his Department's report to Parliament on the proposed disposal of shares in the UK Green Investment Bank, Cm 9214, if he will make it his policy that the preferred bidder for the Government's shares in the UK Green Investment Bank will, as a condition of the sale, be required to give an undertaking to the Government to provide significant new capital annually to that Bank.

Mr Nick Hurd:

The Government has set out its plans for the sale of the Green Investment Bank in the document "Green Investment Bank: sale of shares" laid before Parliament on 3 March 2016.

The sale process is commercially confidential and Government will not disclose details of our engagement with bidders. The Government has committed to lay a report before Parliament on the sale of the Green Investment Bank, as soon as reasonably practicable after a disposal of shares has taken place, and this is also a requirement in the Enterprise Act 2016.

■ Hinckley Point C Power Station

Mr Iain Wright:

[57600]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the implications for his Department's policies on Hinckley Point C of power outages at EDF nuclear reactors in France; and if he will amend the loan guarantees for the construction of Hinckley Point C to make them contingent on the start of power generation at the European Pressurised Reactor at Flamanville by 2020.

Jesse Norman:

[Holding answer 19 December 2016]: The power outages in France do not involve the EPR reactor type to be built at Hinckley Point. There are strong commercial incentives in the Contract for Difference for EDF to build and commission the Hinckley Point C power

plant on time. In respect of the loan guarantee, EDF has confirmed to the Secretary of State that it will not be taking up the guarantee.

■ Housing: Carbon Emissions

Steve McCabe:

[57827]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect of his Department's policies on energy efficiency and sustainable energy on the domestic retrofit industry.

Jesse Norman:

The Government recognises that energy as a sector, including energy efficiency, supports jobs and opportunities right across the country.

In 2014 the domestic and non-domestic energy efficiency and low carbon sectors employed 157,500 people, with turnover of £22.1 billion and exports of £624 million. There is considerable potential for energy efficiency to bring benefits to the UK economy as part of our Industrial Strategy, especially in the building and manufacturing supply chains.

A long-term framework requires a policy mix that supports stability and confidence in the market, and we are working with industry to consider future policy options.

We also commissioned an independent review chaired by Peter Bonfield into consumer advice, protection, standards and enforcement for home energy efficiency and renewable energy measures. This was published on 16th December.

Steve McCabe:

[57830]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the use of Green Open Homes as part of a national energy efficiency strategy.

Steve McCabe:

[57846]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect that a decrease in the activity of Green Open Homes will have on the domestic retrofit market.

Jesse Norman:

The Government provided funding for Green Open Homes to kick start the initiative. The intention was that the scheme would reach a position where it could be sustained by industry support as it provides an opportunity for companies to showcase energy efficiency improvements. The original period of Government support was extended and the value of the scheme will now be demonstrated by whether industry support is forthcoming. Government continues to ensure there is significant support for domestic energy efficiency through the Energy Company Obligation.

■ Housing: Construction**Alan Brown:**[\[57343\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government on using British wood in the construction of new housing to improve energy efficiency and cut carbon emissions.

Jesse Norman:

Ministers in DCLG and BEIS have been having discussions covering a range of topics, including how best to increase housing supply while improving energy efficiency and cutting carbon emissions as we head towards 2050. In addition, the Government is committed to working with the Construction Leadership Council to reduce the trade gap in construction products and materials, including wood.

■ Manufacturing Industries: Trade Competitiveness**Stephen Kinnock:**[\[57339\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans the Government has to provide contingency funding for the continuation of compensation for the indirect costs of the renewables obligation and small scale feed-in-tariffs for steel and other energy intensive industries beyond April 2017.

Jesse Norman:

We are engaging with the European Commission about our state aid pre-notification to move from compensation to exemption for the indirect costs of the Renewables Obligation (RO) and small-scale Feed-in Tariffs (FiT).

Stephen Kinnock:[\[57340\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to (a) progress the Government's application to the European Commission to exempt and (b) bring forward legislative proposals related to the exemption of energy intensive industries from the indirect costs of the renewables obligation and small scale feed-in-tariffs.

Jesse Norman:

We are in discussions with the European Commission about our state aid pre-notification to move from compensation to exemption for the indirect cost of the Renewables Obligation (RO) and small-scale Feed-in Tariffs (FiTs).

Alex Cunningham:[\[57585\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what additional options he has assessed to compensate directly competing energy intensive industries against the costs of the Renewables Obligation and Feed-in Tariffs if state aid approval is not granted.

Jesse Norman:

We notified the European Commission of our proposal to compensate direct competitors to eligible energy intensive businesses last year. We are assessing a number of options that may be available to us within the scope of the EU state aid guidelines.

Alex Cunningham:

[[57586](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what progress has been made on the Government's pre-notification of an application for state aid approval to (a) partially exempt energy intensive industries from the costs of the Renewables Obligation and Feed-in Tariffs and (b) compensate direct competitors against the cost of the Renewables Obligation and Feed-in Tariffs; and if he will make a statement.

Jesse Norman:

We are in discussions with the European Commission about our state aid pre-notification to move from compensation to exemption for the indirect cost of the Renewables Obligation and small-scale Feed-in Tariffs.

We notified the European Commission of our proposal to compensate direct competitors to eligible energy intensive businesses last year.

Stephen Kinnock:

[[57654](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to secure contingency funding for the continuation of compensation for the indirect costs of the Renewables Obligation and small-scale Feed-in Tariffs for energy-intensive industries beyond April 2017.

Jesse Norman:

We are engaging with the European Commission about our state aid pre-notification to move from compensation to exemption for the indirect costs of the Renewables Obligation and small-scale Feed-in Tariffs.

John Healey:

[[57771](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to (a) expedite the Government's application to the European Commission to exempt energy-intensive industries from the indirect costs of the Renewables Obligation and small-scale feed-in tariffs and (b) ensure legislation is in place ahead of the next financial year.

Jesse Norman:

[Holding answer 20 December 2016]: We are in discussions with the European Commission about our state aid pre-notification to move from compensation to exemption for the indirect cost of the Renewables Obligation (RO) and small-scale Feed-in Tariffs (FiT) and have developed draft legislation in preparation.

■ Natural Gas: Republic of Ireland

Stephen Gethins: [\[57853\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the UK leaving the EU on the level of imports of natural gas from the UK by the Republic of Ireland.

Jesse Norman:

The Republic of Ireland imports a significant proportion of its gas supplies from GB, so it is important to ensure continued security of supply after the UK has left the EU.

■ Renewable Energy: Scotland

Callum McCaig: [\[57391\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he took to fulfil his obligation to consult Scottish Ministers, under section 61 of the Scotland Act 2016, on the contents of the Contracts for Difference press announcements made on 9 November 2016.

Jesse Norman:

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has certain obligations under section 61 of the Scotland Act 2016 to consult Scottish Ministers, as well as a statutory duty to consult Scottish Ministers before making regulatory changes under section 24 of the Energy Act 2013.

However, the announcements made on 9 November did not fall within the scope of the obligation as they related to matters falling within stated exceptions to that obligation, or are subject to consultation now with Scottish Ministers. On 9 November 2016 the Department published further details of the strike prices for the second Contracts for Difference (CFD) Allocation Round:

- The budget (including lapse of the minima and application of a maxima, strike prices and the strike price methodology) is an exercise of a statutory power under the CFD scheme and not subject to any Parliamentary procedure and thus falls within the exception to consult in section 90C(2) Scotland Act 1998, as inserted by section 61 Scotland Act 2016: the strike price methodology used had already been agreed for the first CFD round and officials shared a number of technical details with Scottish Government officials ahead of the announcement;
- We announced a consultation on non-mainland GB onshore wind projects and will be actively seeking the views of Scottish Government as part of the consultation exercise; and
- We further announced a call for evidence on fuelled technologies and again will be seeking the views of Scottish Government.

■ Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme**Andrew Bridgen:**[\[57891\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans the Government has to continue the Renewable Heat Incentive.

Jesse Norman:

In the 2015 Autumn Statement the government announced continued funding for the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) schemes, with the budget rising to £1.15bn by 2020/21. Reforms to the RHI were announced on Wednesday 14th December 2016, which are designed to ensure that the RHI focuses on long-term decarbonisation, offers better value for money and protects consumers, supports supply chain growth.

■ Small Businesses: Infrastructure**Chi Onwurah:**[\[57844\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government is taking to improve local infrastructure for small businesses.

Margot James:

This Government is committed to helping small businesses to reach their potential by creating a business environment that supports growth and encourages long-term investment. We have committed £12 billion funding for local areas from 2015-16 to 2020-21 through the Local Growth Fund. This investment has, to date, resulted in over 860 projects to improve local infrastructure, unlock housing, and boost educational attainment.

We are also backing business, by reducing corporation tax to 17% by 2020, cutting red tape by a further £10 billion and encouraging major investments in the UK's research infrastructure.

CABINET OFFICE**■ Civil Contingencies Secretariat****Rachael Maskell:**[\[57940\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the total (a) budget and (b) full-time equivalent workforce was of the Civil Contingencies Secretariat in each of the last six years.

Rachael Maskell:[\[57942\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many people were seconded to the Civil Contingencies Secretariat from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and its associated agencies, during (a) 2015 and (b) 2016; and in what capacity such employees were seconded.

Ben Gummer:

The budget and headcount for the Civil Contingencies Secretariat (CCS) for each of the last six years are set out in the table below. Headcount reflects staff paid directly from the CCS budget.

YEAR	HEADCOUNT	TOTAL BUDGET
2010-2011	75	£9,615,758
2011-2012	76	£10,514,000
2012-2013	64	£10,281,000
2013-2014	64	£9,104,000
2014-2015	61	£8,029,000
2015-2016	75	£10,518,000

A significant proportion of staff in CCS are on loan or secondment from other departments or agencies, including from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and its associated agencies. This figure changes regularly due to staff turnover.

■ **Lord-Lieutenants: Lancashire**

Andrew Stephenson: [\[57581\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, where members of the public can access up-to-date information on deputy lieutenants.

Andrew Stephenson: [\[57582\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many lord lieutenants and deputy lieutenants there are in (a) England, (b) the North West and (c) Lancashire.

Andrew Stephenson: [\[57583\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will list the date of appointment for each deputy lieutenant for Lancashire.

Andrew Stephenson: [\[57584\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will list the names of the current deputy lieutenants for Lancashire.

Andrew Stephenson: [\[57593\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, in which districts of Lancashire each of the existing deputy lieutenants for Lancashire reside.

Ben Gummer:

There are 47 Lord-Lieutenants in England, five of whom are in the North West. Like other counties, Lancashire has one Lord-Lieutenant.

Information on the number of serving Deputy Lieutenants is not held centrally: the number of Deputy Lieutenants in a Lieutenancy at any time is a matter for the Lord-Lieutenant, subject to limits calculated on the basis of population size. Lieutenancy websites may hold relevant information about current Deputy Lieutenants.

TREASURY

■ Personal Income

Dawn Butler:

[\[57761\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the accuracy and implications of the analysis published by the Women's Budget Group and Runnymede Trust on 28 November 2016 on the effect of tax and benefit changes and changes in public spending on lone mothers relative to the effect on other groups.

Dawn Butler:

[\[57762\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the accuracy and implications of the analysis published by the Women's Budget Group and Runnymede Trust on 28 November 2016 on the effect of changes to taxes and benefits between 2010 and 2020 on white men from the highest income group relative to the effect on other groups.

Dawn Butler:

[\[57763\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the accuracy and implications of the analysis published by the Women's Budget Group and Runnymede Trust on 28 November 2016 on the cumulative effect on Asian women from the lowest income group of changes to taxes and benefits between 2010 and 2020.

Dawn Butler:

[\[57764\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the accuracy and implications of the analysis published by the Women's Budget Group and Runnymede Trust on 28 November 2016 on the effect of the Government's fiscal policy between 2010 and 2020 on the income of BME women relative to the effect on the income of other groups.

Dawn Butler:

[\[57765\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make a formal response to the analysis published by the Women's Budget Group and Runnymede Trust on 28 November 2016 of the effect of the Government's fiscal policy on Black and Asian families.

Jane Ellison:

The Government does not agree with some of the assumptions underpinning the analysis; such as, that income from benefits would not be shared within the household, the imprecise distributional impact of spending on public services and the lack of accounting for how the government is helping women and families of different backgrounds, by providing a stable economy.

The number of women in work has increased by 1.3 million since 2010 to 14.9 million and the female employment rate stands at a record high 69.8%. The number of Black,

Asian and Minority Ethnic women in work is at a record high. The Lone Parent employment rate, which covers both male and female lone parents, is currently the highest on record at 66.5%, over 10 percentage points above the 2005 rate.

We have put women front and centre of our economic plan, helping more women than ever before to start businesses and get the support they need to work through Tax-Free Childcare, and childcare support through Working Tax Credits and Universal Credit.

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Affordable Housing

Mr Clive Betts:

[55903]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how much of the extra £1.4 billion announced in the Autumn Statement 2016 for affordable homes will be available to provide (a) social housing and (b) affordable homes to rent; and how many extra homes in each such category he estimates that extra investment will provide by 2020.

Gavin Barwell:

[Holding answer 6 December 2016]: The additional £1.4 billion investment in the Affordable Homes Programme 2016-21 will provide a further estimated 40,000 social homes by March 2021. The investment, as part of the wider flexible programme, will provide a mix of affordable housing including affordable homes for rent and low cost home ownership. The actual split of tenures will depend on bids received, based on the assessment of local needs and local housing markets.

■ Affordable Housing: Construction

Mr Clive Betts:

[54973]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, with reference to paragraph 3.5 of Autumn Statement 2016, how many affordable homes to rent will be built in each year from 2017 to 2020; and how many of those homes will be built with a central government grant.

Gavin Barwell:

[Holding answer 30 November 2016]: The additional £1.4 billion investment in the Affordable Homes Programme will deliver an estimated additional 40,000 affordable housing starts by 2020/21, increasing the overall capital budget to £7.1 billion up to 2021 to deliver an estimated 225,000 affordable homes.

The flexible programme will fund a mix of affordable housing including affordable homes for rent and low cost home ownership. The actual split of tenures will depend on bids received, based on the assessment of local needs and local housing markets. All homes provided under the programme will be part-funded by a central government grant; this is in addition to other affordable homes delivered without grant and those delivered with Right to Buy receipts.

■ Communities and Local Government: Horizon 2020

Helen Goodman: [57685]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, with reference to the oral contribution by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the Treasury Committee on 12 December 2016, in response to Q311, who in his Department is responsible for assessing whether grant applications for Horizon 2020 funding are (a) value for money and (b) in line with Government objectives.

Andrew Percy:

I refer the hon Member to the answer given to her by my rt hon Friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury to Question UIN 57694:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-12-14/57694/>.

■ Communities and Local Government: Staff

Diana Johnson: [57719]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how many staff have been employed in the Local Growth Unit in each region in each year since 2009-10.

Andrew Percy:

Cities and Local Growth Unit was created in December 2013. There are six local teams. These were entirely BIS staff until April 2016, when one member of DCLG staff was added to each team. The total regional headcount is 77. The current local team headcount in each region is as follows: Yorkshire and North East (14), North West (13), East Midlands and South East Midlands (10), West Midlands (13), London and East (13) and South Central and West (14). The figures have remained largely stable. The Unit also currently has four fast streamers based with the local teams on time limited placements, one in Gateshead, one in Manchester and two in Birmingham.

Rachael Maskell: [57939]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what the total (a) budget and (b) full-time equivalent workforce was of his Department's Resilience and Emergencies Division in each of the last six years.

Andrew Percy:

Government has paid out almost £300 million to help householders, communities and businesses to get back on their feet, following the winter flooding of 2015/16.

In the previous five years, the Departmental pay budgets were not broken down to this level of detail so there are not comparable figures available. The staffing levels in this division fluctuate, using extra capacity to manage the coordination of the Government's recovery programmes such as the public disorder of 2011, major floods of 2013/14 and major winter floods of 2015/16.

In 2016/17, the total pay budget for the Department's Resilience and Emergencies Division for 2016/17 is £3.01 million. Levels of staff have risen and fallen as the Government response has increased and been stood down.

■ Communities and Local Government: Work Experience

Louise Haigh:

[\[56301\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how many unpaid internships there are in his Department.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The Department for Communities and Local Government has no unpaid internships. The Civil Service runs the Summer Diversity Internship Programme, which is a two month placement and is paid. The Civil Service also runs the Early Diversity Internship Programme which is for a week only (and more akin to work experience) - it provides expenses to encourage applications and ensure there is no financial loss. The Department participates in both of these programmes.

■ Hedges and Ditches

Kate Hoey:

[\[57884\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, with reference to the Matters Relating to High Hedges: notes to local authorities, published by the Department for Communities and Local Government in 2008, page 5, when the five-year review of high hedges legislation was carried out.

Kate Hoey:

[\[57885\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, with reference to the Matters Relating to High Hedges: notes to local authorities, published by the Department for Communities and Local Government in 2008, page 5, what the conclusions were of the review of high hedges legislation.

Kate Hoey:

[\[57903\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of the implications for his policies of the operation of the amended high hedges legislation in Scotland which includes deciduous trees.

Gavin Barwell:

My Department has no plans to review existing high hedges legislation. Local authorities are best-placed to resolve private disputes about tall evergreen hedges and loss of light and visual amenity to neighbouring homes and gardens.

■ Local Government: West Midlands

Daniel Kawczynski:

[\[58037\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if he will make an estimate of the potential effect on (a) staffing, (b) administrative and (c) other costs of replacing Shropshire Council and Telford and Wrekin Council with a single unitary authority.

Mr Marcus Jones:

It is for the Shropshire Council and Telford & Wrekin Council to decide whether they wish to merge into a single unitary council to improve the local governance of the area and make it more sustainable, and if so to make an assessment of the potential effects on services, staffing, and costs which they would need to include as part of any formal governance change to be submitted to the Secretary of State.

■ Neighbourhood Development Plans: West Midlands**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**[\[57786\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, with reference to the oral contribution of the Minister of State for Housing and Planning of 13 December 2016, Official Report, column 733, on the Neighbourhood Planning Bill, what steps he has taken to ask Birmingham City Council to consult the Royal Sutton Coldfield town council on the measures included in the Birmingham City Council Development Plan 2031.

Gavin Barwell:

[Holding answer 20 December 2016]: Local planning authorities are required to prepare and comply with a Statement of Community Involvement throughout the preparation of a local plan. For Birmingham Development Plan this included consulting with resident associations and neighbourhood forums, parish councils and the general public, in addition to a list of other relevant consultees at the required stages to inform the production of a draft plan, to seek representations on that plan prior to it being submitted for independent examination and on modifications to the plan proposed during examination. Local groups and representatives also provided evidence to the Inspector as part of the examination process. The Inspector examining the Birmingham Development Plan confirmed that the council undertook widespread consultation and that the consultations met all the relevant legal requirements, including compliance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. Notwithstanding this, I have written to Birmingham City Council to make them aware of the matters you have raised.

■ Nurseries: Non-domestic Rates**Tulip Siddiq:**[\[57848\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 21 October 2016 to Question 49076, if he will publish the amount that the Government has paid to each local authority in England to offer business rates reductions for childcare providers.

Mr Marcus Jones:

Under the business rates retention system, where a local authority uses its discretionary powers to grant business rates discounts the resulting loss of business rates income is effectively shared equally between the local authority and the Government. The Government does not collect data on particular types of premises that have benefited from local discretionary relief.

■ Solar Power: Non-domestic Rates**Mr Alan Campbell:**[\[58014\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to ensure that proposed increases in business rates do not have a negative effect on the British solar industry.

Mr Alan Campbell:[\[58015\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of changes in the business rate on the British solar industry.

Mr Marcus Jones:

Business rates are based on valuations from the Valuation Office Agency and we do not intervene in their independent assessments. We have put in place a £3.6 billion transitional relief scheme to ensure that no ratepayer is unfairly penalised by the 2017 revaluation.

■ Travellers: Caravan Sites**Rebecca Long Bailey:**[\[56884\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what estimate his Department has made of the number of local authority Travellers' sites that will be required in each of the next 10 years.

Rebecca Long Bailey:[\[56885\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what estimate his Department has made of the number of Travellers' sites that are required in each local authority area.

Rebecca Long Bailey:[\[56886\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what mechanisms there are to ensure local authorities meet the required number of Travellers' sites in each local authority area.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The Government has made no such estimates.

It is the responsibility of local authorities to assess all local housing needs through their local plan.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ Department for Culture, Media and Sport: Horizon 2020****Helen Goodman:**[\[57686\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the oral contribution by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the Treasury Committee on 12 December 2016, in response to Q311, who in her Department is responsible for assessing whether

grant applications for Horizon 2020 funding are (a) value for money and (b) in line with Government objectives.

Matt Hancock:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him by my rt. hon. Friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury today to Question UIN 57694.

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

Tim Farron:

[[56227](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, how much her Department spent on travel that was not standard class in each of the last five years.

Matt Hancock:

Over the last 3 years the Department, and its predecessors, spent the following amounts on non-standard class travel:

2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
£57,900.30	£61,605.77	£25,283.42
Overall Total: £144,803.73		

Total figures for 2011/12 and 2012/13 are not held centrally and to obtain them would incur a disproportionate cost.

■ **Mobile Broadband: Rural Areas**

Glyn Davies:

[[57589](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what competition measures will be promoted in the forthcoming auction of 2.3GHz and 3.4GHz spectrum in order to secure improved mobile coverage in rural areas.

Matt Hancock:

Ofcom will conduct all forthcoming spectrum auctions in line with their published competition objectives, which can be found here: <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/about-ofcom/latest/media/media-releases/2016/ofcom-outlines-rules-for-mobile-spectrum-auction>.

■ **Museums and Galleries**

Tom Watson:

[[57594](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, how many museums she has visited in an official capacity since her appointment.

Matt Hancock:

14.

■ Museums and Galleries: Closures

Tom Watson:

[57595]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, how many regional museums have closed in each of the last six years.

Matt Hancock:

The Department does not hold data on museums closures in the last six years. However, DCMS is currently in the process of conducting a review of the museums sector, which includes consideration of the resilience of the sector. A link to the Museums Review consultation may be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/review-of-museums-in-england>. I also refer the hon Gentleman to the answer provided to PQ 49502.

EDUCATION

■ Children: Protection

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:

[57412]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to help local social services to develop primary prevention strategies to reduce child maltreatment; and what discussions she has had with those services on involving other services in the development of those strategies.

Edward Timpson:

The Government's statutory guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, revised last year, is crystal clear about the importance that we attach to preventative services. Providing help early, before issues and problems escalate, is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later.

The *Working Together* guidance sets out that local agencies should work together to put processes in place for the effective assessment of the needs of individual children who may benefit from early help services. It is right that decisions about the provision of services, including preventative, early help services, are taken locally by agencies that are best placed to plan provision, taking account of local needs and circumstances.

Through the Children and Social Work Bill, the Government is introducing a stronger but more flexible statutory framework that will support local partners to work together more effectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. The new framework will allow the safeguarding partners – namely health services, the police and the local authority – much greater freedom to make decisions themselves as to who they work with and how best to arrange their services to improve the outcomes for children in their area. The new arrangements are based on the findings of the Wood Review, published in May 2016, which included extensive consultation with the sector.

In 2013 the government set up the Early Intervention Foundation, funded by the Department for Education, the Department for Work and Pensions, the Department of Health, and the Department for Communities and Local Government. It operates

independently of central government, to establish a robust evidence base for what approaches work best in early intervention and to support commissioners in implementing early intervention programmes and practice in their local areas.

The Government is also setting up a new What Works Centre for children's social care. The What Works Centre will focus on improving outcomes for our most vulnerable children and their families. It will identify best practice in supporting children suffering from, or at risk of, abuse and/or neglect. The WWC will be able to build a truly comprehensive picture of what excellence looks like by looking at both effective interventions and practice systems. We expect the WWC to work in close partnership with the sector and bring new and innovative approaches to gathering, disseminating and embedding its findings, drawing on lessons from a wide range of interventions – including reviews of serious cases and our Children's Social Care Innovation Programme.

Over the last two years the Government has invested over £100 million in 53 projects through the Children's Social Care Innovation Programme. The programme is supporting local authorities and other organisations to develop new approaches in children's social care, including preventing child maltreatment. In April this year we committed a further £200m to support innovation and improvement over the next four years.

■ Department for Education: Horizon 2020

Helen Goodman:

[57688]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the oral contribution by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the Treasury Committee on 12 December 2016, in response to Q311, who in her Department is responsible for assessing whether grant applications for Horizon 2020 funding are (a) value for money and (b) in line with Government objectives.

Joseph Johnson:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to her by my rt. hon. Friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury to Question UIN 57694:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-12-14/57694/>.

■ Obesity: Children

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[58005]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when she expects the outcome of Ofsted's thematic review of obesity, healthy eating and physical activity in schools to be published.

Edward Timpson:

The childhood obesity plan, published in August 2016, included a commitment to undertake a thematic review of obesity, healthy eating and physical activity in 2017. We are working with Ofsted and the Department of Health to ensure we meet this commitment.

■ Overseas Students

Jonathan Edwards: [\[57269\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the effect of the UK's decision to leave the EU on the number of international students studying at UK higher education institutions.

Joseph Johnson:

Any effects on the number of potential Home, EU and non-EU students following the UK's exit from the EU will be considered as part of wider discussions about the UK's relationship with the EU.

■ School Standards and Framework Act 1998

Mr Graham Allen: [\[58051\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 14 December 2016 to Question 56128, whether she plans to repeal paragraph 4 of Schedule 22 of the Equality Act 2010 which exempts provisions of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 that relate to religious aspects of the appointment and dismissal of teachers.

Nick Gibb:

There are no plans to repeal paragraph 4 of Schedule 22 of the Equality Act.

As set out in my response to question 56128, we consider that the provisions in sections 60(4) and 60(5) of the School Standards and Framework Act comply with the EU Employment Equality Directive Article 4(2) and as such see no requirement to make any changes to the Equality Act in this respect.

■ Schools: Food

Mrs Sharon Hodgson: [\[58004\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when she plans to incorporate new guidance on sugar and nutrition into school food standards.

Edward Timpson:

We agreed to update the School Food Standards in light of refreshed government dietary recommendations as part of the 'Childhood Obesity: a plan for action' published in August 2016. Departmental officials have begun talks with Public Health England colleagues about how best to do this.

■ Students: Finance

Fiona Mactaggart: [\[57421\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how long, on average, students wait for a decision on funding if they require the Home Office to confirm to Student Finance England that their immigration status makes them eligible to apply for that funding.

Fiona Mactaggart:[\[57422\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for the Home Department on the quota of 20 immigration status checks per day allocated to Student Finance England.

Joseph Johnson:

The Home Office works to an agreement to confirm decisions on eligibility for student funding within 10 working days. Regulatory changes that created a new long residency category of customers made earlier in 2016 have resulted in an increase in numbers of customers being referred for checks with the Home Office. This has led to an increase in processing times for such checks. Extra resource has now been provided to increase the volume completed by 25% per day.

It is the responsibility of individual students to provide the necessary evidence in support of their application. My officials are working with the Home Office to explore what additional support or alternative solutions can be provided to increase the speed of immigration status checks.

■ Universities: Pay**Rebecca Long Bailey:**[\[56874\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will require all universities in the UK to publish regular remuneration reports.

Joseph Johnson:

The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) already requires all the institutions which it funds to publish the salaries of their Vice Chancellors in their annual accounts.

Rebecca Long Bailey:[\[56875\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what measures the Government plans to introduce to regulate pay increases granted by internal remuneration bodies to Chancellors and Vice Chancellors of universities.

Joseph Johnson:

Universities are autonomous bodies and it is for them to determine pay arrangements for their staff. However the Government said in the 2016 Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) grant letter that,

"it is clear that efficiency includes demonstrating restraint in senior pay and remains concerned about the substantial upwards drift of the salaries of some top management.

We would like to see leaders in the sector exercise much greater restraint".

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Agriculture: Subsidies

Rachael Maskell:

[[57963](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many Basic Payment Scheme claims made in 2015 are yet to be fully resolved by the Rural Payments Agency; and how many such claims were resolved by that agency in each of the last 12 months.

George Eustice:

[Holding answer 19 December 2016]: As at the 21 December, in addition to claims which the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) cannot pay due to legal reasons such as probate, there are 6 BPS claims to complete for BPS 2015. The RPA is investigating new queries it has received and is currently reviewing 2,539 of these.

We understand how important BPS payments are to farmers and we're working hard to get money into bank accounts. We've agreed that BPS 2016 payments for certain claimants whose 2015 claims are still being reviewed, such as some types of common land claims, should not be held up. The 2016 payment will be based on the current 2016 claim information we hold.

■ Bottles: Recycling

Derek Thomas:

[[57651](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of bottle deposit schemes as a means to achieve cleaner beaches.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

Defra analysed the costs and benefits of implementing a deposit return system (DRS) for single-use drink containers as part of the 2011 Review of Waste Policy in England. We also sought views in the 2012 consultation on higher packaging recycling targets.

This work showed that introducing a DRS may increase recycling and reduce litter but might impose additional costs on businesses, consumers and local authorities (which would lose revenue from recycling). However, we lack evidence to quantify these benefits and costs appropriately.

Last year, the Scottish Government published a feasibility study and a call for evidence investigating the implementation of a DRS for single-use drink containers in Scotland. This valuable work highlighted significant uncertainties about the impacts and benefits a DRS would have, notably regarding costs, environmental quality and littering and existing waste collection systems. We will review any further evidence on DRS.

We will continue to focus on improving existing waste collection and recycling systems. We are also developing a new Litter Strategy for England to help coordinate and maximise the impact of anti-litter activity by local government, industry and others.

■ Cadmium: Pollution**Dr Andrew Murrison:**[\[57703\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if her Department will quantify the contribution to soil cadmium levels of (a) phosphate-based fertilisers and (b) environmental pollution.

George Eustice:

Defra does not hold the information requested.

The rate at which cadmium levels in soil change is measured in decades, and to calculate the contribution to soil cadmium levels of (a) phosphate-based fertilisers and (b) environmental pollution would require historical data on cadmium input rates that have not been collected. In particular, the cadmium concentration of phosphate-based fertilisers is not regulated in the UK, and Defra does not collect data on it.

However, Defra does have a recent estimate of the current average rate of input of cadmium into European soils through various mechanisms. For (a) phosphate-based fertilisers this is 0.8 grams of cadmium per hectare per year; and for (b) environmental pollution this is 0.35 grams of cadmium per hectare per year. This estimate is part of the evidence base for an EU fertiliser regulation proposed in March, which limits the concentration of cadmium allowed in phosphate-based EC fertilisers.

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Horizon 2020**Helen Goodman:**[\[57689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the oral contribution by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the Treasury Committee on 12 December 2016, in response to Q311, who in her Department is responsible for assessing whether grant applications for Horizon 2020 funding are (a) value for money and (b) in line with Government objectives.

George Eustice:

I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my Rt Hon. Friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury on 20 December 2016 to PQ UIN 57694.

■ Dogs: Smuggling**Dr Lisa Cameron:**[\[57904\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans her Department has for ensuring that intelligence on illegal puppy importations is shared between (a) Euro Tunnel, (b) ferry operators and (c) other carriers and relevant enforcement agencies.

George Eustice:

Sharing intelligence across government and with those organisations transporting pet animals is one of the most important ways of identifying illegal puppy importation. A central intelligence unit has been established within the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA). One of the unit's roles is to review available data and intelligence and ensure it

can be shared appropriately with enforcement agencies, animal welfare charities and carriers.

An operational group comprising government enforcement agencies, animal welfare charities and relevant carriers has been set up to support the unit. The role of this group is to identify data and intelligence that can be used to uncover illegality, threats, trends and concerns surrounding puppy importation.

Dr Lisa Cameron: [\[57906\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if her Department will assess the potential merits of moving enforcement responsibilities from carriers to Government agencies in order better to tackle the illegal importation of puppies by way of the pet travel scheme.

Dr Lisa Cameron: [\[57907\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will make it a requirement for animal health resources to be available at UK borders accurately to age dogs as required.

George Eustice:

Defra takes the issue of the illegal importation of puppies and abuse of the pet travel scheme seriously. All pet animals entering Great Britain on approved routes under European Union Pet Travel Scheme are subject to documentary and identity checks. These are performed by carrier's staff or checkers acting on their behalf. The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) train and appoint carriers and pet animal checkers. APHA also undertake random audits. Audits carried out in 2015 identified only 1.3% of the animals checked to be non-compliant with pet travel rules. APHA work closely with carriers and pet animal checkers to address any issues identified and provide additional training as required.

We have no current plans to amend the arrangements for checking pet animals at the border. Defra is currently reviewing the operation of the Pet Travel Scheme in England and review includes the pet checking and carrier approval process. As part of the review the Department held a public consultation during the autumn of 2016. We are currently analysing the feedback from the consultation which will be published as part of the overall review in 2017. Since December 2015 APHA Port of Dover staff have been working in partnership with the Dogs Trust to identify, seize and quarantine underage puppies illegally transported into the country.

■ Flood Control

Rachael Maskell: [\[57989\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what proportion of the £12.5 million allocated to the Environment Agency for temporary flood defences, as set out in the National Flood Resilience Review, has been spent by the Environment Agency since the publication of that review in September 2016.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The Environment Agency has spent all of the £7.65 million allocated for use in 2016/17. The majority of this funding has been used to purchase around 20 miles of temporary flood barrier, which increases the Environment Agency's overall holding to around 25 miles. The Environment Agency has also doubled their stock of sandbags from 250,000 to 500,000 and purchased two additional Incident Command Vehicles.

The Environment Agency will use the remainder of the funding in 2017/18 to purchase an additional 70 pumps and ancillary equipment, three further Incident Command Vehicles and storage and logistics capabilities.

Rachael Maskell:[\[57991\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what flood risk assessment she has received from the water telecommunications industries since the publication of the national Flood Resilience Review in September 2016; how many key local infrastructure assets have been identified by those industries as vulnerable to flooding; and how many such assets have had temporary improvements made to increase their resilience to flooding.

Rachael Maskell:[\[57992\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many of the 530 key local infrastructure assets identified by her Department as vulnerable to flooding in circumstances envisaged by the Environment Agency's Extreme Flood Outlines have had improvements made to their flood defences since the publication of the National Flood Resilience Review in September 2016.

Rachael Maskell:[\[57993\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what each key local infrastructure asset identified in the National Flood Resilience Review as being vulnerable to flooding in circumstances envisaged by the Environment Agency's Extreme Flood Agency's Outlines is.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

Good progress is being made on the implementation of the National Flood Resilience Review recommendations. All infrastructure companies have completed their initial assessments of their vulnerable sites for suitability for temporary flood defences and as a result companies are investing heavily in resilience measures to ensure continuity of supply this winter. This includes putting in place or having deployment plans for temporary defences, and other contingency measures such as rezoning of water supplies and the use of mobile telecommunications cells to reduce the risk of disruption of services. Further to this, the Government is working with utility companies to improve permanent defences in the longer term.

Rachael Maskell:[\[57995\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, which public authorities have provided partnership funding for flood protection; and how much each such authority has provided to date.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The Environment Agency receives spending information from public authorities on both their own flood and coastal risk management projects and the Environment Agency projects to which they contribute.

This information is grouped into "public contributions" for each scheme, enabling the Environment Agency to have an overview of partnership funding available for flood and coastal risk management projects since 2011. Contributions are however not broken down by public authority and the Environment Agency does not hold nationally a list of all public authorities that have provided partnership funding.

Around 300 public authorities, including Local Authorities, Highways Authorities and Internal Drainage Boards, are expected to deliver projects between April 2015 and March 2021. Over this period they are expected to contribute around £300 million in public contributions. This is in addition to other funding sources such as contributions from the private sector and local levy funding.

Rachael Maskell:[\[57996\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what proportion of the partnership funding for flood protection raised within the current six-year programme has come from private sector donations.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

To reduce the risk of flooding to a further 300,000 homes as part of the flood and coastal erosion risk management investment programme 2015 to 2021, the Environment Agency expects currently that 1 per cent of the partnership funding contributions required will come from private sources. The Environment Agency continues to work in partnership with the private sector and expect that further contributions will be secured as the programme progresses.

Rachael Maskell:[\[57997\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what targets her Department has set for raising partnership funding for flood protection in (a) 2016-17, (b) 2017-18, (c) 2018-19, (d) 2019-20 and (e) 2020-21.

Rachael Maskell:[\[57998\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what targets her Department has set for raising partnership funding for flood protection in each year from 2011; and what the actual amount was of such funding raised in each of those years.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The Department did not set a target for the amount of partnership funding for flood protection to be raised between 2011 and March 2015, and no annual target has been set for the period from April 2015. The target for the whole six year period from April 2015 to March 2021 is to raise the equivalent of at least an additional 15 per cent of the total capital allocation from partnership funding on top of Government's contribution.

The partnership funding each year since 2011:

2011/12 = £39 million

2012/13 = £40 million

2013/14 = £83 million

2014/15 = £79 million

2015/16 = £74 million

The above figures are rounded down to the nearest million and include expenditure of funds raised by Regional Flood and Coastal Committees through local levy.

Rachael Maskell:

[57999]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much resource funding was allocated to flood risk management in each of the last six complete financial years; and what resource funding has been allocated to flood risk management in the current financial year.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

All government resource spending allocated to flood risk management in each of the last six years and for the current financial year can be found in the Central Government Funding for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management in England publication, which is available on the gov.uk website or via the following link:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/549093/Funding_for_Flood_and_Coastal_Erosion_in_England_Sep_2016.pdf

Rachael Maskell:

[58001]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what her most recent estimate is of the number of lead local flood authorities which (a) have and (b) have not published a local flood risk strategy.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

Lead Local Flood Authorities report their progress with local flood risk management strategies annually. As of 31 March 2016 out of the 152 Lead Local Flood Authorities in England, 114 had completed and published their strategy and 26 had completed or were undergoing public consultation on their draft. Of the remaining 12, we have been monitoring their progress and encouraging to complete as quickly as possible.

■ Flood Control: Databases

Rachael Maskell:

[57990]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what progress has been made in establishing the new ResilienceDirect database; how many flood defence assets are recorded in that database; and how many new subscribers have been granted access to that database since its creation.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

ResilienceDirect is the UK's secure and free to use web-based platform for the Resilience Community. ResilienceDirect enables the sharing of real time information across all

category 1 and 2 emergency responders, government departments and other key agencies, including the Devolved Administrations, for emergency planning, response and recovery. The database holds a total of 164,049 Environment Agency flood defence assets, such as walls, embankments and flood gates, which operate together to manage flood risk in England. Currently there are over 20,000 users.

■ Floods

Rachael Maskell: [\[57941\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the total (a) budget and (b) full-time equivalent workforce was of her Department's Flood Management Team in each of the last six years.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The Government is investing £2.5 billion over six years on improving flood defences (up until 2021). This is a real terms increase in capital investment – up from £1.7 billion in the last Parliament and £1.5 billion between 2005 and 2010. We are exceeding our manifesto commitment by building 1,500 new flood defence schemes that will better protect over 300,000 more homes.

The capital programme is built up of flood and coastal erosion schemes developed and promoted by local authorities, internal drainage boards and the Environment Agency in collaboration with communities.

Separate to this, the budget – or resource Departmental Expenditure Limit (RDEL) – and full time equivalent workforce (FTE) figures for Core Defra's flood management team (i.e. not including flood management teams in Defra's Agencies and Non-Departmental Public Bodies), which is responsible for developing policy on flood risk management and responding to emergencies including flood, is set out below:

FY	CORE DEFRA FLOOD MANAGEMENT AND EMERGENCIES RDEL (£M)	CORE DEFRA FLOOD MANAGEMENT AND EMERGENCIES FTE
11/12	36.0	31.67
12/13	43.6	31.67
13/14	25.4	35.47
14/15	25.4	37.47
15/16	15.9	37.70
16/17	8.1	40.0

The change in RDEL over the last 6 years is explained primarily by the gradual transfer of funding for councils' Lead Local Flood Authority roles (LLFAs) from Defra to the

Department for Communities and Local Government. This began in FY 13/14; FY 16/17 is the first year DCLG was responsible for all of central Government's funding for LLFAs.

■ Government Departments: Food

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[[58017](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, which Departments have adopted the Government buying standards for food catering services since 18 August 2016.

George Eustice:

The Government Buying Standard for Food and Catering Services (GBSF) was initially published in 2011 and is mandated for procurement of food and catering services by all central government Departments as part of the Crown Commercial Service Facilities Management framework.

This Government has also committed to implement in central departments the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) approach as set out in the Plan for Public Procurement of Food and Catering Services published in July 2014. Defra officials are working with leads in other Departments to raise awareness and understanding, and ensure uptake in forthcoming contract renewals.

■ Members: Correspondence

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[[57872](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when she plans to reply to the letter of 21 November 2016 from the hon. Member for Washington and Sunderland West on Monument Park, Pattinson Road, Waste Site Cluster.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

I replied to the hon. Member for Washington and Sunderland on 20 December 2016.

■ Rabies

Dr Lisa Cameron:

[[57908](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if her Department will consider reintroducing the requirement for rabies titration tests and post-rabies antibody titration test wait periods at the border.

George Eustice:

Defra takes the threat to public and animal health posed by animals entering the United Kingdom seriously and requires appropriate rabies vaccination for pet animals entering the country. Travel between EU Member States and from some lower risk countries requires a rabies vaccination followed by a 21 day waiting period. For countries with higher rabies risk stricter rules apply involving a rabies titration test and waiting period. A quantitative risk assessment was carried out by rabies experts in 2011. They judged

the risk of a pet animal with rabies entering the UK under the EU pet travel rules as very low.

Defra has no plans to amend the rabies controls for pet animals entering the United Kingdom but continues to monitor the disease situation and will undertake a further, formal risk assessment if the evidence indicates that one is warranted.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

■ Cadmium: Pollution

Dr Andrew Murrison:

[57714]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential implications of the reduction in cadmium within phosphate fertilisers in the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and the Council COM(2016)157/F1 for (a) the UK's dependence on Russia and (b) the stability of North African economies.

Sir Alan Duncan:

The Government has made no such assessment. Due to uncertainty around the cost and the industrial processes to reduce cadmium content, it would be difficult to assess how the proposed limits on the concentration of cadmium in fertiliser will affect North and West African phosphate rock miners, and therefore also unclear to what extent UK and wider European industry will switch to Russian or other sources.

■ Democratic Republic of Congo: Uganda

Andrew Rosindell:

[57701]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment his Department has made of the stability of the border between Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

We continue to follow developments on the border between the DRC and Uganda. As with many borders in the world there are periods of tension between peoples, particularly on porous border such as this. At present we do not assess the border to be unstable.

■ Egypt: Politics and Government

Daniel Zeichner:

[57862]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of democracy stability in Egypt.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

Egypt has made progress towards more democratic institutions through the passing of a new Constitution with better protection of rights and freedoms in 2014, the completion of Presidential elections in 2014 and Parliamentary elections in 2015. We welcome these

steps and continue to support the Egyptian people's aspiration for a full and functioning democracy.

We also look to President Sisi and the Egyptian government to make more progress on human rights and freedoms. We remain concerned about detentions of political and civil society activists and journalists, deaths and reports of torture in police detention and prisons, and the continued narrowing of space for civil society to operate freely. A more open political environment with better protection of human rights is vital to Egypt's long term stability.

■ EU Institutions

Stephen Gethins: [\[57858\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many premises in which locations the UK shares with EU institutions.

Sir Alan Duncan:

We are currently co-located with the European External Action Service in four locations, Baghdad, Dar Es Salaam, Nouakchott and Colombo.

■ Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Pay

Jake Berry: [\[56988\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what the percentage gap in earnings is between the highest-paid and lowest-paid full-time employee in his Department.

Sir Alan Duncan:

The lowest paid full-time employee is paid approximately 11% of the salary of the highest paid employee.

Jake Berry: [\[57032\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what the percentage gap in earnings is between the pay of full-time staff in the highest pay grade in his Department and average full-time pay in that Department.

Sir Alan Duncan:

The average salary of a full time employee is approximately 21% of that of the highest paid.

■ Foreign Relations

Douglas Chapman: [\[57403\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to his Foreword to the National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015, First Annual Report 2016, Cm 9161, what definition the Government uses of soft power; and how the Government quantifies the statement that the UK has some of the strongest and most effective soft power in the world.

Alok Sharma:

A commonly accepted definition of soft power, based on the work of Joseph Nye, is 'the ability to affect others through influencing, persuading, and eliciting positive attraction, in order to achieve outcomes'. The UK's soft power stems from a wide range of resources, many of which are completely independent of government. This includes the UK's values, the English language, our cultural heritage and assets, and our world class education system, all of which attract tourists, students and business investment. In addition, the Government has chosen to invest in organisations such as the British Council and the BBC World Service, which build understanding between countries and promote the exchange of information and ideas.

The UK is recognised as a leader in soft power by a range of external organisations. The UK has ranked in the top three in four different soft power rankings since 2012, most recently ranking second in the 2016 Portland Soft Power index.

■ Ghana: Customs**James Duddridge:**[\[58023\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the efficiency of the customs service in Ghana.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

Ghana's customs service falls under the responsibility of the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA) with whom we share a good relationship.

We support the World Bank's respected and influential annual Doing Business Survey, which reports on many of the key issues that businesses face in countries across the world. One important indicator that the report examines relates to trading across borders. The effectiveness of a country's customs procedures are highly relevant to this indicator. For Ghana, the 2016 survey indicated a small improvement in the country's relative ranking for trading across borders. However, burdensome procedures and corruption at borders are among the most problematic factors for trade in Ghana. Customs procedures lack efficiency and exporting and importing require time-consuming paperwork to clear goods at the border. Corruption and bribery in these processes are widespread. A recent report by US based GAN Integrity found that whilst Ghana performs best in the West African region for road governance in relation to customs services, controls and demands for bribes are increasing at the Tema port exit.

We continue to follow these matters closely and regularly raise concerns about the ease of doing business including corruption with the Government of Ghana.

■ Israel: Fires**Stephen Gethins:**[\[57805\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what reports his Department has received on the effect of recent wildfires in Israel.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The wildfires were brought under control on 28 November. An Israeli Government spokesperson said that 150 people were injured and 560 homes destroyed. Israeli Finance Minister Kahlon announced plans for compensation for those affected.

■ LGBT People: Oppression**Tim Farron:**[\[57918\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, which countries he has identified as actively persecuting LGBT citizens; and what discussions he has had with his counterparts in those countries relating to such persecution.

Alok Sharma:

Defending the rights of LGB&T people is an important part of the Foreign & Commonwealth Office's human rights work. There are many countries in which LGB&T people are discriminated against, including by the state. For example, there are 73 countries that criminalise private, consensual sexual relations between adults of the same sex. All UK Embassies and High Commissions monitor and raise human rights issues in their host countries. We will continue to encourage all governments to respect the rights of LGB&T people, especially those that criminalise homosexuality and those that fail to defend the rights of LGB&T people against social prejudice and violence.

■ Morocco: European Development Fund**Alan Brown:**[\[57617\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with the European Commission on the level of EU Development Fund contributions that Morocco has invested in Western Sahara.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

Morocco is not a European Development Fund country. However it does receive other European funding, and my officials in Brussels and Morocco maintain close contact with the Commission to best target and deliver support.

■ Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe**Steve Baker:**[\[57376\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his counterpart in the Iranian government on the detention of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

Ministers and officials have raised Mrs Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe's detention repeatedly, at all levels, with the Iranian government. The Prime Minister, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Maidenhead (Mrs May), and The Foreign Secretary, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Mr Johnson), raised Mrs Zaghari- Ratcliffe's case with their Iranian counterparts during the UN General Assembly in September. The Prime Minister followed up her concerns in writing to President Rouhani on 3 October. I

also met with the Iranian Ambassador and Mrs Zaghari-Ratcliffe's husband, Richard Ratcliffe, on 7 December, and we will continue to raise these cases with the Iranian Government at every available opportunity.

■ Pakistan: Minority Groups

Tom Brake:

[\[57525\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions his Department has had with the Pakistani High Commission on reports of increasing persecution of the Ahmadi community in Pakistan.

Alok Sharma:

The Government strongly condemns the persecution of all minorities, including the targeting of people based on their beliefs. Our concerns are reflected in the latest update to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office annual human rights report.

We regularly raise our concerns about the protection of minority communities, including religious minorities, with the Pakistani Government at a senior level. During his visit to Pakistan in November, the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Boris Johnson), raised religious tolerance and the importance of safeguarding the rights of all Pakistan's citizens. We continue to urge Pakistan to honour in practice its human rights obligations, including those related to religious minorities, and to uphold the rule of law.

■ Spain: British Nationals Abroad

Stella Creasy:

[\[57815\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many British Citizens have requested the aid of the British Consular in Spain for crimes involving sexual violence or harassment in that country in the last five years; and what prosecutions have resulted from such reports.

Sir Alan Duncan:

Our records show that over the past five years 269 British nationals approached the FCO's consular service in Spain requesting assistance as the victim of rape or sexual assault. This figure breaks down as 69 in 2012; 38 in 2013; 59 in 2014; 46 in 2015; and 57 in 2016. We do not hold information on the number of victims of sexual harassment and we do not routinely record details of prosecutions in a manner that allows the Foreign Office to answer the second part of the question in the time available.

■ Sudan: Arrests

Mark Durkan:

[\[57974\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to the government of Sudan on the arrest of the human rights defender Dr Mudawi Ibrahim Adam and his driver Adam El-Sheikh Mukhtar on 7 December 2016.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

Whilst we have not yet raised this case specifically with the government of Sudan, we have expressed our support for the African Commission on Human and People's Rights' call for the release of Dr Mudawi made on 17 December.

We regularly make representations to the government of Sudan on arbitrary arrests and detentions of human rights defenders. Most recently, together with our Troika (US and Norway), EU and other international partners we released a statement on 7 December condemning the increase in political detentions and newspapers' censorship.

■ Syria: Armed Conflict**Alex Salmond:**[\[57916\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to ensure the safety of the residents of Aleppo who were evacuated from that city on 15 December 2016.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The UK was active in the UN Security Council in the adoption of a Resolution on 19 December on humanitarian protection. Our top priority in Syria is the protection of civilians, especially in Aleppo, given the relentless siege there. On 15 December the Foreign Secretary summoned the Russian and Iranian ambassadors to make clear our profound concern about events in Aleppo and to urge them to allow full UN access to ensure civilian protection.

Stephen Gethins:[\[58040\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to help ensure evacuation routes remain available for civilian use in Aleppo.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The UK Government is following closely developments as eastern Aleppo is evacuated. We supported UN Security Council Resolution 2328, adopted on 19 December, which asks the UN to monitor evacuations from eastern Aleppo. We will maintain pressure for this resolution to be implemented and for the evacuation of all those who wish to leave to continue.

Stephen Gethins:[\[58046\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent reports he has received on the number of civilians remaining in Aleppo.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

Last week the UN estimated that there were 40,000 civilians remaining in eastern Aleppo. Since then thousands have been evacuated, but there are still many civilians awaiting evacuation. The situation remains fluid and numbers of those remaining and being evacuated are changing each day. The UK has called for the safe evacuation of all those civilians who wish to leave. On 19 December with partners, we successfully secured the adoption of a UN Security Council Resolution which demands full access for

the UN across Syria and in particular requests the UN to monitor evacuations from eastern Aleppo. All parties must now comply fully with this Resolution. It is crucial that the UN oversees these evacuations to ensure civilian protection.

Stephen Gethins:

[58047]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent reports he has received on evacuation corridors in Aleppo being blocked.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The UK is following closely developments as eastern Aleppo is evacuated. There have been many obstacles to the evacuation process and pauses once the process started. People are now being evacuated and the UK will continue to press for this process to continue safely and under the coordination of the UN.

Stephen Gethins:

[58048]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the availability of evacuation routes for civilians leaving eastern Aleppo.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The regime has only opened one evacuation route through the Ramouseh corridor in regime controlled south west Aleppo and has restricted the involvement of impartial humanitarian actors in the process. We are extremely concerned at the way the regime and its backers have been conducting themselves in the areas where it has retaken control. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has reported the summary execution of 82 people, including women and children; there have also been reports of people disappearing as they reach regime held areas; and of young men being forced to join the Syrian army. That is why we supported UN Security Council Resolution 2328 which was passed on 19 December. It demands full access for the UN across Syria and in particular requests the UN to monitor evacuations from eastern Aleppo. We will maintain pressure for this resolution to be implemented and for UN monitors to have completely unfettered access.

■ Uganda: Politics and Government

Andrew Rosindell:

[57704]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to the government of Uganda on the recent arrest of King Charles Mumbere of Rwenzururu and violence in West Uganda.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

Her Majesty's Government is concerned by the violence that occurred in Kasese district in Uganda in November 2016, which resulted in the reported deaths of over 100 civilians and members of the security forces. We have raised the matter with the Government of Uganda and the Uganda Human Rights Commission. We support the EU local statement of 16 December relating to these matters.

We have urged the Government of Uganda to complete a timely and transparent investigation into these incidents, in accordance with due process, rule of law, international legal obligation and in line with the Commonwealth charter.

I visited Uganda in August 2016 and have followed this case. We continue to believe that a human rights compliant approach is the most effective way to secure long-term peace and stability. The British High Commission work closely with the Government of Uganda, civil society and human rights defenders to ensure human rights are respected in the country. The UK made recommendations to Uganda at the Universal Periodic Review at the UN in November.

■ USA: Arms Trade

Douglas Chapman:

[\[57462\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he has discussed the recent US partial cessation of weapons sales to Saudi Arabia with his US counterpart.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

UK officials have discussed the recent US announcement with their US counterparts.

■ Zimbabwe: Bank Notes

James Duddridge:

[\[58021\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for economic stability in Zimbabwe of the government in that country issuing bank notes in its own currency equivalent to the US dollar.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

Zimbabwe faces a serious economic crisis. Bond notes have provided some short term liquidity, but they are not a sustainable solution to Zimbabwe's economic challenges. Without fundamental reform, taking into account the advice of the International Financial Institutions, an economic collapse is a real prospect. The British Embassy in Harare continues to monitor the situation and we are keeping our travel advice under review.

HEALTH

■ Clinical Commissioning Groups: Shropshire

Daniel Kawczynski:

[\[58036\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will make an estimate of the potential effect on (a) staffing, (b) administrative and (c) other costs of replacing Shropshire Clinical Commissioning Group and Telford and the Wrekin Clinical Commissioning Group with a single clinical commissioning group.

David Mowat:

Decisions on clinical commissioning group (CCG) mergers are a matter for NHS England and the CCGs concerned. As such, the Department will make no estimate of the effect of merging Shropshire CCG and Telford and Wrekin CCG.

NHS England advises that there are no plans at this stage to merge the two CCGs.

■ Dentistry: Training**Dr Sarah Wollaston:**[\[57883\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will publish the rates at which the NHS market forces factor is applied to the dental service increment for teaching.

Mr Philip Dunne:

Payments for dental undergraduate clinical placements (formerly known as dental service increment for teaching) are outside the scope of the medical undergraduate clinical placement tariff and subject to local arrangements between the placement provider and Health Education England.

There is no nationally mandated market forces factor rate applied to these locally agreed payments.

Dr Sarah Wollaston:[\[57894\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how much dental and medical service increment for teaching funding was allocated to each dental school by (a) student and (b) in total for each of the last three years.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The table below shows the total funding allocated by Health Education England (HEE) for dental placements in England in each of the last three years.

YEAR	FUNDING ALLOCATED £ MILLION
2014/15	£98.5
2015/16	£97.7
2016/17	£99.7

Source : HEE

Information relating to the funding allocated to individual dental schools is not held centrally.

■ Department of Health: iNHouse Communications**Melanie Onn:**[\[57661\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether his Department has had communications with iNHouse Communications Ltd in connection with any current commercial tender process.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The Department can confirm following a detailed search of its internal record systems and all registered interest in the current commercial tenders process, that iNHouse Communications Ltd are not a registered supplier and consequently there are no records of any commercial tenders or communications being held with this company.

Melanie Onn:[\[57662\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether his Department has awarded any commercial contracts to iNHouse Communications Ltd in the last five years.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The Department can confirm following a detailed search of its internal record systems that iNHouse Communications Ltd are not a registered supplier and consequently there are no records of any commercial contracts being awarded during the past five years.

■ Doctors: Training**Dr Sarah Wollaston:**[\[57887\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on the income of NHS providers of the proposed withdrawal of the service increment for teaching funding for training international medical students.

Mr Philip Dunne:

In early 2017, the Department plans to run a public consultation on its proposals to expand domestic undergraduate medical training places by 1,500 per year, from the academic year 2018-19.

National Health Service providers will continue to receive placement funding for the minimum number of students that Health Education England forecast are required to meet the longer-term workforce needs of the NHS.

■ Health Professions: Training**Dr Sarah Wollaston:**[\[57943\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the effect of including the market forces factor as a criterion for allocation of Service Increment for Teaching (SIFT) funding on the amounts allocated for each Local Education and Training Board (LETB) in England; and what estimate he has made of the proportion of SIFT funding spent on salaries in (a) London and (b) each other LETB in England.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The market forces factor (MFF) index used in the allocation of funding for clinical placements (formerly known as service increment for training) is consistent with the approach taken by NHS Improvement in adjusting service tariffs to reflect unavoidable cost differences between health care providers, based on their geographical location. This is considered the most appropriate method to adjust resource allocations in the National Health Service in proportion to these cost differences.

The MFF is applied to all three education and training tariffs, however it is not applied to the contribution to salary for postgraduate doctors in training, which instead are based on national pay scales and amended for inner and outer London weighting.

■ Hospital Beds

Norman Lamb:

[\[57909\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate his Department has made of the cost to the public purse of hospital care for in-patients who have no medical need for that care in 2016-17.

Mr Philip Dunne:

No such assessment has been made.

However, as part of implementing Lord Carter's recommendations on hospital productivity, 'Operational productivity and performance in English NHS acute hospitals: Unwarranted variations', NHS Improvement is leading work with providers to develop a richer dataset around all aspects of the patient pathway, including discharge.

NHS England is also leading activity to embed a minimum community dataset which will allow an accurate understanding of levels of activity within community health services, this will help enable a robust picture of costs and implications of delayed discharges to emerge. At the same time, the Department continues to work closely with the National Health Service and local government to help local areas improve transfers out of hospital, share best practice, and reduce unnecessary delays.

■ Hospitals: Consultants

Heidi Alexander:

[\[57592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many hospital consultant posts are vacant; and what steps his Department is taking to ensure that there is an adequate number of hospital consultants working in the NHS.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The number of hospital consultant posts that are vacant is not collected by the Department. The latest workforce data published by NHS Digital shows that as at September 2016 there are 106,131 full time equivalent (FTE) doctors working in the National Health Service in England, of which 44,333 are consultants. This is an overall increase of almost 11,400 (FTE) more doctors since May 2010, of which over 8,400 (23.6%) are consultants.

Health Education England (HEE) is responsible for ensuring that there is sufficient future supply of staff to meet the workforce requirements of the English health system, taking into account issues such as demographic changes.

In delivering its annual workforce plan for England HEE undertakes extensive discussions with NHS organisations, arm's length bodies and Royal Colleges to understand future workforce requirements. HEE takes into account future demand for services in arriving at the final numbers it will commission.

■ Hyperactivity

Rachael Maskell: [\[58009\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate he has made of the average waiting time for child and adolescent mental health services attention deficit hyperactivity disorder assessment in (a) York Central constituency, (b) City of York Council area and (c) England in each year since 2010.

Nicola Blackwood:

This information is not collected centrally.

■ Neuromuscular Disorders: Ambulance Services

Dr Sarah Wollaston: [\[58038\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what discussions his Department has had with National Ambulance Service medical directors on ensuring that the best practice system of flagging people with muscle-wasting conditions to ambulance crews in London, North West and North East Ambulance Services is used across all ambulance services.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The Department has not had any recent discussions with National Ambulance Service Medical Directors on this subject.

NHS England has advised that it is working with all ambulance services in England to ensure the right resource is allocated to the right 999 call at the right time.

Currently the flagging of patients with long term conditions or longer term care needs is not used universally. However the development of technology to allow real-time searching of the National Health Service number as a unique patient identifier will significantly increase the value of placing 'flags' on patients with specific clinical needs. This will then reliably allow any attending healthcare professional to access care plans and special patient notes to help inform individual patient management. This is a component of the 2017/19 ambulance service national Commissioning Quality and Innovation framework.

■ NHS: Buildings

Karin Smyth: [\[58042\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether he has received a draft of the report from Sir Robert Naylor on the NHS estate; and when he plans to publish the final report.

Mr Philip Dunne:

Sir Robert Naylor is currently finalising his report which is expected to be published early in 2017.

■ Nutrition

Mrs Sharon Hodgson: [\[58016\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, when he expects his Department's review of the nutrient profile model to be completed.

Nicola Blackwood:

The review of the nutrient profiling model is due to be completed by autumn 2017. The proposed timescale is currently under review.

■ Obesity: Children

Mrs Sharon Hodgson: [\[58006\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, when he expects Public Health England to host a conference on digital technology that can help reduce childhood obesity.

Nicola Blackwood:

The childhood obesity plan states that Public Health England will hold an annual digital technology "hackathon" bringing together leading developers and programmers to produce innovative solutions to address childhood obesity. A date for this event has yet to be set.

■ Patients: Isle of Wight

Mr Andrew Turner: [\[57547\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate his Department has made of the (a) cost and (b) time taken for Isle of Wight residents travelling for treatment to mainland hospitals.

Mr Philip Dunne:

No such estimate has been made, however NHS England advise that work on travel times to and from the mainland, costs and the numbers of patients involved is part of the next stage of the work being undertaken to develop the new model of care for the Isle of Wight.

■ Surgery

Rachael Maskell: [\[58010\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what guidance NICE has issued on whether it is clinically appropriate to delay surgery for (a) obese patients for 12 months and (b) smokers for 6 months.

Nicola Blackwood:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence has advised that it has not made any specific recommendations on delaying surgery for obese patients or patients who smoke, and that its guidelines tend to focus on the diagnosis, care and management of health conditions, rather than protocols for the delivery of services.

HOME OFFICE

■ Asylum: Children

David T. C. Davies:

[\[49879\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many unaccompanied asylum seeking children arriving in the UK have been given a dental check-up in the latest period for which figures are available.

David T. C. Davies:

[\[49880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether it is the Government's policy to ensure that unaccompanied children arriving in the UK to seek asylum are given dental check-ups.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

Unaccompanied asylum seeking children arriving in the UK are transferred to the care of a local authority. The local authority will arrange for the child's health to be assessed and for a health plan to be drawn up. This will include dental care. Central records are not kept of the number of dental check-ups given to such children.

■ Bail

Dr Andrew Murrison:

[\[56340\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what progress the Government has made on reforming pre-charge bail.

Brandon Lewis:

The Government plans to reform pre-charge bail through the provisions of chapter 1 of Part 4 of the Policing and Crime Bill, which is currently at Report Stage in the House of Lords.

In the expectation that the Bill will receive Royal Assent early in the new year, we are working closely with the College of Policing to develop guidance which will form part of the College's Authorised Professional Practice on Detention, Custody and Bail Management. In parallel, we are working with colleagues at the Ministry of Justice and Her Majesty's Courts & Tribunals Service to develop Criminal Procedure Rules for use by the courts for pre-charge bail extension hearings.

The Government is also working with the Police, NHS England, the Royal College of Emergency Medicine, NHS Wales and the Local Government Association on a series of Memoranda of Understanding to streamline the provision and processing of evidence to enable the police to conclude their investigations within the 28-day initial bail period.

■ Burglary

James Duddridge:

[\[58022\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the implication for burglary prevention of the selling by Amazon of lock picking kits.

Brandon Lewis:

The Home Office has not undertaken such an assessment. We are aware that equipment which may have a number of legitimate uses can be bought online which can potentially be misused by criminals to commit crimes such as burglary. We are clear that, where such crimes take place and are reported to the police, they should be taken seriously, investigated and, where appropriate, the perpetrators taken through the courts and met with tough sentences.

■ Counter-terrorism**Liam Byrne:**[\[53214\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many intervention providers for the Channel Programme are pending approval.

Liam Byrne:[\[53215\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many of her Department's approved intervention providers for the Channel Programme are based in (a) the North East, (b) the North West, (c) Yorkshire and the Humber, (d) the East Midlands, (e) the West Midlands, (f) the east of England, (g) London, (h) the South East and (i) the South West.

Mr Ben Wallace:

There are currently 16 intervention providers (IPs) undergoing assessment for approval to provide ideological mentoring within the Channel programme. The table below provides a breakdown of the regional location of where current IPs reside and are based. The majority of IPs work nationally and are frequently commissioned to work outside of their geographical location to undertake interventions. The number of IPs regionally can fluctuate over time, this is due in part to IPs relocating to other areas; new IPs being added to the register; and a change in personal circumstances that limits capacity to undertake interventions. We keep the list of IPs under review to ensure that regional distribution is appropriate to the number of Channel cases.

REGION	NUMBER OF PROVIDERS
North East	1
North West	10
Yorkshire and the Humber	0
East Midlands	7
West Midlands	9
East of England	5
London	15
South East	1

REGION	NUMBER OF PROVIDERS
South West	2
Wales	1

■ Emergency Services: Telecommunications

Hywel Williams: [\[55963\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how her Department is working with EE and other mobile network operators to maximise the benefit of the new publicly funded emergency network services sites.

Hywel Williams: [\[55964\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that proposed new Government funded sites, built as part of the emergency services network, are multi-occupancy sites and not single-occupancy sites.

Brandon Lewis:

In delivering the Emergency Services Network (ESN), the mobile network operator EE will deliver up to 291 new mast sites. Government will deliver approximately 230 further sites (known as the "Extended Area Services" (EAS) sites) in the most remote and rural areas of Great Britain.

For EAS sites, the principal objective is to provide coverage to meet the needs of the emergency services, but the Home Office is working with the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and DCMS to identify any proposed mast locations which could improve mobile coverage in future, with a view to ensuring these are built to a specification which could accommodate multiple operators.

EE has indicated that it is delivering around 200 new sites in Scotland as part of ESN. In addition there are 104 sites in Scotland that are being considered as part of the Extended Area Services (EAS). Delivery of these sites is subject to planning permission and the acquisition of land. There are currently no new sites proposed in the constituency of Inverclyde, either by EE or the EAS as part of ESN.

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[56437\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that EE negotiates transparent commercial terms for multi-operator access to publicly funded sites for the emergency services network.

Brandon Lewis:

In delivering the Emergency Services Network (ESN), the mobile network operator EE will deliver up to 291 new mast sites. Government will deliver approximately 230 further sites (known as the "Extended Area Services" (EAS) sites) in the most remote and rural areas of Great Britain.

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EE has indicated that it is delivering around 200 new sites in Scotland as part of ESN. In addition there are 104 sites in Scotland that are being considered as part of the EAS. Delivery of these sites is subject to planning permission and the acquisition of land. There are currently no new sites proposed in the constituency of Inverclyde, either by EE or the EAS as part of ESN.

■ Entry Clearances: EU Nationals

Peter Kyle:

[48987]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with the hospitality sector on future entry requirements for EU nationals after the UK has left the EU.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

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

Details of Ministerial meetings with external organisations and individuals are passed to the Cabinet Office on a quarterly basis and are subsequently published on the Cabinet Office website which is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/cabinet-office>

■ Fraud: Prosecutions

Mr Roger Godsiff:

[57655]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many successful prosecutions have resulted from Economic Crime Command investigations in each year since 2013.

Mr Roger Godsiff:

[57659]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many arrests the Economic Crime Command of the National Crime Agency has made in each year since 2013.

Mr Ben Wallace:

The National Crime Agency does not break down the number of arrests by department (or National Crime Agency predecessors). Activity that leads to arrest and successful prosecution, is often the result of work undertaken by multiple units across the agency.

■ Freezing of Assets: Russia**Mr Dominic Raab:**[\[53636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has subjected (a) Dmitry Klyuev, (b) Pavel Karpov or (c) Andrey Pavlov to an (i) asset freeze or (ii) asset recovery in the last eight years.

Mr Ben Wallace:

The Home Office is responsible for the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002. The powers in the Proceeds of Crime Act may be exercised by law enforcement agencies such as the NCA, SFO, constables and HMRC.

■ Hate Crime: Merseyside**Ms Angela Eagle:**[\[52718\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many racially or religiously aggravated offences were reported in Merseyside in each month since the EU referendum; and what change that represents compared with the figures for 2015.

Brandon Lewis:

The Home Office publish statistics on racially or religiously aggravated offences by force by quarter. The most recently published statistics, to June 2016, can be found in the Home Office Open Data Tables available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-recorded-crime-open-data-tables>.

In October, the Home Office published Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2015/16. This release included an Annex of provisional data for specific racially or religiously aggravated offences in England and Wales around the time of the EU Referendum. Force level breakdowns for these offences up to September 2016 will be published in Home Office Open Data Tables in January 2017. These tables will be released alongside the ONS quarterly Crime Statistics. For information, the hate crime report is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2015-to-2016>

This Government is committed to tackling hate crime. The UK has one of the strongest legislative frameworks in the world to tackle hate crime. We are working across Government with police, (including National Community Tensions Team), the Crown Prosecution Service and community partners to send out a clear message that hate crime will not be tolerated and we will vigorously pursue and prosecute those who commit these crimes.

■ Home Office: Personnel Management**Louise Haigh:**[\[56117\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people employed in human resources roles in her Department have (a) prior experience and (b) qualifications in human resources.

Sarah Newton:

This information is not held centrally within the Home Office. The information requested could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ Home Office: Staff**Helen Whately:**[\[57127\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what measures her Department has in place to support those of its staff who have mental health problems.

Sarah Newton:

In the Home Office we are committed to breaking down barriers and reducing stigma for those staff living with mental health conditions. We signed up to the Time to Change pledge in 2014 making a public commitment to be at the forefront of UK employers to tackle mental health issues in the workplace and we remain dedicated to ensuring mental health is a priority. Our specific initiatives are outlined in Annex 1.

Attachments:

1. Annex 1 - PQ 57127 [PQ 57127 Annex 1 - mental health support (1).docx]

■ Home Office: Travel**Tim Farron:**[\[56233\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much her Department spent on travel that was not standard class in each of the last five years.

Sarah Newton:

Total spend on travel that was not standard class (£) is set out in the table below (this includes Eurostar Standard Premier):

2011-2012:	900,000
2012-2013:	700,000
2013-2014:	1,100,000
2014-2015:	900,000
2015-2016:	600,000

■ Home Office: Work Experience**Louise Haigh:**[\[56309\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many unpaid internships there are in her Department.

Sarah Newton:

The Department is an active participant in the Civil Service Summer Diversity Internship programme. This is a paid scheme and individuals normally remain with the Home Office for 9-10 weeks.

The Department also provides a work experience programme for 15 - 18 year olds from diverse backgrounds. This is a cross Civil Service scheme working with Local Education Authorities and aimed at giving individuals a sense of what being a Civil Servant is like by placing them in the Civil Service for a week. This is unpaid and involves shadowing for a week.

■ Human Trafficking: EU Action

Martin Docherty-Hughes:

[[56728](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what preparations her Department is making for the coordination of efforts to tackle human trafficking with EU member states after the UK leaves the EU.

Sarah Newton:

The UK will in due course be leaving the EU. Co-operation with our EU and global allies will continue on the important issue of tackling modern slavery after our exit. We are determined to do whatever is necessary to turn the tide on perpetrators as well as ensure victims are appropriately supported. It would be wrong to set out unilateral positions on specific measures in advance of negotiations.

During the period of the negotiations to exit the EU, the UK remains a full member of the EU and we will continue our work with EU partners to tackle modern slavery including through the EU Directive on Trafficking of Human Beings 2011.

■ Immigrants: Detainees

Robert Flello:

[[53575](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the cost of immigration detention was in each of the last three years.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

Detention costs over the past three financial years have been published in the Home Office's Annual Report and Accounts, for 2015-16 and 2014-15. Copies of these publications can be found on the .gov.uk website:

For 2015-16:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/539638/HO_AR_16_gov.pdf

For 2014-15:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/441282/HO-AR15_web.pdf

Heidi Allen:

[[56126](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many women recorded as pregnant have been held in immigration detention; and how many of those women left detention to be removed from the UK since the Immigration Act 2016 came into force.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

Through section 60 of the Immigration Act 2016, which came into force on 12 July 2016, we have placed a 72 hour limit on the detention of pregnant women for the purposes of removal, extendable to up to a week in total with Ministerial authorisation.

It may not always be appropriate for healthcare professionals to disclose confidential medical information that the patient has asked not to be disclosed. Subject to these limitations, Home Office management information indicates that 12 pregnant women were detained in the immigration detention estate between 12 July 2016 and 30 September 2016. Of these women, 1 was removed from the UK.

The section 60 limitations, along with a new policy on adults at risk in detention, and other improvements to caseworking processes, represent a comprehensive package of safeguards for pregnant women in the immigration system.

■ Immigrants: Employment**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:**[\[57981\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department has taken to make individual with limited or indefinite leave to remain aware of the 2014 changes to the right to work rules making an expired travel document with a valid visa no longer sufficient proof of an individual's right to work.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The Home Office conducted a public consultation in 2013 on changes to the regulations specifying the document checks that employers should undertake to establish an excuse under the Immigration Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 in relation to the prevention of illegal working. In that consultation, the Home Office signalled its intention to tighten the system of right to work checks and to focus these on more secure documentation, in order to simplify checks for employers and better prevent illegal working.

When implementing the changes in May 2014, we published new guidance on the relevant pages of Gov.uk and communicated the changes to employers. Employers have a crucial role to play in informing migrants applying for jobs what documentation is acceptable as evidence of a right to work under the regulations. The Home Office has been rolling out biometric residence permits to non-European Economic Area (EEA) migrants granted permission to enter or remain for more than six months in the UK, which provide a simple means of evidencing lawful immigration status.

■ Immigration**Paul Blomfield:**[\[56175\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answers of 30 November 2016 to Questions 50075, 50073 and 50074, how many of those people who have claimed to be stateless since 2013 and were refused status in the UK on that basis have been removed from the UK.

Paul Blomfield:

[[56176](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answers of 30 November 2016 to Questions 50075, 50073 and 50074, how many of those people who have claimed to be stateless since 2013 and were refused status in the UK remain in the UK without status.

Paul Blomfield:

[[56177](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answers of 30 November 2016 to Questions 50075, 50073 and 50074, how many of those people who have claimed to be stateless since 2013 and were refused status in the UK on that basis have subsequently been granted status in the UK on other grounds.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

Home Office Stateless policy is designed to assist those who do not qualify for protection but are unable to return to the country of their former habitual residence because they are stateless and would not be admitted to any other country. The requirements are set out in the Immigration Rules and reflect our obligations under the 1954 UN Convention relating to the status of stateless persons.

Home Office shares information on the number of Stateless applications received and those removed with UNHCR. The Home Office continues to provide regular updates to UNHCR. UNHCR releases information on annual global stateless trends. The information requested can be found using the following links:

2015:

<http://www.unhcr.org/uk/statistics/unhcrstats/576408cd7/unhcr-global-trends-2015.html>
<http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home/opendocAttachment.zip?COMID=576402377>

2014:

<http://www.unhcr.org/uk/statistics/country/556725e69/unhcr-global-trends-2014.html>
<http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home/opendocAttachment.zip?COMID=5762b0584>

2013:

<http://www.unhcr.org/uk/statistics/country/5399a14f9/unhcr-global-trends-2013.html>
<http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home/opendocAttachment.zip?COMID=5762b0d84>

The information requested on the latest immigration status of those refused Stateless leave is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ Immigration Controls

Mr David Hanson: [55054]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of (a) flights, (b) sea transportation and (c) rail transportation has been risk-assessed when notified to the Border Force in each year since 2010.

Mr David Hanson: [55055]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of Advanced Passenger Information checks has been completed by Border Force at primary check points on (a) scheduled flights, (b) unscheduled flights, (c) sea transportation and (d) rail transportation in each year since 2010.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

Every route to the United Kingdom whether by air, sea or rail carries an element of risk, and assessment of risk is undertaken across all routes and all modes. Analysis of passenger, crew and service information in advance of travel or upon departure to the UK forms part of the risk assessment process – which is complemented by full checks of all passengers arriving at primary control point on all modes.

■ Immigration Controls: EU Nationals

Ms Diane Abbott: [58028]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with which (a) EU heads of government, (b) heads of state, (c) members of the EU Commission and (d) leaders of the parliamentary groupings in the European Parliament she has (i) met and (ii) discussed the Government's plans to reduce net migration from the EU after the UK leaves the EU.

Ms Diane Abbott: [58063]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what representations she has received from and what discussions she has had with (a) Ian Wright, director-general of the Food and Drink Federation, (b) Helen Dickinson, chief executive at the British Retail Consortium and (c) others on potential changes to immigration systems or new work visa systems after the UK has left the EU.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

Home Office Ministers and officials have meetings with a wide variety of international partners, as well as organisations and individuals in the public and private sectors, as part of the process of policy development and delivery. Details of Ministerial meetings with external organisations and individuals are passed to the Cabinet Office on a quarterly basis and are subsequently published on the Cabinet Office website which is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/cabinet-office>

■ Immigration: EU Nationals**Tom Brake:**[\[56326\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the trialled fast track scheme for permanent residency applications from EU migrants; (b) what progress has been made to extend that programme to all eligible EU migrants; and when the roll-out of that programme will be completed.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

As part of the ongoing Home Office programme to digitise applications, we have launched a number of online options. One of these allows some EEA nationals to submit online applications for Permanent Residency. This is currently limited to single applicants. UK Visas & Immigration are working towards digitalising all application routes. The intention is to enable customers to apply online across our services and immigration routes in a straight-forward and customer-focused way.

■ International Corruption Unit: Staff**Mr Roger Godsiff:**[\[57656\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many arrests the International Corruption Unit of the National Crime Agency has made since its creation.

Mr Roger Godsiff:[\[57657\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many staff there are in the International Corruption Unit of the National Crime Agency.

Mr Roger Godsiff:[\[57658\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many staff at the International Corruption Unit of the National Crime Agency are on secondment from other police forces.

Mr Ben Wallace:

As serious and organised crime threats change, the National Crime Agency retains the ability to flex its resources to react. There are a number of agency wide capabilities and functions that all commands have access to and use in the fight against serious and organised crime.

The number of staff working in a particular unit is not a reliable indicator of the overall National Crime Agency resource linked to a particular type of crime. The majority of the National Crime Agency's staff work as a flexible investigative resource, not in a particular unit, but assigned to particular operations across all areas of the NCA as needed.

The National Crime Agency does not break down the number of arrests by department (or National Crime Agency predecessors). Activity that leads to arrest and successful prosecution, is often the result of work undertaken by multiple units across the agency.

■ Internet: Bullying**Tim Farron:**[\[57864\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have been charged with offences relating to online internet abuse in each of the last five years.

Sarah Newton:

The information requested is not held by the Home Office. The Home Office receives data from police forces in England and Wales on crimes and outcomes of all offences in the notifiable offence list. Online internet abuse is not a specific crime category and such abuse is likely to fall into one of the specific offences such as 'harassment' or 'stalking'. Furthermore, police outcomes measure the number of offences that result in a charge, rather than the number of people charged for each offence.

The Ministry of Justice Court Proceedings Database holds information on defendants proceeded against, found guilty and sentenced for criminal offences in England and Wales.

■ Israel: Travel**Richard Burden:**[\[56868\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 30 November 2016 to Question 54294, what assessment she has made of whether the criteria for advanced security checks for the Registered Traveller Service are compatible with the Government's obligations under international law.

Richard Burden:[\[56869\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 30 November 2016 to Question 54294, what criteria in advanced security checks allow the Border Force to assess whether an applicant is suitable to join or remain in the Registered Traveller Service.

Richard Burden:[\[56870\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 30 November 2016 to Question 54294, whether the advanced security checks for the Registered Traveller Service include an assessment of whether the applicant has acted or has contributed to actions in contravention of the Geneva Convention or the Hague regulations.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

A full suite of enhanced checks are carried out at the point of application for the Registered Traveller Service and at the renewal stage; for reasons of security we are not able to detail these separately. A real-time list of individuals enrolled on Registered Traveller is stored on a secure IT system and both the individual and their travel document are checked against this system upon entry to the UK.

Registered Traveller membership does not guarantee entry to the UK. RTS members still have to meet the usual criteria and must follow the conditions of any leave to enter or remain in the UK. RTS members are removed from the service if they no longer qualify.

Individuals applying to use the Registered Traveller Service must meet the usual criteria for entry to the UK under the Immigration Rules and pass the advanced security checks that apply to the scheme.

■ Members: Correspondence

Alan Brown:

[[58000](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish a response to the briefing note by the trade union, Community, which was sent to her by the hon. Member for Kilmarnock and Loudoun with the letter of 1 November 2016 on Dungavel Immigration Return Centre; and if she will make a statement.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

We do not intend to publish a response to the briefing note by the trade union, Community. A response to the hon. Member's letter, which contained the briefing note, was sent on 20 December 2016.

■ Migrant Camps: France

Michelle Donelan:

[[57477](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much of the £3.6 million offered to the French government for support relating to migration she plans will fund (a) support facilities in migrant camps and (b) security presence within such camps.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

On 24 October the Home Secretary announced a financial contribution of up to £36m to support the French humanitarian operation to clear the camp in Calais. This funding will be used to maintain the security of the juxtaposed controls, support the clearance of the Calais camp and ensure it remains closed. As the Home Secretary made clear, this contribution is not unconditional, and we continue to work with the French Government on their plans to ensure that the clearance operation is full and lasting.

■ Offences against Children: Aston Hall Hospital

Holly Lynch:

[[57983](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether it is expected that the inclusion in Operation Hydrant of cases relating to historical abuse in youth football will have an effect on the date on which the inquiry plans to report on abuse at Aston Hall.

Sarah Newton:

The Home Office provided £1.8m in 2016/17 to fund Operation Hydrant, which was established to coordinate the national police response to allegations of non-recent child sexual abuse involving persons of prominence or within institutions. Operation Hydrant is providing the same coordinating function for the allegations relating to football that have recently come to light. Resources are being prioritised appropriately to meet this emerging demand while continuing to deliver the national coordination function.

As the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Community Health and Care advised in response to PQ 55902 on 6 December 2016, timescales for any system-wide Serious Case Review or Learning Review about abuse in Aston Hall will depend on the outcome of the police investigation which is the responsibility of Derbyshire Police.

■ Overseas Students

Ms Diane Abbott:

[\[58064\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate her Department has made of the net financial contribution per annum to the economy from international students; and how that contribution is expected to change in the next three years.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The Government recognises that international students make an important contribution during their time here, and they help make our education system one of the best in the world. The UK remains the second most popular destination in the world for international higher education students.

We continue to be committed to ensuring our top universities can attract the best students from around the world. The latest figures show that visa applications from university students are now 17 per cent higher than they were in 2010 and visa applications to Russell Group universities are 47 per cent higher than in 2010.

■ Police: Procurement

Lyn Brown:

[\[56019\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the savings to be achieved in the police force through the use of joint procurement.

Brandon Lewis:

The police spend about £2.5bn per year on third party goods and services.

The Department has enacted a number of price comparison exercises whereby the police have been required to report more detailed information about their procurement spend on individual items which have been published on police.uk.

Over the last 18 months Forces have reported procurement savings of £140m; of which £49.5m have been collaborative.

■ Proscribed Organisations

Ms Diane Abbott:

[\[58067\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what violent or terrorist far right or neo-Nazi groups are being monitored or considered for possible proscription as an illegal organisation.

Mr Ben Wallace:

We do not routinely comment on whether an organisation is or is not under consideration for proscription.

■ Refugees: Children**Stella Creasy:**[\[49305\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the letter from the Immigration Minister to all local council leaders of 8 September 2016, if she will publish the number of places pledged by each local authority area for those unaccompanied refugee children as identified by section 67 of the 2016 Immigration Act to date.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

There are currently no plans to publish the number of places pledged by each local authority area for those unaccompanied refugee children as identified by section 67 of the 2016 Immigration Act. The Home Office publishes the number of asylum claims from unaccompanied children as part of the quarterly immigration statistics release. According to the latest release, in the year ending June 2016 there were 3,472 asylum claims from unaccompanied children. The full statistics can be found at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-april-to-june-2016/asylum#unaccompanied-asylum-seeking-children>

Mr Alistair Carmichael:[\[53365\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what progress she has made in making an estimate of how many unaccompanied refugee children will be transferred from the EU to the UK under section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016.

Mr Alistair Carmichael:[\[53436\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reasons Eritrean and Afghan children over the age of 15 do not qualify under the eligibility criteria set out in the Guidance: Implementation of section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 in France published by her Department.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

We will in due course specify the number of unaccompanied refugee children to be transferred to the UK under section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016. Eritrean and Afghan children over the age of 15 do not qualify under the published criteria for the implementation of section 67 in France, because these reflect our focus on the very youngest children, those assessed as being at high risk of sexual exploitation and those likely to be granted refugee status in the UK. The latter criterion is based on nationalities with a first instance asylum grant rate of 75 per cent or higher in the year to June 2016.

Helen Goodman:[\[55864\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if the Government will make it its policy to transfer 1,000 children from Calais to the UK before Christmas 2016.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

We have worked closely with the French authorities to support the clearance of the Calais camp and to transfer children eligible to come to the UK. Since 10 October, we have transferred over 750 children from France. The current phase has been concluded.

More children will be transferred from across Europe under the Immigration Act in the coming months, including children from France.

We will continue to meet our obligation under the Dublin Regulation to transfer unaccompanied refugee children to the UK where a family link has been established.

In line with the legislation, we will in due course specify the number of unaccompanied refugee children to be transferred to the UK under section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016.

Thangam Debbonaire:

[[56298](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many unaccompanied and separated children have been (a) identified, (b) assessed and (c) transferred under sub-section 1 of section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

We are continuing to work closely with partners across Europe to identify unaccompanied asylum seeking children who may be eligible to come to the UK.

The Government has transferred more than 750 children to the UK in support of the French operation to clear the Calais camp, including children who meet the criteria for section 67 of the Immigration Act.

The Dubs process has not ended. More eligible children will be transferred from Europe, in line with the terms of the Immigration Act, in the coming months. Following consultation with local authorities on capacity to host unaccompanied children, we will be announcing the specified number in due course.

Catherine West:

[[57970](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much funding has been allocated to local authorities to support the unaccompanied child refugees in the UK.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The Government significantly increased the funding provided to local authorities looking after Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) in July. These rates are based on a detailed analysis of financial information sent to the Home Office by local authorities about their actual cost of caring for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children. The analysis showed that the average cost across all local authorities of looking after an Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child aged under 16 was approximately £41,610 per annum and the average cost of supporting those aged 16 and 17 was approximately £33,215 per annum. The Government has made additional funding available for local authorities through the Controlling Migration Fund.

The UK Government takes its responsibility in all cases involving children seriously and has committed to regularly review funding to support and care for unaccompanied asylum-seeking and refugee children, working closely with the Local Government Association and local authorities.

Ms Diane Abbott:

[[58061](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she has taken to ensure that any refugee children who were recently accommodated at Calais and who were entitled to come to the UK have not been trafficked, become domestic slaves or forced into prostitution.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

We continue to work closely with local authorities, the Department for Education, the Local Government Association, non-governmental organisations, and other Government departments to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children transferred from France to the UK. The Government recently announced its intention to publish a Safeguarding Strategy which will bring together a number of strands of ongoing work and develop a more holistic, robust and evidence-based strategy to supporting these vulnerable children.

Children transferred to the UK were assessed on arrival by Home Office officials who are trained to identify indicators of human trafficking and modern slavery. Under the Dublin Regulation, safeguarding checks are conducted ahead of the children being reunited with their relatives.

The Government takes its responsibilities towards all vulnerable children extremely seriously. That is why when a child goes missing from care, agencies work closely with local authorities and local police forces in order to find them.

■ Refugees: Human Trafficking

Fiona Mactaggart:

[[49684](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have been granted refugee status or another type of subsidiary protection in the UK on the basis that they have been trafficked since 2010.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

Our records indicate that since 2010, 1,003 confirmed victims of trafficking have been granted refugee status or other form of protection as a result of an application for asylum. It is not possible to say whether refugee status was awarded due to the applicant being a victim of trafficking without a review of individual case record at disproportionate cost.

■ Refugees: Sponsorship

Peter Kyle:

[[57898](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what progress has been made on developing the Community Sponsorship Scheme for refugees announced in October 2015.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The Community Sponsorship scheme was launched in July by the Home Secretary to empower community groups, including charities and faith groups, to support refugees directly. Community sponsorship is a new model for resettlement in the UK. It is

commencing on a small scale and we will closely monitor the scheme to ensure it delivers good outcomes for resettled families and local communities.

■ Religious Freedom: Iraq

Jim Shannon:

[\[57699\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the letter of 17 November 2016 from the All Party Parliamentary Group for International Freedom of Religion or Belief on providing further support to Iraqi minorities, such as Yazidis, if she will meet the hon. Members who signed that letter.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

Home Office Ministers have regular meetings with Ministerial colleagues and others as part of the process of policy development and delivery. As was the case with previous administrations, it is not the Government's practice to provide details of all such meetings.

■ Sexual Offences

Ms Diane Abbott:

[\[58065\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential effect of proposed changes in the status and treatment of sexual abuse victims on the way in which police forces deal with such cases.

Sarah Newton:

The Home Office has no plans to change the status and treatment of victims of sexual abuse. It is essential that those reporting serious crimes to the police are treated as victims. The police should focus on the credibility of the allegation rather than the credibility of the witness or victim. Accepting that a person has been a victim of crime does not automatically mean accepting that a specific allegation is credible.

■ Theft

Chi Onwurah:

[\[57549\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what guidance she provides to (a) police forces and (b) victim support bodies on charging for the release of stolen property which has been recovered by police forces.

Brandon Lewis:

The return of recovered stolen property and any associated charges is an operational matter for the police. The department does not provide guidance to the police on such matters or to victim support bodies.

■ Torture

Alex Salmond:

[\[58026\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of Proving Torture: Demanding the impossible, Home Office

mistreatment of expert medical evidence, published by Freedom from Torture in November 2016; and what steps her Department is taking to improve asylum decision-making for torture survivors.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

I refer the hon. Member to the response to the hon. Member for Birmingham, Hall Green, UIN 54220, on 30 November 2016.

■ **Vetting**

Diana Johnson:

[\[57048\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications for criminal records checks have been received by the Disclosure and Barring Service from the Football Association in each year since 2009-10; and what proportion of those applications (a) passed and (b) failed.

Sarah Newton:

The DBS does not receive information from applicants that enables it to report statistics accurately on the total number of applications relating to specific employers, including the Football Association, unless they are a Registered Body.

Diana Johnson:

[\[57729\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the average time taken was for the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to (a) process a DBS application and either scan or return it to the applicant for amendments, (b) search the Police National Computer, (c) search the Children's Barred List where appropriate, (d) search the Adult's Barred list where appropriate, (e) search the records held by local police where appropriate and (f) print the DBS certificate and return all necessary documentation to the applicant in (i) the UK and (ii) Yorkshire and the Humber in each year since 2012.

Sarah Newton:

A high proportion of applications to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) are submitted electronically, and do not need to be scanned or returned.

Table 1 shows the average days taken for the DBS to scan paper applications onto the system, or return a paper application to the customer for amendments. This data is not available for the Yorkshire and Humber region. All data in Table 1 relates to the UK. Separate information for Yorkshire and the Humber region is not available.

Table 2 shows the average days taken for the DBS to search the Police National Computer, police local records and print the document, for the United Kingdom.

Table 3 shows the average days taken for DBS to search the Police National Computer, police local records and print the document for Yorkshire and Humber European electoral region.

Checks of the children and adults barred lists are carried out in parallel to the local police checks and data on the average time taken to conduct these checks cannot be provided without incurring disproportionate costs.

Attachments:

1. Annex Tables 1-3 [PQ 57729 Diana Johnson - Annexes Tables 1-3.pdf]

■ Visas: Clergy

Mr Gregory Campbell: [\[56713\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make it her policy to grant short-term pastoral visas to Christian church ministers from countries where their members are suffering persecution for their faith.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

Ministers of Religion can apply to come to the UK if they have been offered a job within a faith community here.

■ Visas: Iran

Alison Thewliss: [\[56930\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many visas have been approved in Iran in each month since 1 May 2014.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The latest quarterly Home Office immigration statistics on entry clearance visas are published in 'Immigration Statistics, July - September 2016', available from the following website: <https://www.gov.uk>

■ Written Questions: Government Responses

Fiona Mactaggart: [\[56361\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to answer Questions 47283 and 47284 tabled on 7 October 2016 by the right hon. Member for Slough.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The answers to the hon. Member's questions, UINs 47283 and 47284, were issued on 20 December 2016.

I apologise to the hon. Member for the delay in responding.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

■ Department for International Development: Staff

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[57856\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how many officials of her Department work full-time on the Violence Against Women and Girls helpdesk; and if she will make a statement.

James Wharton:

The UK is one of the only countries in the world with a dedicated team working on tackling Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG); we currently have 6.5 FTE (Full Time Equivalent) staff working on this policy area.

The VAWG helpdesk provides advice for teams across government on programmes and projects preventing violence against women and girls. The helpdesk is managed by the VAWG team in DFID's Policy Division.

Mr Jim Cunningham:[\[57857\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how many civil servants in her Department work full-time in the Inclusive Societies Department; and if she will make a statement.

James Wharton:

Inclusive Societies Department has lead responsibility for support to civil society, violence against women and girls, disability and other marginalised groups. It has 40.3 full time equivalents posts.

■ Developing Countries: Crimes of Violence**Mr Jim Cunningham:**[\[57854\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment she has made of the prevalence of gender-based violence; what steps her Department is taking to reduce such violence; and if she will make a statement.

James Wharton:

Globally, 1 in 3 women have experienced some form of physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime.

Since 2012 DFID has nearly doubled its programming on violence against women and girls, for example our £35 million programme to tackle Female Genital Mutilation which is helping to reduce the practice by 30% in 17 countries across Africa. On 27 November we announced additional support to the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women that will benefit over 500,000 women.

■ Developing Countries: Females**Mr Jim Cunningham:**[\[57863\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the Independent Commission for Aid Impact report entitled DFID's Efforts to Eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls, published in May 2016; and if she will make a statement.

James Wharton:

DFID received the Independent Commission for Aid Impact's highest green rated response, recognising DFID's world-leading work on violence against women and girls. DFID's management response, published on our website at

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/528263/man-response-VAWG.pdf, sets out areas for further focus in the future.

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[57867]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what use her Department makes of social norms approaches within its programmes to increase women's economic empowerment and political participation; and if she will make a statement.

James Wharton:

Negative social and cultural expectations lead to discrimination against women and girls, and can severely limit their ability to participate fully in politics and in the economy. DFID is committed to tackling this discrimination in our strategy to empower women and girls, and in our recently published Bilateral and Multilateral Development reviews.

■ Developing Countries: Older People

Patrick Grady:

[57478]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 26 October 2016 to Question 49681, if the Government will reinstate ageing as part of the Ministerial brief on inclusive societies in any further ministerial portfolio changes.

James Wharton:

Ageing makes up part of the policy portfolio which is managed by Inclusive Societies Department. Lord Bates oversees the work of Inclusive Societies Department. Information on Ministerial portfolios is in the process of being updated on GOV.UK.

■ Syria: Armed Conflict

Stephen Gethins:

[58039]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what recent assessment her Department has made of the humanitarian situation in areas of Syria outside Aleppo.

James Wharton:

The UN estimates that there are 13.5 million people in need of humanitarian assistance inside Syria, including 4.9 million living in hard to reach or besieged areas. The UN assesses that 7 million people do not have consistent access to adequate food, 15 million need water and sanitation, and 4.3 million are in need of shelter.

Stephen Gethins:

[58049]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what recent assessment her Department has made of the humanitarian assistance required in Aleppo.

James Wharton:

The UN estimates that 10,000 to 15,000 people are awaiting evacuation from besieged East Aleppo, where food and medical supplies are exhausted; shelter is scarce, and access to water is severely restricted. Our priority for these people is safe evacuation in

full compliance with international humanitarian law, so that our humanitarian partners along the evacuation route may deliver the life-saving aid these people urgently need.

■ Syria: Overseas Aid

Stephen Gethins: [\[58041\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what humanitarian assistance the Government is providing to civilians in Syria.

James Wharton:

The UK is providing life-saving support to millions of people inside Syria. Through UN and NGO partners, we are delivering the full range of relief; including food, clean water, shelter, and healthcare. Between February 2012 and August 2016, we provided, for example, over 16.4 million monthly food rations, medical support to over 3.7 million people, and relief packages to over 5.5 million people (including essential winter and household items, such as blankets). This is funded through the £2.3 billion pledged by the UK in response to the Syria crisis, our largest ever response to a single humanitarian crisis.

Stephen Gethins: [\[58045\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of the use of aid bridges to deliver aid to civilians in Syria.

James Wharton:

We continue to look at all options, compliant with international law, to alleviate the suffering of millions of Syrians. A pre-requisite for successful aid bridges is consent from all parties controlling the air space. The Assad regime and Russia have systematically denied humanitarian access to besieged populations by land and have refused consent for air bridges of supplies to opposition-held besieged areas.

JUSTICE

■ Animal Welfare

Angela Smith: [\[55407\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment her Department has made of trends in the level of the recidivism rate of persons who have committed offences under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 in the last 10 years.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The reoffending rate for those who committed an offence under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 was on average just over one percent over the last eight years.

Data on reoffending rates for people convicted of offences under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 is available up to 2014, with a one year follow-up period. Data for 2015 and 2016 will be available in due course.

■ Brixton Prison

Kate Hoey: [\[57895\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what plans the Government has for the future of HM Prison Brixton.

Kate Hoey: [\[57902\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether the Government plans to (a) privatiser and (b) increase the private involvement in the running of HM Prison Brixton.

Dr Phillip Lee:

We are investing £1.3 billion to reform and modernise the prison estate to make it more efficient, safer and focused on supporting prisoner rehabilitation. We will build new prisons and close prisons that are in poor condition and those which do not have a long-term future in the estate. We will also simplify the organisation of the estate so prisoners are placed at the right level of security in prisons with appropriately tailored regimes. This will ensure that the supply of places providing rehabilitation and resettlement services, and those that serve the courts, are balanced with demand.

We want to make sure that our prisons are run in the most effective way to achieve our reforms. We are currently considering how best to reorganise the prison estate as a whole to achieve this goal, and will announce our plans in due course.

■ Civil and Family Proceedings

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[57296\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will make it her policy to ensure that civil and family courts are made aware of the criminal convictions or details of prohibition orders of plaintiffs.

Dr Phillip Lee:

The Government has no current plans to introduce new procedures as the courts have powers to deal with unmeritorious claims and applications. The court can strike out any action it views as an abuse of process or issue an order restricting the litigant's ability to continue with further applications or claims, either of its own motion or on request by a party to the proceedings.

■ Coroners: Suicide

Grant Shapps: [\[45548\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether the Government plans to make changes to rules requiring coroners recording a suicide to meet the same criminal standard of proof as unlawful killing rather than the civil standard.

Dr Phillip Lee:

The Government has no current plans to amend the law on the burden of proof for returning a conclusion of suicide at an inquest but it will keep the matter under review.

■ Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence

Joan Ryan:

[57726]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 8 November 2016 to Question 51526, what her planned timetable is for implementation of the extra-territorial jurisdiction requirements of ratification for the Istanbul Convention.

Dr Phillip Lee:

I refer the honourable member to the Answer of 8 November 2016 to Question 51526.

■ Cremation: Babies

Diana Johnson:

[57201]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if her Department will publish all correspondence her and her predecessor had with (a) Hull City Council, (b) the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull North and (c) constituent Tina Trowhill on baby ashes and cremation working practices.

Diana Johnson:

[57202]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether her Department holds a record of the meeting held by the then Secretary of State for Justice with the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull North and constituent Tina Trowhill on 22 February 2016 on baby ashes and cremation working practices.

Diana Johnson:

[57203]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether a civil servant was in attendance at the meeting held by the then Secretary of State for Justice with the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull North and constituent Tina Trowhill on 22 February 2016 on baby ashes and cremation working practices.

Dr Phillip Lee:

It is not our practice to publish ministerial correspondence.

The Ministry of Justice has a note of the meeting of 22 February 2016 when the then Justice Secretary met the Honourable Member and your constituent Tina Trowhill to discuss baby ashes and cremation practices. A civil servant attended the meeting.

The Government has made clear that historic infant cremation practices must never be repeated. That is why we took decisive action, following a well-received consultation, to introduce a statutory definition of ashes and modernise crematoria processes. Other work is in hand.

Hull City Council has decided against a local investigation, and has made substantial improvements to cremation processes.

■ Harassment**Liz Saville Roberts:**[\[57297\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many victims of harassment or stalking have had proceedings against them in family courts initiated by the perpetrator of that staling or harassment in England and Wales in 2014 and 2015.

Dr Phillip Lee:

The Government is clear that stalking and harassment are totally unacceptable. That is why we have recently announced that there will be a new civil stalking protection order, to support victims of stalking at an earlier stage than address the perpetrators behaviour before it becomes entrenched.

We do not hold data on how many victims of stalking or harassment have been involved in family proceedings initiated by the perpetrator of the abuse. The court do have powers to deal with unmeritorious claims and applications. The court can strike out any action it views as an abuse of process or issue an order restricting the litigants ability to continue with further applications or claims, either of its own motion or on request by a party to the proceedings.

We continue to work with the judiciary to consider what additional protections may be necessary for victims of stalking or harassment.

■ Homosexuality**Diana Johnson:**[\[57047\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of exonerating rather than pardoning gay and bisexual men convicted of now-abolished sexual offences; and if she will bring forward legislative proposals to exonerate gay and bisexual men of such offences.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

It is hugely important that we pardon people convicted of historical sexual offences who would be innocent of any crime today. Through pardons and the existing disregard process we will meet our manifesto commitment and put right these wrongs. Everyone living who obtains a pardon through the new process will also have obtained a disregard, meaning that they will be treated as if they had never committed the offence.

■ Immigration: Appeals**Steve Baker:**[\[57377\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps she is taking to reduce delays in securing dates for First-tier Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum) hearings.

Dr Phillip Lee:

We do everything we can to avoid unnecessary delay in the Immigration & Asylum Tribunal and we have provided an additional 4,950 tribunal sitting days for this financial year to ensure current caseloads do not increase. We are keeping performance under close review.

Alison Thewliss:

[57847]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many First-tier immigration tribunals were lodged in each month since October 2015; and for each such month how many are outstanding.

Dr Phillip Lee:

We do everything we can to avoid unnecessary delay in the Immigration and Asylum Tribunal, and have provided an additional 4,950 tribunal sitting days for this financial year to ensure current case loads do not increase. We are keeping performance under close review and are confident there is sufficient capacity to deal with the number of appeals we expect to receive.

The number of appeals since October 2015, both lodged and outstanding, in First-tier immigration appeals are in the table below:

	APPEALS LODGED	OUTSTANDING
Oct 15	6,231	54,446
Nov 15	6,063	55,907
Dec 15	6,079	57,951
Jan 16	4,822	59,533
Feb 16	6,457	60,488
Mar 16	6,103	61,901
Apr 16	5,370	62,668
May 16	5,374	63,598
Jun 16	5,254	64,821
Jul 16	4,770	64,108
Aug 16	5,177	63,604
Sep 16	4,524	62,903

■ **Ministry of Justice: Staff**

Jake Berry:

[57015]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what plans her Department has to include worker representation on its departmental board.

Dr Phillip Lee:

The MoJ Board membership is in line with guidance issued from the Cabinet Office, which outlines that Departmental Boards should, as a minimum, include Non-Executive Board Members, Ministers and Senior Civil Servants (including the Permanent Secretary).

In order to make Board discussions and meetings as effective as possible, a range of additional attendees may be invited on occasion to ensure robust scrutiny and a wider range of advice is considered.

The membership will be guided by the Cabinet Office in order to keep a consistent approach with the rest of the departments.

■ Ministry of Justice: Translation Services**Royston Smith:**[\[57404\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the selection criteria were for the contract to provide translation and transcription services for her Department, awarded to thebigword in May 2016.

Dr Phillip Lee:

The selection criteria for the contract awarded to Thebigword for translation and transcription services was:

Service Delivery (35% of the total score);

Booking Service and Data Security (25% of the total score);

People and Resources (20% of the total score);

Mobilisation, Transition and Contract Management (10% of the total score); and

Legal, Commercial and Financial (10% of the total score).

The quality and financial criteria were evaluated separately. The Authority set a Quality Threshold and all bids which met or exceeded this threshold proceeded to the final stage of evaluation.

■ Offences against Children**Mr Roger Godsiff:**[\[55926\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when the Government plans to issue a commencement order for the provisions in the Serious Crime Act 2015 relating to sexual communications with a child.

Sir Oliver Heald:

Sexual communication with a child is abhorrent, which is why the government legislated to make it a specific offence. We remain committed to commencing this law as soon as possible.

■ Pre-sentence Reports

Jo Stevens:

[45569]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment she has made of whether the five-day turnaround for pre-sentence allows sufficient time for safeguarding checks to be carried out.

Dr Phillip Lee:

When preparing a pre-sentence report, the report author must initiate safeguarding checks regarding children and vulnerable adults at risk at the earliest opportunity

The duty under the Children's Act 2004 on all relevant agencies to make arrangements to ensure they discharge their functions in regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children does not end with an initial check and assessment at pre-sentence stage. Assessments begin at the pre-sentence report stage and continue through to the end of sentence.

■ Prison Sentences

Dawn Butler:

[57371]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prisoners serving sentences for imprisonment for public protection have completed the tariff period set by their original sentence.

Dawn Butler:

[57372]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prisoners serving sentences for imprisonment for public protection whose tariffs had expired were refused parole in each of the last five years.

Dr Phillip Lee:

The information requested is available on gov.uk.

Public protection remains our key priority; however, the recent HMIP report rightly highlights concerns around the management of IPP prisoners.

We have set up a new unit within the Ministry of Justice to improve progression for all IPP prisoners and are working with the Parole Board to improve the efficiency of the parole process.

■ Prisons

Luciana Berger:

[56045]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many safer cells there are; and what proportion of prison cells are safer cells in each prison in England.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

Safer cells are designed to make an act of suicide or self-harm as difficult as possible. However, no cell is totally safe, and where a prisoner is accommodated in a safer cell this forms only a part of the package of support measures that are put in place to manage the risk of self-harm or suicide.

It is not possible to express the number of safer cells as a proportion of the total number of cells. This is because only those safer cells being used to accommodate prisoners who are being supported using the Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) case management process for prisoners at risk are operating as safer cells. The number of safer cells therefore varies over time.

■ Sexual Offences: Counselling

Jim Shannon:

[[54248](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what discussions she has had with Cabinet colleagues on improving the availability in courts of counsellors and psychiatrists to help victims of sexual offences.

Dr Phillip Lee:

The government is committed to supporting all vulnerable victims and witnesses throughout the criminal justice system in England and Wales. Criminal justice and support for victims are a matter for devolved administrations in Northern Ireland and Scotland.

The government is also committed to ensuring that victims of sexual offences receive the support that they need. This includes funding for Independent Sexual Violence Advisors, who do not have to be qualified counsellors or psychiatrists, but who can accompany victims through the court process, as a supporter. The Ministry of Justice also provides funding to 86 female rape support centres across England and Wales providing independent, specialist support to female victims of both recent and historic sexual violence including Child Sexual Abuse, as well as funding for 12 male rape support centres, a support website and a pilot national helpline for male victims of rape and sexual abuse.

■ Small Claims

Mr David Nuttall:

[[57801](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what discussions the Government has had with representatives of the insurance industry on (a) raising the small claims limit and (b) reforming whiplash compensation.

Mr David Nuttall:

[[57802](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that potential savings arising from raising the small claims limits for (a) public and (b) employer liability will be passed on to customers.

Dr Phillip Lee:

A consultation paper and impact assessment setting out the case for reform were published on 17 November and are available on [gov.uk](#).

Since the publication of the consultation Ministers and officials have met to discuss the proposed reforms with a range of interested parties from across the sector, including representatives from the insurance industry, claimant lawyers, defendant lawyers and

credit hire companies. The government has made clear it expects savings from its reform package to be passed on to policy holders and will monitor the industry's reaction closely.

The consultation closes on 6 January.

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ Mental Health Services

Helen Whately: [57554]

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what comparative assessment he has made of (a) the level of psychiatric morbidity and suicide rate and (b) expenditure on mental health in Northern Ireland and other nations of the UK.

Kris Hopkins:

The issue of mental health and expenditure on mental health in Northern Ireland is devolved to the Northern Ireland Executive.

The Office of National Statistics does however, release regular statistics on the rate of deaths by suicide across the United Kingdom. The statistics can be found at:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/suicidesintheunitedkingdom/previousReleases>

Officials from the Department of Health engage with their counterparts in the Devolved Administrations on these statistics, and they discuss whether there are areas for learning on tackling mental health problems.

■ Northern Ireland Office: Staff

Jake Berry: [57016]

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what plans his Department has to include worker representation on its departmental board.

James Brokenshire:

I refer the hon Member to the oral statement on the Corporate Governance Green Paper of 29 November 2016, Official Report, Column 1408.

TRANSPORT

■ A14

Jo Churchill: [57648]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps are being taken to improve the A14 from junction 42 (Westley) to junction 51 (Beacon Hill).

Mr John Hayes:

Highways England has no plans to improve this section of the A14 in Suffolk within the current Roads Investment Strategy (2015-2020). However, Highways England's largest construction project has just commenced on the A14 between Huntington and Cambridge.

There are now updating its East of England route strategy in preparation for the second Roads Investment Strategy (2020-2025) and options for improving the A14 further will be considered.

■ Department for Transport: Horizon 2020

Helen Goodman: [\[57693\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the oral contribution by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the Treasury Committee on 12 December 2016, in response to Q311, who in his Department is responsible for assessing whether grant applications for Horizon 2020 funding are (a) value for money and (b) in line with Government objectives.

Mr John Hayes:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him by my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury on 20 December 2016 to Question UIN 57694.

■ Motor Vehicle Type Approval

Stewart Malcolm McDonald: [\[57342\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Written Statement of 12 December 2016, EU Transport Council, HCWS340, what recent progress his Department has made with his counterparts in other EU countries on reaching an agreement on (a) proposals for creating a regime for EU whole vehicle type approval and (b) further steps to ensure car manufacturers tackle emissions irregularities.

Mr John Hayes:

The UK is actively involved in negotiations to strengthen the EU type approval regime within the Council. We share the proposal's overall objectives of raising the standards of all EU type approval authorities and ensuring that manufacturers face a level playing field in obtaining the approvals needed to place their vehicles on the market.

The UK strongly supports the introduction of Real Driving Emissions testing as part of type approval requirements. This is expected to significantly reduce real world emissions from new cars and vans, and make it almost impossible for manufacturers to manipulate emissions. The UK is pressing for final agreement of these requirements before Christmas this year.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Carers: Employment

Natalie McGarry:

[\[58002\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps he is taking to support people providing unpaid care in securing and keeping (a) full-time and (b) part-time employment.

Natalie McGarry:

[\[58003\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps he is taking to ensure that adult and young carers who provide unpaid care receive the carer's allowance and other benefits they are entitled to.

Penny Mordaunt:

Carer's Allowance is paid to informal carers who meet the qualifying conditions, which include being over the age of 16 and providing care for at least 35 hours a week for a person with a disability who is in receipt of a qualifying benefit. Over 785,000 carers in Great Britain, including around 70,000 in Scotland, currently receive Carer's Allowance. Carer's Allowance can be claimed online, and around three quarters of carers submit their claims this way. Since the online service was launched, nearly 700,000 claims have been made this way, with feedback from claimants showing that more than nine out of ten are satisfied with the service. Financial support for carers is also available through Universal Credit, Income Support, Housing Benefit and Pension Credit.

As more employers understand the value of retaining their employees, and as flexible working becomes more widely available, it is increasingly important to allow carers to balance their caring responsibilities with paid employment. To help with this we will be publishing proposals on carers' employment in our Fuller Working Lives Strategy in the new year; rolling out Universal Credit to ensure work pays for all people, including carers; and increasing the earnings limit in Carer's Allowance from £110 to £116 a week from April 2017.

■ Employment: Disability

Diana Johnson:

[\[57727\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what proportion of disabled people were in employment in each year since 2009-10 by NUTS 1 region.

Penny Mordaunt:

From 2013-14 to 2015-16 we have seen 400,000 more disabled people in employment in the UK (see points 1 to 3 in the notes section). Over the same time we have seen the overall employment rate for disabled people increase by around 3 percentage points, where it now stands at 47 per cent.

The table below shows the proportion of working age disabled people in employment by NUTS 1 region between 2010-11 and 2015-16. Please note that data is not available

for 2009/10. In addition, due to changes to the definition of disability that were made in 2013, data for 2013-14 onwards cannot be compared with previous years.

The majority of the regions saw increases in their disability employment rate broadly in line with that of the UK as a whole over the period 2013-14 to 2015-16. Similarly, the number of disabled people in employment increased in every region over the period. Though due to small sample sizes in the survey used, the observed trends may not indicate statistically significant changes.

Table - The proportion of working age disabled people in employment in April to March of each year by NUTS 1 region from 2010-11 to 2015-16.

	2010 - 11 (%)	2011 - 12 (%)	2012- 13 (%)		2013- 14 (%)	2014- 15 (%)	2015- 16 (%)
North East	40.1	38.0	39.5		38.6	41.2	40.6
North West	41.3	41.3	41.8		39.2	40.0	43.4
Yorkshire and Humberside	43.7	43.1	45.6		43.4	43.6	46.2
East Midlands	49.8	48.1	48.0		46.7	48.1	50.6
West Midlands	42.1	41.1	44.2		41.9	43.3	43.7
Eastern	53.1	52.1	53.7	Figures pre 2013/14 should not be compared with figures from 2013/14 onwards	51.6	55.3	52.0
London	43.8	40.8	44.7		43.5	47.4	48.7
South East	53.9	52.5	52.5		52.8	54.4	55.4
South West	50.5	51.1	50.7		51.0	54.8	54.9
Wales	39.9	40.2	42.0		41.6	42.3	43.3
Scotland	44.3	43.9	42.8		39.7	42.0	41.8
Northern Ireland	27.2	28.0	29.0		33.6	33.4	31.4
United Kingdom	45.5	44.6	45.8		44.4	46.4	47.3

Source: Annual Population Survey, April to March 2010-11 to 2015– 16.

Notes:

1. Note that these figures are based on the Annual Population Survey and differ to the labour market status of disabled people figures available at the link below:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/datasets/labourmarketstatusofdisabledpeoplea08> which are based on the quarterly Labour Force Survey (LFS).

1. The latest quarterly LFS figures for Q3 2016 show that the number of disabled people in work has increased by almost 600,000 since Q2 2013; currently over 3.4 million disabled people are in employment. The employment rate of disabled people has increased by around 5 percentage points over the last three years and now stands at 48%.
2. The APS was used to provide a larger sample size to give regional breakdowns.
3. New analysis was carried out to produce data for 2012-13 and 2013-14. The other data is publicly available from NOMIS.
4. Due to changes in disability definition data for 2013-14 onwards should not be compared to data from previous years.
5. The GSS harmonised definition of disability is used for data for 2013-14 onwards. This is in line with the Equality Act definition of disability. Pre 2013-14 the Disability Discrimination Act definition of disability is used.
6. Percentages are rounded to the nearest 0.1 percentage point.
7. Data is subject to sampling variation.
8. Precision of statistics is limited by small sample sizes.
9. Figures are for the working age population, comprised of people aged 16 to 64.

■ Jobcentres: Glasgow

Stewart Malcolm McDonald:

[58027]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent discussions he has had with the Scottish Government on improving public transport connections after the proposed closure of jobcentres in Glasgow.

Damian Hinds:

DWP has held a number of discussions with Scottish Government on a wide range of issues in relation to support for claimants and our strategic estate plans. We will continue to engage with both Scottish Government and the local authority to ensure alignment of strategic plans, including tackling barriers to employment such as transport. In this case, the majority of Jobcentres are between approximately one and four miles away from their new locations and the journey using public transport takes from 10 to 40 minutes.

We are carrying out a public consultation in areas where customers have to travel more than three miles or more than 20 minutes to help inform the final decision and planning.

Stewart Malcolm McDonald: [\[58043\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate he has made of the savings to the public purse which will accrue from the proposed closure of the jobcentre in (a) Castlemilk and (b) Langside.

Damian Hinds:

The closure of (a) Castlemilk and (b) Langside are currently only proposals and due to commercial negotiations still on-going we are unable to provide information on estimated savings until the negotiations have concluded.

Stewart Malcolm McDonald: [\[58044\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent discussions he has had with the Public and Commercial Services Union on the proposed closure of jobcentres in Glasgow.

Damian Hinds:

As is usual, we informed the Public and Commercial Services (PCS) Union of our specific proposals for Glasgow five days before we informed staff. A consultation which the PCS can contribute to is now underway and will feed into the final decision making process.

Stewart Malcolm McDonald: [\[58068\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what discussions he has had with the owners of the Castlemilk and Langside jobcentres on the proposed closure of jobcentres in Glasgow before the announcement of those closures on 7 December 2016.

Damian Hinds:

The current leases on Castlemilk and Langside jobcentres are held as part of the private finance initiative with Telereal Trillium.

■ Personal Income

Rachel Reeves: [\[57826\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what comparative assessment his Department has made of the level of income that a couple with two children where the main earner is working full-time on the national living wage will receive relative to what they would have received in tax credits.

Damian Hinds:

There is no meaningful way of comparing an unreformed Tax Credit system with Universal Credit. Universal Credit is a fundamentally different benefit to the legacy benefit system and provides people with support into, and to progress in work.

If a family were moved from tax credits onto Universal Credit by the Department for Work and Pensions with unchanged circumstances they would not see their benefit income reduce, due to Transitional Protection. The exact level of entitlement will depend on the circumstances of both people in the couple.

One element of reform cannot be viewed in isolation from all others, including the introduction of the National Living Wage and rises in the Personal Tax Allowance.

Universal Credit now provides for up to 85% of childcare costs, giving parents the opportunity to work and earn more so they can support their families and improve the life chances of their children. Eligible parents can now access up to 30 hours free childcare per week for 3 and 4 year olds.

Universal Credit is designed to strengthen incentives for parents to move into and progress in work and evidence shows that under Universal Credit claimants move into work significantly faster and stay in work longer than under the old system.

■ Social Security Benefits

Louise Haigh:

[\[57734\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent estimate he has made of the average waiting time for transitioning from jobseeker's allowance to income support.

Damian Hinds:

We do not hold any data in relation to cases which have transitioned from Jobseekers Allowance to Income Support, however we can confirm that the year-to-date (YTD) figure as at November 16 is 83.8% for Income Support claims cleared within 5 days.

■ Social Security Benefits: Scotland

Ian Murray:

[\[58069\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of claim decisions for Scottish claimants of (a) employment and support allowance and (b) personal independence payments were upheld at appeal in each of the last four quarters for which information is available.

Penny Mordaunt:

The table below shows the number of appeals registered in Scotland against Personal Independence Payment (PIP) decisions (new claims and reassessments for Disability Living Allowance (DLA)) and how many and what proportion of them, expressed as a percentage of appeals registered (whether heard or not), resulted in no change of award amount for the claimant.

QUARTER	APPEALS REGISTERED	AWARD AMOUNT CHANGED	AWARD AMOUNT DID NOT CHANGE	PROPORTION OF APPEALS THAT HAD
				NO CHANGE TO AWARD AMOUNT
Apr 15 - Jun 15	1,950	930	1,020	52%
Jul 15 - Sep-15	1,670	840	830	50%
Oct 15 - Dec-15	1,710	790	920	54%
Jan 16 - Mar-16	1,960	940	1,030	52%

Notes to figures:

- The quarter refers to the date when the initial PIP decision was made.
- PIP data includes both normal rules cases and special rules cases for the terminally ill claimants, and is for both new claims and DLA reassessment claims.
- Data has been rounded to the nearest 10. Figures may not sum due to rounding.
- Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole percentage.
- This is unpublished data and, as such, it does not meet the quality standard required for official statistics publication. It should be used with caution and it may be subject to future revision.
- Data taken from the PIP computer system's management information.

Information for Employment Support Allowance Fit for Work decisions only, is as follows

Period 1.10.2008 to 30.9.2015 (for claims started within that period)

Appealed decisions upheld: 45,400

Appealed decisions overturned: 36,700

Ian Murray:

[58070]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of assessment reports conducted by contractors for Scottish claimants of (a) employment and support allowance and (b) personal independence payments were carried out by a qualified doctor in each of the last four quarters for which information is available.

Penny Mordaunt:

All healthcare professionals undertaking assessments on behalf of the Department are registered practitioners (occupational therapists, nurses, doctors, physiotherapists and paramedics) who have met requirements around training, post-qualification experience and competence.

The number of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) face to face assessments completed by healthcare professionals in Scotland was:

QUARTER	TOTAL ASSESSMENTS	BY DOCTORS
December 2015 to February 2016	13,242	2,051 (15.48%)
March 2016 to May 2016	14,299	2,064 (14.43%)
June 2016 to August 2016	15,479	2,039 (13.17%)
September 2016 to November 2016	16,397	2,539 (15.48%)

(Source: Data provided by CHDA)

None of the Personal Independence Payment (PIP) assessments in Scotland were completed by a qualified doctor. The Department does not require or specify that PIP assessments are carried out by doctors.

Ian Murray:

[58071]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many outstanding (a) employment and support allowance and (b) personal independence payment assessments for Scottish claimants there were in each of the last four quarters for which information is available.

Penny Mordaunt:

The numbers of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) initial work capability assessments (WCAs) still in progress in Scotland in the last four quarters for which information is available are as follows:

QUARTER	TOTAL IN PROGRESS
Ending 29 February 2016	36,900
Ending 31 May 2016	54,800
Ending 31 August 2016	59,600
Ending 30 November 2016	64,800

Source: Data is derived from administrative data held by the DWP and assessment data provided by the healthcare provider.

Outstanding WCA referrals in Scotland reduced between March 2015 (the start of CHDA contract) and December 2015 with the subsequent increase in outstanding referrals being in part due to the reintroduction of re-referrals from December 2015.

The numbers of Personal Independence Payment cases still in progress with the assessment provider in Scotland in the last four quarters for which information is available are as follows:

QUARTER	TOTAL IN PROGRESS
Ending 31 January 2016	13,200
Ending 30 April 2016	12,100
Ending 31 July 2016	8,100
Ending 31 October 2016	6,600

Source: Data taken from the PIP computer system's management information

■ Universal Credit

Rachel Reeves:

[57822]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate his Department has made of the level of taper rate in universal credit that would mean that households were no worse off under universal credit than they were under tax credits.

Rachel Reeves:

[57825]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what comparative assessment his Department has made of the effect on the level of income received by households under universal credit relative to what they received under tax credit if the taper rate for universal credit was set at 55 per cent.

Damian Hinds:

The structures of Universal Credit and the legacy benefit systems are different meaning there will be households with higher notional entitlements, and households with lower notional entitlements whatever the taper rate. However, no household will see a decline in the benefit payments purely as a result of the introduction of Universal Credit

The single universal credit taper means that as people's earnings increase, their Universal Credit payments reduce at a steady rate, so they can be sure they will always be better off working and earning more. We have also announced a 2% improvement in the Universal Credit single taper meaning more support for hardworking families.

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

HOME OFFICE

■ Freezing of Assets: Russia

Mr Dominic Raab:

[\[53636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has subjected (a) Dmitry Klyuev, (b) Pavel Karpov or (c) Andrey Pavlov to an (i) asset freeze or (ii) asset recovery in the last eight years.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 21 December 2016. The correct answer should have been:

Mr Ben Wallace:

The Home Office is responsible for the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002. The powers in the Proceeds of Crime Act may be exercised by law enforcement agencies such as the NCA, SFO, constables and HMRC. **It is Home Office policy not to comment on individual cases.**

JUSTICE

■ Bail Hostels

Mr David Hanson:

[\[49931\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many offenders have been in breach of curfew conditions at bail hostels in (a) England and (b) Wales in each year since 2010.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 1 November 2016. The correct answer should have been:

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The National Offender Management Service records only those breaches of curfew restrictions from Probation Approved Premises where offenders are recalled to custody as a result. Curfew breaches, while important, do not necessarily lead to recall. For example, an offender may be only a few minutes late, or may have been unable to return for reasons outside his or her control. In such cases other action may be appropriate instead.

97% of Approved Premises residents complete their time at the Approved Premises without breaching their curfew. The numbers of recalls for breach of curfew between 2011/12 and 2015/16, in England and in Wales, are set out below. Curfew was not recorded separately from other recall reasons in 2010/11.

	ENGLAND	WALES
2011/12	205	2
2012/13	211	1
2013/14	230	0
2014/15	240	2
2015/16	234 292	11 16

Public protection is our top priority. When an abscond takes place, police are immediately notified and are responsible for locating the offender. We take any breach of licence conditions extremely seriously and offenders who abscond can be sent back to prison.

Mr David Hanson:

[49987]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many offenders absconded from bail hostels in (a) England and (b) Wales in each year since 2010.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 1 November 2016. The correct answer should have been:

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The numbers of recalls of offenders for absconding from Approved Premises between 2010/11 and 2015/16, in England and in Wales, are set out below.

	ENGLAND	WALES
2010/11	1153	45
2011/12	986	27
2012/13	911	41
2013/14	836	31
2014/15	753	33
2015/16	662 884	21 27

Public protection is our top priority. When an abscond takes place, the offender is recalled, and the Police are notified and are responsible for locating the offender.

We take any breach of licence conditions extremely seriously and offenders who abscond can be sent back to prison.

Mr David Hanson:

[50040]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many offenders housed in bail hostels have been taken back into custody as a result of notification from bail hostel staff to police in each year since 2010.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 1 November 2016. The correct answer should have been:

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The National Offender Management Service records offenders who have been returned to custody from Approved Premises under seven categories: absconding, breaches of the Approved Premises Rules, positive drugs tests, increasing risk, breaches of licence conditions, breaches of curfew restrictions, and other reasons. All recalls to custody involve the police, since only they have the legal power to return offenders to custody.

The numbers of recalls for any of these reasons between 2011/12 and 2015/16, in England and in Wales, are set out below. These include figures for breach of curfew and absconding, as provided in answer to questions 49931 and 49987 respectively.

	ENGLAND	WALES
2010/11	2445	106
2011/12	2413	115
2012/13	2339	112
2013/14	2346	109
2014/15	2467	115
2015/16	2125 2807	110 143