

Daily Report

Thursday, 1 December 2016

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 1 December 2016 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:39 P.M., 01 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

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ British Business Bank

Daniel Zeichner: [54813]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what proportion of the British Business Bank's investment portfolio is invested in life science businesses.

Daniel Zeichner: [54848]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much the British Business Bank has invested in life science businesses since it was established.

Margot James:

British Business Bank (BBB) equity programmes have invested over £37m in life science businesses since BBB became a PLC in November 2014. The BBB also manages a number of government programmes which were facilitating finance to businesses prior to November 2014. Including these, BBB equity programmes are currently investing over £130m of finance in life science businesses. Approximately 8% of the BBB's total equity investment portfolio is invested in life science businesses.

■ Cold Weather Payments

Glyn Davies: [54591]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what proportion of Cold Weather Payment recipients whose energy is supplied by (a) British Gas, (b) EDF, (c) EON, (d) nPower, (e) Scottish Power, (f) SSE and (g) all Big Six companies are on their supplier's standard variable tariff.

Jesse Norman:

The Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) does not collect or hold data on those who receive Cold Weather Payments. BEIS collects data from energy suppliers regarding the tariff that customers are on as part of the Domestic Fuel Inquiry. The tariff data is collected from the energy suppliers in confidence; As such we cannot provide figures for specific companies. In quarter 2 2016, 69 per cent of domestic standard electricity customers were on a variable tariff. For domestic gas customers, 67 per cent were on a variable tariff. This data is published as part of our Quarterly Energy Prices publication which can be found in tables 2.4.2 and 2.5.2 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/annual-domestic-energy-price-statistics>).

■ Department for Business, Innovation and Skills: Reorganisation

Clive Lewis: [55184]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the BIS 2020 project is ongoing.

Margot James:

The BIS 2020 reform programme was developed to ensure the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) was able to deliver efficiency savings while making the Department simpler and better for users. Following the Machinery of Government changes, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) is considering how best to align the reform agendas of its two predecessor Departments.

Clive Lewis:[\[55185\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much has been paid to McKinsey for its work on the BIS 2020 project; and what further such payments are due.

Margot James:

I refer the hon Member to the answer given to the Hon Member for Sheffield, Heeley (Louise Haigh) to question UIN [19649](#) answered on 15 December 2015. No further payments are due to McKinsey for its work on BIS2020.

■ Energy: Prices**Glyn Davies:**[\[54536\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what proportion of customers of the Big Six energy companies have been on their supplier's standard variable tariff for each year from 2006 to 2016.

Jesse Norman:

The Government wants to see energy companies treating all of their customers fairly, including those on Standard Variable tariffs, not just those who switch.

The Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) collects data, including customers' tariff information, from energy companies as part of the domestic fuels inquiry (DFI). In the second quarter of 2016, 69 per cent of domestic standard electricity customers and 67 per cent of domestic gas customers were on variable tariffs. This data is published within our Quarterly Energy Prices publication and can be found in Tables 2.4.2 and 2.5.2 which is available online: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/annual-domestic-energy-price-statistics>.

BEIS started collecting this data at the end of 2012; therefore annual data is available for 2013 onwards. These figures are based on the DFI which covers around 85 per cent of the market. This includes all of the big 6 energy suppliers, Northern Ireland suppliers and one smaller supplier. The proportion of customers on variable tariffs, including standard variable tariffs, is as follows:

	STANDARD ELECTRICITY	GAS
2013	81	79
2014	75	73
2015	73	70

Mr David Anderson:

[\[54586\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will discuss with energy companies the potential exclusion of customers who cannot access IT services from cheaper tariffs.

Jesse Norman:

Department for Business, Energy and Industry Strategy Ministers have met with a number of energy supply companies to discuss a wide range of issues.

Consumers without access to the internet can shop around to find a better deal for their energy by using any price comparison company which is accredited to the Confidence Code administered by Ofgem and provides a free telephone price comparison service. In addition Citizen Advice offers advice and support on energy switching.

The Government has made it clear that it wants to see companies treating all of their customers fairly – not just those who switch.

Glyn Davies:

[\[54590\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many times per year and in what format customers of (a) British Gas, (b) EDF, (c) EON, (d) nPower, (e) Scottish Power and (f) SSE who are on standard variable tariffs receive Supplier Cheapest Tariff information.

Jesse Norman:

Ofgem's regulations state that energy suppliers must provide information on any alternative cheaper tariffs that they offer, on the front page of every customers' energy bills and annual statements and on notification of increase in charges.

■ Intellectual Property

Barry Gardiner:

[\[54683\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government plans to take to ensure the continued recognition of UK firms' existing trademarks and patents in the EU after the UK has left the EU.

Joseph Johnson:

There is no EU patent, so patents can only be granted with effect in individual states, either by applying directly to the relevant national office, or through the European Patent Office, which is not an EU body. These will therefore not be affected by the UK leaving the EU. Patents owned by UK businesses with effect in the UK will continue to be governed by national law.

In contrast, the EU trade mark is a unitary right with effect in the whole of the EU. When the UK leaves the European Union, EU trade marks will still be available to UK business and existing EU trade marks will continue to offer protection in other Member States. We are consulting businesses and considering how existing EU trade marks can continue to provide protection in the UK.

Barry Gardiner:

[\[54984\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the cost to UK businesses of resolving future cross-border trademark and patent disputes through court action after the UK leaves the EU.

Joseph Johnson:

The UK Intellectual Property Office is currently working closely with stakeholders and other government departments to assess the impact that leaving the EU will have on IP rights and their enforcement. The mechanisms for cross border enforcement, access to courts in other jurisdictions and the cost of those disputes in the future will depend to a large degree on what agreements are put in place for broader civil and criminal justice cooperation at the time of exit. It is not possible to make an accurate estimate of those costs at this time.

■ **Sellafield: Trade Unions**

Sue Hayman:

[\[53763\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what information his Department holds on when officials from the Office of Nuclear Regulation last met Sellafield trades union leaders from (a) Unite, (b) Prospect and (c) the GMB.

Jesse Norman:

[Holding answer 23 November 2016]: The Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) met with safety representatives from the unions on 13 July 2016 as part of preparations for Sellafield's Annual Regulatory Review. Union leaders were invited to attend and Prospect and GMB were represented at this meeting. ONR regularly interacts with union representatives from Unite, Prospect and the GMB as part of its normal regulatory business, including at site stakeholder and safety representative meetings. The most recent of these interactions attended by a senior Sellafield union representative (Prospect) was on 1 November.

■ **Small Businesses: Rutherglen and Hamilton West**

Margaret Ferrier:

[\[54697\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to support micro enterprises in Rutherglen and Hamilton West constituency.

Margot James:

The British Business Bank currently facilitates around £310m of finance in Scotland. This includes over £300,000 in loans to 54 start-up businesses in the Rutherglen and Hamilton West constituency. Since it was established in 2007, Innovate UK has supported 5 Small & Medium sized Enterprises in the constituency with more than £2.5m in grants. This includes funding two micro enterprises with innovation vouchers in 2013 and 2014. In 2015/16, Innovate UK committed to invest £58.3m in 291 innovation projects in Scotland.

■ Warm Home Discount Scheme

Glyn Davies: [\[54581\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what proportion of Warm Home Discount recipients whose energy is supplied by (a) British Gas, (b) EDF, (c) EON, (d) nPower, (e) Scottish Power, (e) SSE and (f) all six firms are on their supplier's standard variable tariff.

Jesse Norman:

Ofgem collect data on the number of Warm Home Discount recipients; the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy collect data from the energy companies on the type of tariff that their customers are on. These two data sources cannot be combined, and for this reason it is not possible to provide the proportion of Warm home Discount recipients that are on their supplier's standard variable tariff.

The total number of customers that received the Warm Home discount in 2015/16 was 1,350,403 within the core group as well as further 836,201 to those eligible under the broad group. This data is published by Ofgem in their Annual report online (https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/system/files/docs/2016/11/whd_annual_report_sy5_final_for_publication_0.pdf). The number given by each of the companies listed is given below. Please note, this will not sum to the total number of rebates as the whole scheme includes small suppliers as well:

COMPANY	NUMBER OF REBATES
British Gas	700,400
EDF	236,700
E.on	357,000
Npower	208,300
Scottish Power	215,100
SSE	366,800
All 6 companies	2,084,000

The proportion of customers on standard tariffs is collected by BEIS in confidence and as such specific company data cannot be provided. Of all domestic customers, in quarter 2 2016, 69 per cent of standard electricity and 67 per cent of gas customers were on variable tariffs. These figures are published as part of our Quarterly Energy Prices publication and can be found in Tables 2.4.2 and 2.5.2 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/annual-domestic-energy-price-statistics>).

Glyn Davies:

[\[54589\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what additional written communications each of the Big Six energy companies give to recipients of the Warm Home Discount to support them in switching to the lowest priced energy tariffs; and whether the provision of such communication is monitored by Ofgem.

Jesse Norman:

Energy suppliers must include on bills and other communications to domestic customers information about the savings they can make by moving to their supplier's cheapest tariff.

Suppliers are not required to provide any additional written communications to recipients of the Warm Home Discount scheme concerning switching to the lower tariff, and Ofgem does not monitor suppliers' tariff communications with scheme recipients.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Cabinet Office: Advertising

Stephen Doughty:

[\[53019\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how much the Government has spent on advertising in (a) The Times, (b) The Sunday Times, (c) The Mail on Sunday, (d) The Sun, (e) The Sun on Sunday, (f) The Huffington Post, (g) Mail Online, (h) Daily Mail, (i) The Guardian and (j) Trinity Mirror newspapers in each Department in the last six years.

Ben Gummer:

[Holding answer 18 November 2016]: Government advertising is purchased by our media buying partner, Carat.

Carat has held the contract for UK Government media buying since January 2015. The figures that are supplied below show spend by departmental groups for the financial year 2015/16. HM Government does not hold figures for previous financial years.

In the last Parliament, the Government saved £18.6 billion through efficiencies and reform - and we are aiming to make another £15-20 billion in efficiency savings by 2019-20.

Since 2010, we have already reduced Government spending on communications by £1 billion.

Government advertising supports the government's priorities and helps deliver its programmes. Government communications helps improve the lives of people and communities in the UK, assists with the effective operation of our public services and delivers responsive and informative communications 24 hours a day.

The advertising expenditure figures below are provided by Departmental Group, and include for each Department expenditure by Arms Length Bodies reporting to the respective Secretary of State.

Daily Mail/Weekend Magazine

DEFRA £12,160

DCLG £74,100

DWP £79,888

HMT £569,594

Home Office £18,816

DCMS £64,600

DH £74,240

Total £893,398**Trinity Mirror – Daily Mirror/Daily Record/Sunday Mirror/The People/We Love Telly**

BIS £8,100

DCLG £16,200

DWP £64,613

HMT £104,669

DH £134,943

DCMS £6,400

MOD £4,200

Total £339,125**Guardian/The Guide/Weekend**

DEFRA £2,420

DFE £10,956

DCLG £4,840

DWP £4,180

HMT £69,575

DFT £1,210

Home Office £2,640

UKTI £4,840

DCMS £5,808

Total £106,469**Mail on Sunday/Event Magazine/You Magazine**

DEFRA £36,922

DWP £65,268

HMT £363,836

Home Office £16,023

BIS £8,000

DH £41,610

DCMS £32,900

Total £564,559

Sun on Sunday/Fabulous

DWP £76,853

HMT £236,859

DH £75,298

DCMS £10,763

Total £399,773

The Sun/TV Magazine

MOD £12,000

BIS £41,370

DCLG £105,887

DWP £109,603

HMT £301,713

DCMS £42,000

DH £231,631

Total £844,204

The Sunday Times

DEFRA £33,380

DFE £122,904

DWP £31,864

HMT £493,084

Home Office £55,307

BIS £11,370

DCMS £11,380

Total £759,289

Times/Times Magazine

DEFRA £14,400

DFE £36,941
 DWP £10,151
 HMT £337,019
 Home Office £347,341
 DCMS £5,970
 UKTI £11,488
 DCMS £34,498

Total £797,808

Mail on Line

HMT £149,500
 MOD £154,442
 BIS £37,802
 DH £162,614

Total £504,358

Huffington Post

We only use one supplier for AOL owned properties (that includes Huffington Post) so it is impossible to distinguish from other AOL bookings that run across the portfolio.

Royston Smith: [\[55152\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what criteria determine the eligibility of publications to be destinations for publicly-funded advertisements.

Royston Smith: [\[55181\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps the Government takes to ensure that it does not place publicly-funded advertisements in publications that promote hate speech.

Ben Gummer:

The Government buys advertising space via a single media buying agency, Carat.

The media buying agency have been instructed to ensure that Government advertising only appears in reputable media, including publications.

■ **Developing Countries: Sustainable Development**

Patrick Grady: [\[55004\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what discussions he has had with the Office for National Statistics on (a) its decision to delay the launch of its consultation on proposed national indicators for the sustainable development goals and (b) setting a new date for the launch of that consultation.

Ben Gummer:

I have had no discussions with the Office for National Statistics on these matters. The decision to delay the consultation was taken by the ONS itself on its own authority.

■ **Government Departments: Personnel Management**

Louise Haigh: [\[54840\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many people employed in human resources roles in the civil service have (a) prior experience and (b) qualifications in human resources.

Ben Gummer:

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

■ **Government Departments: Work Experience**

Louise Haigh: [\[54796\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many internships currently exist in all government departments.

Ben Gummer:

A variety of internships are undertaken across government and no central database is kept of these internships. The Civil Service Fast Stream runs a Summer (for penultimate and final year undergraduates) and Early (for first year undergraduates) Diversity Internship programme. For the summer scheme, 308 intern placements were offered in 2016 and 100 placements were offered for the early scheme. Applications are now open for the 2017 schemes

■ **Voting Rights: Young People**

Margaret Ferrier: [\[54916\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if the Government will bring forward legislative proposals to extend the franchise to 16 and 17 year olds for the next UK general election.

Chris Skidmore:

The Government has no plans to lower the voting age for the next UK general election.

TREASURY

■ **Child Tax Credit**

Lucy Powell: [\[55214\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether under the proposed limitation of child tax credits to the first two children in a household, a third child in that household with a date of birth after April 2017 would be eligible for child tax credit payment, if the second child were cared for under kinship care arrangements or had been born as a result of non-consensual sex.

Mr David Gauke:

In future, all families - those in receipt of benefits and those supporting themselves solely through work - will be faced with the same sorts of financial considerations when making decisions about having more children. Families will no longer be able to claim additional support through Child Tax Credit (CTC) for third or subsequent children in a family where the child is born on or after 6 April 2017.

However, recognising that some parents or carers are not in the same position to make a choice, the Government has been clear that there would be exceptions for third and subsequent children for certain groups. This includes children who are in kinship care arrangements or born from non-consensual sex.

■ Flood Control: Finance

Sue Hayman: [\[55089\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of developing capital and revenue funding for flood risk management projects to local authorities.

Mr David Gauke:

This is answered on the basis that 'developing' should read 'devolving' in the question above: such that the question refers to the potential to devolve flood risk management funding for England to local authorities.

Government targets flood risk management funding to minimise household risk and wider economic impacts; and this requires a national perspective on the allocation of grants.

However, local areas already provide significant input into flood risk management in their area: with local authorities, internal drainage boards, Regional Flood and Coastal Committees and the Environment Agency area teams deciding which flood defence improvement schemes to build and promote into the national capital programme.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs is the lead government department for flooding policy.

■ Highways England: VAT

Alan Brown: [\[55121\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much VAT Highways England paid in 2015-16.

Jane Ellison:

As HM Revenue and Customs has a statutory duty of taxpayer confidentiality, this information cannot be provided. However, some relevant information may be available in Highways England's Annual Report and Accounts for 2015/16, which can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/highways-england-annual-reports-and-accounts>.

■ Infrastructure

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[55188\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 28 November 2016 to Question 54558, what steps he plans to take to determine which infrastructure projects to fund from the National Productivity Investment Fund; and if he will make a statement.

Mr David Gauke:

Paragraph 3.9 of the Autumn Statement details the allocation approach for the National Productivity and Investment Fund.

■ Insurance: Competition

Chris Leslie: [\[55040\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the level of support the prudential regulatory regime provides to ensure the competitiveness of the UK insurance industry.

Simon Kirby:

The UK insurance industry is the largest in Europe and the third largest in the world. The government is aware of the important contribution of insurance to the nation's economy and is keen to ensure the industry remains competitive. The Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA) is the independent regulator for major insurance firms in the UK, with a general objective to promote the safety and soundness of the firms it regulates.

The government continues to improve competitiveness and encourage growth in the sector. For example, as announced in the Autumn Statement, the government is consulting on draft regulations which will introduce a competitive regulatory and tax regime for Insurance Linked Securities in the UK. The regulations are designed to allow the UK to compete in this innovative area and will enhance our position as a global insurance hub.

■ Local Government: Public Private Partnerships

Dr Andrew Murrison: [\[54415\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will estimate the value of local authority debts accrued from public-private partnership developments since 2010 in (a) England and (b) Wiltshire.

Mr David Gauke:

The values of the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) liabilities included in the Statement of Financial Position of the Whole of Government Accounts (WGA) are:

FINANCIAL YEAR	ENGLISH LOCAL AUTHORITIES£M	WILTSHIRE COUNCIL£M
2014-15	11,985.3	51.7
2013-14	11,610.3	53.4

FINANCIAL YEAR	ENGLISH LOCAL AUTHORITIES£M	WILTSHIRE COUNCIL£M
2012-13	10,850.9	37.1
2011-12	9,935.4	30.4
2010-11	8,930.1	31.0
2009-10	8,039.0	42.2

The most recent WGA is for the 2014-15 financial year and was published in May 2016. The 2015-16 WGA is currently being prepared and will be published in 2017.

■ Money Lenders

Richard Burgon:

[\[54926\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to paragraph 4.13 of the Autumn Statement 2016, on the term convicted loan sharks, (a) what those offences were and (b) which agency has responsibility for prosecuting those offences.

Simon Kirby:

The scheme referred to is at paragraph 3.45 of the Autumn Statement 2016. It is run by the England Illegal Money Lending Team, which has responsibility for taking action against loan sharks.

The Team prosecutes loan sharks under s23 Financial Services and Markets Act 2000, which provides that it is an offence for any person to carry on a regulated activity without permission (the relevant regulated activity being Article 60B of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 (Regulated Activities) Order 2001 (entering into regulated credit agreements)). Additionally, the Team prosecute offences under s327 and s329 Proceeds of Crime Act 2002.

Funds are recovered from convicted loan sharks by confiscation orders under Part 2 of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002.

■ Motor Vehicles: Insurance

Ian Murray:

[\[55220\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the two per cent increase in insurance premiums on the number of uninsured vehicles in (a) Scotland and (b) the UK.

Jane Ellison:

Insurance Premium Tax (IPT) will increase from 10% to 12% from June 2017. IPT is a tax on insurers and it is up to them whether they pass on any increased costs.

The Government has no evidence to suggest that this level of change to IPT will lead to changes in the number of uninsured vehicles. The estimated number of uninsured vehicles in the UK has fallen from 2 million in 2005 to 1 million today.

■ National Productivity Investment Fund

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[55190\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 28 November 2016 to Question 54558, whether it is his Department's policy that the National Productivity Investment Fund will fund a minimum number of projects based outside London; and if he will make a statement.

Mr David Gauke:

The government has established a National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIF) to provide £23bn of additional spending between 2017/18 and 2021/22. Every penny spent by the UK government is explicitly earmarked for areas that are critical to boosting productivity: economic infrastructure (transport and digital communications), Research and Development (R&D), and housing.

Further details about specifically how and where this money will be invested will be set out by the relevant departments and agencies in due course.

Where spending on measures within the NPIF does not extend to Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, the devolved administrations will receive funding through the Barnett formula in the usual way.

■ National Savings Bonds

Helen Goodman: [\[54792\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to publish the full terms of his planned Investment Guaranteed Growth Bonds.

Simon Kirby:

The government will publish further details of the terms of the NS&I Investment Bonds in due course, and with sufficient time for prospective customers to be informed ahead of the product going on sale in spring 2017. The final rate will be confirmed at the 2017 spring budget.

■ Police Service of Northern Ireland: VAT

Alan Brown: [\[55120\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much VAT the Police Service of Northern Ireland paid in 2015-16.

Jane Ellison:

As HMRC has a statutory duty of taxpayer confidentiality, this information cannot be provided. However, some relevant information may be available in the Police Service of Northern Ireland's Financial Statements for 2015/16, which can be found at: <https://www.psnl.police.uk/inside-psni/our-departments/finance-and-support-services/financial-services-branch/annual-statement-of-accounts/>.

■ Railways: Finance

Jim McMahon: [\[54573\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to paragraph 3.19 of the Autumn Statement 2016, how much of the proposed £450 million funding for rail capacity and smart ticketing will be spent in each region.

Mr David Gauke:

At Autumn Statement £450m was allocated to trial digital signalling technology which can expand capacity and improve reliability on the railway. DfT will announce more information on how this will be allocated in due course.

Around £80m of funding was allocated for the rollout of smart ticketing across the country. The government has also committed £150 million to support the rollout of smart and integrated ticketing across the North. Taken together this means that by the end of 2018 passengers will have a smart choice for their ticket, including smart season tickets in our major cities. DfT will announce more details in due course.

■ Railways: South East

Caroline Lucas: [\[54670\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to publish the London and South Coast Rail Corridor Study; and if he will make a statement.

Mr David Gauke:

The former Chancellor commissioned the London South Coast Rail Corridor Study in 2015, which looks at the region's rail transport needs broadly. The Study considers the case for investment in the Brighton Main Line, re-opening the Lewes-Uckfield line, as well as the 'BML2' concept, for a new mainline to London. The Government will publish the London and South Coast Rail Corridor Study, and its response to the recommendations, in due course.

■ Revenue and Customs: Northern Ireland

Tom Elliott: [\[55006\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many HM Revenue and Customs posts there were in (a) Fermanagh and South Tyrone and (b) West Tyrone constituencies in (i) 2007-08 and (ii) the most recent period for which figures are available.

Jane Ellison:

Between 2006 and 2008 HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) carried out a Regional Review Programme (RRP) designed to take forward the consolidation of its estate and the relocation of staff nationwide in line with business plans. The economic climate and changing customer demands meant that HMRC had to become leaner and more efficient.

At the outset of the RRP, HMRC had in the region of 600 staffed offices. Around 100 of these were classed as specialist sites such as ports or docks which had to be retained and were outside the review process. By December 2008, HMRC had published

decisions on the future of these buildings - 258 would be vacated and 235 would be retained

The number of HMRC posts in Fermanagh and South Tyrone constituency in 2007-08 was 71. At the end of October 2016 the number of posts in this constituency was 33.

Since the formation of HMRC there has not been an HMRC office situated in the West Tyrone constituency.

■ Revenue and Customs: Telephone Services

Frank Field:

[55079]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many and which public telephone lines operated by HM Revenue and Customs are 0345 lines; how many calls have been made to those lines in the last 12 months for which data is available; what the average duration of calls was to each such line; and how much was charged to all callers using each such line.

Jane Ellison:

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) publishes some performance data at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/business-plan-indicators>.

The information in respect of the 0345 public telephone lines is as follows:

NUMBER		NUMBER OF CALLS - 12 MONTHS TO END OF JUNE 2016	AVERAGE DURATION OF CALLS MINS:SECS
0345 300 3900	Tax Credits Helpline	19,310,874	Not available
0345 300 3941	Tax Credit Childcare Provider	86,676	07:46
0345 300 3943	Tax Credit Agent Line	123,767	05:45
0345 300 3944	Tax Credit - Local Authority	85,538	03:11
0345 300 3946	Tax Credits - Intermediaries	61,795	09:52
0345 302 1429	Tax Credits Payment Line	1,583,067	Not available
0345 366 7820	Orderline - Bulk Order	11,308	03:07
0345 600 4270	NIN State Pension Top Up	31,894	Not available

Where the information in the table is shown as "Not Available", this is because customers calling the number are transferred to the correct Department based on the

spoken reason for call, rather than the number dialed. Calls cannot be tracked by dialed number through this platform, but can be tracked on some of the simpler helplines. The overall line of business call waiting and handling times is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/business-plan-indicators>

HMRC does not hold information on the cost to customers of calls to its helplines because the cost will vary depending on the call package that a customer has with their telephony provider.

Phone charges are the responsibility of OfCom; full details of costs can be found on their website at <http://consumers.ofcom.org.uk/phone/how-much-does-a-phone-call-really-cost/>

■ Sanitary Products: VAT

Paula Sherriff: [\[55213\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to paragraph 5.15 of the Autumn Statement 2016, how much he plans to make available for the next round of Tampon Tax Fund allocations.

Mr David Gauke:

Last year, the government announced an annual £15m Tampon Tax Fund to support women's charities across the UK. This is the estimated amount raised from VAT on women's sanitary products. At this year's Autumn Statement, the government announced that it would launch the next round of the Tampon Tax Fund on 1 December 2016.

■ Social Security Benefits

Ian Murray: [\[55221\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential future effect on households in (a) Scotland and (b) the UK of the freeze on working age benefits consequential on the upward revision by the Office of Budget Responsibility of CPI inflation in its Economic and Fiscal Outlook of November 2016.

Ian Murray: [\[55222\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish updated costings of the effect on households in (a) Scotland and (b) the UK of the freeze on working age benefits consequential on the upward revision by the Office of Budget Responsibility of CPI inflation in its Economic and Fiscal Outlook of November 2016.

Mr David Gauke:

The freeze on working-age benefits came into effect in April 2016. The Government does not hold a costing of this measure based on the Autumn Statement inflation assumptions, as neither it nor the OBR updates costings of previously announced measures that have already come into force. At the Autumn Statement the Government published analysis showing the cumulative impact of taxation, welfare and public spending measures implemented over this Parliament, in 2019-20, on UK households.

This analysis included the freeze on working age benefits and the latest OBR economic forecasts.

This analysis can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-statement-2016-documents>

■ Telecommunications: Finance

Jim McMahon:

[54574]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to paragraph 3.20 of the Autumn Statement 2016, how much of the proposed £1 billion to be invested in digital communications will be spent in each region.

Mr David Gauke:

The Autumn Statement 2016 announced over £1 billion to be invested in digital communications. This includes £400 million for a new Digital Infrastructure Investment Fund, with investment decisions to be made by an independent fund manager on a commercial basis. Details about how local areas can access funding for 5G trials and local fibre rollout will be set out in due course.

■ Welfare Tax Credits

Frank Field:

[55269]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to paragraph 6.2 of the Autumn Statement 2016, if he will make it his policy that HM Revenue and Customs reimburses claimants for each year that tax credits payments were affected by the error which resulted in families with disabled children not being in receipt of their full tax credit entitlement.

Jane Ellison:

Claimants were able to claim the higher rate of Child Tax Credits (CTC) by informing HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) of eligibility at the time an initial claim for or renewal of CTC was made. Accompanying guidance provided details of the eligibility requirements for this. In addition, claimants could call the relevant HMRC helpline at any time. Between April 2011 and April 2014, the number of working families claiming the disabled child element increased to 152,000, and has since risen to 169,000.

It is the claimants' responsibility to inform HMRC of their eligibility to the higher element of CTC. However, to help claimants claim the right amount HMRC's backup practice is to take information from Department for Work and Pensions to automatically update tax credit awards. However, for the period in question, this information sharing process proved unreliable. Although legally HMRC are only required to backdate claims for 31 days on receipt of a notification or claim, at the Autumn Statement, the Government announced that HMRC would make corrections for this year for the customers it has identified who have not claimed. Customers will receive a lump sum payment to reflect entitlement since 6 April 2016, and an on-going higher award.

■ West Midlands Combined Authority: Finance

Ian Austin: [\[54685\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with the West Midlands Combined Authority on granting that Authority power to fund non-transport infrastructure projects.

Mr David Gauke:

The government agreed a mayoral devolution deal with the West Midlands on 17 November 2015, which will give the West Midlands Mayoral Combined Authority additional powers and funding. Discussions on implementation, between the combined authority and government, are ongoing.

As the government announced at the Autumn Statement, it will continue to work towards a second devolution deal with the West Midlands Combined Authority. It will also give mayoral combined authorities powers to borrow for their new functions, which will allow them to invest in economically productive infrastructure, subject to agreeing a borrowing cap with HM Treasury.

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**■ Coastal Communities Fund**

Jim McMahon: [\[54645\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how much funding his Department plans to allocate to each area from the Coastal Communities Fund.

Andrew Percy:

The Coastal Communities Fund awards grants to projects in coastal areas through a competitive bid-led process and is not allocated directly to specific places or areas. Funds are awarded to projects that best meet the programme's aims to promote sustainable growth and jobs. Approximately £38 million is available to allocate to projects in England next year.

■ Combined Authorities: Dorset

Mr Christopher Chope: [\[55235\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if he will place in the Library a copy of the correspondence between his Department and Dorset Councils since 1 July 2016 relating to the application by those councils to establish a combined authority for Dorset from April 2017.

Mr Marcus Jones:

I have today placed in the Library of the House a copy of the letter we have received from Dorset Councils since 1 July 2016.

Mr Christopher Chope:

[55236]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if he will place in the Library a copy of the application from the nine Dorset Councils to establish a combined authority for Dorset from April 2017; and whether he intends to establish that combined authority.

Mr Marcus Jones:

We expect to reach our decision early in the new year on the Dorset councils' proposal to establish a combined authority. The documents are publicly available on -

<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/dorset-combined-authority>

■ Communities and Local Government: Staff

Stephen Timms:

[55243]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how many full-time equivalent civil servants employed by his Department are working exclusively on issues arising for Greater London as a result of the UK voting to leave the EU; and what the civil service grade is of each of those officials.

Mr Marcus Jones:

DCLG is interested in developing a rich, place-based understanding of the opportunities and implications for local areas including Greater London. Work on EU exit is being led by respective policy teams in the department, who are assessing the implications of EU exit across all regions, including London. The department continues to meet with the GLA, London Councils and the LGA to discuss exit issues.

■ Devolution

Mr David Anderson:

[54587]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, which regions have agreed or are developing plans for devolved government without the need for an elected mayor.

Andrew Percy:

To date Cornwall, a single, large unitary authority is the only area to agree a non-mayoral devolution deal with government. As a result their devolution package is not as expansive as those deals which have included commitments to establish Mayoral Combined Authorities, for example Cornwall has not received a Gainshare fund.

With regard to future devolution, it is for local areas to develop their proposals and share these with government.

Mr David Anderson:

[54588]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what criteria he uses to decide whether a region can agree a devolution deal without a regional mayor.

Andrew Percy:

An area's governance arrangements must provide the accountability and leadership which is proportionate to the scale of powers and budgets being devolved.

■ **Highcliffe Community Association**

Mr Christopher Chope:

[\[55232\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what information his Department holds on when Historic England plans to respond to the letter of 22 September 2016 from Highcliffe Community Association of Greystones House, Waterford Road, on modified proposals to extend their premises; and for what reason Historic England's letter of 7 November 2016 to Christchurch Borough Council makes no reference to those modified proposals.

Gavin Barwell:

This is a matter between the local authority and Historic England, and the information is not therefore held centrally. The local Historic England office may be able to provide you with more information. We have passed this request onto DCMS, the Department which has responsibility for Historic England.

■ **Housing: Newham**

Stephen Timms:

[\[55230\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what estimate his Department has made of the (a) number and (b) proportion of new housing being developed in the London Borough of Newham in the next three years which will be specifically reserved for first time buyers.

Gavin Barwell:

We do not routinely hold such information but the London Borough of Newham's Local Plan, adopted in January 2012, makes no reference to first time buyers. Through the National Planning Policy Framework we ask local councils to use their Local Plans to meet the full, objectively assessed needs for all types of housing in their areas.

We have consulted on a 20% Starter Homes requirement for suitable housing sites of 10 units or more (or 0.5 hectares or more) for the regulations under the Housing and Planning Act 2016. We are considering the responses and will set out our future plans for housing in the forthcoming White Paper.

■ **Local Government Services: EU Law**

Julie Elliott:

[\[54605\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what the potential effect on (a) funding for and (b) services provided by local authorities is of the repeal of EU laws and directives.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The Prime Minister has said that she intends to trigger Article 50 by the end of March next year. Negotiations between the UK and the European Union cannot start before then. The Government will not be giving a running commentary on the negotiations. However, we are working closely with the Local Government Association and councils across the country to ensure local government takes advantage of the opportunities that exit from the European Union will bring.

■ Parking: Fines**Steve McCabe:**[\[54501\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of requiring private car parking firms to join an accredited body to ensure that customers who wish to challenge fines have the right to an independent appeal process.

Mr Marcus Jones:

HMG has looked extensively into the issue of requiring private car parking firms to join an accredited body and has determined a voluntary membership approach is a sufficient safeguard.

The Government promotes a system of industry self-regulation by the parking sector. Private parking companies have the option to join an Accredited Trade Association (ATA). This means they can then access vehicle keeper data from the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency. They must operate under the ATA's code of practice and provide free access to an independent appeals process. If a company fails to comply with the code of practice, it can be suspended or expelled.

If a motorist has concerns about the operating practices of any individual parking company, then motorists have the option of reporting them to trading standards and in the first instance should seek to contact Citizens Advice.

■ Parking: Unfair Practices**Gill Furniss:**[\[54482\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, when he plans to publish his Department's response to the Parking Reform: Tackling Unfair Practices consultation.

Mr Marcus Jones:

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

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

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

■ Planning Permission

Mr Geoffrey Cox:

[\[54421\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of amending the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 to enable a Class Q application to be made in two parts for (a) change of use and (b) building operations.

Gavin Barwell:

Class Q permitted development rights, which allow agricultural buildings to change to residential use, provide both for change of use only and for change of use and associated building operations. Where the change of use to a residential dwelling would not be possible without the associated building operations, a local authority should consider the complete proposal when determining whether to grant prior approval.

We therefore have no plans to amend the regulations in this regard.

■ Private Rented Housing: Fees and Charges

Dr Andrew Murrison:

[\[54411\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what actions were agreed during meetings he had in the last six months with representatives from the Association of Residential Letting Agents relating to fees for private sector tenants.

Gavin Barwell:

In the last six months, I have met jointly with the managing directors of the Association of Residential Letting Agents (ARLA) and the National Association of Estate Agents (NAEA). This was an initial briefing where the two organisations outlined their views on a range of private sector housing issues, but no actions were agreed.

I also opened the first meeting of the Affordability and Security Working Group, set up by the Department for Communities and Local Government, and attended the initial part of the meeting, at which ARLA was one of the organisations present.

■ Regional Planning and Development

Julian Sturdy:

[\[54554\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what the timetable is for the announcement of successful bids to the Government's Garden Villages programme; and if he will make a statement.

Gavin Barwell:

We are expecting to make an announcement very shortly on the first cohort of garden villages selected for support.

■ Selby-Hull Railway Line: Electrification

Karl Turner:

[53605]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of the rejection of the proposal for electrification of the Selby to Hull railway line on the Government's plan for a Northern Powerhouse.

Andrew Percy:

[Holding answer 22 November 2016]: This Government is committed to delivering the Northern Powerhouse; it remains central to our plans to build an economy that works for all. This is why in previous rounds of Local Growth Deals we have invested £2.8 billion in Northern Powerhouse regions. This includes £863.8 million for the Local Enterprise Partnerships that cover Hull and Selby as follows: £113.6 million for the Humber, £122.2 million for York, North Yorkshire and East Riding, and £628 million for Leeds City Region.

The train operators that serve Hull are planning to deliver a range of benefits for passengers: new rolling stock, faster journey times, and improvements to Hull station.

Due to bi-modal trains that will be built in the North East, these benefits can be delivered without the need for electrification. This will mean better journeys for passengers without having to wait for an electrified route and will avoid the inconvenience this would cause. A direct service to Hull on the Trans Pennine Express Network will remain in place.

The Arriva Rail North franchise, which started in April, has committed to upgrading the Hull-Doncaster-Sheffield route to a new high-quality 'Northern Connect' service. There will be new or refurbished trains on these longer-distance services, with faster journeys and stations staffed daily, with catering services and free Wi-Fi at each one.

Passengers travelling to Hull and to East Riding will benefit from other improvement including Virgin Trains East Coast running faster services when their new fleet of Azuma trains are introduced in 2018, taking up to 6-7 minutes off the route from London to Hull.

First Hull Trains recently announced a £60 million investment in five new AT300 bid-mode trains of five carriages each. These will take advantage of the existing electrified East Coast line and then continue on to Hull via Selby.

We are determined to strengthen transport links across Northern towns and cities, so that people have greater choice and flexibility over the places they choose to work and live.

We have created Transport for the North (TfN) to develop transport plans that drive economic growth. We have committed £50 million over this parliament and are working to put the organisation on a statutory footing, so that TfN can effectively deliver its objectives.

We are also investing £13 billion in transport in the North during this parliament, to take forward key projects in the Northern Powerhouse.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Department for Culture, Media and Sport: Ministerial Policy Advisers

Tom Watson: [\[55187\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 28 November 2016 to Question 53795, what the (a) name, (b) job title and (c) responsibility is of each of the unpaid advisers based in the gambling, licensing and lottery section of her Department.

Matt Hancock:

There are no unpaid advisors currently based in the gambling, licensing and lottery section.

Tom Watson: [\[55207\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 28 November 2016 to Question 53795, what the (a) name, (b) job title and (c) responsibility is of each of the unpaid advisers currently based in the Private Office Group of her Department.

Matt Hancock:

There are no unpaid advisers currently based in the Private Office Group.

Tom Watson: [\[55208\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 28 November 2016 to Question 53795, what the (a) name, (b) job title and (c) responsibility is of each of the unpaid advisers currently based in the Sport Directorate of her Department.

Matt Hancock:

There are no unpaid advisors currently based in the Sport Directorate.

■ Digital Technology

Louise Haigh: [\[55017\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what recent estimate she has made of the number of people without basic digital skills in each (a) region and (b) nation of the UK.

Matt Hancock:

We have no made such assessment.

DEFENCE■ **Armed Forces: Pay**

Jim Shannon:

[\[55260\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that levels of salary for armed forces personnel reflect changes in salaries for non-service personnel.

Mark Lancaster:

The independent Armed Forces' Pay Review Body (AFPRB) provides advice annually to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Defence on pay levels for members of the Armed Forces. In reaching their recommendations, the AFPRB consider a number of factors including the need for the pay of the Armed Forces to be broadly comparable with pay levels in civilian life.

■ **Army: Training**

Sir Nicholas Soames:

[\[55182\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, in what foreign countries and in what formation the Army has conducted exercises in each of the last three years.

Mike Penning:

Information about overseas exercises and formation size can be found in the attached table. Please note that for 2014 only limited data is held.

Attachments:

1. 55182 - British Army conducted exercises overseas [20161130-PQ11555_78020_Soames_Overseas_Exercises_ADOC_Input_O.xlsx]

■ **Ministry of Defence: Theft**

Luciana Berger:

[\[55244\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the information provided to the hon. Member for Liverpool, Wavertree and pursuant to the Answer of 8 November 2016 to Question 51845, what steps his Department has taken to (a) review stolen items on sale on eBay and (b) otherwise recover items stolen from its sites over the last year.

Luciana Berger:

[\[55245\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the information provided to the hon. Member for Liverpool, Wavertree and pursuant to the Answer of 8 November 2016 to Question 51845, what assessment his Department has made of the risks posed to UK citizens from military equipment stolen from its sites over the last year.

Luciana Berger:

[\[55246\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the information provided to the hon. Member for Liverpool, Wavertree and pursuant to the Answer of 8 November 2016 to Question 51845, if he will list the purchase cost of each item referred to.

Luciana Berger: [\[55247\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the information provided to the hon. Member for Liverpool, Wavertree and pursuant to the Answer of 8 November 2016 to Question 51845, what assessment his Department has made of the approximate weight of the (a) full industrial steel kitchen and (b) summer house stolen from its sites in 2015-16.

Luciana Berger: [\[55248\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the information provided to the hon. Member for Liverpool, Wavertree and pursuant to the Answer of 8 November 2016 to Question 51845, from which of his Department's sites each of the 25 sets of night vision goggles were stolen.

Mark Lancaster:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) works hard to detect and deter theft and there are robust processes in place to raise awareness of the need for vigilance in all aspects of security. Just as theft occurs in wider society, the MOD is not immune and we actively encourage individuals to report any evidence of loss or suspicion of theft. It is important to note that in some cases of reported theft the property is later recovered. In the case of key assets however, MOD sites have a wide range of additional security measures to ensure their safety.

The weight of the full industrial kitchen and summer house has not been recorded.

In respect of the further detailed information requested this will take time to collate and I will write to the hon. Member shortly.

■ Syria: Humanitarian Aid

Hilary Benn: [\[55238\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the oral contribution of the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of 28 November 2016, on the risks to RAF personnel of air drops of aid to Aleppo, what assessment he has made of the capacity of drones to undertake such air drops.

Mike Penning:

Whilst UK military Unmanned Aerial Vehicles do not have a cargo capability, the Ministry of Defence is keeping all options under review.

Hilary Benn: [\[55239\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent assessment he has made of the (a) feasibility and (b) risks of the RAF delivering aid through air drops to Aleppo; and if he will make a statement.

Mike Penning:

The Ministry of Defence continues to work with allies and partners to develop flexible and credible options to alleviate the humanitarian suffering in Aleppo.

The use of military aircraft to deliver aid presents high risks, not only to RAF personnel and aircraft, but to those on the ground in a dense urban area like Aleppo.

If it were possible to obtain the relevant permissions from the Syrian regime, then the World Food Programme would be able to use those permissions to get a safe route for the land delivery of the aid that is so desperately needed.

For air drops to be feasible, there is a need to identify clear drop zones, ensure safe access for the intended recipients, and to co-ordinate with authorities on the ground. Without this, air drops could result in civilian casualties. Flying RAF transport aircraft into hostile terrain and through the airspace around Aleppo would expose UK personnel to a severe risk of attack.

Nonetheless, this Government continues to keep all our options under review.

■ Type 45 Destroyers

Mr Virendra Sharma:

[\[55170\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent steps he has taken to ensure the readiness of the Type 45 destroyers.

Harriett Baldwin:

The normal operating cycle of every ship involves them entering different readiness levels depending on their programmes and Departmental planning requirements.

It is Ministry of Defence policy not to publish details of the readiness states of individual Royal Navy vessels or types for the purpose of safeguarding national security.

EDUCATION

■ Arts: Education

Derek Thomas:

[\[54740\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to promote arts subjects in schools.

Nick Gibb:

The Government believes that every child should experience a high quality arts education throughout their time at school. All schools, including academies and free schools, must provide a broad and balanced curriculum that promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school.

The National Curriculum, which includes music, art and design, drama, and dance, is compulsory for maintained schools. Academies and free schools are not required to teach the National Curriculum, but can use it as a benchmark.

Last month, we announced a multimillion pound investment in music and cultural education. This includes:

- £300 million over the next four years for a network of music education hubs
- £29 million a year until 2018 for the Music and Dance scheme which provides support for talented young musicians and dancers to attend world-class institutions

- £4.1 million a year until 2018 for cultural education programmes
- £500,000 a year until 2018 for In Harmony, an orchestral training programme for pupils in disadvantaged areas
- £600,000 for other small music programmes across the country for each year until 2020
- £13.5 million a year until 2018 for the Dance and Drama Awards Scheme. This scheme offers income-assessed support for tuition fees and living costs for students aged 16-23 at a number of high quality private dance and drama schools

■ **Department for Education: Advertising**

Stephen Doughty: [53137]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much the Government has spent on advertising in each of the last six years with (a) The Times, (b) The Sunday Times, (c) The Mail on Sunday, (d) The Sun, (e) The Sun on Sunday, (f) The Huffington Post, (g) Mail Online, (h) Daily Mail, (i) The Guardian and (j) Trinity Mirror.

Caroline Dinenage:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer given by my Rt Hon. Friend the Minister for the Cabinet Office on 1 December 2016 to UIN: 53019.

■ **English Baccalaureate**

Justin Tomlinson: [53762]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the efficacy of the English Baccalaureate in achieving its objectives.

Nick Gibb:

The English Baccalaureate (EBacc) entry and achievement measures were introduced into the school performance tables to encourage the uptake and achievement of a set of academic subjects at GCSE: mathematics, English, science (including computer science), a modern or ancient foreign language and either history or geography. Since their introduction the proportion of the pupil cohort taking the EBacc qualifications at GCSE has grown from 21.8% in 2010 to 39.6% in 2016, but too many children are still missing out including, according to The Sutton Trust[1], high achieving pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.

We have consulted on plans to ensure that the majority of young people take these qualifications in the future and will publish our response in due course.

[1] <http://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Missing-Talent-final-june.pdf>

■ Extended Schools

Alex Chalk: [\[55257\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what progress the Government has made on providing additional funding to enable the extension of secondary school hours with the inclusion of additional sports and physical education from the soft drinks levy.

Alex Chalk: [\[55271\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the process is to access the additional funding to extend secondary school hours with the inclusion of additional sports and physical education from the soft drinks industry levy.

Edward Timpson:

The previous chancellor announced his intention that funding from the sugar levy would help up to 25% of secondary schools provide a longer school day, to include a range of activities including sport. The Department is currently determining the details of how the funding will be allocated. We will provide further details in due course so that schools have sufficient time to apply for the funding and implement their plans.

■ Free School Meals

Lucy Powell: [\[55216\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what groups of children will be entitled to receive free school meals after the roll-out of universal credit.

Edward Timpson:

My Department is working closely with the Department for Work and Pensions, other Government departments and other interested parties to establish new criteria for determining entitlement to benefits-related Free School Meals as the roll-out of universal credit (UC) progresses. No decision has been taken yet, our proposals on this matter will be announced in due course.

As an interim measure, all pupils whose parents are in receipt of UC are currently entitled to free school meals

■ Free Schools

Jess Phillips: [\[54326\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, which free schools have moved premises from accommodation that was not designated temporary.

Jess Phillips: [\[54352\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the maximum number of times is that a free school has moved from permanent accommodation.

Nick Gibb:

There are no free schools which have moved premises from their permanent site. There are also no free schools which have moved from their permanent accommodation into alternative accommodation.

■ Gender Recognition

Mrs Maria Miller: [\[55060\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to page 29 of the Government response to the First Report from the Women and Equalities Committee, Session 2015-16, on Transgender Equality, Cm 9301, published in July 2016, what the findings were of the study commissioned to ascertain the adequacy and consistency of knowledge on gender variance in initial social work training and continuous professional development.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Department for Education is currently in the process of commissioning the study referred to which is expected to be completed by the end of March 2017. Findings will be published at a later date.

■ Glenburn Sports College

Rosie Cooper: [\[55122\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether the former Glenburn Sports College site in Skelmersdale is to be used for educational purposes; and whether she has placed any conditions on future disposal or use of that site.

Rosie Cooper: [\[55123\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, on what date her Department made the decision to transfer ownership of the former Glenburn Sports College site in Skelmersdale to Lancashire County Council.

Rosie Cooper: [\[55124\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether the ownership of the former Glenburn Sports College site in Skelmersdale has been transferred from her Department to Lancashire County Council; and what financial assistance her Department has given to Lancashire County Council for the management or demolition of buildings at that site.

Edward Timpson:

The Secretary of State has made a determination, under Part II paragraph 5(4)(a) to Schedule 22 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, to transfer the school site to Lancashire County Council. In a letter to the council, dated 14 November 2016, notifying them of that determination, the Department set out that no financial assistance would be available and none has been provided.

Any decision regarding the future use or disposal of the school site is a matter for Lancashire County Council, however as former school land, protections remain in place for a number of years preventing disposal of the site without the consent of the Secretary of State.

■ Mathematics: Teachers

Louise Haigh: [54841]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of mathematics teachers who teach pupils at key stage (a) 1, (b) 2, (c) 3 and (d) 4 have a mathematics degree.

Nick Gibb:

In Key Stages 3 to 4 in state funded secondary schools, the proportion of mathematics hours taught by a teacher with a relevant post A-level qualification was 82.0% in the 2015/16 academic year.

A full breakdown of the qualification types is included in Table 12 in the statistical first release 'School Workforce in England, November 2015', which was published in June 2016: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/school-workforce-in-england-november-2015>

Information for Key Stages 1 and 2 is not available as we do not collect information on mathematics teaching time in primary school through the school workforce census.

■ Overseas Students

Royston Smith: [54929]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment she has made of the contribution to the UK economy of overseas students studying at (a) Russell Group, (b) University Alliance and (c) MillionPlus universities.

Joseph Johnson:

The Department has not made an assessment of the contribution to the UK economy of overseas students studying at universities represented by Russell Group, University Alliance and Million Plus.

However, the Government's International Education Strategy, published in July 2013, did include an analysis of the value of all overseas students to the UK. This estimated that EU and Non-EU students at UK universities contributed £9.7 billion in 2011 to the UK economy (tuition fees and living expenditure).

The Department will shortly be publishing the latest estimates of the total value of education exports to the UK economy for 2014.

■ Pre-school Education

Valerie Vaz: [55115]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what her Department's plans are for investing in early years education after 2018.

Caroline Dineneage:

The Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015 announced government investment of over £1 billion more a year in childcare and early years education for two-, three- and four-year-olds by 2019-20.

Government consulted earlier this year on proposals to ensure that early years funding is allocated efficiently and fairly across the country, and we will announce a response to the consultation shortly.

■ Pupils: Walking and Cycling

Ruth Cadbury:

[\[54448\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if the Government will use revenues from the soft drinks industry levy to promote walking and cycling for school journeys.

Edward Timpson:

We want all pupils to be healthy and active. Since 2013, we have invested over £600 million of ring-fenced funding to improve PE and sport in primary schools, and have committed to doubling the primary PE and sport premium to £320 million a year from September 2017 using revenue from the soft drinks industry levy. This will enable schools to make further improvements to the quality and breadth of PE and sport they offer.

Schools have the freedom to decide how best to use the funding based on the needs of their pupils, and schools may elect to provide extra-curricular activities for pupils, which may include initiatives designed to encourage journeys involving walking or cycling to and from school.

Cycling proficiency is a core skill that if learnt at an early age can act as a strong incentive for children to remain active as they grow up. It is the Government's aspiration that all children have the opportunity to learn to ride a bike and to support this aim - the Department for Transport is providing £50 million over the next four years to deliver cycling training for school children through the Bikeability training programme.

■ Schools: Finance

Helen Jones:

[\[54716\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when she plans to bring forward the legislative proposals that will be required as a consequence of the planned removal of the Education Services Grant to local authorities.

Nick Gibb:

We have provided local authorities with the operational information on revenue funding for 2017-18 which includes the removal of the Education Services Grant. We intend to lay draft regulations to effect these arrangements in legislation as soon as possible in the new year.

■ Schools: Mental Health Services

Lucy Powell:

[\[55215\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many children and young people in secondary schools across England have access to a school-based counsellor; and how many

of those children are in (a) maintained schools, (b) academy schools and (c) further educational establishments.

Edward Timpson:

Children and young people's mental health and wellbeing is a priority for this Government.

Schools are able to decide on the most appropriate support to provide for their pupils, including school-based counselling, based on their individual circumstances. To inform their decisions Government has published advice, drawn up with experts, on how to provide effective access to counselling support.

We do not require schools and colleges to report centrally on the support they provide. However, to inform further policy development, we are currently conducting a nationally representative survey of schools and colleges about what they offer to support the mental health of their pupils and students. The results should be available next spring and will provide national estimates of the proportion of schools and colleges which make different types of provision, including school-based counselling.

■ **Schools: North of England**

Jim McMahon:

[\[54788\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Northern Powerhouse Schools Strategy, published on 23 November 2016, what estimate she has made of the level of underfunding of schools in the north of England.

Nick Gibb:

The Government is determined to build a country that works for everyone. We welcome Sir Nick Weller's independent report which identifies the need to increase the supply of high-quality teachers and senior leaders in the North, the limited capacity of multi-academy trusts (MATs), and the need for more schools to offer a stretching curriculum, as key challenges in the north.

The report highlights the need for all schools to be funded fairly and according to their circumstances. That is why we are introducing a national funding formula, which will allocate funding to schools according to actual measures of schools' and pupils' needs.

Earlier this year we held the first stage of consultation on our proposals to introduce national funding formulae for schools and high needs. The first stage of consultation invited responses on the principles, architecture and the building blocks we proposed to include in the national funding formulae.

We will issue our response to the first stage consultation on the national funding formula, confirming which factors will be included, and launch the second stage of the consultation, later this year. The second stage will invite responses on the weightings we propose to give each of the factors in the formulae, and provide illustrative allocations for schools and local areas.

■ Schools: Warrington

Helen Jones: [54223]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will assess the effect on the budget of Warrington Borough Council of the removal of the Educational Services Grant.

Helen Jones: [54302]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will assess the effect which the removal of the Education Services Grant in 2017 will have on the ability of (a) local authorities and (b) Warrington Borough Council to carry out their statutory duties relating to education.

Nick Gibb:

As announced at the Spending Review, we plan to save £600m from the Education Services Grant (ESG) by phasing out the general funding rate from 2017-18.

Local authorities will continue to receive ESG funding in 2016-17. They will also receive transitional ESG funding from April 2017 to August 2017 inclusive.

We recognise that local authorities, including Warrington Borough Council, will need to use other sources of funding to pay for education services they carry out for pupils in maintained schools once the general funding rate has been removed from September 2017. This is why we are amending regulations to allow local authorities to retain some of their maintained schools' Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) to cover the statutory duties that they carry out on behalf of their maintained schools.

The remaining ESG funding will be used to fund local authorities for the duties they hold in relation to all pupils. In 2017-18, this will be paid to local authorities through the DSG.

■ Teachers: Labour Turnover

Mr Jim Cunningham: [54391]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to reduce the number of (a) primary and (b) secondary school teachers leaving the profession within five years of entering it; and if she will make a statement.

Nick Gibb:

The proportion of teachers leaving the profession within five years of entering it has remained broadly stable since 1996, as shown in Table 8 of the School Workforce Census 2015: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/school-workforce-in-england-november-2015>. Around 7 out of 10 teachers are still employed in state-funded schools five years after qualifying. The way in which statistics are reported does not distinguish between primary and secondary teachers.

It is vital for schools to be able to retain good teachers and therefore we have made policy interventions in the areas that teachers tell us matter most, such as improving pupil behaviour and reducing unnecessary workload.

We established three independent review groups made up of serving teachers and head teachers to tackle the three biggest issues the 2014 Workload Challenge showed were

most burdensome for teachers. We have listened to what they said and accepted all their recommendations for Government.

Their reports published on 26 March were welcomed by the sector and include clear messages that can empower classroom teachers and school leaders to challenge unproductive practice. We are continuing to work with teachers and their representatives on how to effectively embed the principles in the reports, and help make a culture change so teachers can focus on what really matters.

We have conducted the first biennial Teacher Workload Survey. A report of the findings will be published once finalised. Results from this survey, and those in future years, will help us track teacher workload so that further action can be taken if needed.

We commissioned a working group on developing behaviour management content for initial teacher training (ITT) chaired by Tom Bennett which reported earlier this year. The recommendations of the group were mainly accepted by government and the specific content relating to behaviour management is now included in the Framework of Content for ITT which has been available for providers to use since July this year.

There is a second behaviour review in progress which is focussed around behaviour management in schools with a particular focus on leadership, culture and systems used to tackle disruptive pupil behaviour. The review will report and make recommendations early in the New Year.

■ Teachers: Resignations

Stephen Timms:

[54643]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the reasons why teachers in (a) primary and (b) secondary schools leave the profession within five years of entering it; and if she will make a statement.

Nick Gibb:

The proportion of teachers leaving the profession within five years of entering it has remained broadly stable since 1996, as shown in Table 8 of the School Workforce Census 2015: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/school-workforce-in-england-november-2015>. Around 7 out of 10 teachers are still employed in state-funded schools five years after qualifying. The way in which statistics are reported does not distinguish between primary and secondary teachers.

Research on why teachers leave the profession consistently cites the same top factors, which include unnecessary workload and poor pupil behaviour. It is vital for schools to be able to retain good teachers and therefore we have made policy interventions in these areas that matter most to the profession.

We established three independent review groups made up of serving teachers and head teachers to tackle the three biggest issues the 2014 Workload Challenge showed were most burdensome for teachers. We have listened to what they said and accepted all their recommendations for Government.

Their reports published on 26 March were welcomed by the sector and include clear messages that can empower classroom teachers and school leaders to challenge unproductive practice. We are continuing to work with teachers and their representatives on how to effectively embed the principles in the reports, and help make a culture change so teachers can focus on what really matters.

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There is a second behaviour review in progress, also being undertaken by Tom Bennett, which is focussed around behaviour management in schools with a particular focus on leadership, culture and systems used to tackle disruptive pupil behaviour. The review will report and make recommendations early in the New Year.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Bovine Tuberculosis

James Gray: [\[54741\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many abattoirs in the UK processed TB reactor cattle in 2016.

George Eustice:

There are a total of 6 abattoirs contracted by Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) to accept TB reactor cattle – 5 in England, 1 in Wales. There is also an abattoir in Scotland that routinely takes reactors from farms in Scotland for the Animal and Plant Health Agency. All of these received reactor cattle in 2016. Other abattoirs would have been used to slaughter reactors under a private arrangement with the owner. The Animal and Plant Health Agency does not have a list detailing abattoirs that processed reactors under a private arrangement with the owner.

James Gray: [\[54745\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the furthest distance is in (a) time and (b) mileage that a TB reactor cow has travelled to a UK abattoir which processed TB reactor cattle in the last three years.

George Eustice:

The furthest journey recorded in the last three years was agreed for six cattle, in December 2015.

a) The estimated journey time was 4.5 hours.

b) The furthest reported distance travelled by a reactor in the last 3 years is 260 miles.

This was agreed as the nearest contracted abattoirs were unable to take the reactors within the ten working day target for removal.

James Gray:

[\[54845\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the (a) average, (b) minimum and (c) longest time between an animal testing positive for TB at a farm test and being collected from that farm for destruction has been in the last 12 months.

George Eustice:

Data for the previous 12 months is not readily available due to a change in the way this data is recorded in April 2016.

Removal times for the period April 2016 to November 2016 -

a) Average number of days = 9.3

b) Minimum number of days = 0

c) Maximum number of days = 89 days (as a result of farmer refusal to allow removal and bankruptcy complications).

These figures include animals slaughtered on farm for welfare or other reasons and those for which there was a delay in removal for any reason including to allow for calving, medicine withdrawal.

These figures cover England, Scotland and Wales.

James Gray:

[\[54846\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many abattoirs in the UK process TB reactor cattle.

George Eustice:

There are a total of six abattoirs contracted by the Animal and Plant Health Agency to accept TB reactor cattle – five in England, one in Wales. There is also an abattoir in Scotland that routinely takes reactors from farms in Scotland for the Animal and Plant Health Agency. However owners can choose to privately slaughter any reactor animal under a private arrangement with a slaughterhouse of their choice, which may or may not be one of these seven abattoirs.

■ Environment Protection

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[54668\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether mechanisms to reducing the UK's international footprint outside the UK and in the UK's Overseas Territories will be included in her Department's planned 25 year environment plan.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The 25 year environment plan will be developed in two stages. Firstly, a consultative Green Paper which will be published soon and secondly, the full plan itself. We will use feedback from the Green Paper to help inform the plan.

■ Fisheries

Angela Smith: [\[54593\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 16 September 2016 to Question 45492, on Fisheries, if her Department will publish, for each instance in which an exception to reaching targets is granted, what the reasons for that exemption are.

George Eustice:

The Government supports setting EU Total Allowable Catches (TACs) at Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) in 2017 wherever possible. In accordance with the provisions of Council Regulation 1380 / 2013 a delay in reaching MSY beyond 2017 would be allowed if a proposed TAC reduction would seriously jeopardise the social and economic sustainability of the fishing fleets involved. A decision may also be taken by the Council not to do so if it would merely increase the discarding of fish especially in a mixed fishery.

It would not be feasible to account fully for all the cases where the final outcome differs from the range of options recommended by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, including advice on fishing at MSY and this information is not published by the EU.

■ Flood Control

Mary Creagh: [\[54981\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to her oral contribution of 24 November 2016, Official Report, column 1004, whether that investment is in addition to the investment in flood defences announced in the March 2016 Budget.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The £15m announced by the Secretary of State to be spent on Natural Flood Management is included within the £700m for flood defence and resilience funding announced in the March Budget.

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[55096\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the potential effect of a changing climate on flood defences across the UK; and if she will make a statement.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The Environment Agency has made an assessment of the likely increased flows in river and rise in sea level and the impact these changes could have on defence standards. Guidance has been provided to ensure that when building or improving defences the risk management authorities take account of climate change and make allowances in the design of defence structures.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/adapting-to-climate-change-for-risk-management-authorities. This guidance was updated in 2016 and will be kept under review as new information or projections of climate change emerge.

The Environment Agency has taken account of the impacts of climate change in developing its long term investment scenarios, including the increased costs of building and maintaining defences.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/flood-and-coastal-risk-management-in-england-long-term-investment

The Environment Agency monitors water and sea levels, tide and wave heights to ensure that these are consistent with expected changes due to climate change. This allows for the assessment of whether defence structures continue to provide their designed service level.

■ Flood Control: Lancashire

Cat Smith: [\[54667\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to paragraph 3.25 of the Autumn Statement 2016, which flood defence schemes in Lancashire have been granted funding.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

£20m was announced in the Autumn Statement for capital flood defences to better protect over 5,000 homes. The three schemes to receive this funding are in Yorkshire and Staffordshire.

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

■ Horticulture

Ms Margaret Ritchie: [\[55086\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the potential effect of the UK leaving the EU on the horticultural sector.

George Eustice:

The Government is holding regular meetings with a range of stakeholders from the horticulture industry. We have a manifesto commitment to introduce a 25 year plan to grow and produce more, both to increase consumption of British produce in the domestic market and to export more. We will be working with the horticulture industry to design policies that help horticulture grow and succeed outside the EU.

■ Livestock: Testing

James Gray: [\[54927\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate her Department has made of the annual expenditure by farmers on pre-movement testing and other short interval tests.

George Eustice:

500,488 cattle were included in 35,999 pre-movement tests performed in England between 01/11/2015 and 31/10/2016, at an average unit cost that has been estimated between £3 and £5 in veterinary fees per animal tested. These are private tests paid by the farmer and therefore the actual testing fees are a private arrangement between farmers and their veterinary surgeons.

3,104,324 cattle were included in approximately 12,008 complete Short Interval tests performed in England between 01/11/2015 and 31/10/2016. These tests are carried out at Government's expense in most cases unless a farmer opts to pay privately for the testing

Information on Pre-movement testing can be found at the TB Hub

www.tbhub.co.uk/guidance/testing-and-compensation/pre-movement-testing/

■ Waste: Exports

Mr David Hanson: [\[54514\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many exports categorised as (a) B1250 and (b) 16 01, under Regulation (EC) No 1013/2006, have been investigated by UK Border Force in each year since 2010.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

None.

The four environment agencies are the competent authorities of destination and dispatch under the Transfrontier Shipment of Waste Regulations 2007.

Neither the Environment Agency nor the Northern Ireland Environment Agency has undertaken any recent investigations. Natural Resources Wales and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency have investigated exports of end-of-life vehicles, as set out below. A number of these investigations are ongoing.

YEAR	NUMBER OF END-OF-LIFE VEHICLES
2010	0
2011	0
2012	1
2013	6

YEAR	NUMBER OF END-OF-LIFE VEHICLES
2014	3
2015	1
2016 (to end Oct)	3

Source: Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Natural Resources Wales

EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION

■ Agriculture

Julian Sturdy: [\[907597\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what steps he plans to take during the UK's negotiations to leave the EU to ensure that (a) the financial and competitive position of UK agriculture is maintained and (b) UK agriculture can provide national food security after the UK leaves the EU.

Mr David Jones:

We are focused on growing our world-leading food and farming industry, and we want the best possible arrangement for UK agriculture and for consumers. The department is therefore working across government to analyse the impacts of our withdrawal from the EU, including on agriculture and food security. This will inform the UK's negotiating position; but we are not going to not speculate on what that looks like at this stage.

■ Brexit

Mr Peter Bone: [\[55253\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, whether his policy is to trigger Article 50 by 31 March 2017.

Mr David Jones:

The Government has set out the timetable for triggering Article 50 by the end of March 2017 and that timetable has not changed.

■ Department for Exiting the European Union: Consultants

Hilary Benn: [\[55210\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, pursuant to the Answer of 13 October 2016 to Question 47680, if he will list the consultancy firms that his Department has utilised the services of on a pro bono or nominal (£1) basis to date.

Hilary Benn: [\[55211\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, pursuant to the Answers of 15 September and 13 October 2016 to Questions 45944 and 47680, if he will list the

consultancy firms that his Department has utilised the services of not on a pro bono or nominal (£1) basis to date.

Mr David Jones:

To date, the Department for Exiting the European Union has utilised the services of eight consultancy firms on a pro bono or nominal basis.

CONSULTANCY SERVICE PROVIDER	SERVICES PROVIDED
Accenture	Policy support
Frontier Economics	Market analysis
KPMG	Support Programme Management Office and departmental set-up
Oliver Wyman	Policy support
McKinsey	Organisational design and assurance consultancy
Deloitte	Internal financial planning
PWC	Departmental set-up and Programme Management support

The department has also utilised the services of two paid secondees from the Boston Consulting Group on civil service salary levels supporting policy development.

■ **Higher Education: Finance**

Paul Blomfield:

[\[54579\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, pursuant to the Answers of 17 November 2016 to Question 52097 and 22 November 2016 to Question 53632, on higher education: finance, what assessment he has made of the effect of the UK leaving the EU on fee income estimates.

Mr David Jones:

We have been clear that we want to create an environment in which the UK as a whole can continue to be a world leader in research, science and the tertiary education sector more broadly.

Current EU students and the 16/17 and 17/18 cohorts have already had reassurance that they will be able to obtain finance for the full duration of their course. Applications for 18/19 do not open until September 2017 and we will ensure students applying have information in advance of this date.

We are not going to provide a running commentary on every twist and turn of negotiations, but we will work hard to get the best deal for Britain and its universities.

■ Transitional Arrangements

Jonathan Edwards:

[\[54423\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what plans his Department has to ensure transitional arrangements are in place prior to the UK leaving the EU.

Mr David Jones:

As the Prime Minister has said, we want to avoid a cliff-edge and to provide certainty where we can. We want a smooth and orderly exit from the EU. How we achieve that will depend on the nature of the agreement we reach with the EU.

We will also convert the body of existing EU law into domestic law and Parliament will be free to amend, repeal and improve any law it chooses. This process will give businesses and workers maximum certainty as leave the European Union. We are not going to give a running commentary on every twist and turn of these upcoming negotiations: it is not in our national interest and will not help us get the best deal for Britain.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

■ Burma: Crimes of Violence

Catherine West:

[\[54757\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make representations to his Burmese counterpart on the recently reported attacks on (a) Yekai Chaung Gwasone, (b) Dar Gyi Sar and (c) Myaw Taung.

Alok Sharma:

The British Government is deeply concerned by the recent flare-up of violence in Rakhine State. This was triggered on 9 October, when three Burmese Border Guard Police posts were attacked by armed Rohingya groups. We have called for restraint, humanitarian access and an investigation. The Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my noble Friend, the Rt Hon Baroness Anelay of St Johns, visited Burma from 9-12 November. She urged Burmese Government Ministers to resume immediate humanitarian access to the affected areas in Northern Rakhine and for a full and independent investigation into all reports of human rights violations. The Government of Burma has committed publicly to do so. I also raised the situation in Rakhine State with the Burmese Minister of Construction in London on 29 November.

■ Burma: Politics and Government

Catherine West:

[\[54758\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what plans he has to visit Burma to discuss the (a) promotion of human rights, (b) strengthening of democratic process and (c) protection of ethnic, religious and sexual minorities.

Alok Sharma:

I met State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in London on 13 September together with the Prime Minister, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Maidenhead (Mrs May), where we discussed ways in which the UK could support Burma's political transition including the promotion of human rights and protection of minorities. The Foreign Secretary, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Mr Boris Johnson) also discussed the transition with her on 12 September during the same visit. In addition, the Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my noble Friend, the Rt Hon. Baroness Anelay of St Johns, visited Burma from 9-12 November and met a number of Government Ministers to discuss human rights, democracy and the protection of minorities. I plan to visit to Burma in 2017.

Catherine West:

[\[54759\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the security and human rights situation in Rakhine, Burma.

Alok Sharma:

The British Government is deeply concerned by the recent flare-up of violence in Rakhine State. This was triggered on 9 October, when three Burmese Border Guard Police posts were attacked by armed Rohingya groups. We have called for restraint, humanitarian access and an investigation. We are aware of a number of disturbing reports of human rights violations by security forces in Rakhine State. We have made several representations to the Government of Burma, both through our Ambassador and also through Ministerial contacts. The Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my noble Friend, the Rt Hon. Baroness Anelay of St Johns, visited Burma from 9-12 November. She urged Burmese Government Ministers to resume immediate humanitarian access to the affected areas in Northern Rakhine and for a full and independent investigation into all reports of human rights violations. The Government of Burma has committed publicly to do so. I also raised the situation in Rakhine with the Burmese Minister of Construction in London on 29 November.

Catherine West:

[\[54760\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with (a) his Burmese counterpart, (b) Htin Kyaw, (c) elected officials of the National League for Democracy and (d) Aung San Suu Kyi on transitioning from the former military government to the current government in that country.

Alok Sharma:

I have not met President Htin Kyaw. However, I did meet State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in London on 13 September together with the Prime Minister, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Maidenhead (Theresa May), where we discussed ways in which the UK could support Burma's political transition. The Foreign Secretary, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Mr Boris Johnson) also met her on 12 September where he too discussed the transition. The Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my noble Friend, the Rt Hon. Baroness Anelay of St Johns, visited Burma from 9-12 November and met a number of Government Ministers. The

British Embassy in Rangoon, including the British Ambassador, regularly discuss democratic transition with Members of Parliament from the National League of Democracy. The UK has been a leading supporter of Burma's reform process since 2011. We supported elections in 2015 which led to Burma's first civilian Government in over half a century. However, the transition is not complete and we will continue to work with the new Government to consolidate the reforms. This includes a package of support worth £113 million this year.

■ Burma: Rohingya

Yasmin Qureshi:

[54815]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what reports he has received on the alleged incident of rape of Rohingya women by security forces in Rakhine State, Burma, and if he will make a statement.

Alok Sharma:

We are aware of a number of disturbing reports of sexual violence against Rohingya women by security forces in Rakhine State. These were alleged to have taken place during the ongoing security operations in Rakhine, triggered on 9 October when three Burmese Border Guard Police posts were attacked by armed Rohingya groups. The Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my noble Friend, the Rt Hon. Baroness Anelay of St Johns, visited Burma from 9-12 November. She urged Burmese Government Ministers to resume immediate humanitarian access to the affected areas in Northern Rakhine and for a full and independent investigation into all reports of human rights violations. The Government of Burma has committed publicly to do so. I also raised the situation in Rakhine State with the Burmese Minister of Construction in London on 29 November.

■ Cameroon: International Assistance

Liz McInnes:

[55003]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what diplomatic steps he is taking to prevent Boko Haram blocking UN aid to refugees in Cameroon.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The UK was one of the first donors to respond to the humanitarian crisis across the Lake Chad Basin and we have recently announced £80m in humanitarian funding over and above the £90m already contributed. Our High Commissioner in Cameroon met President Biya on 17 November and re-affirmed the United Kingdom's continued commitment to supporting Cameroon and its neighbours, including through the Multi-National Task Force in the fight against Boko Haram. We will be deploying additional capacity to Cameroon to support that effort.

We are also leading efforts to mobilise other members of the international community to consider where they can do more and to raise awareness of this humanitarian crisis globally. This has included chairing a Lake Chad Basin meeting in the margins of UN General assembly in September 2016 and co-chairing an event with ECHO in the

margins of the WFP Executive Board meeting in November 2016. We are also encouraging UN agencies to deploy more field staff to the region.

■ **Djibouti: Female Genital Mutilation**

Helen Goodman: [\[54686\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 23 November 2016 to Question 52971, if he will instruct the UK Ambassador with responsibility for Djibouti to make representations on the practice of female genital mutilation to the government of Djibouti.

Helen Goodman: [\[54938\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 23 November 2016 to Question 52971, if he will urge the UK diplomatic representative to Guinea Bissau to make representations on the practice of female genital mutilation to the government of Guinea Bissau.

Helen Goodman: [\[54939\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 23 November 2016 to Question 52971, if he will urge the UK diplomatic representative to Iraq to make representations on the practice of female genital mutilation to the government of Iraq.

Helen Goodman: [\[54940\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 23 November 2016 to Question 52971, if he will urge the UK diplomatic representative to Togo to make representations on the practice of female genital mutilation to the government of Togo.

Helen Goodman: [\[54942\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 23 November 2016 to Question 52971, if he will urge the UK diplomatic representative to the Ivory Coast to make representations on the practice of female genital mutilation to the government of the Ivory Coast.

Helen Goodman: [\[54943\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 23 November 2016 to Question 52971, if he will urge the UK diplomatic representative to Nigeria to make representations on the practice of female genital mutilation to the government of Nigeria.

Helen Goodman: [\[54944\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 23 November 2016 to Question 52971, if he will urge the UK diplomatic representative to Niger to make representations on the practice of female genital mutilation to the government of Niger.

Helen Goodman: [\[54945\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 23 November 2016 to Question 52971, if he will urge the UK diplomatic representative to Benin to make representations on the practice of female genital mutilation to the government of Benin.

Helen Goodman: [\[54946\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 23 November 2016 to Question 52971, if he will urge the UK diplomatic representative to the Central African Republic to make representations on the practice of female genital mutilation to the government of the Central African Republic.

Helen Goodman: [\[54947\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 23 November 2016 to Question 52971, if he will urge the UK diplomatic representative to Yemen to make representations on the practice of female genital mutilation to the government of Yemen.

Helen Goodman: [\[54948\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 23 November 2016 to Question 52971, if he will urge the UK diplomatic representative to Kenya to make representations on the practice of female genital mutilation to the government of Kenya.

Helen Goodman: [\[54950\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 23 November 2016 to Question 52971, if he will urge the UK diplomatic representative to Burkina Faso to make representations on the practice of female genital mutilation to the government of Burkina Faso.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

Female Genital Mutilation is a high priority for the UK and we will continue to work with governments and partners to end the abusive practice. DFID leads our international efforts on FGM and it is raised by our Heads of Missions, officials and visiting Ministers. We will continue to do this, including in the countries raised.

We also work closely with international partners, including the EU and UN, especially in countries where we do not have an Embassy, to press governments to prevent FGM. Supported by UK funding, the UN Joint Programme on FGM and cutting has led coordinated efforts to influence national policy and legislation in 17 high prevalence countries.

■ Egypt: Female Genital Mutilation

Helen Goodman: [\[54949\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 23 November 2016 to Question 52971, if he will urge the UK diplomatic

representative to Egypt to make representations on the practice of female genital mutilation to the government of Egypt.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

Female Genital Mutilation is a high priority for the UK and we will continue to work with governments and partners to end the abusive practice. DFID leads our international efforts on FGM and it is raised by our Heads of Missions, officials and visiting Ministers. We will continue to do this, including in the countries raised.

We also work closely with international partners, including the EU and UN, especially in countries where we do not have an Embassy, to press governments to prevent FGM. Supported by UK funding, the UN Joint Programme on FGM and cutting has led coordinated efforts to influence national policy and legislation in 17 high prevalence countries.

■ **Egypt: Press Freedom**

Helen Goodman:

[\[54851\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to the government of Egypt on the imprisonment of journalists and curtailment of the free press in that country.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

Egypt is one of the FCO's 30 Human Rights Priority Countries. In the FCO's Human Rights and Democracy Report published in April, we raised concerns about the detention of journalists and restrictions on freedom of expression in Egypt. FCO ministers and officials regularly raise human rights concerns with the Egyptian authorities, including the detention of journalists. For example, we raised the arrests of journalists Amr Badr and Mohamed el Sakka in May with the Egyptian Ambassador to London.

The UK has also raised its concerns about human rights in Egypt at the UN, most recently at the Human Rights Council in September. We also supported an EU statement at the same session which specifically expressed concerns about the arrests of journalists in Egypt. When the Prime Minister met President Sisi in September, she noted the importance of human rights. The UK wants to see more political progress and better protection of human rights in Egypt. That includes implementation of the rights guaranteed by Egypt's constitution, more freedom of expression, and more space for NGOs and civil society. These rights and freedoms are key for Egypt's long-term stability and we will continue to raise our concerns with the Egyptian authorities.

■ **Ethiopia: Civil Disorder**

Liz McInnes:

[\[55002\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what diplomatic steps his Department is taking to tackle civil unrest in Ethiopia since its national state of emergency was declared.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

We are urging the Government of Ethiopia to implement the State of Emergency with restraint and for the shortest time possible. We have been clear that continued police repression, and refusal to allow peaceful protest and space for political discussion, will fuel unrest and instability. The President of Ethiopia has outlined a number of measures, including electoral reform, to address protestors' concerns. We are urging their swift implementation and offering UK support to their reform agenda.

India: Bank Notes**Caroline Lucas:**[\[54889\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations his Department has made to the Indian government on ensuring that demonetised 500 and 1,000 rupee notes can be exchanged in the UK before the end of 2016.

Alok Sharma:

I refer the Hon. Lady to the answer I gave in the House to my Hon. Friend the Member for Harrow East (Bob Blackman MP) on 22 November *Official Report*, Column 750. It is for the Indian Government and the Reserve Bank of India to define what is Indian legal tender. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has updated its travel advice, advising British nationals travelling to India how to act in this matter, and we advise those nationals to monitor the situation closely. The Reserve Bank of India has currency controls in place which limit the amount of rupees (INR25,000) that can be brought into India by overseas residents.

Indonesia: Female Genital Mutilation**Helen Goodman:**[\[54941\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 23 November 2016 to Question 52971, if he will urge the UK diplomatic representative to Indonesia to make representations on the practice of female genital mutilation to the government of Indonesia.

Alok Sharma:

Both the Ambassador and Deputy Head of Mission at our Embassy in Jakarta have now raised this issue with the Minister of Women's Empowerment and Protection and the Minister of Religious Affairs.

NATO**Mr Nigel Dodds:**[\[54549\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of progress on the implementation of decisions taken at the Warsaw NATO Summit in July 2016.

Sir Alan Duncan:

There has been good progress on the areas agreed at the Warsaw Summit including: Operation SEA GUARDIAN went live on 9 November, allowing NATO ships to conduct

surveillance activities, counter-terrorism and capacity building of regional navies in the Mediterranean; long-term training and capacity building of Iraqi Armed Forces inside Iraq from January 2017; and the deployment of an Enhanced Forward Presence of four multinational battalions to the east of the Alliance in 2017.

The Prime Minister and the Defence Secretary hosted NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg in London on 23 November to discuss and maintain the momentum on this and other important security issues. The Foreign Secretary will attend NATO's meeting of Foreign Ministers in Brussels in December to further discuss work to implement the Warsaw commitments.

■ Prosperity Fund: Energy

Catherine McKinnell: [\[55116\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what proportion of his Department's Prosperity Fund was allocated to (a) coal, oil and gas projects and (b) renewable energy projects in each financial year since 2013-14.

Alok Sharma:

The FCO Prosperity Fund was the FCO's dedicated annual fund supporting prosperity work overseas from 2011 until March 2016.

Through targeted projects its aims were to support the conditions for global and UK growth. Since 2013/14 the Prosperity Fund allocated the following to coal, oil and gas projects:

- 2013/14 approximately 1.9% (£370,000 from a total budget of £19.5m)
- 2014/15 approximately 3.9% (£758,000 from £19.5m)
- 2015/16 approximately 3.4% (£997,000 from £29.3m)

Since 2013/14 the Prosperity Fund allocated the following to renewable energy projects:

- 2013/14 approximately 5% (£983,000 from a total budget of £19.5m)
- 2014/15 approximately 2% (£402,000 from £19.5m)
- 2015/16 approximately 5.1% (£1.5m from £29.3m)

These figures include ODA and non-ODA projects.

Attachments:

1. Answer reprinted in correct format. [PQ 55116 McKinnell, Prosperity fund.docx]

Catherine McKinnell: [\[55117\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what proportion of his Department's Prosperity Fund was allocated to energy projects in each financial year since 2013-14.

Alok Sharma:

The FCO Prosperity Fund was the FCO's dedicated annual fund supporting prosperity work overseas from 2011 until March 2016. Through targeted projects its aims were to support the conditions for global and UK growth.

Since 2013/14 the Prosperity Fund allocated the following to energy projects:

- 2013/14 approximately 23% (£4.5m from a total budget of £19.5m)
- 2014/15 approximately 17% (£3.3m from £19.5m)
- 2015/16 approximately 20% (£5.9m from £29.3m)

These figures include ODA and non-ODA projects on energy distribution, security, policy and efficiency as well as renewables, oil, gas and coal.

The FCO Prosperity Fund ended in March 2016 and was replaced by the new cross-government Prosperity Fund. More information is available on gov.uk where all FCO ODA spend is published.

■ Sudan: Detainees**Mark Durkan:**[\[54663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his Sudanese counterpart on the six-month detention of Khalafalla Al-Afif Mukhtar, Midhat Afif Al-Deen Hamdan and Mustafa Adam on charges relating to their work and affiliation with the Centre for Training and Human Development.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

We continue to raise our concerns about the trial of members of the human rights NGO TRACKs directly with the Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs as part of our ongoing human rights dialogue, most recently during the visit of the Sudanese Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs on 10 October. I also made our wider human rights concerns clear to the Sudanese delegation during the same visit.

In coordination with our international partners we have ensured that there is a diplomatic presence at each stage of the trial of the members and affiliates of the Centre for Training and Human Development. Officials from our Embassy last attended on 30 August, and US officials attended the most recent hearing on 22 November.

■ Sudan: Trials**Mark Durkan:**[\[54661\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his Sudanese counterpart on the trial of members and affiliates of the Centre for Training and Human Development.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

We continue to raise our concerns about the trial of members of the human rights NGO TRACKs directly with the Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs as part of our ongoing human rights dialogue, most recently during the visit of the Sudanese Undersecretary for

Foreign Affairs on 10 October. I also made our wider human rights concerns clear to the Sudanese delegation during the same visit.

In coordination with our international partners we have ensured that there is a diplomatic presence at each stage of the trial of the members and affiliates of the Centre for Training and Human Development. Officials from our Embassy last attended on 30 August, and US officials attended the most recent hearing on 22 November.

Mark Durkan:

[\[54662\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the fairness of the trial relating to members and affiliates of the Centre for Training and Human Development in Sudan.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

We continue to raise our concerns about the trial of members of the human rights NGO TRACKs directly with the Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs as part of our ongoing human rights dialogue, most recently during the visit of the Sudanese Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs on 10 October. I also made our wider human rights concerns clear to the Sudanese delegation during the same visit.

In coordination with our international partners we have ensured that there is a diplomatic presence at each stage of the trial of the members and affiliates of the Centre for Training and Human Development. Officials from our Embassy last attended on 30 August, and US officials attended the most recent hearing on 22 November.

HEALTH

■ Ambulance Services: Staff

Paula Sherriff:

[\[55088\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he is taking to encourage diversity in the workforce of ambulance services in England.

Mr Philip Dunne:

Ambulance services, like all employers across the National Health Service, are responsible for improving the diversity of their workforce to reflect the communities they serve.

This month, the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives pledged their commitment to NHS England's Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) in a renewed effort to improve diversity in ambulance trusts.

As part of their NHS standard contract, each ambulance trust will focus on four WRES indicators. They will set short, medium and long term goals to address:

- the number of black and minority ethnic staff in their workplaces;
- the shortlisting and application rates of candidates from BME backgrounds;
- bullying, harassment and abuse by patients and the public; and
- bullying, harassment and abuse by colleagues.

■ Antidepressants: Children

Tim Farron: [\[55140\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what information his Department holds on how many children have been prescribed anti-depressants in each year since 2010.

Nicola Blackwood:

Information is not collected centrally on the number of people prescribed a particular medicine or their age.

■ Bovine Tuberculosis

James Gray: [\[54742\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many TB reactor cattle were taken to each abattoir in the last 12 months.

Nicola Blackwood:

There are seven premises that are contracted by the Animal and Plant Health Agency to slaughter TB reactor cattle.

Between 1 November 2015 and 31 October 2016 36,689 TB reactor cattle were slaughtered in England and Wales.

A producer can choose to send cattle to a non-contracted approved slaughterhouse.

Between 1 November 2015 and 31 October 2016, 230 TB reactor cattle were slaughtered in non-contracted TB reactor slaughterhouses in England and Wales.

James Gray: [\[54744\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the Government's welfare standards are for adequate lairage for TB reactor cattle which are kept overnight.

Nicola Blackwood:

The animal welfare standards for TB reactor cattle kept overnight are the same as for any other cattle sent to slaughter for human consumption.

These standards are available in Regulation 1099/2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing. Annex III of the Regulation states:

- Animals which have not been slaughtered within 12 hours of their arrival must be fed, and subsequently given moderate amounts of food at appropriate intervals (usually every 12 hours). In such cases, the animals shall be provided an appropriate amount of bedding or equivalent material which guarantees a level of comfort appropriate to the species and the number of animals concerned. This material shall guarantee an efficient drainage or ensure adequate absorption of urine and faeces.

- Arrangements must be made for milking dairy animals at intervals of not more than 12 hours.

- Animals which are not taken directly to the place of slaughter after being unloaded must have drinking water available to them from appropriate facilities at all times.

Regulation 853/2004, Annex III, Section I, Chapter II, regarding the requirements for slaughterhouses, also states for lairages that:

- Adequate and hygienic lairage facilities must be equipped for watering the animals and, if necessary, feeding them.

James Gray: [\[54748\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the longest time is that a TB reactor cow has spent in lairage before its destruction.

Nicola Blackwood:

The Food Standards Agency does not routinely record this information however it is usual industry practice that TB reactor animals are slaughtered on the same day of arrival at the abattoir.

■ Breast Cancer: Drugs

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[55067\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps NHS England is taking to increase bisphosphonates prescription for the prevention of secondary breast cancer; and if he will make a statement.

Nicola Blackwood:

NHS England has advised that, whilst it recognises that bisphosphonates may have benefits for some women in preventing secondary breast cancer, their provision is a matter for clinical commissioning groups.

Bisphosphonates are not licensed for the treatment or prevention of secondary breast cancer. However, clinicians can prescribe bisphosphonates 'off-license' subject to any local funding policies if they consider them to be clinically appropriate for an individual, as current prescribing arrangements allow off-license drugs that are found to have new uses to be prescribed to patients.

Prescribing decisions are for clinicians taking into account their patients' individual clinical circumstances. There is no legal or regulatory barrier to the funding or prescribing of drugs off-license. Prescribing in this way is part of normal every day clinical practice and offers benefits to a great number of patients.

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[55068\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate he has made of the number of prescriptions issued for bisphosphonates to prevent secondary breast cancer in each year that figures are available; and if he will make a statement.

Nicola Blackwood:

Information is not collected centrally on the conditions for which medicines are prescribed. Bisphosphonates are primarily used to prevent or treat osteoporosis.

■ DeepMind

Margaret Ferrier:

[\[54507\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how much the NHS has paid DeepMind Health for its work related to the Streams app for the Royal Free Trust.

Nicola Blackwood:

Digital transformation is crucial if we are to get the best results for patients. This is an agreement between the individual trust and the partner organisation, and as such the Department does not hold the details of the agreement. However, arrangements local National Health Service organisations enter into with third parties to manage data on their behalf, whether for research or any other purposes, must comply with the Data Protection Act 1998.

■ Diabetes

Pauline Latham:

[\[54681\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the findings in the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) Improvement and Assessment Framework data, published in September 2016, which showed that over two-thirds of CCGs have been rated as either needs improvement or greatest need for improvement in diabetes services; and if he will make a statement.

David Mowat:

The Clinical Commissioning Group Improvement and Assessment Framework (CCG IAF) contains two recognised evidence-based measures of whether patients with diabetes are being supported to successfully manage their condition. These are the achievement of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) treatment targets, which cover blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol control, and participation in structured education programmes.

These measures were selected to reflect matters highlighted by the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) in January 2016 in its report on the management of adult diabetes services. The purpose of the CCG IAF is to highlight the key areas where clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) need to make improvements. The number of CCGs in need of improvement against these two indicators is consistent with the findings of the PAC.

The NHS Operational Planning and Contracting Guidance 2017-2019 included an announcement that NHS England intends to launch a major programme of investment in the treatment and care of people with diabetes. As part of this, CCGs will be able to bid for additional funding of around £40 million per year for priorities which include improvements in relation to the achievement of the treatment targets and attendance at structured education programmes.

■ General Practitioners: Prescriptions

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[54473\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what guidance his Department provides to GPs to ensure the regulation of self-prescribing by health practitioners.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The Department does not provide doctors with guidance to ensure the regulation of self-prescribing by health practitioners.

The General Medical Council (GMC) is the independent regulator of doctors in the United Kingdom. The GMC guidance, *Good Medical Practice* describes what is expected of all doctors registered with the GMC. In this guidance it states that a doctor must, wherever possible, avoid providing medical care to themselves or anyone with whom they have a close personal relationship.

The GMC also produces supporting, explanatory guidance, *Good Practice in Prescribing and Managing Medicines and Devices* that expands on the advice in *Good Medical Practice*.

A serious or persistent failure to follow this guidance may put a doctor's registration with the GMC, and their licence to practise at risk.

■ Health Services

Justin Madders: [\[55081\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what his policy is on the introduction of accountable care organisations.

Justin Madders: [\[55082\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of accountable care organisations as a mechanism for improving efficiency.

Justin Madders: [\[55083\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will make an assessment of the extent of private sector involvement in accountable care organisations.

Justin Madders: [\[55085\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will make an assessment of the potential effect of the introduction of accountable care organisations on access to treatment.

David Mowat:

Local service leaders in every part of England have worked together to produce shared Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs) to transform health and care in the communities they serve, and to agree how to spend increasing investment in the National Health Service. Some of the 44 STPs feature plans to develop accountable care organisations, the characteristics of which will depend on local service design.

Through the new care models programme, the Five Year Forward View arms-length bodies are helping local partnerships develop and implement new care models, two of

which are population-health models - Multispecialty Community Providers (MCPs) and Integrated Primary and Acute Care Systems (PACS). As these care models develop, the partner organisations are expected to take on shared accountability for the health and care of the populations they serve.

By sharing accountability, and providing services that best meet the needs of their local populations, MCPs and PACS are expected to deliver much greater integration between primary and acute care; physical and mental health; health and social care; improving health outcomes; and the quality, accessibility, and efficiency of local services. Where this involves substantial service reconfiguration, local areas will be expected to consult patients and the public in the normal way.

The new care models programme has recently published the MCP and PACS frameworks, which set out further the emerging care models and their benefits, and examples of best practice that others can implement. National MCP and PACS contracts are being developed to underpin these care models. Existing requirements on the NHS around commissioning and the procurement of services, including services provided by the independent sector, will continue to apply to new care models.

■ Medical Equipment

Justin Madders:

[\[54777\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will estimate how many proposals for new medical technologies the NICE Technology Appraisal Committee has discussed in the last five years.

Nicola Blackwood:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has advised that it defines medical technologies as all products, except medicines, used in healthcare to diagnose, prevent, monitor or treat illness or disability, for example a pacemaker, knee replacement, X-ray machine or blood pressure monitor.

NICE has advised that its Technology Appraisal Committee has appraised seven such medical technologies in the last five years. A further four technologies have guidance currently in development.

Justin Madders:

[\[54858\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will make an assessment of the effect of NICE technology appraisal recommendations on the level of uptake of new medical technologies among NHS healthcare providers.

Nicola Blackwood:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has advised that it defines medical technologies as all products, except medicines, used in healthcare to diagnose, prevent, monitor or treat illness or disability, for example a pacemaker, knee replacement, X-ray machine or blood pressure monitor.

National Health Service commissioners are legally required to make funding available for health technologies recommended by NICE, normally within three months of the publication of NICE's final guidance.

NHS Digital publishes information on the uptake of NICE approved medicines across NHS providers through the Innovation Scorecard. Work is taking place to improve information on the uptake of medical technologies, including those with a positive NICE appraisal. The latest publication can be viewed at:

<http://content.digital.nhs.uk/catalogue/PUB21784>

■ Medical Records

Sir Nicholas Soames: [55183]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what representations he has made to Capita on the time taken by that body to send GP in-patient records to pay practices.

David Mowat:

My hon. Friend, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Nicola Blackwood) is holding regular meetings with Capita and NHS England to discuss matters relating to the primary care support contract.

■ Mental Health Services: Children

Norman Lamb: [55164]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many young people aged 17 years or under were admitted to mental health hospitals outside their (a) clinical commissioning group and (b) area team area in England in each of the last five years.

Nicola Blackwood:

I refer to the answer I gave on 22 November 2016 to the hon. Member for Liverpool, Wavertree (Luciana Berger) to Question [53616](#).

■ Mental Illness: Diagnosis

Anne Marie Morris: [55118]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many mental health diagnoses were made in (a) Newton Abbot, (b) Devon and (c) England in the last 12 months.

Nicola Blackwood:

Provided is the estimated number of people accessing mental health services during the most recent 12 month period 2015/16. Data are provided for people whose general practitioner was in the South Devon and Torbay Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) administrative area. Data for Newton Abbot and Devon is not available.

Number of people using National Health Service funded adult secondary mental health and learning disability services by CCG, estimated 2015/16

	NUMBER OF PEOPLE
England	1,825,905
99Q NHS SOUTH DEVON AND TORBAY CCG	10,185

Source: Mental Health and Learning Disabilities Dataset, NHS Digital.

■ NHS: Drugs

Dr Andrew Murrison:

[R] [\[54412\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, on what date (a) Ministers and (b) officials of his Department met representatives from the (i) NHS and (ii) pharmaceutical industry to discuss drug price rises in each of the last two years.

Nicola Blackwood:

Ministers and officials regularly meet with stakeholders from the National Health Service and the pharmaceutical industry where a range of issues are discussed, including the pricing of medicines.

No central record exists of these meetings and it is not possible to provide a comprehensive response. However, nine meetings were held between Departmental officials and pharmaceutical companies under the Pharmaceutical Price Regulation Scheme and statutory medicines pricing scheme to specifically discuss price increases for branded medicines. The dates of these meetings were:

12 February 2015

16 March 2015

21 May 2015

5 January 2016

11 February 2016

21 March 2016

21 April 2016

26 May 2016

29 June 2016

In addition, there have also been meetings with the *British Generic Manufacturers Association* where generic medicines price increases were discussed.

■ NHS: Pensions

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[55252\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of proposals for NHS Pensions to charge fees for members requesting pension forecast information.

Mr Philip Dunne:

No assessment has been made as there are no current proposals for NHS Pensions to charge fees for members requesting pension forecast information.

■ **NHS: Working Hours**

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[\[55189\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 28 November 2016 to Question 53350, if he will record the average number of hours worked each week by NHS job category in future; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Philip Dunne:

As set out in the Answer of 28 November to Question 53350, the Electronic Staff Record (ESR) does not clearly show the full extent of additional work carried out by National Health Service staff. Some inferences can be made about average hours by analysing data from ESR (which is the payroll system) and other sources such as trust rostering systems. There are different rostering systems for different staff groups in the NHS; not all employers use the same systems; and the working time contribution of consultants is measured in units which are of varying lengths of time depending on when they are worked. To collect data centrally on the average hours worked each week by NHS job category would place an unreasonable burden on NHS organisations. It is the responsibility of employers to ensure that hours worked are within statutory and contractual limits for working hours and patterns.

■ **Nivolumab**

Derek Thomas:

[\[54449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what information his Department holds on delays in NICE providing its guidance on the Nivolumab drug; and whether any decisions have been made about the future funding of that drug.

Nicola Blackwood:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) makes information on the progress of ongoing technology appraisals available on its website, including explanations for any delays.

NICE has issued technology appraisal guidance recommending nivolumab (Opdivo) for a number of indications as follows:

- for treating advanced (unresectable or metastatic) melanoma in guidance published in February 2016;
- (in combination with ipilimumab) for treating advanced melanoma in guidance published in July 2016; and
- for previously treated advanced renal cell carcinoma in guidance published in November 2016.

NICE is also appraising nivolumab for a number of other indications, including lung cancers and head and neck cancer.

National Health Service commissioners are legally required to fund drugs and treatments recommended in NICE technology appraisal guidance within three months of the publication of final guidance. Under the new operating model for the Cancer Drugs Fund, NHS England will fund drugs recommended by NICE in draft technology appraisal guidance from the point of marketing authorisation.

■ Ophthalmology

Sir Hugo Swire: [55012]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he is taking to decrease the number of people missing or cancelling ophthalmology appointments.

David Mowat:

Local National Health Service organisations are responsible for making their own arrangements for minimising the number of people missing or cancelling ophthalmology appointments.

The Department, in conjunction with behavioural scientists at Imperial College, conducted randomised controlled trials at Barts Hospitals NHS Trust looking at the content of the most effective text message reminder. The results were published in an online academic journal in September 2015 ¹ and summarised on the Department's website in January 2016 ².

¹<http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0137306>

²<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reducing-missed-hospital-appointments-using-text-messages>

■ Ophthalmology: Devon

Sir Hugo Swire: [55013]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how much missed or cancelled ophthalmology appointments in the Northern, Eastern and Western Devon Clinical Commissioning Group area cost the NHS in 2015-16.

David Mowat:

This information is not available centrally.

■ Pharmacy

Norman Lamb: [55007]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, on how many occasions between 1 October 2016 and 21 October 2016 (a) he, (b) Ministers in his Department and (c) officials in his Department have met representatives of (i) Boots, (ii) Lloyds Pharmacy and (iii) the National Pharmacy Association.

Norman Lamb: [55008]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, on how many occasions between 1 July 2016 and 30 September 2016 (a) he, (b) Ministers in his Department and (c) officials in his Department

have met representatives of (i) Boots, (ii) Lloyds Pharmacy and (iii) the National Pharmacy Association.

Norman Lamb:

[\[55009\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, on how many occasions between 1 April 2016 and 30 June 2016 (a) he, (b) Ministers in his Department and (c) officials in his Department have met representatives of (i) Boots, (ii) Lloyds Pharmacy and (iii) the National Pharmacy Association.

David Mowat:

My Rt. hon. Friend the then Minister of State (Alistair Burt) met with Pharmacy Voice on 26 April 2016 when a representative of the National Pharmacy Association (NPA) was in attendance.

My Rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State met with the Chief Executive Officer of Walgreens Boots Alliance on 26 July 2016.

I met representatives of the NPA informally when I attended the Pharmacy Business Awards on 13 October 2016.

Officials met with representatives of Walgreens Boots Alliance on 26 April 2016. A representative of the NPA attended a stakeholder event on 28 April 2016 on "Community pharmacy in 2016/17 and beyond".

■ Science: Foreign Investment in UK

Justin Madders:

[\[54855\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, with reference to the proposals for changes to the arrangements for evaluating and funding drugs and other health technologies appraised through NICE's technology appraisal and highly specialised programmes, published on 13 October 2016, if he will make an assessment of the potential effect of proposals for the introduction of a budget impact threshold on the level of inward investment into the UK life sciences sector.

Nicola Blackwood:

We have made no such assessment. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and NHS England are consulting on the proposals and they are therefore subject to change. NICE and NHS England will assess the impact of the proposals in light of consultation responses.

Independent evidence suggests that the most important attraction for companies to invest in research in the United Kingdom is the availability of world-class scientific expertise, which is the focus of the Government's effort to ensure the UK remains at the forefront of global research and development.

■ Slaughterhouses: Animal Welfare

James Gray:

[\[54743\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many abattoirs have adequate lairage for cattle kept overnight.

Nicola Blackwood:

It is a condition of approval that all slaughterhouses are required to have adequate lairage facilities and there is no distinction between requirements for day or night time lairage.

There are currently 180 approved cattle slaughterhouses in England and Wales (some of these premises also slaughter other species).

Regulation 853/2004, Annex III, Section I, Chapter II, sets out the requirements for slaughterhouse lairage and states:

- Adequate and hygienic lairage facilities must be equipped for watering the animals and, if necessary, feeding them.

Animal welfare standards are set out in Regulation 1099/2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing. Annex III states:

- Animals which have not been slaughtered within 12 hours of their arrival must be fed, and subsequently given moderate amounts of food at appropriate intervals (usually every 12 hours). In such cases, the animals shall be provided an appropriate amount of bedding or equivalent material which guarantees a level of comfort appropriate to the species and the number of animals concerned. This material shall guarantee an efficient drainage or ensure adequate absorption of urine and faeces.
- Arrangements must be made for milking dairy animals at intervals of not more than 12 hours.
- Animals which are not taken directly to the place of slaughter after being unloaded must have drinking water available to them from appropriate facilities at all times.

■ Vegetables: Consumption

Ms Margaret Ritchie:

[\[55087\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department plans to take to encourage increased consumption of vegetables.

Nicola Blackwood:

The Government recommends eating plenty of fruit and vegetables as part of a healthy balanced diet. The national food model the Eatwell Guide, provides a visual representation of the types and proportions of the foods needed for a healthy, balanced diet, and depicts a diet rich in fruit and vegetables.

The Government's 5 A DAY campaign which specifically promotes fruit and vegetable consumption was launched in 2003. The 5 A DAY message is embedded in the Eatwell

Guide and communicated alongside other healthy eating advice through, for example the Change4Life campaign, the One You campaign and the NHS Choices website.

■ **WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control**

Philip Davies: [\[54974\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether the officials from his Department who attended the seventh conference of the Parties of World Health Organisation Framework Convention on Tobacco Control met with representatives of the Group Action on Smoking and Health during that conference.

Nicola Blackwood:

Officials met with a range of public health stakeholders on 12 October 2016 before attending the Conference of the Parties of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Deborah Arnott the Chief Executive of Action on Smoking and Health, attended that meeting. No further meetings were scheduled or held before or during the conference.

HOME OFFICE

■ **Asylum: Children**

Stuart C. McDonald: [\[55072\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the compatibility of her Department's guidance, entitled implementation of section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 in France, published on 8 November 2016, with (a) the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, (b) Article 2 of that convention and (c) the Equality Act 2010.

Stuart C. McDonald: [\[55180\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her Department's guidance, entitled implementation of section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 in France, published on 14 November 2016, whether she plans to apply similar restrictions to those described in that document based on age or nationality to other children being considered for relocation to the UK under that section.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The criteria for relocating children to the UK from France under section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 are based on the reasonable likelihood of their qualifying for refugee status and achieving long-term stability. The criteria are therefore in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The guarantee of rights in relation to children, and the delivery of appropriate services to individual children, is currently provided by the French State.

Our policies do not deprive any child of access to these benefits and therefore are fully in line with the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child. Furthermore, section 55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009 requires the Secretary of State to

carry out their immigration and asylum functions in a way that takes into account the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the UK. Where a child is outside the UK, the spirit of the duty should be applied. Due regard has been given, throughout the process of establishing the criteria and guidance, to the Secretary of State's duties under the Equality Act 2010. The criteria and guidance are in full compliance with those duties.

The published guidance applies to unaccompanied children in France who had been resident in the migrant camp in Calais on or before 24 October. It is time limited to the period of the camp clearance operation, including the ongoing assessment and transfer of eligible children directly from specialist centres throughout France.

■ Entry Clearances: Overseas Students

Paul Blomfield: [\[54782\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 14 November 2016 to Question 52095, on how many occasions in the last 12 months reviews and the exercise of the specialist assurance function in relation to tier 4 decision making have resulted in a reversal of a decision.

Paul Blomfield: [\[54784\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 21 November 2016 to Question 51921, what the average time taken is to process an administrative review of a tier 4 application.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The Home Office does not hold the specific information in the format requested. To obtain it would involve interrogating individual case records, at disproportionate cost.

■ Firearms: Licensing

Geoffrey Clifton-Brown: [\[54882\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what mechanisms there are to measure the performance of police forces when dealing with firearm and shotgun certificate applications.

Geoffrey Clifton-Brown: [\[54883\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many section 7 temporary firearm and shotgun permits were issued in the last year for which figures are available in England and Wales.

Geoffrey Clifton-Brown: [\[54884\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will collect and publish data on performance in processing firearm and shotgun certificate applications which includes the time taken to process (a) initial firearm and shotgun licence grants and (b) firearm and shotgun licence renewals in England and Wales.

Brandon Lewis:

Under the Firearms Act 1968, which applies to England, Wales and Scotland, firearm and shotgun certificate administration is a matter for the chief officer of police for the area in which the applicant lives.

The time taken to process a firearm or shotgun application can vary as the chief officer must take into account the need to manage risk and ensure public protection. The Government has no plans to collect and publish data on police performance in processing firearm and shotgun certificate applications.

The Policing and Crime Bill, which is before Parliament, introduces a power to issue statutory guidance to the police in relation to firearms licensing. This should lead to improved consistency in practice across forces.

Jim Shannon:[\[55273\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to improve (a) response times and (b) consistency across the UK in such times for the renewal of firearms licences.

Brandon Lewis:

Under the Firearms Act 1968, which applies to England, Wales and Scotland, firearm and shotgun certificate administration is a matter for the chief officer of police for the area in which the applicant lives. The time taken to process a firearm or shotgun application can vary as the chief officer must take into account the need to manage risk and ensure public protection.

The Policing and Crime Bill, which is before Parliament, introduces a power to issue statutory guidance to the police in relation to firearms licensing. Additionally, the Bill as amended during Lords Committee provides for automatic temporary extension to the validity of expired certificates if a police decision on a timely application for renewal remains outstanding. These measures should lead to improved response times and consistency across forces.

The possession of firearms is subject to separate legislation in Northern Ireland.

■ Immigration Controls**Christian Matheson:**[\[54953\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what checks are applied by the UK Border Agency to Heads of State and Heads of Government, and their staff, who visit the UK.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

Heads of State are exempt from Immigration control. Heads of Government visiting the UK for official reasons are also exempt. Border Force officers conduct Home Office checks on these categories of visitors to confirm the identity of the visitor and to endorse passports if required.

■ Money Lenders: Confiscation Orders

Richard Burgon: [\[54896\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to paragraph 4.13 of the Autumn Statement 2016 policy paper, published on 23 November 2016, what the total value of confiscation orders made under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 against people convicted of loan sharking offences has been in each of the last five years.

Richard Burgon: [\[54897\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to paragraph 4.13 of the Autumn Statement 2016 policy paper, published on 23 November 2016, how much has been recovered pursuant to confiscation orders made under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 from people convicted of loan sharking offences in each of the last five years.

Mr Ben Wallace:

The Home Office does not hold information on the total value of confiscation orders made or recovered by the categories described in the question.

■ Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013

Mr David Hanson: [\[54678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, which external groups her Department plans to consult on its review of the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 under section 18 of that Act.

Brandon Lewis:

The Home Office will consult with a wide range of external groups, including representatives of the scrap metal and metals recycling industry such as the British Metals Recycling Association, the energy and rail networks, the Church of England and other religious bodies, Historic England, representatives from Gypsy, Traveller and Roma organisations, local authorities and the police.

■ Visas: Iran

Alison Thewliss: [\[55084\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the performance of VFS Global in providing visa services on behalf of UK Visas and Immigration in Iran.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

UK Visas and Immigration regularly reviews the service provided on its behalf by Commercial Partners, and is satisfied with the service provided by VFS Global in Iran.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**■ Department for International Development: Public Expenditure**

Paula Sherriff: [\[55212\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, in relation to paragraph 5.22 of the Autumn Statement 2016, what assessment she has made of the effect of the planned reduction in her Department's budget; and whether any current projects are being considered for cancellation.

James Wharton:

HMT routinely adjust the Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) budget to ensure the UK meets the target to spend 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI) on ODA. DFID will work closely with HMT to identify budget adjustments, focusing on adjusting spend that offers lowest value for money, and taking into account performance and fit with UK strategic objectives.

■ Developing Countries: HIV Infection

Caroline Lucas: [\[54888\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what plans she has to undertake a stocktake review of her Department's work on HIV to assess its comparative performance with other countries (a) in general and (b) on Sustainable Development Goal 3.3.

James Wharton:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I provided on 7 November to Question numbers 51481 and 51482.

Caroline Lucas: [\[54890\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment her Department has made of the effectiveness of its integration of HIV and AIDS prevention programmes into (a) the wider health system and (b) her Department's programmes; and if she will make a statement.

James Wharton:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I provided on 28 November to Question number 54484.

■ Occupied Territories: Demolition

Alan Brown: [\[55142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 22 November 2016 to Question 53572, whether the UK made a financial contribution to the EU's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Office (ECHO) in respect of the 180 structures funded by the ECHO and demolished by the Israeli government since 2009.

James Wharton:

The UK's financing share of European Union (EU) expenditure varies year on year but has been approximately 15%. The UK has made no further bilateral contribution to the programme in question.

■ **Sierra Leone: Non-governmental Organisations**

Ann Clwyd:

[\[54679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what reports she has received on (a) a proposed revision to the 2009 NGO Policy Regulations by the government of Sierra Leone and (b) the views of civil society organisations on that proposed revision.

James Wharton:

The Government of Sierra Leone is consulting on revising the NGO policy guidelines. The DFID team in Sierra Leone is talking to the government, other development partners and civil society organisations. Civil society organisations we have engaged accept that government should have adequate oversight of their work, particularly where they are being funded to support government programmes and objectives. They are keen to work with government to ensure that new administrative requirements, fees and taxes are appropriate and proportionate. It will be important that the guidelines strike the right balance.

■ **Syria: Overseas Aid**

Hilary Benn:

[\[55240\]](#)

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

James Wharton:

The UN estimates that over 36,000 Syrians across Aleppo have been displaced in recent weeks. In besieged eastern Aleppo, where up to 275,000 people live, intensified attacks by the Assad regime and its allies has led to severe food and water shortages, near exhaustion of medical supplies and high numbers of people requiring urgent medical evacuation. In western Aleppo, the UN reports that indiscriminate attacks have also killed and injured civilians.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ **Brexit**

Catherine West:

[\[54529\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many projects in operation in his Department are related to the UK's exit of the EU.

Greg Hands:

The Prime Minister has instructed all departments to identify potential opportunities that will arise from exiting the European Union.

This Government is united in its ambition to deliver a successful withdrawal from the European Union and a new relationship with Europe, and departments will work together to deliver this.

In the Department for International Trade our responsibilities include:

- Promoting and supporting UK exports of goods and services, including through export finance and insurance to support a growing economy that works for everyone;
- Maximising opportunities for wealth creation through supporting Foreign Direct Investment and Outward Direct Investment;
- Delivering the best international trading framework for the UK to maximise trade and investment opportunities.

In all of these areas there may be opportunities that relate to the UK's exit from the European Union. We are working with the Department for Exiting the European Union to seize these opportunities, and ensure a smooth process of exit on the best possible terms for the United Kingdom and its citizens.

■ Department for International Trade: Legal Opinion

Barry Gardiner:

[\[54509\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 12 September 2016 to Question 44715, which legal firms have offered his Department pro bono support.

Greg Hands:

It would not be appropriate to give the names of individual firms.

Barry Gardiner:

[\[54510\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 17 October 2016 to Question 48262, which external firms will be providing the (a) analysts and (b) lawyers referred to in that Answer.

Greg Hands:

The analysts and lawyers referred to are internal.

■ Embassies

Chi Onwurah:

[\[55125\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether any high commission, consulates or embassies offer co-working space to support (a) foreign companies who wish to trade with the UK and (b) UK companies who wish to develop overseas markets.

Mark Garnier:

The Department for International Trade helps UK companies to export. Posts and delivery partners provide a range of services to UK exporters. In some markets, where posts and partners judge this beneficial, our offer to British companies includes rental of dedicated office space in self-contained areas (in accordance with the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations).

■ Fish Products: Northern Ireland

Douglas Chapman: [\[55069\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what the value was of seafood exports from Northern Ireland in (a) 2012-13, (b) 2013-14, (c) 2014-15 and (d) 2015-16.

Mark Garnier:

The value of seafood exports from Northern Ireland since 2012 is given in the attached table. Source: HM Revenue and Customs Interactive Regional Trade Statistics database.

Attachments:

1. Seafood Exports from NI [55069 - Table.docx]

■ Foreign Investment in UK

Barry Gardiner: [\[54478\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many inward investment projects have been confirmed by his Department in the first half of the 2016-17 tax year.

Greg Hands:

The Department for International Trade collects and validates information on known foreign direct investment (FDI) projects that materialise in the UK during a financial year. The results are published annually to allow for full quality control of the results, and can be found on Gov.uk.

■ India: Overseas Trade

Douglas Chapman: [\[54560\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps the Government took to advise Scottish companies of the promotional opportunities provided by his visit to India of November 2016.

Douglas Chapman: [\[54561\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what the value was of commercial agreements reached during his visit to India of November 2016.

Douglas Chapman: [\[54562\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what the value was of commercial agreements involving Scottish companies reached during his visit to India of November 2016.

Mark Garnier:

[Holding answer 28 November 2016]: The Department for International Trade (DIT) worked with colleagues across the UK and the Devolved Administrations to identify companies to join the Prime Minister's business delegation. This process included wide consultation with our counterpart, Scottish Development International. All the UK regions were represented in the Prime Minister's delegation.

The total value of the announced commercial agreements secured during the Prime Minister's visit was £1.2 billion. This figure does not include all deals agreed over the

period. All deals between UK companies and their Indian counterparts are commercially sensitive. We can only announce those where we receive express consent from the company.

■ Police: Equipment

Greg Mulholland: [54956]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what export licences have been granted for the sale of British-made policing equipment in the last 12 months; and to which countries each of those licenses was granted for.

Mark Garnier:

Information on exports licences is publically available as Official Statistics at www.gov.uk.

These reports contain detailed information on export licences issued, refused or revoked, by destination, including the overall value, type (e.g. Military, Other) and a summary of the items covered by these licences.

Currently published data includes information up to 30 June 2016. Information covering 1 July to 30 September 2016 will be published in January 2017 and information covering 1 October to 31 December will be published in April 2017.

All export licences are issued in strict accordance with the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria and any sanctions or embargoes that may be in place at the time an application is submitted for consideration.

■ Trade Agreements

Barry Gardiner: [54508]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 14 October 2016 to Question 46441, what estimate he has made of the total annual value to the UK of exports and imports related to preferential access to EEA countries and non-EU members of the Customs Union.

Greg Hands:

Two per cent of the UK's exports of goods and services and four per cent of the UK's imports of goods and services in 2015 went to or came from European Economic Area countries and non-EU members of the Customs Union.

■ World Trade Organisation

Barry Gardiner: [54479]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if he will make available the analysis presented to the Cabinet sub-committee on Europe at the meeting of 18 October 2016 on the consequences for the UK economy of adopting World Trade Organisation rules.

Greg Hands:

Records of Cabinet meetings or those of its sub-committees are confidential.

Barry Gardiner:

[\[54480\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when he expects the UK will be in a position to confirm its status at the World Trade Organisation after the conclusion of the Article 50 process.

Greg Hands:

The UK is already a founding member of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). The process of separating our position from that of the EU within the WTO is distinct from the Article 50 process.

JUSTICE

■ Cremation

Diana Johnson:

[\[54429\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will meet with the constituent of the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull North, Claire Clappison, to discuss the loss of the ashes of her son, Hayden, in 2003.

Diana Johnson:

[\[54430\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will meet with the constituent of the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull North, Mandi Reeve, to discuss the loss of the ashes of her sons, Scott and Sean, in 1996.

Diana Johnson:

[\[54431\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will meet the constituent of the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull North, Helen Dawson, to discuss the loss of the ashes of her son, Jake, in 2005.

Diana Johnson:

[\[54432\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will meet the constituent of the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull North, Adele Thornton, to discuss the loss of the ashes of her daughter, Chelsea, in 2000.

Diana Johnson:

[\[54433\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will take steps to support an inquiry by Hull City Council into the loss of the ashes of Adele Thornton's daughter, Chelsea, in 2000.

Diana Johnson:

[\[54434\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will take steps to support an inquiry by Hull City Council into the loss of the ashes of Helen Dawson's son, Jake, in 2005.

Diana Johnson:

[\[54435\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will take steps to support an inquiry by Hull City Council into the loss of the ashes of Mandi Reeves' sons, Scott and Sean, in 1996.

Diana Johnson: [\[54436\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will take steps to support an inquiry by Hull City Council into the loss of the ashes of Claire Clappison's son, Hayden, in 2003.

Diana Johnson: [\[54437\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will ensure that the National Cremation Working Group assesses the potential merits of changes to policy arising from the loss of the ashes of Scott and Sean, the sons of Mandi Reeves, in 1996.

Diana Johnson: [\[54438\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will ensure that the National Cremation Working Group assesses the potential merits of changes to policy arising from the loss of the ashes of Hayden, the son of Claire Clappison, in 2003.

Diana Johnson: [\[54439\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will ensure that the National Cremation Working Group assesses the potential merits of changes to policy arising from the loss of the ashes of Chelsea, the daughter of Adele Thornton, in 2000.

Diana Johnson: [\[54440\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will ensure that the National Cremation Working Group assesses the potential merits of changes to policy arising from the loss of the ashes of Jake, the son of Helen Dawson, in 2005.

Dr Phillip Lee:

The Secretary of State recently met you and your constituent Tina Trowhill whose Action for Ashes Hull organisation represents parents in Hull. The Secretary of State expressed her deepest sympathy for all the parents who had not had their infants' ashes returned to them after cremation and explained the government's position.

The government is supportive of local investigations into historic infant cremation practices but does not plan to order such inquiries in Hull or elsewhere. Our clear priority since we received the Emstrey report in June 2015 has been to put measures in place across England and Wales to prevent such distressing infant cremation practice ever happening again. That is why we held a consultation which closed in March, announced our proposals in light of consultation responses in July, introduced a new statutory definition of ashes in October and have put in place a National Cremation Working Group of experts which is now advising us on more complex regulations and new statutory forms which will come into effect in 2017. The Working Group, which includes Action for Ashes Hull, will also assist us in developing new codes of practice, training and information for bereaved families.

Hull City Council has assured us that it has provided the information that it holds to all bereaved parents who have approached it about their babies' cremations. This includes Claire Clappison, Mandi Reeves, Helen Dawson and Adele Thornton.

■ Gender Recognition

Mrs Maria Miller:

[\[55075\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to page 11 of the Government response to the First Report from the Women and Equalities Committee, Session 2015-16, on Transgender Equality, column 9301, published in July 2016, what steps the Government has taken since the publication of that response to monitor the possibility and incidence of victimisation of transgender people arising from the spousal consent provision of the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013.

Dr Phillip Lee:

The Government has always been clear, that no-one has the right to prevent their wife or husband from obtaining a legal gender change. We will continue to monitor this issue. Statistics now show that 90 married transgender people have successfully gained a Gender Recognition Certificate since provisions under the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 were commenced.

■ Ministry of Justice: Departmental Responsibilities

Catherine West:

[\[54531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many projects in operation in her Department are related to the UK's exit of the EU.

Sir Oliver Heald:

The Government is united in its ambition to deliver a successful withdrawal from the EU and a new relationship with Europe. My department is working closely with the Department for Exiting the European Union to realise the full range of opportunities, and to mitigate any potential risks associated with the UK's withdrawal from the European Union in respect of MoJ's areas of responsibility.

■ Prison Service: Termination of Employment

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[55126\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prison officers are predicted to leave the service in 2017 for reasons of (a) retirement, (b) reassignment, (c) dismissal and (d) redundancy.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The Ministry of Justice does not make predictions of the numbers of Prison Officers who will leave the Prison Service.

SCOTLAND

■ Social Security Benefits: Scotland

Mr Christopher Chope:

[\[55233\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, pursuant to the Answer of 28 November 2016 to Question 54636, what the timetable is for completion of the Government's consideration of

splitting competence; and whether the power to create new benefits in devolved areas and the power to top up reserved benefits will be capable of exercise before full executive competence has been transferred.

David Mundell:

The power to create new benefits in devolved areas and the power to top up benefits in reserved areas were commenced on 5 September 2016, enabling the Scottish Parliament to legislate on these matters. I look forward to hearing how the Scottish Government intend to use these substantial new powers.

As I referenced in the response to my hon Friend's previous question, the UK Government has agreed to consider an approach to splitting competence at the request of Scottish Government Ministers. The Joint Ministerial Working Group on Welfare will meet again early in the new year to discuss progress. The UK Government will continue to work with the Scottish Government to achieve a safe and secure transfer of powers, with those people affected by the changes at the heart of all considerations.

TRANSPORT

■ A27: Worthing

Sir Peter Bottomley:

[54797]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make available online the 1996-97 conclusions of the inspector's report stemming from the inquiry on the A27 road proposals for Worthing and District.

Mr John Hayes:

I understand that the conclusion of the Inspector's report would not have been placed online as a matter of course back in 1996/97. Highways England will investigate to see if the document is still held. If it is located and it is still relevant, then it will be published on the A27 road project website.

Sir Peter Bottomley:

[54798]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the main elements are in the cost-benefit analysis conducted on alternative proposals for the A27 road in and around Worthing.

Mr John Hayes:

The main elements in the cost-benefit analysis that Highways England are conducting on alternative proposals for the A27 road in and around Worthing, are the: a) costs (constructions costs, land costs, preparation costs, supervision costs, maintenance costs), b) benefits (travel time, vehicle operating costs, accidents impacts, construction delay, maintenance delay, changes in indirect taxation, reliability) and c) environmental impacts, such as CO2 emissions, air quality, noise, etc.

■ A595: Accidents

Mr Jamie Reed:

[55147]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will take steps to reduce the number of road accidents on the A595.

Mr John Hayes:

The A595 is some 85 miles in length of which Highways England is responsible for the 19 mile section between Chapel Brow and Calder Bridge and the remainder is the responsibility of Cumbria County Council. Highways England keeps the safety performance of all its roads under continuous review and has delivered safety improvements at nine locations on the A595 between January 2011 and October 2016. These include improvements to pedestrian facilities, road markings, road signs, the introduction of traffic signals and a reduction in the speed limit from 60mph to 50mph between Mirehouse and Bigrigg. The number of recorded personal injury accidents along this section in 2015 was significantly lower than in previous years.

■ Agricultural Machinery

David Warburton:

[54578]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if his Department will assess the potential merits of introducing licensing regulations for drivers of large tractors and farming machinery on public highways similar to those governing HGV drivers.

Mr John Hayes:

Agricultural vehicles tend to travel much lower mileages on the public road and operate at significantly lower speeds than HGVs. The Government does not consider that it would be proportionate to the risk posed by these vehicles at current weight limits to impose on them the same licensing requirements as for HGVs.

■ Bus Services

Mr Christopher Chope:

[55234]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what cost benefit analysis the Government has carried out on the potential financial risk for council taxpayers of powers being given to local authorities to reverse bus deregulation and replace it with bus franchising.

Andrew Jones:

The Department for Transport published an impact assessment (IA), which analysed the potential costs and benefits of the Bus Services Bill proposals. The IA can be accessed from the gov.uk website - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bus-services-bill-impact-assessments>.

The actual costs and benefits will depend on how franchising is implemented at the local level, and the Bill requires any authority wishing to pursue franchising to produce an assessment of its proposed scheme, which will include consideration of whether the authority would be able to afford the scheme and whether it would represent value for money.

■ Department for Transport: Departmental Responsibilities

Catherine West: [\[54753\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many projects in operation in his Department are related to the UK's exit from the EU.

Andrew Jones:

The Government is united in its ambition to deliver a successful withdrawal from the EU and a new relationship with Europe, and departments will work together to deliver this. The Department for Transport is contributing to this effort. Current work is not project-based.

■ Driver and Vehicle Agency: Staff

Tom Elliott: [\[55005\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many Driver and Vehicle Agency posts there were in (a) Fermanagh and South Tyrone and (b) West Tyrone constituencies in (i) 2007-08 and (ii) the most recent period for which figures are available.

Andrew Jones:

The Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA) is part of the Northern Ireland Executive's Department for Infrastructure and the staff there are part of the Northern Ireland Civil Service. The Department for Transport and the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency do not hold information on the number of staff employed by the DVA in Northern Ireland.

■ Driving: Licensing

Daniel Zeichner: [\[55050\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the DVLA's system for assessing older drivers.

Andrew Jones:

While no formal assessment has been made, the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) keeps all its processes and systems under review. The current driver licensing arrangements take into account the risks that an individual poses to road safety and are designed to be fair and proportionate to all drivers who remain fit and competent to drive, regardless of age.

The current arrangements generally work well and balance road safety considerations with personal mobility. All drivers aged 70 and over must renew their licence and make a declaration about their medical fitness to drive at least every three years. This renewal process prompts drivers to confirm whether or not they have any relevant medical conditions and that they can continue to meet the required eyesight standards.

Depending on the information provided by the customer, the DVLA may need to contact the driver's doctor or consultant for further information before a decision can be made.

■ Electric Vehicles

Mr Clive Betts:

[\[55073\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to paragraph 3.18 of the Autumn Statement 2016, on electric vehicle charging points, what plans he has to ensure (a) greater compatibility between vehicles and charging points and (b) universal pricing systems for electric vehicle charging.

Mr John Hayes:

New powers to improve the provision of electric vehicle infrastructure have been proposed for inclusion in the forthcoming Modern Transport Bill. These proposals include a power to regulate technical standards of infrastructure to ensure easy compatibility with vehicles, and a power to require clear and consistent pricing information. A public consultation closed on 24 November.

At the Autumn Statement, the Chancellor announced additional funding of £270m for ultra low emission vehicles – with £80m for charging infrastructure – in addition to existing funding of more than £600m over this Parliament. Grant funding for chargepoints will continue to require that all public chargepoints have standards that enable them to work with all types of electric vehicle. In addition, the EU Directive (2014/94/EU) on the deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure will facilitate the standardised provision of connectors for chargepoints across Europe and is currently being transposed into UK law.

■ Govia Thameslink Railway

Kelvin Hopkins:

[\[55218\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 21 November 2016 to Question 53180, which two individuals reported minor perceived conflicts of interest; and what was the perceived conflict reported in each such case.

Paul Maynard:

Information about the two individuals that reported minor perceived conflicts of interest is as follows:

1. An employee (AA) of an organisation commissioned by the Department to produce a specialist report on each bidder's response to a specific set of requirements in the invitation to tender. After attending a training session for specialist report authors that included material on conflicts of interests, AA notified the Department that AA had a relative who was employed by Southern Rail, on the operational side of the business, and that the relative held a very small number of shares in the parent company. The Department was content for AA to continue in the appointed role because AA had declared the perceived conflict of interests and because AA's relative was not in a position where they could have any influence over the procurement process.
2. An individual (BB) (not an employee of the Department) who was appointed to fill one of the quality and delivery evaluator roles. After attending a training session for evaluators that included material on conflicts of interests, BB informed the Department

that a former colleague had joined one of the bidders and had drafted parts of the bid submission. BB informed the Department that the perceived conflict of interests was mitigated away because the parts of the bid submission that BB's former colleague had drafted were not parts that BB would be evaluating.

■ **Govia Thameslink Railway: Rolling Stock**

Kelvin Hopkins: [\[55217\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what information he or officials of his Department hold on the number of delays or cancellations caused to Govia Thameslink Railway services by faulty rolling stock.

Paul Maynard:

Govia Thameslink Railway report the number of cancellations and delay minutes that they are responsible for which includes delays caused by faulty rolling stock.

■ **High Speed 2 Railway Line: Midlands**

Karen Lumley: [\[54922\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of High Speed 2 on the (a) speed and (b) efficiency of travel for people travelling within the Midlands; and if he will make a statement.

Andrew Jones:

HS2 will transform connectivity between the Midlands, London and the North. Within the Midlands it will deliver journey times of 20 minutes between Birmingham and the new East Midlands Hub; and of 37 minutes between Birmingham and Nottingham (a 32 minute reduction).

HS2 will also: improve rail service reliability; enable a higher frequency of services; improve capacity (including by enabling more commuter services into Birmingham) and improve access to Birmingham airport.

■ **Large Goods Vehicles**

Mr Laurence Robertson: [\[54861\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the effect of the longer semi-trailer trial on residents in small villages.

Mr John Hayes:

The evidence from the trial indicates that longer semi-trailers are principally being used on major motorway and trunk routes between depots and warehouses. There is a general evaluation of the trial, involving the collection of extensive data on safety, environmental impact and economics of longer semi-trailers. The results, published on the Department for Transport website, include a significant reduction in the number of journeys required compared to the use of standard length semi-trailers.

■ Luton Airport: Railways

Mr Gavin Shuker:

[\[54471\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will take steps to specify the provision of a four fast trains per hour service between London St Pancras and Luton Airport Parkway as part of the refranchising of the East Midlands route; and if he will make a statement.

Paul Maynard:

The next East Midlands franchise is due to start in July 2018 and we are currently undertaking a process of information gathering to develop the high-level view of the franchise specification. We are due to begin a public consultation later this year to inform the specification. Until the views submitted through the public consultation are understood and further analysis is conducted on the options for the franchise, a firm decision cannot be taken at this stage.

■ Mill Hill Broadway Station

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[54540\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the level of congestion at Mill Hill Broadway railway station in the (a) last three months and (b) the next five years.

Paul Maynard:

Network Rail's East Midlands Route Study published earlier this year identified Mill Hill Broadway as a station needing passenger congestion relief by 2023 in Control Period 6 (CP6). The Government intends to articulate in 2017 its emerging priorities for improvements to train services and the national rail network for CP6.

It is the responsibility of the station operator to ensure that platforms are managed safely and to have measures in place to deal with the risks from over-crowding. The Department will keep under review any identified congestion through periodic review and franchising processes.

■ Motorcycles: Lighting

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[54470\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of making mandatory the use of side lights on motorcycles and mopeds with an engine capacity of 50cc or less.

Andrew Jones:

The Department has made no assessment of the potential merits of making the use of side lights mandatory, but headlamps that operate automatically whenever the machine is ridden have been fitted to most new machines under a voluntary agreement with the European motorcycle manufacturing industry since 2003. Changes in the construction requirements for new machines came into force from January 2016, which include a mandatory requirement for such systems.

■ Railway Stations: Access

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[54584\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the timetable is for applications to the next round of his Department's Access for All programme.

Paul Maynard:

All the funding under the current pot of money for Access for All has been allocated to stations. We intend to seek further funding for the next rail control period and details will be announced in due course.

■ Railway Stations: Repairs and Maintenance

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[54542\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many programmes have received disbursements from the Station Commercial Project Facility.

Paul Maynard:

The Station Commercial Project Facility was launched in April 2011 and has contributed £92m to the delivery of enhancement projects at 46 stations. To build on that success we have allocated a further £16m towards a further eight projects which need to be completed by 31 March 2019.

■ Railway Stations: Rural Areas

Paula Sherriff: [\[55070\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what funding has been made available to his Department for redevelopment of rural rail stations in the Autumn Statement 2016.

Paul Maynard:

The Autumn Statement announced £450 million to trial digital signalling technology to improve reliability, £5m development funding for Midlands Rail Hub, and £80m to accelerate the rollout of Smart Ticketing. This is in addition to the very substantial investment this Government is making in the railways, the largest since Victorian times.

Through the ongoing Franchise Process, the Government requires train operators to work with Community Rail Partnerships to support rural rail stations and services. The Government provides funding to the Association of Community Rail Partnerships ("ACoRP"), and for the Designated Community Rail Development Fund.

Additionally, the Government supports improvements at all railway stations, including rural railway stations, through the National Station Improvement Programme, Station Commercial Project Facility, and Access for All.

■ Railways: Dawlish

Anne Marie Morris:

[55119]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what proportion of the £50 million investment in rail resilience projects referred to in paragraph 3.25 of the Autumn Statement 2016 is intended for the Dawlish Rail Resilience Project.

Paul Maynard:

The £10m of investment in Dawlish is 20% of the £50m rail resilience project investment announced in the Autumn Statement 2016. This funding will allow Network Rail's development work to continue on the three highest priority Devon coastal sites identified in the geo-technical study which Network Rail published on 17 November. This work will include the development of an application for the necessary planning consents for the work on the cliffs along the coast to the immediate north-east of Teignmouth.

■ Railways: Franchises

Kelvin Hopkins:

[55011]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether civil servants employed in his Department have been consultants to Govia Thameslink Railway in its bid for the Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern Franchise.

Paul Maynard:

This information is not held in the form requested, and can only be obtained at a disproportionate cost.

■ Railways: Staff

Kelvin Hopkins:

[55010]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the effect of the level of planning by train operating companies of the availability of conductors or guards on train service delays and cancellations; and if he will place this information in the Library.

Paul Maynard:

The Department has made no such assessment; it is an operational matter for franchised train operators to ensure that their traincrew planning and management is sufficiently effective to provide the required service to passengers and to meet their franchise obligations.

Kelvin Hopkins:

[55191]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what representations he has received on the application of the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 to driver only operation; and if he will place a copy of those representations in the Library.

Paul Maynard:

I have not received any formal representations on this specific point.

■ Renewable Fuels: Transport

Dr Lisa Cameron: [\[54603\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of his Department's progress towards meeting the Renewable Energy Directive target that at least 10 per cent of transport fuels should come from renewable sources by 2020; and if he will make a statement.

Mr John Hayes:

I refer the Honourable Member to my answer of 30 November 2016 to UIN 54131.

■ Roads: Accidents

Mr Jamie Reed: [\[55148\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many fatal accidents there have been on each A road in 2016.

Andrew Jones:

The table below gives the top 20 A roads with the highest number of fatal accidents in Great Britain for 2015. The fatal accident rate per 100 miles of route length has also been provided as this allows the length of road to be taken into account when comparing the safety performance of the roads.

Given the relatively small number of accidents on each road, the total number of fatal accidents could vary significantly between years. Accident numbers will vary between roads based on a number of factors, including: traffic volume and different types of vehicle, as well as the characteristic of the road itself.

Top 20 A roads with the highest number of fatal accidents in 2015, Great Britain.

A ROAD NUMBER ¹	NO. OF FATAL ACCIDENTS	FATAL ACCIDENT RATE PER 100 MILES OF ROUTE LENGTH ²
A5	17	6.42
A1	14	4.37
A6	13	4.56
A40	12	4.24
A303	11	10.0
A46	9	4.23
A4	9	6.33
A30	9	3.03
A41	9	5.21

A ROAD NUMBER ¹	NO. OF FATAL ACCIDENTS	FATAL ACCIDENT RATE PER 100 MILES OF ROUTE LENGTH ²
A49	9	6.15
A15	8	7.90
A45	8	9.55
A35	8	7.60
A47	8	4.53
A259	8	6.19
A38	8	2.44
A34	7	4.05
A90	7	4.47
A631	7	10.9
A66	7	5.73

1 excludes A(M) sections of road

2 Route length includes slip roads and covers the length of the road rather than length of individual carriageways.

The attached document (Appendix 1) provides the number of fatal accidents and fatal accident rates per 100 miles of route for each of the A roads where a fatal accident was recorded in 2015.

Data for 2016 is currently unavailable. The statistics will be available after publication in June 2017.

Attachments:

1. Appendix 1 [055148 - Appendix 1.docx]

■ **South West Railway Line**

Dr Andrew Murrison:

[\[54418\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, on what date he plans to announce the successful bidder for the South Western rail franchise.

Paul Maynard:

We expect to announce the winning bidder in February 2017.

■ Southern: Compensation

Sir Nicholas Soames: [\[55149\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the exact date is of the change in the delayed repay threshold on the Southern Rail franchise.

Paul Maynard:

Work is progressing on this introduction, and is a matter of priority for both the operator and the Department. We expect to be able to announce an implementation date shortly.

■ Space Technology

Richard Burden: [\[54450\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans to include measures on spaceports in the Modern Transport Bill; and if he will make a statement.

Mr John Hayes:

The Government is working on measures for inclusion in the Modern Transport Bill that will create the legal basis for the licensing of spaceports and the conducting of commercial spaceflight operations in the UK. This will help to grow our national, space-related economy, and bring benefits to local industries involved in spaceport activity, such as construction and tourism – supporting this Government's strategy for delivering jobs and economic growth to every community and corner of the country.

■ Unmanned Air Vehicles

Lucy Powell: [\[54775\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with (a) the British Airline Pilots' Association, (b) the Civil Aviation Authority, (c) the Metropolitan Police and (d) other relevant stakeholders on the near-miss incident between a drone and a passenger plane on 18 July 2016.

Mr John Hayes:

The Department for Transport and the Civil Aviation Authority work with a wide range of partners, including the British Airline Pilots' Association and the Police, to ensure our understanding of potential hazards to aircraft remains up to date. Work is underway to better understand the risk posed by drones to commercial aircraft and ensure that the regulatory and industry responses remain fit for purpose.

■ Unmanned Air Vehicles: Safety

Lucy Powell: [\[54690\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 27 April 2016 to Question 34680, what his Department's current involvement is with the European Aviation Safety Agency's development of EU-wide safety rules for drones.

Mr John Hayes:

The Department for Transport has been participating in negotiations on the revision of the European Aviation Safety Agency's (EASA) Basic Regulation, which will include EU-wide safety rules for all unmanned aircraft.

The Civil Aviation Authority participates in the EASA Expert Group of subject matter experts, and will assist with the development of the Implementing Rules that sit beneath the Basic Regulation.

WALES**■ Free Movement of People: Wales****Jonathan Edwards:**[\[55019\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect on the economy in Wales of restrictions to the free movement of people when the UK leaves the EU.

Alun Cairns:

The Prime Minister has committed to ensuring that we get the best possible deal for all parts of the United Kingdom, including Wales. It is important that we understand the impacts on the different sectors of the economy and the labour market from any changes that we make.

I am working closely with the Department for Exiting the European Union, the Home Office and others to identify and develop options to shape our future immigration system, including considering how best to control the number of people coming to the UK from the EU following Brexit.

■ Pay: Wales**Jo Stevens:**[\[55014\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what estimate he has made of the expected average wage level in Wales in 2020.

Alun Cairns:

Earnings in Wales are increasing faster than the national average.

Boosting productivity growth and protecting jobs is crucial for creating a sustained rise in living standards. That is why this Government is investing in infrastructure, supporting job creation and reforming markets.

The UK Government is also taking targeted action to continue to raise incomes through a number of measures such as increasing the personal allowance and freezing fuel duty.

The OBR forecasts for November 2016 show that across the UK, average earnings are estimated to increase by 2.2% in 2016, 2.4% in 2017, 2.8% in 2018, 3.3% in 2019 and 3.6% in 2020.

■ Tax Yields: Wales

Jo Stevens: [\[55144\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, how much tax revenue was collected from people in work in Wales in each year since 2009.

Alun Cairns:

HMRC publishes annual estimates for a disaggregation of tax receipts between England, Wales, Scotland & Northern Ireland. The numbers in this publication do not represent an estimate of the tax revenue that would be raised if each tax was collected at the devolved level. This information is not available.

Since 2014, the independent Office for Budgetary Responsibility have also published forecasts for tax streams that are expected to be devolved to the Welsh Government.

The Wales Bill removes the requirement for a referendum before the Welsh Rates of Income Tax are introduced, allowing the Welsh Government to become more accountable to people in Wales by becoming responsible for raising more of the money it spends.

■ Wales Office: Departmental Responsibilities

Catherine West: [\[54752\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, how many projects in operation in his Department are related to the UK's exit from the EU.

Alun Cairns:

The Prime Minister has instructed all departments to identify potential opportunities that will arise in their areas from EU Exit. The Government is united in its ambition to deliver a successful withdrawal from the EU and a new relationship with Europe, and departments will work together to deliver this.

■ Wales Office: Travel

Jo Stevens: [\[55143\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, how much his Department has spent on ministerial travel in each year since 2010.

Guto Bebb:

The Departmental spend on ministerial travel since 2010 is set out below:

FINANCIAL YEAR	SPEND £
2010/11	199,040
2011/12	124,562
2012/13	158,848
2013/14	147,673

FINANCIAL YEAR	SPEND £
2014/15	105,765
2015/16	34,490

The spend includes travel by rail, car and air for all Wales Office Ministers. In September 2012, the number of Wales Office Ministers increased from 2 to 3. The travel costs reduced in 2014-15, and further in 2015-16, with the former Secretary of State for Wales giving up use of his Ministerial car. The impact of these savings is shown in part in financial year 2014-15, and in full in financial year 2015-16.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Equal Pay

Dawn Butler:

[\[54954\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, if the Government will undertake a detailed analysis of (a) the pay gap between women of African, Caribbean, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds and women of other backgrounds and (b) what steps can be taken to reduce that pay gap.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has been undertaking research into the pay gap for black and minority ethnic employees, as part of a wider study of pay gaps. The EHRC expects to publish the results of this work early next year.

■ Gender Recognition

Mrs Maria Miller:

[\[55074\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, with reference to page 11 of the Government response to the First Report from the Women and Equalities Committee, Session 2015-16, on Transgender Equality, column 9301, published in July 2016, what progress the Government has made on reviewing the Gender Recognition Act 2004 to determine whether changes can be made to streamline and de-medicalise the gender recognition process.

Mrs Maria Miller:

[\[55076\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, with reference to page 8 of the Government response to the First Report from the Women and Equalities Committee, Session 2015-16, on Transgender Equality, column 9301, published in July 2016, and pursuant to the Answer of 15 September 2016 to Question 45657, what progress the Government has made on (a) publishing update reports on the documents Working for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Equality: Moving Forward and Advancing transgender equality: a plan for action, published in 2011 and (b) producing a new action plan on transgender equality.

Mrs Maria Miller:

[\[55077\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, with reference to page 30 of the Government response to the First Report from the Women and Equalities Committee, Session 2015-16, on Transgender Equality, Cm 9301, published in July 2016, to which heads of profession she wrote highlighting the need for training on transgender issues for their profession and asking them to introduce training if not already available and to monitor the effectiveness of any training provided; and what information she holds on steps taken by heads of profession in response to those letters.

Mrs Maria Miller:

[\[55078\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, with reference to page 22 of the Government response to the First Report from the Women and Equalities Committee, Session 2015-16, on Transgender Equality, Cm 9301, published in July 2016, what the outcomes have been of the Government's internal review of gender markers in official documents.

Caroline Dinenage:

In our response to the Committee in July, the Government committed to a range of significant actions designed to improve the lives and experiences of transgender people.

We agree with the Committee that issues raised are serious and complex. That is why we are engaging with stakeholders to make sure any changes we make are based on evidence and user needs.

On the action plans specifically, we are in the process of collating updates and will publish a summary in 2017.

On reforms to the Gender Recognition Act, we've been engaging with ministers on how to take this commitment forward and we have begun our stakeholder engagement programme by meeting the Gender Recognition Panel.

We will provide an update on the Government's progress in 2017.

■ Government Equalities Office: Breastfeeding

Alison Thewliss:

[\[54464\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what (a) facilities and (b) other support her Department provides for (i) visitors and (ii) staff for (A) lactating mothers and (B) the expressing of breast milk.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Government Equalities Office is based at Sanctuary Building, London which has a facility for nursing mothers.

The Government Equalities Office follows the Department for Education guidance issued to managers on the support available to new and expectant mothers.

■ Government Equalities Office: Departmental Responsibilities

Catherine West:

[[54751](#)]

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, how many projects in operation in her Department are related to the UK's exit from the EU.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Prime Minister has instructed all departments to identify potential opportunities that will arise in their areas from EU Exit. My Department, working closely with the Department for Exiting the European Union, is undertaking a variety of analytical and organisational work to understand the impacts of leaving the EU across its entire policy remit. My Department is also making sure that the implications of leaving the EU are understood and accounted for within the context of pre-existing projects. The Government is united in its ambition to deliver a successful withdrawal from the EU and a new relationship with Europe, and departments will work together to deliver this.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Child Poverty Unit

Dan Jarvis:

[[55237](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 25 November 2016 to Question 54256, what steps the Child Poverty Unit is taking to reduce poverty among children living in working households.

Damian Hinds:

This Government is committed to action that tackles the root causes of poverty and disadvantage, not just the symptoms. There is clear evidence that work is the best route out of poverty. Working age adults in non-working families are almost four times more likely than those in work to be living on a low income. And the Child Poverty Transitions Report (Jun 2015) found that 74% of poor children in workless families that moved into full employment exited poverty.

This is why we are reforming the welfare and tax system to support people into work, ensure that work always pays, and to allow people to keep more of what they earn. For the first time ever we are supporting claimants who are in low paid work to increase their earnings and progress in their careers.

■ Employers' Liability: Asbestos

Nusrat Ghani:

[[54646](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps his Department is taking to support businesses which are threatened with legal action from previous employees affected by asbestos is but are unable to trace any relevant employers' liability insurance policy.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Act 1969 requires most employers to insure against liability for injury or disease to their employees arising out of employment.

The Department for Work and Pensions does not provide financial support to businesses that face an employers' liability compulsory insurance claim. Employers are strongly advised to keep, as far as is possible, a complete record of their employers' liability insurance. Businesses that fail to hold the necessary insurance details risk having to meet the costs of such claims themselves.

■ Employment

Dan Jarvis: [\[55249\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people have moved into work from receiving out-of-work benefits in each of the last five years; and how many such people have moved into work with a salary above 60 per cent of median household income in each of those years by year.

Damian Hinds:

The Department for Work and Pensions does not hold sufficiently reliable data on claimant flows into work to answer this question. Benefit claimants are not required to report their destination to Jobcentre Plus when they stop claiming benefit. However, as we roll out Universal Credit, we expect to be able to use Real Time Information (RTI) to track claimant earnings.

Dan Jarvis: [\[55250\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people have moved into work and earn above the national minimum wage from receiving out-of-work benefits in each of the last five years.

Damian Hinds:

The Department for Work and Pensions does not hold sufficiently reliable data on claimant flows into work to answer this question. Benefit claimants are not required to report their destination to Jobcentre Plus when they stop claiming benefit. However, as we roll out Universal Credit, we expect to be able to use Real Time Information (RTI) to track claimant earnings.

■ Employment and Support Allowance

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[54543\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether he has made an assessment of the potential effect of pausing planned reductions in the employment and support allowance work-related activity group rates on the rate of employment for disabled people.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Government believes that the changes to Employment and Support Allowance should proceed as legislated for so that people have access to the best support to move closer to the labour market and, when they are ready, into work. New funding of £60m in 2017/18 rising to £100m a year in 2020/21 has been provided for additional practical employment support for new claimants who have limited capability for work from April 2017.

■ Housing Benefit: Social Rented Housing

Stephen Timms:

[\[55231\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people in (a) East Ham constituency, (b) the London Borough of Newham and (c) Greater London have been classified as under-occupying their homes in each year since 2012.

Caroline Nokes:

The figures requested are in the table below:

Households classified as under-occupying: East Ham constituency, 2013-2016

AUGUST 2013	750
August 2014	650
August 2015	600
August 2016	560

Households classified as under-occupying: London Borough of Newham, 2013-2016

AUGUST 2013	2,140
August 2014	1,850
August 2015	1,680
August 2016	1,570

Households classified as under-occupying: Greater London, 2013-2016

Thousands

AUGUST 2013	55.3
August 2014	48.2
August 2015	45.1
August 2016	41.3

Notes:

1. Constituency and Local Authority figures have been rounded to the nearest ten, and regional figures have been rounded to the nearest hundred.

2. Figures are numbers of households receiving Housing Benefit with a spare room subsidy deduction. This policy only affects working age households in the social rented sector.
3. Figures have not been provided for August 2012 as the social rented sector spare room subsidy policy did not exist until April 2013.
4. A small number of households now receive their housing support through Universal Credit. The table covers Housing Benefit only as equivalent Universal Credit data are not yet available.

■ Low Pay

Dan Jarvis: [\[55251\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps the Government is taking to enable people in low-paid professions to move into positions with a higher salary.

Damian Hinds:

Universal Credit provides us, for the first time, with the opportunity to help people who are in low-paid work to progress. This is the first time that any country has made a significant commitment to supporting people through the welfare system to seek to increase their earnings in work. We are currently at the stage of testing a range of approaches to provide evidence for the development of our future in-work policy. This involves work with individuals – including a large-scale Randomised Control Trial delivered by Jobcentre Plus – and with employers, who play a central role.

■ Means-tested Benefits: Greater London

Stephen Timms: [\[55268\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many hardship payments have been issued by his Department to people living in (a) East Ham constituency, (b) the London Borough of Newham and (c) Greater London in each year since 2012.

Damian Hinds:

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

■ Pensions: Fraud

Ian Murray: [\[55219\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment he has made of trends in the incidence of pension fraud in (a) Scotland and (b) the UK since the introduction of the pension freedoms announced in the Budget 2014.

Richard Harrington:

The government takes the threat of pension scams very seriously, and is committed to protecting people by helping them to avoid putting their money into scams and by pursuing fraudsters wherever possible.

It is for this reason that the Government established Project Bloom, a multi-department, multi-agency group of officials to help co-ordinate action to tackle scams, monitor trends and share intelligence on emerging threats. Members include the National Crime Agency, police forces, Pension Wise, regulators and key Government departments.

However, the government recognises that more needs to be done. We have heard the concerns raised that the pension freedoms may make people more vulnerable to scams involving their pension savings and that is why we have taken positive action and announced, at autumn statement, that we will consult on a package of measures aimed at tackling 3 different areas of pensions scams:

- a ban on cold calling in relation to pensions to help stop fraudsters contacting individuals;
- limiting the statutory right to transfer to some occupational pension schemes, and
- making it harder for fraudsters to open small pension schemes

The intention is that the consultation will be launched before Christmas; and next steps will be announced at Budget 2017

■ Personal Independence Payment

Margaret Ferrier:

[\[54594\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the oral contribution by the Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work of 21 November 2016, Official Report, column 604, if his Department will issue guidance to personal independence payment assessment providers on how claimant satisfaction reviews should be conducted; and if he will make a statement.

Penny Mordaunt:

It is a contractual requirement for providers to undertake claimant satisfaction reviews. Claimant satisfaction reviews are undertaken by a third party on behalf of Capita and Atos, and only after the case has been returned to the department. Reviews would normally be conducted by telephone, but in the event the customer is unable to be contacted by telephone a survey is issued via the post for completion.

■ Welfare Tax Credits: Disability

Frank Field:

[\[55270\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to paragraph 6.2 of the Autumn Statement 2016, what the reasons were for the error which resulted in families with disabled children not being in receipt of their full tax credit entitlement.

Penny Mordaunt:

To assist claimants, DWP shares information with HMRC to help identify those Child Tax Credits (CTC) claimants entitled to higher rate CTC because of the Disability Living Allowance (DLA) Child award. The clerical process to do this was not working as intended and resulted in a reduced number of clerical referrals from DWP to HMRC.

Referral volumes are now back in line with expectations and there have been no further issues reported. We remain committed to taking all reasonable steps to make the process more robust.

At the Autumn Statement the Government announced HMRC will put this right for claimants affected this year and claimants will receive a lump sum payment to reflect entitlement since 6 April 2016, and an on-going higher award.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Twenty Second Conference of the Parties: Marrakesh Climate Change Conference

Minister of State for Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Mr Nick Hurd): [\[HCWS297\]](#)

The annual Conference Of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations framework convention on climate change took place in Marrakesh, Morocco, from 7-18 November. The United Kingdom was represented by myself (Minister of State for Industry and Climate Change) who has been negotiating for the UK and promoting British business. The conference was described as an 'implementation COP' focused on starting the process of turning the first global climate change deal, known as the Paris Agreement, into a clear blueprint for action.

The UK aims for Marrakesh were to: (a) strengthen action and ambition; (b) make progress on implementing the Paris Agreement; and (c) demonstrate the UK's leadership on climate change. These objectives were achieved.

(A) **Regarding strengthening action and ambition**, there were two key outcomes:

1. The Marrakesh Action Proclamation underlined that the global commitment to tackling climate change is irreversible, calling for raised ambition and strengthened cooperation.
2. Announcements made by governments, businesses and other non-state actors further emphasised the global momentum and the action being taken. On behalf of the UK, Minister Hurd pledged support for many initiatives that will support countries in meeting their emissions reduction targets as the world aims to achieve carbon neutrality in the second half of the century.

(B) **Regarding progress on implementing the Paris Agreement**, consensus was secured on all of the areas where decisions were mandated, including the terms of reference for the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage, and the Paris Committee on Capacity Building. Further progress included:

1. The first meeting of the countries who ratified the Paris Agreement (CMA1).
2. Discussions on detail of the rulebook to support implementation of commitments and setting a deadline to finalise by 2018 with a review in 2017;
3. Agreement for an inclusive and transparent consultation on mitigation commitments ahead of the Facilitative Dialogue in 2018 to assess progress , in order to inform the next round of national pledges on mitigation;
4. Agreement that the Adaptation Fund should serve the Paris Agreement subject to decisions on governance and modalities to be taken at COP24 (in 2018); and

5. Agreement to a five year work plan on “ Loss and Damage ” which will start in 2017. This will include a review of the sources of finance for loss and damage but does not admit new or separate financial arrangements for loss and damage.

(C) Regarding demonstrating UK’s leadership and commitment, we :

1. Announced that the UK had ratified the Paris Agreement. On this occasion, the Secretary of State Greg Clark reiterated that we look ahead to continuing our leadership on climate action and ensuring that British business continues to play a key role in the new global low carbon economy. We believe it will benefit the UK while we implement our industrial strategy to deliver an economy that works for all.
2. Co-led with Australia the production and presentation of the \$100bn Roadmap on behalf of donor countries, setting out how the goal of mobilising US\$100bn of public and private climate finance by 2020 will be achieved.
3. Hosted a Green is GREAT pavilion, showcasing British strengths in managing the impact of climate change and providing a platform to show and sell British innovations.
4. Underwent our second ‘Multilateral Assessment’ setting out progress to meeting our 2020 emissions reduction targets and lessons that could be shared.

The positive outcome from Marrakesh will help to implement what was agreed in Paris more effectively. It caps a year of continued momentum on climate change, including the rapid entry into force of the Paris Agreement, and agreements on phasing down hydro-fluorocarbons under the Montreal Protocol and offsetting the growth in civil aviation emissions at the International Civil Aviation Organisation. From Government and private sector commitments to reduce emissions, it is clear that the economic and political drivers behind the global transition towards a low-carbon future – as well as the commercial opportunities that transition affords – remain

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ 56th Horserace Betting Levy Scheme

Secretary of State for Department for Culture, Media and Sport (Karen Bradley):
[\[HCWS300\]](#)

On 9th November 2016 the Chair of the Horserace Betting Levy Board (‘the HBLB’) informed me that the HBLB had been unable to approve a recommendation from the Bookmakers’ Committee as to the terms of the 56th Levy scheme. Under section 1(2) of the Horserace Betting Levy Act 1969 (‘the Act’), it therefore now falls to me to determine those terms. The Act allows me to determine a new scheme for the said period; or direct that the current scheme shall continue to have effect for that period.

In the March 2016 Budget, the Government set out a timetable for replacing the current Horserace Betting Levy by April 2017. It remains the Government’s intention to replace the current Levy scheme by this date. However until such time as the legislation has passed, the

existing statutory requirements remain. Therefore my Determination for the 56th Levy scheme will only apply should the new Levy not be in place by April.

With this in mind, and having considered the arguments put forward by both betting and racing, I have decided to direct that the current Levy scheme should continue to have effect for 2017/18. In making this Determination I have had regard to the offer made by the Bookmakers' Committee and taken into account the racing members of the Board's reasons for rejecting this offer. Any discussions or negotiations about voluntary Levy contributions in respect of offshore remote betting operators are outside the scope of my statutory role in making this Determination.

Having concluded the Determination I would like express my disappointment that the HBLB and Bookmakers' Committee were not able to agree the Levy scheme and that it has been necessary to refer this matter to Government.

DEFENCE

■ Better Combat Compensation

Secretary of State for Defence (Sir Michael Fallon):

[[HCWS299](#)]

Today I am publishing a consultation on proposals to provide better compensation for deaths or injuries sustained by servicemen or women in combat. Copies of the consultation are available in the Library of the House and on the www.gov.uk website.

The Government is proud of the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme which provides compensation to Service personnel who suffer illness or injury attributable to their service or in the case of those who have died, provides it to their families, whether or not anyone was legally at fault. Separately, the Courts may award damages where the Ministry of Defence has been found to be at fault: however, that often leads to lengthy legal cases alleging battlefield negligence.

The Government has been considering options to provide relief for Service personnel and their families who may otherwise have to pursue lengthy and stressful claims in the courts. In line with our commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant, we plan to provide better compensation by introducing an enhanced scheme so that members and veterans of the Armed Forces and their families receive compensation for injuries or death in combat equal to that which a court would be likely to award if it found negligence.

As part of this reform, we intend to clarify in primary legislation the long-standing common law principle that the Government is not liable for damages as a result of injuries or deaths sustained in combat. This will address the "judicialisation of war" whereby judges second-guess military decisions using criteria that are appropriate for civilian life, but not for the battlefield.

The Iraq Inquiry report by Sir John Chilcot underscored the often challenging circumstances which can contribute to deaths or injuries sustained on the battlefield. The Government is committed to learning the lessons and is reviewing ways in which we can better plan, equip and operate, so that deaths and injuries can be avoided, where possible, in future.

This package will provide relief for individuals and families who in the future will be awarded better compensation without having to pursue lengthy legal action. It will also ensure that the Armed Forces are able to take the rapid and high risk decisions essential to operational effectiveness without being inhibited by the risk of future legal claims.

EDUCATION

■ A level (and AS) qualifications

The Minister of State for School Standards (Nick Gibb):

[\[HCWS301\]](#)

In April this year, the government announced that GCSEs and A levels in a range of languages with smaller cohorts will continue and therefore will be reformed in line with other GCSEs and A levels. This fulfils a commitment made in 2015 to work with the exam boards to ensure the continuation of these qualifications.

The reformed GCSE content for modern foreign languages, published in 2013, is suitable for all the modern languages currently available, and the exam boards are developing specifications for these GCSEs.

At A level, we have worked with the exam boards to develop specific content for modern languages with smaller cohorts. The government is today opening a consultation on this content, which will apply to A levels (and AS) in Arabic, Bengali, Gujarati, Greek, Modern Hebrew, Japanese, Panjabi, Persian, Portuguese, Polish, Turkish and Urdu.

The content for modern languages with smaller cohorts is largely identical to the reformed A level (and AS) content which applies to French, German, Spanish, Chinese, Italian and Russian. This was developed by the independent A Level Content Advisory Board (ALCAB), appointed by the Russell Group to meet the expectations of higher education, and was published in 2015.

This content for modern languages with smaller cohorts addresses the risks associated with the assessment of smaller numbers of candidates, including the challenges of recruiting specialist examiners. The requirement to demonstrate speaking skills is not included in the proposed content, which is consistent with current AS and A level qualifications in languages with smaller cohorts – with the single exception of Urdu (in which speaking skills are currently required). To secure a suitable level of rigour which is comparable for all modern languages, the government proposes a new requirement for modern languages with smaller cohorts. The proposed content would require students to apply language skills (reading, writing and listening) in combination, by responding to spoken and written sources addressing common subject matter.

The A level (and AS) content for modern languages with smaller cohorts will apply to courses beginning in September 2018. The current specifications for these languages will remain available for courses beginning in September 2017.

I can also confirm today that A level history of art and AS and A level statistics will continue to be offered in England following the exam board AQA's decision not to offer these qualifications for new courses starting from September 2017. We believe there is value in

having a broad range of high-quality choices available to A level students and our intention has always been that there should continue to be A levels available in these two subjects. I am therefore pleased that the Pearson exam board has confirmed that it intends to develop new AS and A levels in statistics and a new A level in history of art for teaching from September 2017.

■ Early Years Education

The Secretary of State for Education (Justine Greening):

[HCWS306]

The Government has today published its response to the recent consultation on changes to the funding of the free early years entitlements for three- and four-year-olds. The Government response can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/early-years-funding-changes-to-funding-for-3-and-4-year-olds>

This includes the introduction of an early years national funding formula. This will provide a fairer funding system for nurseries, preschools and childminders.

We are delivering our Manifesto commitment to double the free hours of childcare provided for working parents of three- and four-year-olds, from 15 to 30 hours a week. Many parents want to go back to work, or work more hours, but can't afford to because of the cost of childcare. This policy will make childcare more affordable and support parents to return to work, or to work more hours, if that is what they wish to do.

We are backing this with an additional £1 billion every year by 2019-20 including £300 million per year to increase Government funding rates. We are committed to allocating this record level of investment fairly and transparently so that early years providers can deliver free childcare on a sustainable and high-quality basis.

That is why we consulted on proposals to introduce a new funding system that is fair, transparent and maximises funding to providers. Our proposals to improve the way we allocate funding have been positively received and today, I can confirm our final funding policy. Key features are:

- a new early years national funding formula from April 2017 that will increase Government funding rates in 80% of local authorities;
- a minimum funding rate of at least £4.30 per hour for every local authority;
- a requirement for local authorities to pass 95% of their funding to providers;
- additional funding, worth £55m per year, to support maintained nursery schools until the end of this Parliament (2019-20);
- a new Disability Access Fund worth £615 per child per year to support disabled three- and four-year-olds to access their early years entitlement; and
- a requirement for all local authorities to have Inclusion Funds to channel additional support to children with Special Educational Needs.

These changes will put early years providers in a stronger position to deliver the free entitlements on a sustainable basis. They will help to ensure that every child, whatever their background and individual needs, can access the high-quality early education they need to prepare for school and improve their life chances. And from September 2017, they will support the delivery of 30 hours of free childcare to nearly 400,000 eligible working parents, thus making it easier for them to get on and balance work with their family lives.

Education lies at the heart of this government's ambition to make this a country that works for everyone – and today we are reaffirming our commitment by announcing this new, fairer way of funding our early years. It will ensure the dedicated individuals caring for our children have the support they need to give every child the best start, especially when looking after those who are most in need.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Hanoi Conference on illegal wildlife trade

The Secretary of State (Andrea Leadsom):

[\[HCWS295\]](#)

The Hanoi Conference on Illegal Wildlife Trade took place on 17-18 November 2016, bringing together leaders from across the world to secure international political commitment to action on tackling the illegal wildlife trade (IWT). The Hanoi Conference was the third global conference on IWT to follow the London Conference in 2014 and Kasane Conference in 2015.

I was delighted to attend the Conference on behalf of the UK, alongside His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge. The Conference was successful, with 42 countries and the EU adopting the Hanoi Statement by consensus and 23 countries, the EU and 6 international organisations pledging new and specific actions in the Statement Annex to deliver on their commitments from London and Kasane.

The UK played a key role in supporting Vietnam as chair and host, including direct financial support and seconding staff to the conference secretariat. Our contribution and leadership were widely recognised and commended by international partners. At the Conference, I was able to announce an additional £13million in UK funding for IWT and a number of new initiatives, including expanded British Military training for African park rangers; a project with China to deliver joint training to African border forces; additional funding for Interpol to expand their work with key nations, tracking and intercepting illegal shipments of ivory, rhino horn and other illegal wildlife products; and up to £4million for the International Consortium for Combatting Wildlife Crime (ICWC).

Finally I was also pleased to announce that the UK will host a fourth high level meeting on IWT in 2018, to ensure that this urgent global issue stays at the top of the political agenda and that we continue to deliver on our manifesto commitment to lead the world in tackling IWT.

The UK was able to lead further progress in the margins of the Conference. I hosted a meeting of ASEAN Heads of Delegation, attended by the Duke of Cambridge, where I

pressed for enhanced collaboration in this critical region, particularly on enforcement. The Philippines, chair of ASEAN in 2017, agreed that IWT would feature on the agenda.

In my meetings with Vietnamese Ministers, I welcomed recent positive steps taken by Vietnam to tackle IWT, and encouraged them to intensify further demand reduction and law enforcement efforts, including in respect of specific cases recently highlighted by NGOs and the media. I made clear the UK's commitment to ongoing practical cooperation between our two countries on these issues.

That so many countries and organisations came together once more in Hanoi to agree further action on IWT is a positive signal of ongoing political attention and also a consensus on the importance and urgency of the issue. We will remain focussed on driving forward this momentum and ensuring the commitments made in Hanoi are delivered in the lead up to the next event in London 2018.

HOME OFFICE

■ Blue Card Directive

The Minister of State for Immigration (Mr Robert Goodwill): [\[HCWS303\]](#)

I am confirming the Government's decision that the UK will not opt into the European Commission's recent proposal for a revised Blue Card Directive, published on 7 June 2016.

The proposal seeks to increase the EU's attractiveness to highly skilled workers from outside the EU. It runs counter to the UK's view that decisions on who comes to the country are best framed at national level in accordance with national assessments of economic need. It would also undermine our ability to reduce net migration.

■ Report of the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation on the operation in 2015 of the Terrorism Act 2000 and Part 1 of the Terrorism Act 2006

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Amber Rudd): [\[HCWS302\]](#)

In accordance with section 36(5) of the Terrorism Act 2006, David Anderson QC, the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, has prepared a report on the operation in 2015 of the Terrorism Act 2000 and Part 1 of the Terrorism Act 2006.

I am today laying this report before the House, and copies will be available in the Vote Office. It will also be published on GOV.UK.

I am grateful to David Anderson for his report. I will carefully consider its contents and the recommendations it makes, and will respond formally in due course.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**■ Capital payment to International Financial Institution - Contingent Liability**

The Secretary of State for International Development (Priti Patel): [\[HCWS305\]](#)

In 2015, the UK agreed to be a founder contributor of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). As set out in the Summer Budget 2015, HM Treasury made an initial capital instalment of US\$122,180,000, and committed to subsequent payments of the same amount by the UK Government over the four years from 2017 to 2020. The UK's overall capital contribution will total US\$3,054,500,000, of which these five payments together will make up 20% of "paid-in" capital contribution requiring a cash transfer. The other 80%, \$2,443,600,000, is "callable capital" – the AIIB has the right to call for payment for these shares if there is a crisis affecting the bank's assets or loans. As the paid-in capital is an investment, in return for which we get an asset of a share of the Bank, the Office for Budget Responsibility has forecast this payment as a financial transaction. Financial transactions do not add to Public Sector Net Borrowing.

Payment of the second annual contribution of \$122, 180,000 is in line with the authority provided by this House under the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (Initial Capital Contribution) Order 2015. Parliamentary approval for this will be sought in a Supplementary Estimate for the Department for International Development.

Further, the payment of the second instalment of the capital contribution incurs with it a contingent liability. In line with the AIIB Articles of Agreement, the contingent liability rises in line with the amount of callable capital paid. As such, the UK will increase its current contingent liability of \$488,720,000, incurred when the initial capital instalment was paid by a further \$488,720,000 to a cumulative total contingent liability of US\$977,440,000. A Departmental Minute to this effect was laid before Parliament on 1 December 2016 to give at least 14 sitting days' notice of the intent to incur a contingent liability. The notice period will be completed on 9 January 2017.

Although the AIIB has the right to call for payment of this callable capital incurred when the initial capital instalment was paid, no such instance has occurred in any multilateral development bank in the past. If the liability were to be called, provision for any payment would be sought through the normal Supply procedure.

In joining the AIIB the UK has demonstrated its support for China's initiative to establish the AIIB to address the historic shortage of infrastructure investment in Asia. The AIIB will support economic growth in the region and drive up living standards. The UK's membership will deepen economic ties with Asia and create opportunities for British businesses.

■ UK International Development

The Secretary of State for International Development (Priti Patel): [\[HCWS296\]](#)

Our world is changing. So our approach to development needs to adapt and keep pace with it. DFID will champion an open, modern and innovative approach to development.

Today I am publishing 'Rising to the challenge of ending poverty: The Bilateral Development Review 2016' and 'Raising the standard: The Multilateral Development Review 2016'.

These reviews build on the Government's UK Aid Strategy published in 2015 and set out how UK Aid will be focused on ending poverty and tackling great global challenges like mass migration, disease and climate change. It demonstrates how investing 0.7% of national income in international development will meet Britain's moral obligation to the world's poorest and work in the UK's national interest.

The Bilateral Development Review sets out how DFID will respond to these global challenges and contribute to a more prosperous, secure and stable world. DFID will follow the money, the people and the outcomes to make our aid more effective, transparent, and accountable to the poorest people in the world and to the taxpayers who fund our programmes.

The Multilateral Development Review builds on a systematic assessment of the performance of 38 multilateral institutions funded by the UK through DFID. The review sets out how the UK, as a committed champion of the multilateral system, will work with its multilateral partners and press them hard to take radical action so they continue to raise their performance. We will back high performers while also pressing them to improve even further.

For the convenience of members I attach a copy of these papers and accompanying document to this statement. I will also place a copy in the library of each House and make further copies available in the Vote and Printed Paper Offices.

Attachments:

1. Bilateral Development Review - Technical [Bilateral Development Review - technical note 2016.pdf]
2. Bilateral Development Review 2016 [Rising to the challenge of ending poverty - the Bilateral Development Review 2016.pdf]
3. Multilateral Development Review 2016 [Raising the Standard - the Multilateral Development Review 2016.pdf]

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

■ Government Response to the Strathclyde Review

Leader of the House of Commons (Mr David Lidington):

[\[HCWS304\]](#)

On 27 October 2015 the Government commissioned Lord Strathclyde to lead a review into secondary legislation and the primacy of the House of Commons. Lord Strathclyde published his report on 17 December 2015. The Government has today published its response to the Review and the four related parliamentary Select Committee reports, a copy of which is attached. As I informed the House at Business Questions on the 17 November 2016 (Official Report, column 395 to 396), although the Government found Lord Strathclyde's analysis compelling and we are determined that the principle of the supremacy of the elected House should be upheld, we have no plans to introduce new primary legislation at this time.

Attachments:

1. Government Response to the Strathclyde Review [Strathclyde response.pdf]

PRIME MINISTER

■ Machinery of Government Change: GREAT Britain Campaign

Prime Minister (Mrs Theresa May):

[\[HCWS298\]](#)

Policy responsibility for the GREAT Britain campaign will transfer from the Cabinet Office to the Department for International Trade from 1 December 2016.