

## Daily Report

Tuesday, 13 December 2016

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 13 December 2016 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:45 P.M., 13 December 2016). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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**Notes:**

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

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

## ANSWERS

### ATTORNEY GENERAL

#### ■ Attorney General: Official Cars

**Mr Mark Hendrick:**

[56816]

To ask the Attorney General, with reference to the charges for Government Car Services supplied ministerial cars between 2012 and 2015, published on 17 December 2017, what the (a) purpose, (b) distance travelled and (c) cost was of each journey booked by his Office.

**Robert Buckland:**

The Government Car Service stopped providing individual cars in April 2012. Therefore, there is no individual journey data available from 1 April 2012. The Department for Transport, as part of their transparency agenda, publishes information on the costs incurred by each government department through the use of vehicles provided by the Government Car Services.

Information on recent years can be found via the Gov.UK website below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/ministerial-cars>

### BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

#### ■ Business: North of England

**Graham Evans:**

[907839]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he has taken to support business growth in the north of England.

**Joseph Johnson:**

Business growth in the North of England is a priority for this Government. There are now over 167,000 more businesses in the North than in 2010, an increase of over 15%.

As part of our Northern Powerhouse Strategy we are supporting investment funds totalling over £500m for SMEs, four further science and innovation audits, and 11 Growth Hubs in the North.

#### ■ Carbon Sequestration

**Dr Paul Monaghan:**

[56202]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the Government's future plans are for carbon capture and storage.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government is considering all options for carbon capture and storage in the UK and we intend to set out our approach in due course.

**Mrs Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

[\[56805\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the average carbon capture capabilities of a single tree.

**Mr Nick Hurd:**

The UK's Greenhouse Gas Inventory annually calculates the storage of carbon in UK forestland. The data used are a function of species, age and the quality of the growing location. Based on these data the Forestry Commission's Woodland Carbon Code provides a range for the rate of carbon capture over typical woodland rotations of between 0.8 and 6 tonnes carbon per hectare per year. A typical value for British woodland is about 2 tonnes carbon per hectare per year. These results equate to a range of about 0.3 to 10 kilograms of carbon per year for a single tree over its life cycle, with a typical value of about 2 kilograms carbon per tree per year.

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

**Tim Farron:**

[\[56225\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much his Department spent on travel that was not standard class in each of the last five years.

**Margot James:**

Over the last 5 years the Department, and its predecessors, spent the following amounts on non-standard class travel:

	EX-DECC		EX-BIS*		TOTAL	
Year	First Class Rail	Business/First Class Air	First Class Rail	Business/First Class Air	First Class Rail	Business/First Class Air
2011/12	£3,382	£223,519	£52,803	£1,401,638	£56,185	£1,625,157
2012/13	£9,309	£167,187	£21,955	£1,527,987	£31,264	£1,695,174
2013/14	£6,837	£155,825	£21,672	£1,801,748	£28,509	£1,957,573
2014/15	£3,319	£211,120	£17,992	£1,100,481	£21,311	£1,311,601
2015/16	£11,906	£60,025	£14,901	£944,133	£26,807	£1,004,158
Total	£34,753	£817,676	£129,323	£6,775,987	£164,076	£7,593,663

\*Figures include spend by UK Trade & Investment (which is now part of the Department for International Trade) and policy directorates which are now part of the Department for Education.

## ■ Drugs: Competition

**Justin Madders:**

[[56359](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many pharmaceutical companies have been referred to the Competition and Markets Authority in each of the last five years for which figures are available.

**Margot James:**

In the last five years the Competition and Markets Authority and its predecessor bodies have launched a total of 20 investigations into the pharmaceutical sector involving 41 pharmaceutical companies. There have been: 11 merger cases, 8 Competition Act 1998 cases and 1 review of previous undertakings that were imposed on a firm.

## ■ Employment Agencies: Advertising

**Karl Turner:**

[[56648](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if his Department will take steps to prevent recruitment firms advertising for jobs exclusively abroad before they have advertised locally.

**Margot James:**

The Government amended the Conduct of Employment Agencies and Employment Businesses Regulations 2003 in January 2015 and further in May 2016, to require employment agencies and employment businesses to advertise both specific and generic roles in English, in Great Britain, at the same time or up to 28 days before advertising in another European Economic Area (EEA) Member State.

For skilled workers from outside the EEA, the Immigration Rules already incorporate a resident labour market test (with exemptions for some roles). This requires the recruiter to place two adverts in the UK for 28 days to ensure that there are no suitable workers already in the UK, before a visa can be obtained for the worker.

## ■ EU Framework Programme

**Paul Blomfield:**

[[56174](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 1 December 2016 to Question 54579, what plans he has to facilitate participation in the EU's Framework Programme 9 for UK-based researchers as part of his Department's negotiations on the UK leaving the EU.

**Joseph Johnson:**

Science and research are at the heart of this Government's long term economic plan and our ongoing commitment to our science and research base remains steadfast as we secure the best possible outcome for UK as we exit the EU. Participation of UK-based researchers in the EU's Framework Programme 9 after we leave the EU will be a matter for the negotiations that will follow the triggering of Article 50.

## ■ Gas Fired Power Stations

**Derek Twigg:** [\[56262\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government plans to take to bring forward new gas generation in the event that no new combined cycle gas turbine capacity clears the capacity market auction in December 2016.

**Jesse Norman:**

*[Holding answer 12 December 2016]:* In the recent capacity market auction, around 1.5GW of new gas plant cleared, including a new combined cycle gas turbine, a new open cycle gas turbine, and a variety of new smaller scale, flexible gas resources.

**Derek Twigg:** [\[56264\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate the Government has made of the proportion that gas-fired generation will form of the new proposed 14GW of electricity interconnection to be developed by 2023.

**Jesse Norman:**

*[Holding answer 12 December 2016]:* The Government has not made an estimate of the proportion of electricity imports on interconnectors that will have been generated by gas-fired generation.

Electricity interconnection connects Great Britain's energy market to the markets of neighbouring countries, enabling electricity to be traded. It is not possible to trace the precise source of the electricity transported through interconnectors; the electricity that we import will have been produced by the mix of generation technologies connected to the exporting country's transmission network. The precise generation mix that provides the imported electricity at any point in time will depend on a complex set of factors and, in particular, will vary depending on the characteristics of the exporting market.

## ■ Offshore Industry: North Sea

**Dr Paul Monaghan:** [\[56184\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of future trends in the level of investment in the North Sea oil and gas sector.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Office for Budget Responsibility recently published the November 2016 Economic and Fiscal Outlook which indicates a downward trend in planned capital expenditure in the oil and gas sector due to the low global oil price. Capital expenditure is expected to decrease from £10.1 billion in 2016 to £3.7 billion in 2021.

In the recent Autumn Statement my right hon. Friend the Chancellor recommitted to *Driving Investment*, Government's long-term plan to ensure the oil and gas fiscal regime supports maximising economic recovery. To support this, over the past two years Government introduced measures worth £2.3bn to ensure the UK has one of the most competitive tax regimes for oil and gas in the world, safeguarding jobs and investment.



The Oil and Gas Authority has been established with a remit to maximise economic recovery of UK oil and gas reserves. The Oil and Gas Authority continues to engage with the global investment community to promote the UK Continental Shelf and attract new sources of capital. It has also been working with industry to maximise economic recovery of the UK Continental Shelf by encouraging collaboration, driving down costs and ensuring effective asset stewardship.

## ■ Pubs Code Adjudicator

**Mr Iain Wright:** [\[56203\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what consultations he had with the Pubs Code Adjudicator prior to the publication of the Adjudicator's conflict of interest policy.

**Margot James:**

In line with the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015, the Pubs Code Adjudicator consulted my Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State before making procedural arrangements in dealing with conflict of interest. The Pubs Code Adjudicator sent his conflict of interest policy to my Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State on 13 July, prior to its publication on 21 July.

**Mr Iain Wright:** [\[56204\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many cases have been submitted to the Pubs Code Adjudicator for arbitration; and in how many of those cases (a) objections have been made by one of the parties relating to the conduct of the case by the Adjudicator, on the grounds of a conflict of interest and (b) an alternative arbitrator has been appointed.

**Margot James:**

79 referrals for arbitration have been submitted to the Pubs Code Adjudicator in the first four months of its operation from 21 July to 21 November 2016. 77 of these were valid or accepted for arbitration, while two were out of scope. Of those 77 referrals, an objection to the conduct of the case by the Adjudicator on the grounds of a conflict of interest has been made in 8 cases. No alternative arbitrators have been appointed by the Pubs Code Adjudicator.

## ■ Regional Planning and Development: North of England

**Lucy Powell:** [\[907832\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to support businesses as part of the Northern Powerhouse.

**Mr Nick Hurd:**

Supporting businesses in the Northern Powerhouse is a priority for this Government.

At the Autumn Statement, we launched the Northern Powerhouse strategy, setting out our strategic vision for an even stronger, more productive northern economy. Across the

North we are supporting investment funds totalling over £500m for SMEs, investing £3.4billion in Growth Deal projects, and have created seventeen Enterprise Zones.

■ **Shell: North Sea**

**Ian Murray:** [56829]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 6 December 2016 to Question 55870, if he will assess the merits of retaining the ownership of North Sea assets to be sold by Shell in the UK.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government does not have any plans to make an assessment of the kind described.

■ **Temporary Employment**

**Vicky Foxcroft:** [907835]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent representations he has received on the status and rights of agency workers.

**Margot James:**

I receive regular correspondence from individuals and organisations concerning the rights of workers, including agency workers. The status and rights of agency workers are being examined further by Matthew Taylor in his review of modern working practices. In considering their position he will be engaging with workers, employers, trade unions and representative bodies over the coming months.

## CABINET OFFICE

■ **Cabinet Office: Equal Pay**

**Jake Berry:** [56596]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what plans his Department has to publish information on the gender pay gap among its employees.

**Jake Berry:** [56610]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what plans 10 Downing Street has to publish information on the gender pay gap among its employees.

**Ben Gummer:**

*[Holding answer 12 December 2016]:* The latest gender pay gap data (published in October earlier this year) can be found on the Office for National Statistics website:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/publicsectorpersonnel/bulletins/civilservicestatistics/2016>

In October 2015, the then Prime Minister announced that new gender pay gap reporting measures being introduced across the private and voluntary sector from April 2017 would be extended to also apply across the public sector. We are actively working

to ensure the gender pay gap data we report in future fully mirrors these new requirements.

The Civil Service has a comprehensive plan to become the most inclusive employer in the UK. This is called the Talent Action Plan and was refreshed in March 2016. The plan commits the Civil Service to a number of actions with the aim of removing barriers faced by underrepresented groups, including women, from succeeding. The plan sets out the ambition under key themes which includes recruitment and selection, talent and progression, inclusive culture and social mobility.

Key actions include ensuring single gender panels in recruitment and shortlists are now by exception only (as committed in the first publication of the Talent Action Plan) and committing the Civil Service to reviewing the way in which talent is defined and identified to ensure more inclusive ways to identify potential are developed.

#### ■ Civil Servants: Location

**Andrew Gwynne:**

[56338]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether his Department plans to relocate civil servants outside of central London as part of the 2018 move to 10 South Colonnade.

**Ben Gummer:**

In central London, of 181 offices in 2010, only 54 remain. Increased mobility and flexibility will further reduce demand for office space in central London as fewer staff need to be in offices full-time. Rationalisation will continue, enabling more multi-departmental use of HQ buildings and for civil servants to move to Canary Wharf and Croydon where property costs are lower.

We plan to move to around 20 efficient, fit-for-purpose buildings in central London by 2025, supported by smarter working.

Any proposed relocation is done based on the operational needs of individual departments, and each individual department is responsible for determining workforce numbers remaining in central London.

**Andrew Gwynne:**

[56545]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate he has made of (a) the cost, (b) expected savings and (c) changes to overall civil service staff numbers of plans to move staff from locations in Whitehall to 10 South Colonnade.

**Ben Gummer:**

Relocating to the East London Hub will enable us to reduce the number of leases required on central London property, delivering anticipated net savings of over £20million per annum.

It is vitally important that we make a country that works for everyone and it is right that the government supports growth strategies across the country. This hub is just one step towards achieving this vision. We are supporting Departments in moving to smarter working, creating multi-Department Hubs outside central London and across the UK.

Any proposed relocation is done based on the operational needs of individual departments and each individual Department is responsible for determining its workforce needs.

**Andrew Gwynne:** [\[56649\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to paragraph 6.7 of Budget 2016, what plans additional to the move of 5,700 staff from Whitehall to 10 South Colonnade, have been made to reduce significantly the number of civil servants working in Central London.

**Ben Gummer:**

In central London, of 181 offices in 2010, only 54 remain. Increased mobility and flexibility will further reduce demand for office space in central London as fewer staff need to be in offices full-time. Rationalisation will continue, enabling more multi-departmental use of HQ buildings and for civil servants to move to Canary Wharf and Croydon where property costs are lower.

We plan to move to around 20 efficient, fit-for-purpose buildings in central London by 2025, supported by smarter working.

Any proposed relocation is done based on the operational needs of individual departments, and each individual department is responsible for determining workforce numbers remaining in central London.

**Andrew Gwynne:** [\[56650\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to paragraph 6.7 of Budget 2016, what substantial savings for the taxpayer will result from moving civil servants from central London to 10 South Colonnade.

**Ben Gummer:**

10 South Colonnade brings staff from departments together in a single modern and efficient building in an area with lower rents to facilitate a collaborative Civil Service.

Relocating to the East London Hub will enable us to reduce the number of leases required on central London property, delivering anticipated net savings of over £20million per annum.

## TREASURY

### ■ Companies: Taxation

**John Mann:** [\[56757\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what costs (a) have and (b) will accrue to the public purse as a result of the 2012 Franked Investment income judgment.

**Jane Ellison:**

It is not possible at this stage to give a reliable estimate of the costs to the Exchequer of the eventual outcome of the Franked Investment Income Group Litigation Order. This litigation is ongoing and raises several fundamental legal issues.

The Trust Accounts of HM Revenue and Customs published annually reflect provisions and contingent amounts in relation to this and other items of important on-going litigation. This is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hmrc-annual-report-and-accounts-2015-to-2016>.

## ■ Customs: EU Law

**Ian C. Lucas:** [\[56725\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many additional staff have been allocated to assist with the implementation of the new EU Customs Code which was introduced on 1 May 2016.

**Jane Ellison:**

The transition period for full implementation of the Union Customs Code runs to the end of 2019. HM Revenue and Customs is carrying out this work without the need for additional resources as part of its business as usual activities.

**Ian C. Lucas:** [\[56733\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many applications made pursuant to the implementation of the new EU Customs Code have been processed.

**Jane Ellison:**

The Union Customs Code (UCC) provides for a transition arrangement for re-authorising the customs facilitations for traders through to 2019. To date HM Revenue and Customs has processed 291 UCC Authorised Economic Operator applications which is the major trade facilitation measure within the UCC.

## ■ Income Tax

**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[56250\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what proportion of income tax is estimated to come from the top one per cent of earners in the UK in 2020.

**Jane Ellison:**

The latest statistics published by HM Revenue and Customs project that the top one per cent of income taxpayers will pay 26.9% of all income tax receipts this year, higher than in any year prior to 2010-11. The Government will continue to keep the taxation of high earners under review to ensure it is fair, incentivises hard work and contributes towards the long-term sustainability of the tax system.

The percentage share of income tax liabilities in 2020-21 (27.0%) is estimated from the published information for the 2013-14 Survey of Personal Incomes. This data has been projected using the economic assumptions consistent with the Office for Budget Responsibility's November 2016 Economic and fiscal outlook.

**■ Overseas Aid**

**Paula Sherriff:** [\[56726\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether it is his policy that 0.7 per cent of gross national income is the maximum amount to be allocated to overseas development assistance.

**Mr David Gauke:**

In line with the International Development (Official Development Assistance Target) Act 2015, HM Treasury allocates sufficient Official Development Assistance (ODA) funding to maintain an ODA: Gross National Income (GNI) ratio of 0.7% - the only country in the G7 and G20 to meet the UN commitment. This commitment takes account of wider public spending considerations.

The amount spent on ODA will continue to rise in each calendar year, reflecting the Office for Budget Responsibility's latest economic growth forecasts.

**■ Shell: North Sea**

**Nic Dakin:** [\[56830\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential effect of Shell's sale of its North Sea field assets on the sustainability of UK jobs in that area.

**Mr David Gauke:**

The government does not intend to provide commentary on specific commercial decisions in the North Sea.

The government is committed to making the most of the UK's oil and gas resources. In support of this, the government has announced substantial fiscal reform in the last few years, including significant tax cuts. This will ensure oil and gas companies are well-placed to invest in this vital industry, extend the life of existing assets and safeguard jobs.

**■ Terrorism: EU Action**

**Martin Docherty-Hughes:** [\[56730\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what preparations his Department is making for the coordination of efforts to tackle the financing of terrorism with EU member states in line with the aspirations of the G7 Financial Taskforce after the UK leaves the EU.

**Simon Kirby:**

The UK continues to play a full part in the international work on defeating the terrorist financing, including through the EU, the G7, the Financial Action Task Force and the Counter-ISIL Finance Group. The UK also has a strong reputation for tackling terrorist financing domestically. Counter-terrorist financing is a key part of the UK's CONTEST strategy and earlier this year the UK published an Action Plan for anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist finance.

As we leave the EU, we will continue to build the strongest possible relationship on security with our European partners, as well as our close friends in North America, the Commonwealth, and other important partners around the world. Our voice will always be prominent on the world stage, and we will continue to make it heard on issues such as this through our permanent seat at the UN Security Council and our membership of NATO, of the G7, the G20 and the Commonwealth.

## COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### ■ Communities and Local Government: Personnel Management

**Louise Haigh:** [\[56110\]](#)

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

**Mr Marcus Jones:**

We do not collect this information.

### ■ Council Tax

**Frank Field:** [\[56835\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, when he plans to publish the outcomes of his Department's consultation on Council Tax collection which closed in November 2015.

**Mr Marcus Jones:**

The Department will publish a summary of the responses to the consultation on the "Improving the Efficiency of Council Tax Collection", together with its own response, as soon as possible.

### ■ Green Belt: Sutton Coldfield

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:** [\[56197\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what the exceptional circumstances were in relation to his decision to permit building on greenbelt land in Sutton Coldfield.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:** [\[56198\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of the difference in price between houses built on (a) greenbelt and (b) non-greenbelt land.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:** [\[56199\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what steps he took to prioritise the development of brownfield sites in Birmingham prior to his decision to permit building on greenbelt land in Sutton Coldfield.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:** [\[56200\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what alternative options he considered prior to his decision to permit building on greenbelt land in Sutton Coldfield.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:** [\[56201\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what steps were taken to identify sites of brownfield land under 600 square metres in size suitable for housing development in Birmingham prior to his decision to permit building on greenbelt land in Sutton Coldfield.

**Gavin Barwell:**

The Secretary of State appointed an independent inspector to carry out the examination of the Birmingham Development Plan 2031 as required by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Examination hearings were heard between 21 October and 27 November 2014 at which you and members of the local community expressed your views. These were, of course, considered by the Inspector as part of his examination of this case.

The Inspector set out in his report that the vast majority of sites proposed in the Plan are on brownfield land and there is a density policy that 'seeks to maximise the yield from each development site'.

With regard to exceptional circumstances for alterations to the Green Belt, our position is set out in the decision letter issued to Birmingham City Council on 24 November 2016. The Inspector's concluded that even when taking consideration of the approach taken by the Council, the scale of potentially unmet need in the city is "exceptional" and that a "combination of factors means that exceptional circumstances exist to justify alterations to the Green Belt" and following consideration of the issues we found no reason to disagree.

Regarding the difference in price between houses built on green belt and non-Green Belt land, the Inspector was satisfied that the sites and growth areas within the Plan were justified and deliverable.

The housing capacity set out in the Plan includes a windfall allowance, an element of which includes capacity for smaller sites below 600 square metres.

In the consideration of reasonable alternatives to the strategic Green Belt release at Sutton Coldfield and with regard the matters above, the Inspector concluded that the evidence base is sufficient and provides adequate explanations for the Council's decisions.

In reaching our decision to remove the holding direction we are satisfied that Birmingham City Council should be able to take further steps in connection with the adoption of the Plan and we saw no grounds to differ from the conclusions the Inspector reached. We are satisfied that Birmingham City Council has taken a robust approach that is consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework.



## ■ Help to Buy Scheme: Young People

**Stephen Timms:**

[56836]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how many young people have received assistance from the Government's Help to Buy scheme in (a) the UK, (b) Greater London, (c) the London Borough of Newham and (d) East Ham constituency.

**Gavin Barwell:**

Since the launch of the Help to Buy: Equity Loan, Help to Buy: Mortgage Guarantee and Help to Buy: NewBuy schemes, the total number of homes sold under all three schemes total 183,795 in the UK, of which 10,023 are in Greater London, 317 in the London borough of Newham, and 132 in East Ham constituency.

Information on age of purchaser is not included in the statistics.

## ■ Homelessness

**Steve Rotheram:**

[56136]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what the levels of homelessness were in (a) Liverpool, Walton constituency, (b) Merseyside and (c) England in each year from 2010 to 2016.

**Mr Marcus Jones:**

Homelessness acceptances remain less than half the 2003-4 peak, but one person without a home is still one too many. That is why we have protected £315 million for local authority homelessness prevention funding, and secured £149 million central government funding in this Parliament.

We have a strong homelessness safety net, but we want to go further by putting prevention at the heart of our approach to tackling homelessness. That is why we are supporting Bob Blackman MP's Private Members' Bill. The Homelessness Reduction Bill will significantly reform England's homelessness legislation, ensuring that more people get the help they need earlier to prevent them from becoming homeless in the first place.

Homelessness statistics are recorded at a local authority level. Statistics for each of the last five years on statutory homelessness acceptances, homelessness prevention and relief and rough sleeping by each local authority in England are available at:

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

**CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT****■ Channel Four Television: Public Appointments**

**Tom Watson:** [\[56858\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, whether her Department proposed candidates to Ofcom for vacant Channel 4 non-executive director posts in 2016.

**Matt Hancock:**

Non-executive members of the Channel 4 Corporation board are appointed by Ofcom with the approval of the Secretary of State. Ofcom advertised for four vacancies for candidates with specific sector skills and experience. The Secretary of State approved the four candidates on the basis that they met the skills and experience set out the advertised job descriptions.

The OCPA (Office for the Commissioner for Public Appointments) code, which is a measure of good practice in public appointments, is very clear that it is appropriate for Ministers to suggest potential candidates to be invited to apply for public appointments.

**Tom Watson:** [\[56859\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, for what reason she rejected the appointment of Althea Efunshile as a non-executive director of Channel 4.

**Matt Hancock:**

Non-executive members of the Channel 4 Corporation board are appointed by Ofcom with the approval of the Secretary of State. Ofcom advertised for four vacancies for candidates with specific sector skills and experience. The Secretary of State approved the four candidates on the basis that they met the skills and experience set out the advertised job descriptions.

**Tom Watson:** [\[56860\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what account she took of the diversity of public appointments in her decision relating to the approval of Ofcom's candidates for vacant Channel 4 non-executive director posts.

**Matt Hancock:**

DCMS is committed to ensuring diversity in all public appointments. In the first two quarters of 2016/17, 50% of new DCMS appointments went to women and 18% to BAME candidates

Regarding the recent Channel 4 board posts, the Secretary of State approved the four candidates on the basis that they met the skills and experience set out the advertised job descriptions.

**Tom Watson:** [\[56861\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, how many candidates for vacant Channel 4 non-executive director posts her Department has discussed the appointment process for those roles with on what dates in 2016.

**Tom Watson:**

[\[56862\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, how many candidates for vacant Channel 4 non-executive director posts were interviewed by Ministers of her Department on what dates in 2016.

**Matt Hancock:**

The Secretary of State can ask a Minister to meet with candidates deemed appointable at interview before making a final decision, or indeed meet them herself. There were no meetings or conversations between ministers and any candidates in relation to the Channel 4 board appointments.

■ **Department for Culture, Media and Sport: Information Commissioner**

**Mr Steve Reed:**

[\[56720\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, how many meetings she has held with the UK Information Commissioner since her appointment.

**Matt Hancock:**

The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport has had one meeting with the Information Commissioner since her appointment. The Information Commissioner has also met with other DCMS Ministers to discuss a range of relevant policy issues.

■ **Department for Culture, Media and Sport: Personnel Management**

**Louise Haigh:**

[\[56111\]](#)

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

**Matt Hancock:**

The DCMS HR team is responsible for all HR and payroll related activities. Records of prior HR experience in human resources, for people employed in human resources roles in DCMS, are not held centrally. The information requested could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

The HR team in DCMS have the CIPD qualification.

■ **ICT: Education**

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[56828\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Education on including the subject of cyber resilience in the teaching of ICT in schools.

**Matt Hancock:**

Cyber security is a core part of the Computing Science GCSE curriculum, ensuring students are taught about cyber resilience in secondary school. Work is also underway to ensure cyber security is taught more widely in schools to equip children with the required skills to stay safe online.

Further, under the government's National Cyber Security Programme, DCMS and DfE are working closely to develop an extracurricular national programme to help develop cyber security skills among talented children aged 14-18 from across the social spectrum, and help them pursue a career in cyber security.

## ■ Sports: Equality

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[56803\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 2 December 2016 to Question 55347, on sports: equality, if she will promote the application of similar measures more generally throughout sport to address diversity at the top.

**Tracey Crouch:**

The government strategy for sport and physical activity 'Sporting Future: A New Strategy for An Active Nation' highlights the importance of diversity in senior leadership. On 31 October this year Sport England and UK Sport published a new Code for Sports Governance, fulfilling an action set out in Sporting Future. The code requires each funded organisation to adopt a target of a minimum of 30% of each gender on its board, demonstrate a strong commitment to achieving greater diversity on its board, identify actions to support diversity targets and publish information on fostering diversity including annual updates on progress. The governance code will be mandatory for all sports bodies seeking public funding in the next funding period.

Sport England and UK Sport are also working with funded National Governing Bodies and partners to ensure good practice is adhered to when constructing job descriptions and writing adverts, and are working with expert organisations such as Sporting Equals and Women in Sport to ensure a more diverse range of people are aware of vacancies within the sector as they arise.

## ■ Voluntary Work: Young People

**Lyn Brown:**

[\[56351\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she is taking to encourage people from C2DE families to participate in programmes funded by the Youth Social Action Fund.

**Mr Rob Wilson:**

In 2015/16 the Office for Civil Society invested £1 million to support the development of a national and local fund to specifically target young people from C2DE socio-economic group and those living in rural areas. The National Youth Social Action Fund will develop social action opportunities for over 20,000 young people.

In September 2016 the Prime Minister announced £40 million joint investment between government and the Big Lottery Fund to support Step Up To Serve's #iwill campaign. The #iwill Fund will reach those that have not yet participated in social action including those from C2DE families.

## ■ World War I: Anniversaries

**Mr Mark Hendrick:**

[56289]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what commemorations her Department (a) has held and (b) plans to hold to mark the centenary of First World War and the participation of Muslim soldiers from the Indian subcontinent who fought alongside British and French troops on the Western Front.

**Tracey Crouch:**

Our First World War Centenary programme reflects the contribution of all combatant nations. The first events on 4th August 2014 had a clear Commonwealth focus and we continue to invite representatives from participant nations to all our events such as those held this year, on 1 July, to mark the centenary of the Battle of the Somme. This will continue next year when we commemorate the centenary of Passchendaele – The Third Battle of Ypres.

In addition we gave considerable support to events held on 10 March 2015 at the National Memorial Arboretum and Imperial War Museum Manchester to mark the centenary of the Indian Army's involvement at the Battle of Neuve Chapelle. This brought together British Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs to honour their contribution.

Also in March 2015, 45 Victoria Cross commemorative paving stones were laid in the National Memorial Arboretum to commemorate individuals born overseas, several of the men served in the British Indian Army.

Together with partners Government has also funded the restoration of the Memorial Garden at Horsell Common in Woking. This provides a focal point to bring the Muslim and wider community together to commemorate the First World War.

## DEFENCE

### ■ Maritime Patrol Aircraft

**Brendan O'Hara:**

[56098]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which of the UK's international allies have procured P-8 Poseidon aircraft; and what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the number of the UK's allies which have procured such aircraft on the way in which the UK operates its maritime patrol aircraft.

**Brendan O'Hara:**

[56099]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what discussions he has had with the UK's allies on the interoperability potential between the UK's new maritime patrol aircraft and international fleets.

**Harriett Baldwin:**

The P-8 Poseidon has been acquired by the USA, India and Australia. Norway also plans to buy the aircraft.

The number of Allies operating (or potentially operating) the P-8A in the future offers the opportunity for refined interoperability in both exercise and operational scenarios.

The Ministry of Defence and the RAF conduct regular discussions with key allies, including the USA, on interoperability. For the P-8A Poseidon programme this includes the Seedcorn Initiative which has enabled the RAF to sustain the skills required to operate fixed-wing Maritime Patrol Aircraft. We are also a key contributor to International Maritime exercises, including the Joint Warrior series of exercises which are hosted by the United Kingdom.

#### ■ Terrorism: Northern Ireland

**Tim Farron:** [\[56837\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many letters his Department has sent in the last two years asking soldiers to come forward with any information that could help the Police Service of Northern Ireland in its historical investigations.

**Mike Penning:**

Over the last two years, the Department has sent eight letters to veterans asking them to supply any information in respect of historic investigations by the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

#### ■ Tornado Aircraft

**Douglas Chapman:** [\[56520\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the planned out-of-service date is for the Tornado fast jet fleet.

**Harriett Baldwin:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the then Minister of State for Defence Procurement (Mr Dunne) on 20 October 2015 to Question 11346.

**Attachments:**

1. 11346 - WQnA extract on Tornado Aircraft  
[20151020\_11346\_Tornado\_Aircraft.docx]

#### ■ War Widows: Compensation

**Owen Smith:** [\[56722\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent meetings he has held as part of his Department's review into the Government's policy on compensation for war widows who re-married between 1973 and 2005.

**Mark Lancaster:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 12 December 2016 to Questions 56546, 56547 and 56548.

**Attachments:**

1. 56546 - WQnA extract on War Widows Compensation  
[20161212\_56546\_War\_Widows\_Compensation.docx]

**EDUCATION**■ **Children: Day Care**

Diana Johnson:

[\[56163\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to Ofqual's Vocational Qualifications Dataset published in October 2016, how many level 3 childcare certificates were awarded in each year from 2012 to 2016 by region and constituent part of the UK.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

This is a matter for Ofqual, the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation. I have therefore asked its Chief Regulator, Sally Collier, to write directly to the Honourable Member. A copy of her reply will be placed in the House of Commons Library.

■ **Children: Disability**

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[56140\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many three and four year old children in England have a disability; and how many of those children are benefiting from free childcare.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

The requested information is not held centrally by the Department.

■ **Department for Education: Buildings**

Angela Rayner:

[\[56731\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she plans any office closures for her Department or its departmental agencies.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

The Skills Funding Agency, which became a Department for Education agency following the announcements in July of changes to Ministerial responsibilities, has an existing strategy to shrink its estate. Since 2010, the Skills Funding Agency has reduced its accommodation footprint and it has announced the closure of three further offices - Birmingham, Reading and Plymouth - by 31 March 2017.

We have no other plans to close any offices in the Department for Education estate or those of our agencies. We will continue to keep our estate under review to ensure our business is operating efficiently and effectively.

■ **Department for Education: Departmental Responsibilities**

Angela Rayner:

[\[56762\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the potential implications for her policies on those units and agencies that were formally the responsibility of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills of the recommendations in the McKinsey & Company BIS 2020 report.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

The McKinsey and company BIS 2020 report was produced for BIS: a department which no longer exists following the announcements in July of changes to Ministerial responsibilities. The Department for Education has not engaged with this report or its recommendations.

■ **Department for Education: Staff****Angela Rayner:**[\[56732\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many civil servants are based at each office location in which her Department employs staff.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

The table below shows the headcount number of directly paid Civil Servants in the department by location as at 30 November 2016.

These numbers do not yet include the workforce who will be transferring from the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy to the DfE payroll.

SITE	HEADCOUNT
Birkenhead	1
Bristol	54
Cambridge	18
Coventry	384
Croydon	16
Darlington	445
Guildford	1
Hemel Hempstead	11
Histon	1
Leeds	1
London	1,861
Manchester	392
Nottingham	181
Sheffield	538
TOTAL	3,904



## ■ Free School Meals

Frank Field:

[\[56826\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to ensure that housing benefit data is used by local authorities in England to identify and automatically register all children eligible for free school meals.

**Edward Timpson:**

We want to make it as simple as possible for schools and local authorities to determine eligibility for free school meals (FSM).

We understand that some local authorities have found this approach can be an effective tactic. However, it does not provide a complete or sustainable solution to automatic registration for FSM. We do not consider further legislation to be necessary for this particular approach.

To support FSM registration, the department provides an online eligibility checking facility; and a model registration form for schools to use within their enrolment process.

The department is exploring what opportunities exist in the longer term to make FSM registration processes more efficient.

## ■ Overseas Students

Gordon Marsden:

[\[56770\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many international students have been enrolled on (a) STEM and (b) Vocational Education and Training courses in each year since 2012; and how many such students took part in training or work placements as part of their course.

**Joseph Johnson:**

The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) collects and publishes statistics on enrolments at UK higher education institutions (HEIs). The numbers of international (non-EU) first year enrolments to higher education courses in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects since the academic year 2012/13 have been provided in the table.

Equivalent information is not available for vocational education and training.

**Non-EU <sup>1</sup> domiciled first year enrolments to STEM <sup>2</sup> subjects**

**UK Higher Education Institutions**

**Academic Years 2012/13 to 2014/15**

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
STEM subjects ...of which sandwich <sup>3</sup>	52,905 1,775	56,340 2,180	57,165 2,445
Total all subjects ...of which sandwich <sup>3</sup>	171,910 4,080	179,390 4,870	174,305 5,540

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Student Record

Notes:

\* Figures are given in terms of Full-Person Equivalents. Where a student is studying more than one subject, they are apportioned between the subjects that make up their course.

\* Figures are rounded to the nearest 5.

<sup>1</sup> Country of domicile is based on the student's permanent home address prior to entry to the course.

<sup>2</sup> STEM subjects are defined by HESA as subject groups A to K under the JACS3 classification, more information is available here:

<https://www.hesa.ac.uk/support/documentation/jacs/jacs3-detailed>

<sup>3</sup> Sandwich includes students enrolled on a sandwich course (thick or thin). During that time students are normally expected to undertake periods of study, tuition or work experience which amount to an average of at least 21 hours per week for a minimum of 24 weeks study/placement.

## ■ Pre-school Education

**Diana Johnson:**

[56164]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps the Government is taking to improve regional inequalities in early years provision; and if she will make it her policy to include measures to improve such inequalities in the Northern Powerhouse schools strategy.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

Every child deserves the best possible start in life and high-quality early education is key to future outcomes, particularly for disadvantaged children. That is why we are working hard to ensure parents and children - wherever they live in England - have access to high quality early years education places through the funded 15 hour entitlement for disadvantaged two-year-olds and for all three- and four-year-olds. The Early Years Pupil Premium provides over £300 per eligible child to improve outcomes for disadvantaged children and, from September 2017, working parents who meet the eligibility criteria will also have access to an additional 15 hours of funded early education.

Our early years funding formula, which commences in April 2017, includes an additional needs factor – to better target funding towards local authorities with a higher relative proportion of children with additional needs – and an area cost adjustment to reflect the different costs of providing childcare in different areas of the country. This will help to ensure that all children can access quality early education in their area.

In May 2016, the department commissioned a feasibility study to investigate the regional gap in early years attainment at age 5. The study recommended undertaking longitudinal analysis of the Millennium Cohort Study (MSC) to assess variation in attainment and evaluate the potential drivers of a regional gap. The department has commissioned a study to build on the recommendations of the feasibility report, which will bring greater insight into the potential drivers on the regional attainment gap.

As indicated in the Northern Powerhouse Strategy published in November 2016, this department will be working with northern city regions and other areas in the North of England facing the greatest challenges, to explore options for improving the delivery of early years outcomes:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/571562/NPH\\_strategy\\_web.pdf?platform=hootsuite](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/571562/NPH_strategy_web.pdf?platform=hootsuite).

■ **Pre-school Education: Finance**

**Tulip Siddiq:** [56058]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will publish all the submissions to her Department's consultation, Early years funding: changes to funding for three and four-year olds.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

The Government published its response to the Early Years National Funding Formula consultation on 1 December. The response contains a thorough analysis of responses to each of the questions and can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/early-years-funding-changes-to-funding-for-3-and-4-year-olds>

■ **Pre-school Education: Pupil Exclusions**

**Tulip Siddiq:** [56293]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what research her Department has conducted on the reasons for exclusions of children from early years settings.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

The Department for Education has not conducted specific research on the reasons for exclusions of children from early years settings.

The Department collects data on permanent and fixed-period exclusions from state-funded primary, state-funded secondary and special schools, including nurseries attached to these schools, for children aged four and under. The most recent National Statistics can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/permanent-and-fixed-period-exclusions-in-england-2014-to-2015>. The Department does not collect data on exclusions in other early years settings.

■ **Pre-school Education: Staff**

**Diana Johnson:** [56160]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of school-based early years providers in (a) academies and (b) free schools had staff with (i) Early Years Professional Status, (ii) Early Years Teacher Status or (iii) Qualified Teacher Status in each year from 2014 to 2016.

**Caroline Dineneage:**

The department doesn't collect information on staff with Early Years Professional Status or Early Years Teacher Status in school-based provision. Information is collected on staff with Qualified Teacher Status in schools but we are not able to identify whether these staff work in early years provision in the school.

**Schools****Stephen Timms:**[\[56818\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of the adequacy of the provision of (a) health and nutrition advice and (b) personal finance advice in schools; and if she will make a statement.

**Edward Timpson:**

We encourage schools to create a whole-school culture that promotes health and well-being so that all our children are fit, healthy and able to learn. Schools have the flexibility to choose which educational resources they use to support their teaching and there are opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to be taught the knowledge and skills they need to support healthy living.

The national curriculum, which came into effect in September 2014, sets the expectation that across a variety of subjects, pupils are taught about the importance of healthy eating and nutrition. For example, in primary schools, children are taught about healthy eating, where their food comes from, and how to prepare and cook a range of dishes. In secondary schools, cookery is now compulsory and children are taught to cook a range of healthy and nutritious meals. They are equipped with knowledge about healthy eating and what is meant by a balanced diet. Physical education (PE) is compulsory at all four key stages and should provide opportunities for pupils to become physically confident in a way that supports their health and fitness.

The new national curriculum also made financial literacy statutory for the first time. It is taught as part of the citizenship curriculum for 11 to 16 year olds. Pupils are taught the functions and uses of money, the importance of personal budgeting, money management and the need to understand financial risk. The national curriculum for mathematics has also been strengthened to give pupils from 5 to 16 the necessary mathematical skills they need to make important financial decisions.

Financial education can also be addressed more broadly as part of extra-curricular activities. Programmes such as the National Citizen Service give young people the chance to plan and potentially fundraise for a social action project.

**Young People: Disclosure of Information****Lyn Brown:**[\[56347\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make it her policy to make anonymised ward level data on post-16 student work, education and training destinations, as reported by local authorities to the National Client Information System, open data and available through the data.gov.uk website.

**Edward Timpson:**

The Department is currently exploring ways to utilise the data it collects on education, training and employment outcomes further, with a view to publishing more comprehensive data on educational outcomes in the future. However, there are currently no plans to publish NCCIS data from local authorities at ward level.

The Department applies data suppression and rounding protocols when publishing data to ensure that individuals cannot be identified. This means that estimates produced for very small sub-groups within the population, such as 16 and 17 year olds in each of more than 7,000 wards in England, are unlikely to lead to meaningful results for comparison between wards or within wards over time.

**ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS****■ Agriculture: Subsidies****Mr Laurence Robertson:**[\[56555\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will take steps to ensure that farmers are provided with detailed breakdowns of the claims paid to them when they receive basic farm payments.

**George Eustice:**

The Rural Payments Agency issues remittance advices and revised claim statements to farmers once their claims are paid. We are giving consideration to options to add functionality in future years to give more detailed statements to farmers.

**Mr Laurence Robertson:**[\[56792\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the main reasons were for non-payment of Basic Farm Payments to those who made claims that resulted in no payment in the last year for which figures are available.

**George Eustice:**

The main reasons for claims resulting in no payment were either where claimants did not comply with the scheme rules or applications were received after closure of the penalty period which runs, each year, twenty five calendar days after the application deadline.

**■ Animal Welfare: Sentencing****Justin Tomlinson:**[\[55423\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions she is having with the Secretary of State for Justice on increasing the penalties available for prosecutions relating to animal cruelty.

**George Eustice:**

There has been previous Ministerial discourse on this issue with the Ministry of Justice, but no recent discussions at Ministerial level. Officials from each department have

discussed the issue more recently and are considering the appropriate level of penalties for animal cruelty.

■ **Bovine Tuberculosis: Disease Control**

**Mr Laurence Robertson:** [\[56408\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with Natural England on the level of resources needed for the roll-out of trial badger culls.

**George Eustice:**

In order to be able to achieve a successful cull over a full 4 year period, a cull company needs to have funds in place for the equipment and consumables needed, and other related expenses incurred. Natural England, as the licensing authority, works closely with each cull company to help it estimate how much it is likely to need, based on the population estimates and numbers of badgers to be removed, and the size of the cull area. Previous experience is applied to ensure that cull companies are assisted in making accurate estimates, using known actual costs of equipment, consumables and other expenses. Experience shows that a contingency is required in case a cull company starts to run out of money in scenarios where they need to deploy more resources than originally planned, or there are more badgers to remove than originally estimated. Natural England reviews its approach in estimating costs each year.

■ **Cats: Sales**

**Mr Gregory Campbell:** [\[56717\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will take further steps to prevent the sale of underage kittens.

**George Eustice:**

As part of our review of the Animal Establishments Licensing Schemes, we proposed that kittens under the age of eight weeks should not be sold.

■ **Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Work Experience**

**Louise Haigh:** [\[56305\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many unpaid internships there are in her Department.

**George Eustice:**

There are no unpaid internships within the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

## ■ Energy: Oils

**Nigel Adams:**

[56381]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment her Department has made of the potential benefits of used cooking oil in generating carbon-neutral electricity.

**Dr Thérèse Coffey:**

Defra has not made any specific assessment of the potential benefits of used cooking oil in generating carbon-neutral electricity.

There are restrictions on the disposal of used cooking oil and energy recovery for the production of electricity is one of the available options for managing such waste. As with other biodegradable materials, the energy recovered from used cooking oil is classed as 'renewable energy' and counts towards renewable energy targets aimed at decarbonising energy generation.

## ■ Flood Control: North West

**Mr Mark Hendrick:**

[56532]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what (a) flood prevention work has taken place in areas prone to flooding by the River (i) Ribble, (ii) Lune, (iii) Darwen, (iv) Wyre and (v) Yarrow, (b) flood prevention work is planned in 2017, 2018 and 2019 at those locations and (c) the cost is to the public purse of such work in those locations in (A) 2016, (B) 2017, (C) 2018 and (D) 2019.

**Dr Thérèse Coffey:**

The Environment Agency's six year flood and coastal risk management programme 2015-2021 can be found at the following web address:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/programme-of-flood-and-coastal-erosion-risk-management-schemes>.

There are 17 flood prevention schemes planned in the programme on the named rivers over the next three years.

The estimated cost of the works on the named rivers totals £34,700,051. A breakdown can be found below:

A 16/17 £9,152,821

B 17/18 £18,195,397

C 18/19 £7,068,053

D 19/20 £283,780

These figures include a combination of capital Grant in Aid and partnership funding.

The Environment Agency's maintenance schedule can be found at the following web address:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/river-and-coastal-maintenance-programme>

The Environment Agency and its predecessor bodies have worked with partners to undertake a range of flood prevention work in the catchments of the Ribble, Lune, Darwen, Wyre and Yarrow. This includes the completion of flood and coastal risk management schemes as well as maintenance and flood recovery work.

#### ■ Furs: Imports

**Margaret Ferrier:** [\[55956\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether her Department plans to bring forward legislative proposals on the importation of (a) cat, (b) dog and (c) seal fur after the UK leaves the EU.

**George Eustice:**

There are EU regulations which ban the importation of cat and dog fur and seal products including fur. The Government will bring forward legislation in the next session that, when enacted, will repeal the European Communities Act 1972 and ensure a functioning statute book on the day we leave the EU. This 'Great Repeal Bill' will end the authority of EU law and return power to the UK. The Bill will convert existing European Union law into domestic law, wherever practical.

#### ■ Ivory: Sales

**Mr David Hanson:** [\[56363\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many Article 10 certificates for ivory items have been (a) applied for and (b) issued in the last 10 years for which records are available.

**Dr Thérèse Coffey:**

These are listed in the table below:

DATE	IVORY ARTICLE 10 APPLICATIONS RECEIVED (A)	IVORY ARTICLE 10 CERTIFICATES ISSUED(B)
2006	35	31
2007	62	42
2008	64	61
2009	47	39
2010	63	42
2011	25	21
2012	68	55
2013	48	43
2014	63	53



DATE	IVORY ARTICLE 10 APPLICATIONS RECEIVED (A)	IVORY ARTICLE 10 CERTIFICATES ISSUED(B)
2015	112	87
2016 to 07/12/16	58	57

#### ■ Lions: Hunting

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[56690\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps her Department has taken to identify the country of origin of lion trophies imported into the UK in 2015 and 2016.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

Under the provisions of Article 4.(b)(i) of EC CITES Regulation 338/97 it is a requirement that an export permit is issued by the CITES Management Authority of the country exporting the specimen, and is presented before the UK CITES Management Authority issues an import permit.

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[56691\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what types of lion trophies were imported into the UK in 2015.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

Records show in the calendar year 2015, 19 CITES import permits were noted as 'returned used' for Lion (**Panther leo**). 'Returned used' is the notation used for a confirmed import into the UK. These consisted of :

- 1 Permit for a full body mount
- 5 Permits for shoulder mounts
- 8 Permits for skulls
- 3 Permits for skins
- 1 Permit for claws
- 1 Permit for feet

#### ■ Pigmeat: China

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[56814\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 13 June 2016 to Question 40357, what progress has been made on the implementation of the protocol allowing pig trotters to be exported from the UK to China.

**George Eustice:**

The importance of reaching agreement for the export of UK pigs' trotters to China continues to be raised at the highest levels, most recently by the Secretary of State during her meeting with the Chinese Minister in Beijing last month. The Minister committed to prioritising the UK application and the UK Agriculture, Food and Drink Counsellor, based in Beijing, has continued to press the Chinese authorities for completion of the UK application to allow exports of UK pigs' trotters to commence as soon as possible.

**■ Pigs: Animal Welfare****Sir Alan Meale:**[\[56158\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she is taking to improve enforcement of (a) paragraph 15 on environmental enrichment for pigs of Schedule 8 to the Aftercare of Farmed Animals (England) Regulations 2007 and (b) paragraph 5 on tail docking of pigs of Schedule 3 to the Mutilations (Permitted Procedures) (England) Regulations 2007.

**George Eustice:**

Defra's Code of Recommendations for pigs, which all pig-keepers must be familiar with, provides guidance on how to comply with the legal requirements in relation to environmental enrichment and routine tail-docking. When carrying out an inspection of a pig unit, the Animal Health and Plant Health Agency evaluate the provision of enrichment material and whether pigs are routinely tail-docked without a justifiable reason and will apply breaches where non-compliances are found.

There are health and welfare reasons for continuing to tail-dock in certain circumstances, but we and the pig industry recognise a need to improve the quality of enrichment materials available for all pigs and increase opportunities to stop tail-docking.

Defra contributed to a European Commission research project by Bristol University which informed the EU Commission's recently published guidance on tail docking and enrichment materials. We are working with the industry to implement these recommendations on tail docking and enrichment which were published earlier this year.

**■ Reservoirs****Oliver Dowden:**[\[56819\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what (a) the process is and (b) permissions required are for a reservoir to be drained.

**Dr Thérèse Coffey:**

No legal requirements exist to drain a reservoir under the Reservoirs Act 1975.

However, the operator should inform the reservoir 'Supervising Engineer' to oversee the process.

An Environmental Permit issued by the Environment Agency may be required by an operator ahead of draining a reservoir. This is dependent on site specific issues, the type of release and whether fish may need to be removed.

Emptying a reservoir does not decommission it and the operator's legal responsibilities under the Act still apply.

## ■ Tree Planting

**Mrs Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

[\[56810\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate she has made of the cost to the public purse of each of the 11 million trees the Government has committed it will plant in this Parliament.

**Dr Thérèse Coffey:**

The Forestry Commission estimates that the average cost to the public purse will be around £3.25 per tree.

## EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION

## ■ Department for Exiting the European Union: Visits Abroad

**Dan Jarvis:**

[\[56773\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, how many days he has spent abroad on government business since his appointment.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The Prime Minister has been clear that we will not give a running commentary on our EU exit negotiations. We will ensure that we engage closely with all relevant interlocutors. Details of Ministerial overseas travel will be published in the Department's Quarterly Transparency Returns, which will be made publicly available on GOV.UK.

## ■ EU Grants and Loans

**Stephen Timms:**

[\[56863\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what estimate he has made of the potential effect on European structural funding for each region of the UK of the UK leaving the UK; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The Government recognises the importance of ensuring regions and organisations have stability and certainty in the period leading up to our departure from the European Union. At the same time, we are keen to use the opportunities that departure presents to set our own priorities. The Chancellor has announced that the Treasury will guarantee structural and investment fund bids which are signed before the UK leaves the EU. This includes funding for projects agreed after the Autumn Statement, if they represent good value for money, and if they are in line with the government's strategic priorities, even if these projects continue beyond the UK's departure from the EU.

Leaving the EU means we will want to take our own decisions about how to deliver the policy objectives previously targeted by EU funding. Over the coming months, the government will consult closely with stakeholders to review all EU funding schemes in the round, to ensure that any ongoing funding commitments best serve the UK's national interest, while ensuring appropriate certainty.

#### FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

##### ■ Azerbaijan: Christianity

**Mr Gregory Campbell:** [\[56715\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will hold discussions with the Azerbaijan authorities on recent reports of the persecution, arrest and fining of Christians in that country.

**Sir Alan Duncan:**

We regularly raise human rights issues with Azerbaijan, including freedom of religious belief. Most recently, on 5 December, I discussed human rights in a meeting with the Ambassador of Azerbaijan. The British Embassy in Baku engages with officials from the State Committee Working with Religious Associations and we regularly meet representatives of religious communities in both Azerbaijan and the UK to discuss religious freedom.

##### ■ Balkans: EU Accession

**Stephen Gethins:** [\[56127\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what support his Department offers to countries of the Western Balkans that seek membership of the EU.

**Sir Alan Duncan:**

The Government remains committed to reform, embedding stability and addressing shared challenges such as security and migration in the Western Balkans. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office will continue to support countries committed to the EU accession process, through diplomatic engagement and technical assistance, in meeting the necessary requirements.

##### ■ British Nationals Abroad: EU Countries

**Dr Andrew Murrison:** [\[56536\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many British expatriots residing in EU countries have contacted (a) UK embassies and (b) the Foreign and Commonwealth Office regarding visa rights since 23 June 2016.

**Mr Tobias Ellwood:**

From June to November, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's global network, including our Diplomatic Posts overseas, received 1,572 telephone enquiries in relation to the EU Referendum. These enquiries were not necessarily on visa related issues but did concern the potential impacts of the result of the referendum.

■ **Chagos Islands**

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[56763]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to the oral contribution of the Minister of State for Europe and the Americas of 17 November 2016, Official Report, column 387, what proportion of the 837 Chagossian people surveyed indicated that they wished to reside on the Chagos islands before they were asked to take into consideration what life would be like on those islands.

**Sir Alan Duncan:**

98% of the 832 Chagossians that responded to the public consultation indicated that they were in favour of resettlement.

After being asked to take into consideration the level of health, education and facilities that could be reasonably provided, 25% of the 832 Chagossians were in favour of resettlement.

■ **Foreign and Commonwealth Office: English Language**

**Andrew Gwynne:**

[56764]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if his Department will make available English translations of all foreign language articles or interviews which he provides for non-UK media outlets; and if he will make a statement.

**Alok Sharma:**

It has never been the practice of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to publish translations of articles that appear in foreign media.

■ **Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Personnel Management**

**Louise Haigh:**

[56115]

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

**Sir Alan Duncan:**

We do not centrally hold details of how many officials at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office have prior experience of working in human resources. To provide you with this would require us to gather information from the personnel file of each staff member and the cost of doing this would be disproportionate and exceed the

appropriate limit. We do, however, hold a record of those staff currently employed in the Human Resources Directorate as at 8<sup>th</sup> November 2016 who

(a) are members of the Civil Service HR Profession, with a career anchor in HR : 12 staff.

(b) are not members of the Civil Service HR Profession or have a career anchor in HR but who have a CIPD (or equivalent HR qualification) : 15 staff.

## ■ Foreign Policy: Anniversaries

**Michael Gove:** [\[56622\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to mark the centenary of the Balfour Declaration.

**Mr Tobias Ellwood:**

Firm plans have not yet been made for how we will mark the Balfour Declaration's centenary in November 2017.

## ■ Pakistan: Religious Freedom

**Jim Shannon:** [\[56697\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what information he holds on the raid of the publications office of the Ahmadi Muslim community headquarters in Rabwah, Pakistan on 5 December 2016.

**Jim Shannon:** [\[56698\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his counterpart in Pakistan on the detention of three Ahmadi Muslims arrested in Rabwah, Pakistan on 5 December 2016.

**Jim Shannon:** [\[56699\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his counterpart in Pakistan on freedom of religion for Ahmadi Muslims in that country.

**Alok Sharma:**

We are aware of reports of the raid on the Ahmadiyya offices and of the arrest of four Ahmadiyya in Rabwah, Pakistan. The Government strongly condemns the persecution of all minorities, including the targeting of people based on their beliefs. Our concerns are reflected in the latest update to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office annual human rights report.

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

## ■ USA: Foreign Relations

**Dan Jarvis:**

[\[56772\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with the transition team of the President-elect of the US.

**Sir Alan Duncan:**

The Foreign Secretary, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Mr Johnson) has spoken to Vice President-elect Mike Pence, Senator Jeff Sessions (now the nominee for Attorney General) and other senior Republicans since the US Elections on 8 November. The Prime Minister, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Maidenhead (Mrs May) has spoken twice with President-elect Donald Trump. Furthermore the British Ambassador in Washington and his team have also had extensive engagement with Mr Trump's transition team.

## ■ Uzbekistan: Christianity

**Mr Gregory Campbell:**

[\[56716\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make representations to the authorities in Uzbekistan on reports of the prosecution of Christians and confiscation of religious material in that country.

**Sir Alan Duncan:**

Uzbekistan is a country that the FCO has designated as a Human Rights Priority Country. We regularly continue to raise individual human rights cases with the Uzbek authorities, play an active and visible part in human rights activities in Uzbekistan and fund projects on governance reform, anti-corruption, torture prevention and strengthening women's rights.

## ■ Written Questions: Government Responses

**Tommy Sheppard:**

[\[56813\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, when he plans to answer Question 53905, tabled on 21 November 2016 by the hon. Member for Edinburgh East.

**Sir Alan Duncan:**

Due to a staff administrative error, the response to PQ 53905 was delayed. The response to PQ 53905 was submitted on 12 December 2016.

## HEALTH

## ■ Accident and Emergency Departments: Influenza

**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:** [\[56056\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many people admitted to accident and emergency departments for flu were (a) pregnant, (b) suffering from a long-term health condition and (c) 65 years and over in each calendar year since 2010.

**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:** [\[56169\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many flu jabs were administered by NHS England in each year since 2010.

**Nicola Blackwood:**

The information requested about the status of people admitted to accident and emergency units with flu is not routinely collected.

The number of people vaccinated against flu in financial years 2009/10-2015/16 is set out in the table.

FLU SEASON	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PERSONS VACCINATED
2009/10	10,308,522
2010/11	11,214,949
2011/12	11,735,081
2012/13	11,948,206
2013/14	12,723,280
2014/15	13,306,979
2015/16	14,080,238

*Notes:*

1. Data is taken from the annual Seasonal flu vaccine uptake reports.
2. 'Number of persons vaccinated' comprises the total general practitioner (GP)-registered population vaccinated, vaccinated healthcare workers, and children vaccinated as part of the schools programme in 2015/16.
3. Data on vaccinations given to pregnant women first became available in 2010/11, therefore the figure for 2009/10 does not include pregnancy vaccinations.
4. The period covered is 1 September to 31 January for each flu season apart from 2014/15 and 2015/16 when data for Healthcare Workers was to the end of February.
5. Due to the nature of the data collections there is some minor duplication leading to a possible over-estimation of vaccines given as those vaccines given to healthcare



workers and children in Years 1 and 2 (five and six year olds) in 2015/16 may/may not have been recorded in the GP record. Conversely in 2015/16 as a result of at risk groups being able to access flu vaccination in pharmacies for the first time some vaccine given to this group may not have been recorded in the GP record. These are known data issues related to data flows into the GP record.

6. The flu programme was extended to all children aged two and three year olds in 2013/14; all four year olds in 2014/15; and all those of primary school age children of Years 1 and 2 (five and six year olds) in 2015/16.

#### ■ Care Homes: Food

**Mr Steve Reed:** [56718]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what recent assessment he has made of the quality of food provided in care homes.

**Mr Steve Reed:** [56719]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what guidance his Department provides on standards of nutritional value for food provided in care homes.

**David Mowat:**

In 2014 the Government updated the requirements of regulation with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to provide a greater clarity about how the nutritional and hydration needs should be met. The new requirements are set out in Regulation 14 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014, which came into force on 1 April 2015. The CQC can prosecute for a breach of this regulation if a failure to meet the regulation results in avoidable harm to a person using the service, or a person using the service is exposed to a significant risk of harm.

The CQC is responsible for assessing whether providers are meeting the regulations (Fundamental Standards). The CQC provides a range of guidance for providers to assist them in meeting the Fundamental Standards/Regulations on its website at:

<http://www.cqc.org.uk/content/regulations-service-providers-and-managers>

#### ■ Dental Services: Children

**Judith Cummins:** [56269]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate his Department has made of the cost of hospital admission for a child having teeth extracted under general anaesthetic.

**David Mowat:**

The table below shows the average cost to National Health Service trusts and NHS foundation trusts of providing tooth extractions for patients aged 18 years and under during 2014/15.

## HEALTHCARE RESOURCE GROUP

CODE	HEALTHCARE RESOURCE GROUP DESCRIPTION	UNIT COST (£)
CD06B	Extraction of Multiple Teeth, 18 years and under	834
CD07B	Minor Extraction of Tooth, 18 years and under	439

Source: Reference costs, Department of Health

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nhs-reference-costs-2014-to-2015>

## ■ Department of Health: Work Experience

**Louise Haigh:** [56308]

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

**David Mowat:**

There are no unpaid internships within the Department.

The Civil Service runs the Summer Diversity Internship Programme, which is a two month placement and is paid. The Civil Service also runs the Early Diversity Internship Programme which is for a week only (and more akin to work experience); expenses are provided to encourage applications and ensure there is no financial loss to participants.

## ■ Depressive Illnesses: Suicide

**Jim Shannon:** [56214]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he is taking to reduce the number of people with depression who go on to die by suicide.

**Nicola Blackwood:**

The Government's measures to increase access to mental health services have supported a reduction in overall patient suicides when taking the rise in people accessing mental health services into account. We are investing more than ever in mental health and have introduced the first waiting times standards for mental health to ensure more people get timely access to necessary treatment.

Since it started in 2008, over four million people have entered the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies programme which aims to provide National Institute for Health and Care Excellence approved services to people in England with common mental health conditions including depression. Of that four million, over 2.4 million have completed treatment and over 800,000 are in recovery.

We are also investing £25 million specifically on suicide prevention between 2017-21 and will work with NHS England and our other delivery partners to set out priorities for this funding.

Stigma remains a key barrier to people talking about mental health and suicide and to people seeking help. Further financial support of £12.5 million up to 2020-21 was

announced earlier this year for the national Time to Change Programme which seeks to bring attitudinal change in people towards mental health issues. To date, their work has seen a reported change in over 3.4 million people's attitudes to mental health.

We are also working with local authorities to implement local suicide prevention plans by the end of 2016. To ensure this happens, my Rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State wrote to local authorities and Public Health England published refreshed guidance in October, supported by masterclasses to support local authorities in developing robust plans. We will publish details of those local authorities which achieve this commitment including data on suicides in each area which will enable local areas to benchmark against national averages and other local areas.

We have welcomed the Five Year Forward View for Mental Health recommendations to:

- Achieve a 10% reduction in the national suicide rate by 2020/21;
- Ensure all local areas implement multi-agency suicide prevention plans by 2017;
- Improve the learning from all suicides in National Health Service-funded settings.

Finally, in terms of "committing suicide", we have been making a conscious effort to avoid this language as it creates a sense of shame to friends and family of the bereaved, as well as perpetuates the stigma associated with suicide. Suggested alternatives are "kill themselves" or "die by suicide".

#### ■ Exercise: Children

**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:**

[\[56139\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate he has made of how many children meet recommended weekly physical activity guidance in each year from 2011 to 2016.

**Nicola Blackwood:**

The latest survey report, Health Survey for England 2012, showed that 21% of boys and 16% of girls aged 5-15 meet the guidelines of at least 60 minutes a day of moderate intensity physical activity.

#### ■ General Practitioners

**Joan Ryan:**

[\[56219\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of NHS England's General Practice Resilience Programme.

**David Mowat:**

NHS England launched the General Practice Resilience Programme 28 July 2016 following publication of the General Practice Forward View in April 2016 which committed to invest £40 million in supporting practices to become more sustainable and resilient, including £16 million this year.

The programme devolves funding to NHS England's 13 local teams to secure and deliver a wide menu of support to practices prioritised locally against nationally set criteria. As the first milestones in delivering this four-year programme locally have been focused on

developing a local support approach and identifying which practices to support, it is too early to assess its effectiveness.

NHS England is, however, committed to ensuring that the £16 million is invested in support for practices this financial year and to evaluating the effectiveness of to ensure best value from support to practices.

**Steve McCabe:** [\[56327\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 14 November 2016 to Question 52227, whether the level of reported incidents has increased in the last five years.

**Steve McCabe:** [\[56328\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 14 November 2016 to Question 52227, what discussions he has had with his Ministerial colleagues about increasing litigation fees; what plans he has to support GP practices in dealing with those increased fees; and what steps he plans to take across Government to reduce the number of compensation claims.

**David Mowat:**

Clinical negligence cases in primary care are dealt with by the Medical Defence Organisations – private, not-for profit mutual organisations who manage claims on behalf of their general practice (GP) members. The Department does not hold information about the level of clinical negligence claims or incidents involving GPs.

The Medical Defence Organisations have been vocal about the increases in costs of clinical negligence in primary care, and state that one of the drivers of these costs is an increase in the volume of claims being brought – however they have not published data relating to the actual number of claims and incidents.

A large number of claims (c. 80% according to the Medical Defence Union) are successfully rebutted by the Medical Defence Organisations, so an increasing volume of claims is not indicative of a rise in a number of actual incidents of negligence.

My Rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State held discussions with Ministerial colleagues about the increasing litigation fees in primary care, as part of the work on the GP Indemnity Review. These discussions will continue as the Department seeks to ensure that the costs of clinical negligence in primary care are managed.

Following the GP Indemnity Review, the Department and NHS England announced plans to support GP Practices in dealing with the increased fees. Measures already announced to support GPs include:

- A new GP indemnity support scheme will start in 2016-17 and provide a special payment to practices to offset indemnity inflation. The scheme will initially run for two years, when it will be reviewed.
- NHS England has established a winter indemnity scheme this year to reimburse the indemnity costs of GPs who are willing to work more out of hours sessions to deal with winter pressures.

- The 2016-17 contract already includes an additional £33 million specifically to reflect indemnity inflation rises in the last year.

The Department has also committed to further work to address the growing cost of claims – including the volume of claims. The Department recognises that longer term work is needed to address the root causes of the rising cost of clinical negligence, is incorporating this work into its core business, and will work with stakeholders to develop appropriate solutions in due course. As part of this, the Department is preparing to consult on a new Fixed Recoverable Costs Scheme that would limit recoverable legal costs in clinical negligence claims.

#### ■ General Practitioners: Finance

**Steve McCabe:** [\[56320\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 8 November 2016 to Question 51861, what the average amount is that each GP practice will receive from GP Resilience Programme funding; and what those GP practices are expected to achieve with that funding.

**Steve McCabe:** [\[56321\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 8 November 2016 to Question 51861, how many GP practices in (a) Birmingham and (b) the West Midlands will receive financial support from the GP Resilience Programme.

**David Mowat:**

NHS England has identified just over 1,000 practices nationally to support under the General Practice Resilience Programme. With £16 million funding available this year, this equates to support averaging £16,000 per practice. This is indicative, as practice needs are prioritised, and the nature of support offered, determined locally, will range from support to an individual practice to support across a group of practices. The funding is not intended to provide financial assistance to practices, but to be used to secure a wide menu of support to improve practice operations in order to help practices to become more sustainable and resilient in the future.

23 practices in Birmingham and 123 practices in the West Midlands have been identified for support under the General Practice Resilience Programme, and support offers are currently being agreed with practices. West Midlands has received £1.2 million out of the £16 million funding allocation this year.

#### ■ General Practitioners: Greater London

**Joan Ryan:** [\[56220\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what proportion of General Practice Resilience Programme funding has been granted to vulnerable GP practices in London.

**Joan Ryan:** [\[56221\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many GP practices in Enfield have received financial assistance from the General Practice Resilience Programme.

**Joan Ryan:**

[\[56222\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 8 November 2016 to Question 51648, what recent estimate he has made of the number of GP practices that require assistance from the General Practice Resilience Programme in (a) Enfield and (b) London.

**David Mowat:**

London will receive approximately 16% of the £40 million funding being provided through the four-year General Practice Resilience Programme. London will receive approximately £6.6 million over the lifetime of the programme, with £2.6 million available this year.

Seven practices have been identified for support under the General Practice Resilience Programme in Enfield and support offers are currently being agreed with the practices. The programme funding is not intended to provide financial assistance to practices, but to be used to secure a wide menu of support to improve practice operations that will help practices to become more sustainable and resilient in the future.

229 practices in London have been identified for support under the General Practice Resilience Programme. This includes support to a range of practices - those practices which may benefit from support upstream of any difficulties arising, as well as practices identified as being in difficulty.

## ■ Health Professions and Social Workers

**Ann Clwyd:**

[\[56253\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what plans his Department has to bring forward legislative proposals related to the Law Commission's final report and draft Bill on the regulation of health and social care professionals, published in April 2014.

**Mr Philip Dunne:**

The Government remains committed to reforming professional regulation in line with the written ministerial statement published on 17 December 2015 ([HCWS417](#)).

Following extensive stakeholder engagement over the summer we intend to consult shortly on our priorities for reform, taking account of, and moving beyond, the Law Commission's work.

## ■ Health Services

**Julian Sturdy:**

[\[56252\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of the use of portable surgical health centres to support (a) the delivery of care in a community setting, (b) system transformation and efficiency within the NHS and (c) improving patient outcomes.

**Mr Philip Dunne:**

It is for commissioners to determine the most appropriate model of care provision to meet the needs of their local populations and provide the highest quality of care, which may include the use of portable surgical health centres.

■ **Health Services and Social Services: LGBT People**

**Stuart Andrew:**

[\[56397\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the needs of LGBT people are recognised when planning and commissioning health and social care services; and how his Department plans to monitor its progress in recognising such needs.

**David Mowat:**

It is for local commissioners to decide how best to meet the needs of their local population. However, when arranging services themselves, commissioners of health and social care must ensure their practices and the services delivered on their behalf comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, and do not discriminate against people with protected characteristics; this should include monitoring delivery against the requirements of that Act.

The Equality and Diversity Council, on behalf of the Department, NHS England and Public Health England, asked NHS Digital to manage the development of a data standard to cover data collection of sexual orientation across all data sets relating to adults and young people over the age of 16 in England. This will aid all health and social care organisations in providing equitable access for lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals and increase the understanding of the impact of inequalities on health outcomes for different populations in England, similar to monitoring of ethnicity and gender.

NHS England funded the LGBT Partnership led by the LGBT Foundation, to work with the Department, Public Health England and a range of stakeholders to develop a specification and seek the agreement of Standardisation Committee for Care Information (SCCI). The Foundation will submit the final application to the SCCI Board for approval in January 2017.

■ **Health Services: Private Sector**

**Ann Clwyd:**

[\[56255\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, when his Department plans to publish the findings of its consultation on the expansion of Care Quality Commission ratings to include independent healthcare providers; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr Philip Dunne:**

The Department plans to publish the response to the consultation early in the New Year.

**■ Homeopathy: Prescriptions**

**Andrew Gwynne:** [\[56390\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what progress has been made on the public consultation announced in 2015 on the availability of homeopathic products through NHS prescriptions.

**David Mowat:**

It remains our intention to launch a public consultation on the availability of homeopathic products in primary care in due course.

**■ Medical Records**

**Justin Madders:** [\[56394\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 21 November 2016 to Question 53369, if he will estimate the number of medical records which are missing.

**David Mowat:**

NHS England has confirmed that they are aware of five primary care records which, currently, are reported as unaccounted for and are therefore subject to investigation.

**■ Mental Health Services**

**Norman Lamb:** [\[56791\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many outpatient and community contacts there were in adult secondary mental health and learning disabilities services, by team type, attendance rate and clinical commissioning group, in each of the last 10 years.

**Nicola Blackwood:**

The information is not available in the format requested.

**Norman Lamb:** [\[56802\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 6 December 2016 to Question 55193, what national minimum standards exist to ensure the provision of psychological therapy in adult secondary and tertiary mental health services.

**Nicola Blackwood:**

Over the next five years, NHS England will be working with partners to develop a range of evidence-based treatment pathways for mental health and the supporting infrastructure required to enable their implementation. Each of the pathways will be designed to span the journey from 'referral to recovery'.

As outlined in Implementing the Five Year Forward View for Mental Health, this will include a focus on the provision of evidence-based psychological therapies as part of secondary mental health care services.

NHS England has funded an Improving Access to Psychological Therapies – Severe Mental Illness programme to test and evaluate the impact of providing evidence-based psychological therapies for people with a severe mental illness.



For specialised mental health inpatient care, NHS England has published service specifications for the provision of high, medium and low secure mental health services and tier 4 child and adolescent mental health services which include the provision of psychological therapies and interventions as part of the treatment pathway.

**Norman Lamb:**

[56804]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 6 December 2016 to Question 55192, whether the development of evidence-based treatment pathways in community mental health care will be subject to public consultation.

**Nicola Blackwood:**

NHS England has a memorandum of understanding with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence to deliver an evidence-based treatment pathway (EBTP) support programme and a robust and systematic approach to EBTP development and implementation has been developed. The standards are co-produced with people with experience of mental health services, and the first step in the process is the establishment of a multi-stakeholder expert reference group including experts by experience in the membership. The supporting EBTP 'technical team' that drafts all of the pathway products for publication also includes a minimum of two experts by experience.

#### ■ Neuromuscular Disorders: Bradford

**Judith Cummins:**

[56350]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what discussions he has had with Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust on ensuring that patients with muscle-wasting conditions who are served by that Trust have access to a neuromuscular care advisor.

**David Mowat:**

No such discussions have been had. NHS England is responsible for commissioning specialised neurological services, including services for patients with neuromuscular disorders. NHS England has published a service specification for neurological care that sets out what providers must have in place to offer evidence-based, safe and effective services.

The specification can be found at the following link:

[www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/d04-neurosci-spec-neuro.pdf](http://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/d04-neurosci-spec-neuro.pdf)

National Health Service providers, working with local area teams, may establish patient access to neuromuscular care advisers if they consider it would benefit service provision; such decisions are a local matter.

#### ■ NHS Trusts: Private Patients

**Justin Madders:**

[56392]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 5 December 2016 to Question 55033, what steps his Department takes to recover outstanding fees from private patients.

**Justin Madders:** [\[56393\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 5 December 2016 to Question 55033, if he will collect and publish figures for outstanding fees from private patients.

**Mr Philip Dunne:**

The recovery of outstanding fees from private patients is a matter for each National Health Service trust or foundation trust.

We are informed by NHS Improvement that it does not specifically collect and publish figures for outstanding fees from private patients treated at NHS trusts or foundation trusts.

#### ■ NHS: Students

**Justin Madders:** [\[56354\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will estimate the annual cost to the public purse of exempting undergraduate students from (a) dental charges and (b) prescription charges.

**Justin Madders:** [\[56355\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will estimate the annual cost to the public purse of administering exemptions for eligible students from (a) dental charges and (b) prescription charges.

**David Mowat:**

In England, there are a number of exemptions for both prescription and dental charges for which students may qualify, although only two are specifically for students. Young people aged 16, 17 or 18 and in qualifying full-time education are entitled to free prescriptions, and those age 18 and in qualifying full-time education are entitled to free dental treatment. Another exemption, which covers significant number of students, provides for exemption from dental charges for all young people aged under 18. It is not possible to identify the costs of administering these specific student related exemptions, as the associated costs cannot be differentiated from the overall costs associated with processing prescriptions and reimbursing pharmacies, and processing dental charges.

There is no specific exemption for prescription or dental charges for undergraduate students, and it is not possible to differentiate undergraduates who qualify via one of the various available exemptions from those who aren't undergraduates. It is not possible, therefore, to estimate the cost to the public purse of providing free prescriptions or dental treatment to undergraduates who qualify for exemption.

#### ■ NHS: Training

**Justin Madders:** [\[56061\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what plans his Department has to fund the expansion of the NHS graduate management scheme; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr Philip Dunne:**

The expansion to the NHS Graduate Management Training Scheme which was announced by my Rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health on 30 November will be funded from within existing National Health Service budgets.

■ **Obesity: Children**

**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:**

[\[56055\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many children were admitted to hospital for obesity-related illnesses in each calendar year since 2010.

**Nicola Blackwood:**

NHS Digital does not hold this information centrally.

■ **Orkambi**

**Royston Smith:**

[\[56182\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what discussions his Department has had with Vertex on bringing Orkambi to the market.

**Nicola Blackwood:**

It is for a manufacturer to decide when to market their product.

Vertex received a Marketing Authorisation for Orkambi (lumacaftor-ivacaftor) for the treatment of cystic fibrosis in November 2015. The National Health Service list price for Orkambi was agreed with Departmental officials in December 2015 and the product was launched in the United Kingdom in May 2016.

**Royston Smith:**

[\[56183\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment has been made of the effectiveness of Orkambi in improving life expectancy for people with cystic fibrosis.

**Royston Smith:**

[\[56185\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of making Orkambi available on the NHS.

**Nicola Blackwood:**

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is the independent body that develops guidance for the National Health Service on whether new drugs and treatments represent a clinically and cost effective use of resources.

NICE published final guidance on the use of Orkambi (lumacaftor-ivacaftor) for treating cystic fibrosis homozygous for the F508del mutation in July 2016 that does not recommend this treatment.

Where NICE has not been able to recommend a treatment, funding decisions should be made by the relevant NHS commissioner, based on an assessment of the available evidence.

**■ Orkambi: Children**

**Helen Jones:** [\[56385\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, for what reasons the Kalydeco form of Ivacaftor has been deemed unsuitable for use by children aged between two and five in England; what assessment he has made of its use by children in Scotland; and if he will make a statement.

**David Mowat:**

On 4 December 2016, NHS England announced that ivacaftor would, in future, be commissioned according to its licensed indications for children between two and five.

**■ Palliative Care**

**Stuart Andrew:** [\[56396\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he plans to take to encourage leaders of local health and care systems to work together with local services to deliver good-quality end of life care for LGBT and other people.

**Stuart Andrew:** [\[56399\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to improve palliative and end-of-life care for LGBT people.

**David Mowat:**

Our ambition is for everyone approaching the end of life to receive high quality care that reflects their individual needs, choices and preferences. The Government set out its commitment to everyone at the end of life in the Government response to the independent Review of Choice in End of Life Care. To fulfil the pledge in the response to support local leaders to prioritise and improve care, the Government is writing to Health and Wellbeing Boards to remind them of their duty to end of life care.

The NHS England End of Life Care Programme Team have scheduled a webinar on inequalities, featuring Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) issues, aimed at health and care staff, providers, and commissioners in February 2017. NHS England is also a member of the 'Ambitions partnership for Palliative and End of Life Care', a national partnership of 27 statutory and non-statutory organisations who published the 'Ambitions framework: National framework for local action' in 2015. The framework centres on six Ambitions, underpinned by a number of building blocks which need to be in place for high quality palliative and end of life care to be a reality. The second of the six Ambitions is "Each person gets fair access to care" which focuses on eliminating inequality. The Ambitions Partnership has undertaken a 'deep dive' discussion on inequalities, which included a specific discussion on issues for LGBT people, and are planning a follow up discussion.

## ■ Paralysis

**Jim Shannon:** [\[56217\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what discussions he has had with (a) the Royal College of Nursing and (b) other Royal Colleges on the potential merits of using neural interface technology to treat paralysed patients.

**David Mowat:**

No discussions have taken place between Ministers of the Department and the Royal Colleges on the potential merits of using neural interface technology to treat paralysed patients.

## ■ Patients: Employment

**Jim Shannon:** [\[56379\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if his Department will issue guidance to GPs on seeking information on a patient's employment during appointments.

**David Mowat:**

Increased data sharing can help improve both health and work outcomes for individuals and this is a matter referenced in 'Improving Lives: The Work, Health and Disability Green Paper'. We welcome comments on this over the consultation period which runs until 17 February 2017.

## ■ Plastic Surgery

**Ann Clwyd:** [\[56254\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of the General Medical Council guidance for doctors providing cosmetic surgery which came into force in June 2016.

**Mr Philip Dunne:**

The Department has not made an assessment of the General Medical Council's guidance for doctors offering cosmetic interventions that came into effect on 1 June 2016.

The Department welcomes this guidance which is designed to promote safe, patient-centred care and sets out what is expected from doctors offering cosmetic procedures both surgical and non-surgical.

## ■ Pregnancy: Vitamin B12

**Andrew Bridgen:** [\[56168\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether his Department has plans for routine screening for vitamin B12 deficiency in pregnancy.

**Nicola Blackwood:**

The UK National Screening Committee (UK NSC) has not reviewed the evidence for screening pregnant women for vitamin B12 deficiency. Following a review of the UK NSC in 2014/15 the UK NSC is now carrying out a call for new screening proposals.

Information on how to submit a screening proposal to the UK NSC is available on their website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-nsc-evidence-review-process/appendix-d-how-to-submit-a-proposal-to-the-uk-nsc>

Information on vitamin B12 deficiency is available on the NHS Choices website and can be accessed using the following link:

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Anaemia-vitamin-B12-and-folate-deficiency/Pages/Symptoms.aspx>

## ■ Prisons: Health Services

**Norman Lamb:** [56811]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many prisoners are receiving treatment for a (a) mental health problem and (b) substance or alcohol addiction in the latest period for which figures are available.

**Norman Lamb:** [56812]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many prisoners have been diagnosed with a (a) mental health problem and (b) substance or alcohol addiction in the latest period for which figures are available.

**Nicola Blackwood:**

Data on prisoners receiving treatment for mental health problems, substance misuse and alcohol addiction is collected by NHS England through its Health and Justice Indicators of Performance and by Public Health England via the National Drug Treatment Monitoring System.

Information from these data sets will be published in 2017.

## ■ Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust: Deepmind

**Chi Onwurah:** [56827]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what discussions (a) Ministers And (b) officials of his Department have had with the Royal Free Hospital on its new Streams app.

**Nicola Blackwood:**

No conversations have taken place between the Department and the Royal Free Hospital on its new Streams app.

Digital transformation is crucial if we are to get the best results for patients.

Arrangements some 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.

## ■ Smoking

**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:**

[56142]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate he has made of the number of smokers in each English region in each year from 2010 to 2016.

**Nicola Blackwood:**

Data for adult smoking prevalence in England by region can be found on Public Health England's Local Tobacco Control Profiles:

[www.tobaccoprofiles.info](http://www.tobaccoprofiles.info)

The Tobacco Control Profiles show The Office of National Statistics (ONS) Integrated Household Survey data for 2010 and 2011, and ONS Annual Population Survey data from 2012 to 2015; 2016 data is not yet available.

## ■ Vitamin B12

**Andrew Bridgen:**

[56179]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to improve education for health professionals on screening, diagnosis and effective individual treatment for Vitamin B12 deficiency; and whether his Department has plans to include serum B12 in full blood count screening.

**Nicola Blackwood:**

The diagnosis and treatment for B12 deficiencies is well established and reported in the British Committee for Standards in Haematology (BCSH) guidance document, 'Guidelines for the diagnosis and treatment of Cobalamin and Folate disorders'. The guidance was last updated in May 2014 and can be found at the following link:

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/bjh.12959/epdf>

The BCSH provides up to date advice to both clinical and laboratory haematologists on the diagnosis and treatment of haematological disease by the production of evidence-based guidelines. The Committee operates independently of Department and NHS England and produces evidence based guidelines for both clinical and laboratory haematologists on the diagnosis and treatment of haematological disease, drawing on the advice of expert consultants and clinical scientists practicing in the United Kingdom. It would be for the BCSH, not the Department, to consider whether any adjustments to current best practice, were needed.

A full blood count is not intended as a diagnosis tool for specific health conditions. The test assesses a number of different components in the blood, including red blood cell count, haemoglobin levels and platelet levels and is designed to help a clinician assess the overall health of the patient as part of the overall clinical picture. However, the test often gives important clues to specific conditions and this can help doctors to reach a diagnosis, alongside any other tests or investigations the doctor thinks necessary. For example, it can detect anaemia, which is symptom of B12 deficiency.

## HOME OFFICE

## ■ Fraud

Louise Haigh: [\[54103\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many reports her Department has received of whaling fraud since 2010; and what estimate the Government has made of the cost of such fraud to UK businesses.

**Mr Ben Wallace:**

This information is not held centrally. All fraud should be reported to Action Fraud, the national reporting centre for fraud and online crime which is operated by City of London Police.

Whaling fraud is also known as CEO fraud. Fraudsters pose as the CEO of a company and send emails to an individual in the finance department requesting an urgent transfer of money to a specific bank account. That bank account is operated by the fraudsters and once the money is received it is moved elsewhere and the account closed.

Action Fraud reports that fraudsters use a strong element of social engineering to commit CEO fraud ensuring that the request to transfer funds appears urgent and legitimate. According to Action Fraud the average loss to CEO fraud is £35,000.

## ■ Home Office: Sick Leave

Norman Lamb: [\[53071\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many working days were lost due to mental illness in her Department in each of the last three years.

**Sarah Newton:**

The total number of working days lost in the Home Office due to mental illness in each of the last three years is set out in the table enclosed.

PERIOD	WORKING DAYS LOST AS A % OF WORKING DAYS AVAILABLE
01 April 2013 to 31 March 2014	0.68%
01 April 2014 to 31 March 2015	0.65%
01 April 2015 to 31 March 2016	0.79%

**DATA SOURCE :** DATA VIEW - OFFICE FOR NATIONAL STATISTICS COMPLAINT MONTHLY

snapshot corporated Human Resources data for Home Office

**Period Covered :** Figures are from March 2014, March 2015 and March 2016

**Extraction Date :** 1st April 2014, 2015 and 2016



**DATA SOURCE :** DATA VIEW - OFFICE FOR NATIONAL STATISTICS COMPLAINT MONTHLY

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**Organisational Coverage :** Figures are from the Home Office

**Employee Coverage :** Data is based on all current paid Civil Servants at 31 March 2014, 2015 and 2016 and leavers during the previous 12 months

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

**Attachments:**

1. Annex 1 - PQ 53071 [PQ 53071 Annex 1.doc]

■ **Visas**

**Heidi Alexander:**

[[56123](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applicants who have been refused a settlement visa have subsequently been refused a visitor's visa in each year since 2010.

**Mr Robert Goodwill:**

I am sorry but 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.

## INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

■ **Department for International Development: Visits Abroad**

**Dan Jarvis:**

[[56775](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how many days she has spent abroad on government business since her appointment.

**Priti Patel:**

The Secretary of State has visited a range of countries overseas since her appointment. Information on Ministerial Travel is published as part of DFID's quarterly transparency return on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE****■ Department for International Trade: Visits Abroad**

**Dan Jarvis:** [56774]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many days he has spend abroad on government business since his appointment.

**Greg Hands:**

Details of Ministerial travel, are published quarterly on gov.uk at:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications?keywords=ministerial+travel&publication\\_filter\\_option=transparency-data&topics%5B%5D=all&departments%5B%5D=all&official\\_document\\_status=all&world\\_locations%5B%5D=all&from\\_date=&to\\_date=](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications?keywords=ministerial+travel&publication_filter_option=transparency-data&topics%5B%5D=all&departments%5B%5D=all&official_document_status=all&world_locations%5B%5D=all&from_date=&to_date=)

The Department for International Trade was established in July 2016. The next tranche of transparency data relating to Ministers will be published in due course, covering the quarter July - September 2016.

**■ Trade Promotion: Botswana**

**Stephen Gethins:** [56052]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps his Department is taking to promote trade with Botswana.

**Mark Garnier:**

Currently the Department for International Trade (DIT) does not have a dedicated trade promotion resource in Botswana, trade related enquiries are initially supported by colleagues in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), namely the High Commissioner, Deputy High Commissioner and FCO Prosperity. However, as trade promotion activity across the whole of Southern Africa is managed regionally, the hub in Johannesburg provides support to post where needed.

A recent example of success is a Thales deal to supply the Botswana government with equipment to help in the fight against illegal wildlife trade. In this case the deal was also supported by DIT's Defence and Security Organisation (DSO) in London.

**■ Trade Promotion: Namibia**

**Stephen Gethins:** [56051]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps his Department is taking to promote trade with Namibia.

**Mark Garnier:**

The Department for International Trade (DIT) has a dedicated trade promotion officer in Namibia. Trade relations are managed by them with support from colleagues in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), namely the High Commissioner and FCO Prosperity colleagues.

Namibia also receives additional support from DIT London through inclusion in our aerospace and infrastructure High Value Export Campaigns.

## JUSTICE

### ■ Courts: Appeals

**Paul Blomfield:**

[\[53359\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many appeals or applications were brought (a) in each of the two years before the increase and (b) in each of the two years after the increase for each court or tribunal that has experienced a fee rise of more than 100 per cent in a single increase in the last five years.

**Sir Oliver Heald:**

Our courts and tribunals play a critical role in our society and it is vital we preserve the principle of access to justice by providing a properly funded service.

It is right that those who use the court and tribunal system should pay more to relieve the burden on the taxpayer. At every stage we have sought to protect the most vulnerable by ensuring that a system of fee remissions and exemptions is in place for those who cannot afford to pay a fee.

The only fees which have seen single increases of more than 100 per cent in the last five years are those payable for money claims of more than £10,000 brought in the civil courts. Those fees were increased in March 2015. The information relating to application volumes is below:

YEAR	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
County Court Money Claims	74,497	75,788	65,648

The figures in the table include specified money claims worth more than £10,000 and unspecified money claims worth more than £15,000. Unspecified money claims are categorised in three ways: under £15,000, between £15,000 and £50,000 and over £50,000, therefore it is not possible to generate a precise breakdown of unspecified money claims worth more than £10,000.

### ■ Courts: Fees and Charges

**Paul Blomfield:**

[\[53318\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, which courts have fees set at cost recovery levels.

**Sir Oliver Heald:**

Our courts and tribunals play a critical role in our society and it is vital we preserve the principle of access to justice by providing a properly funded service.

It is right that those who use the court and tribunal system should pay more to relieve the burden on the taxpayer.

At every stage we have sought to protect the most vulnerable by ensuring that a system of fee remissions and exemptions is in place for those who cannot afford to pay a fee.

In the civil courts the fees for issuing money claims worth less than £10,000 and the hearing fees in small claims are set at cost recovery levels and in the family courts the fees for public law family proceedings, care and supervision orders, are at cost recovery levels. Additionally, applications for a grant of probate are also currently set at cost recovery levels.

## ■ Family Courts: Modernisation

**Mr Jonathan Lord:** [\[56062\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what plans her Department has to modernise family courts across England Wales; and if she will make a statement.

**Sir Oliver Heald:**

I want our legal services and justice system to be the best in the world and I am totally committed to the Court Reform Programme. We are investing close to £1billion to reform and digitalise our courts and tribunal services to deliver swifter and more certain justice. Family Justice has an important place within the HMCTS Reform programme.

The first element of the family service to be transformed under the HMCTS Reform Programme is the divorce service. As a result, users will be able to issue and progress their divorce application online whilst accessing improved guidance and signposting to help them to understand each step in the process and get things right first time. They will also be able to track the progress of their case online.

Work on transforming the divorce service has already commenced with future plans including modernisation of the administration of public law, adoption, private law and family law act applications.

Future changes are planned to modernise and digitalise our service in relation to public law, adoption, private law and other types of family application over the coming years.

## ■ Gender Recognition: Prosecutions

**Mrs Maria Miller:** [\[55064\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to page 12 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 progress her Department has made on ascertaining why there have not been any prosecutions under section 22 of the Gender Recognition Act 2014.

**Dr Phillip Lee:**

The Crown Prosecution Service and National Police Chiefs' Council are currently looking into the handling of complaints arising from section 22 of the Gender Recognition Act, and will provide an update in due course.

**■ Immigration: Appeals****Paul Blomfield:**[\[53312\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many applications were made to her Department to remit or reduce fees in exceptional circumstances under Article 7 of the First-tier Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber) Fees Order 2011 in each year from 2011 to 2016; and how many of those applications were granted in each such year.

**Sir Oliver Heald:**

The cost of running our courts and tribunals is unsustainably high. It is absolutely right that those using the system, who can afford it, should pay more to relieve this burden. We make no exception for immigration and asylum cases and these appellants will continue to pay a fee. However, we have suspended the higher fees introduced in October this year. The Lord Chancellor's exceptional power to reduce or remit fees will remain in place, along with exemption and waiver arrangements in particular for those who cannot afford to pay. Our management information system does not collate data on unsuccessful applications for exceptional fee remissions. The number of applications granted since fees were introduced for proceedings in the First-tier Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber) in December 2011 are set out below:

<b>DATE (PERIOD)</b>	<b>APPLICATIONS GRANTED</b>
19.12.2011 to 31.03.2012	6
01.04.2012 - 31.03.2013	71
01.04.2013 to 31.03.2014	148
01.04.2014 to 31.03.2015	183
01.04.2015 to 31.03.2016	314
<b>Total</b>	<b>722</b>

This information covers up to the last full year for which information is available.

**Paul Blomfield:**[\[53358\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what information her Department holds on the racial and ethnic composition of tribunal users in each of the chambers of the First-tier Tribunal in each of the last three years.

**Sir Oliver Heald:**

This information is available on gov.uk.

## ■ Legal Aid Scheme: Children and Young People

Richard Burden:

[\[56825\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many (a) children under 18 years of age and (b) young people aged 18 to 24 were granted legal funding under the Exceptional Case Funding Scheme in (i) 2013-14 and (ii) 2015-16.

Sir Oliver Heald:

We believe that the exceptional funding scheme is functioning as intended. Its purpose is to provide funding where it is legally needed.

Every ECF application is carefully considered by the Legal Aid Agency on an individual basis.

### THE NUMBER OF GRANTED APPLICATIONS FOR EXCEPTIONAL CASE FUNDING BY AGE OF APPLICANT AND FINANCIAL YEAR OF APPLICATION SHOWN IN THE TABLE BELOW.

Year	Under 18	18-24	Unknown
2013-14	1	4	13
2015-16	14	68	27

Please note, because client date of birth was only routinely recorded from October 2013 onwards figures for the above 2 years are not comparable.

For the avoidance of doubt, this data relates to the number of applications granted. It is possible for an individual to hold multiple legal aid certificates, and thus this data may not correspond with the number of discrete individuals granted funding.

## ■ Ministry of Justice: Billing

Tim Farron:

[\[55437\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what proportion of payments by her Department to small businesses are made on time and in accordance with the prompt payment code.

Dr Phillip Lee:

This information is publically available on gov.uk.

## ■ Ministry of Justice: EU Law

Mary Creagh:

[\[54201\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the contribution of the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to the Environmental Audit Committee on 25 October 2016, Question 332, what proportion of existing EU legislation within the policy remit of her Department cannot immediately be brought into UK law upon the UK leaving the EU.

**Sir Oliver Heald:**

The Government will bring forward legislation in the next session that, when enacted, will repeal the European Communities Act 1972 and ensure a functioning statute book on the day we leave the EU. This 'Great Repeal Bill' will end the authority of EU law and return power to the UK. The Bill will convert existing European Union law into domestic law, wherever practical and in that context all relevant legislation is currently being identified and assessed.

■ **Money Claim Online****Christina Rees:**[\[55131\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, for what reasons it is not possible to make a (a) non-fixed monetary amount and (b) personal injury claim using the Money Claim Online website.

**Sir Oliver Heald:**

Money Claim Online was developed to provide an online service for specified (fixed) money claims which constitute the largest proportion of money claims issued. Personal injury claims are usually made for an unspecified amount of money.

■ **Pentonville Prison****Richard Burgon:**[\[52496\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many (a) Band 3 to 5 Officers, (b) Operational Support Grade officers and (c) other grades have been employed at HM Prison Pentonville in each year since 2010.

**Mr Sam Gyimah:**

Information on staff in post within HMP Pentonville requested for 31 March from 2010 to 2013 is contained in the attached table. Information for after 2013 onwards is published in the NOMS Workforce Statistics Bulletin available on the gov.uk website.

**NOMS STAFF IN POST BY GRADE AT HMP PENTONVILLE 31 MARCH 2010 TO 31 MARCH 2013**

	<b>31-Mar-2010</b>	<b>31-Mar-2011</b>	<b>31-Mar-2012</b>	<b>31-Mar-2013</b>
Band 3-5 Officers	378	362	347	341
Band 2 / Operational Support	88	82	76	71
Other grades	121	111	113	108
<b>Total</b>	<b>588</b>	<b>555</b>	<b>536</b>	<b>520</b>

**■ Personal Injury: Compensation**

**Christina Rees:** [\[56096\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, for what reason line 1 of her Department's press release, published on 17 November 2016, announcing the consultation on whiplash reforms, uses the word could rather than will in relation to a reduction in car insurance premiums.

**Christina Rees:** [\[56097\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what representations her Department has received on the proposed cap on whiplash claims compensation of £425 announced in her Department's Reforming the soft tissue injury (whiplash) claims process consultation, published on 17 November 2016.

**Sir Oliver Heald:**

A consultation paper was published on 17 November and is available on gov.uk

Both the press release and the consultation paper explain that insurers are expected to pass on around £1bn per annum to their motor policy holders through reduced premiums. This is estimated to mean an average saving of approximately £40 per motor insurance policy.

The consultation closes on 6 January and the government is due to publish its response by Friday 7 April 2017. When it does it will provide information on representations received, including those relating to the proposed cap on whiplash compensation.

**■ Prison Officers Association**

**Richard Burgon:** [\[54361\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to her oral contribution of 15 November 2016, Official Report, column 127, on meetings with the Prison Officers Association, what meeting she has (a) chaired and (b) attended with national representatives of the Prison Officers Association since 14 July 2016.

**Mr Sam Gyimah:**

The Secretary of State has met with members of the Prison Officers Association (POA) National Executive Committee on three occasions since 14 July 2016.

The meetings did not require a chair due to the small number of people in attendance.

**■ Prison Officers: Sick Leave**

**Richard Burden:** [\[56824\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prison officers have taken long-term sick leave and for what reasons in each of the last five years.

**Mr Sam Gyimah:**

Dedicated prison staff work in an extremely challenging environment in which, on a daily basis, they face unique circumstances unlike most others in the public sector.



We have announced a major shake-up of the prison system with 2,500 extra prisons officers and new security measures to tackle drones, phones and drugs and help make prisons places of safety and reform.

The safety, welfare and wellbeing of our staff is a top priority and we will always ensure prisons have enough staff to run safely and securely.

Long-term sick leave is defined within the Civil Service as periods of absence of more than 28 calendar days. The number of Band 3-5 prison officers to have taken long-term sick leave between 2010/11 and 2014/15 is available in the answer to PQ 37734. Data for 2015/16 is provided below.

### **Instances <sup>1,2</sup> of Long Term Absence Amongst Band 3 to 5 Prison Officers**

#### **2015/16**

#### **INTERNATIONAL CLASSIFICATION OF DISEASES**

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>2015/16</b>
Mental and Behavioural Disorders	852
Musculoskeletal System	500
Injury and Poisoning	344
Digestive System	102
Circulatory System	84
Nervous System and Sense Organs	44
Genitourinary System	28
Infective and Parasitic Diseases	43
Respiratory System	38
Neoplasms	32
Pregnancy Complications	25
Skin and Subcutaneous Tissue	18
Eye and Adnexa	8
Endocrine, Nutritional and Metabolic Diseases	4
Ear and Mastoid Process	9
Symptoms Ill-Defined	627
Blank / Unknown <sup>3</sup>	220

**INTERNATIONAL CLASSIFICATION OF DISEASES****CATEGORY****2015/16**

Total Cases

2,978

Notes:

1 Where an officer has two or more periods of absence for the same reason within a year they are counted as one, where the reasons differ they are counted separately.

2 absences that straddle two years are counted in each year.

3 also includes reasons where small numbers (2 or fewer) would otherwise be suppressed for data protection reasons.

■ **Prisoner Escapes**

**Mr David Hanson:** [\[52321\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prisoners have (a) escaped and (b) absconded from prison by crime class order in each year since 2010.

**Mr David Hanson:** [\[52322\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prisoners have (a) escaped and (b) absconded from prison by crime class order; and how many such people have been captured in each year since 2010.

**Mr David Hanson:** [\[52323\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prisoners have (a) escaped and (b) absconded from category (i) A, (ii) B, (iii) C and (iv) D prisons in each year since 2010.

**Mr David Hanson:** [\[52526\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prisoners have (a) escaped and (b) absconded from category (i) A, (ii) B, (iii) C and (iv) D prisons; and how many of those prisoners have been captured in each year since 2010.

**Mr Sam Gyimah:**

NOMS takes public protection and escapes from prison extremely seriously. An immediate investigation, independent of the prison, is completed following any escape to determine what went wrong and to learn lessons for the future. The vast majority of those who escape are quickly re-captured by the police and charged and prosecuted.

KPI escapes <sup>1</sup> from establishment by offence between 2011/12 to 2015/16 are published on gov.uk. The security category of the prison is also provided. Figures for 2010/11 are not published; there was one KPI escape from a Cat B establishment in 2010/11. The prisoner who escaped was serving a sentence for theft. All prisoners who escaped between 2010/11 and 2015/16 have been returned to custody following the incident.

Absconds take place only from open (Cat D) prisons. Absconds between 2011/12 and 2015/16 by the main offence of the prisoner at the time of the abscond are published

on gov.uk. Figures for 2010/11 are not published and are provided below. Three prisoners who absconded from open prison in 2010/11 were still unlawfully at large on 30 April 2016; all other absconders have been returned to custody.

NOTE 1 An escape is deemed to be a KPI escape if (i) the prisoner is at liberty for 15 minutes or more before recapture or (ii) an offence is committed during an escape lasting less than 15 minutes.

#### **ABSCONDS BY OFFENCE <sup>1</sup>**

	2010/11
<b>ALL OFFENCES</b>	<b>235</b>
Violence against the person	51
Sexual offences	2
Robbery	69
Theft offences	66
Criminal damage and arson	3
Drug offences	20
Possession of weapons	9
Public order offences	2
Miscellaneous crimes against society	5
Fraud offences	5
Summary non-motoring	2
Summary motoring	1
Offence not recorded	0

#### ■ Prisoners

**Paul Flynn:**

[\[55223\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps her Department is taking to reduce the prison population.

**Mr Sam Gyimah:**

The Government is committed to transforming our prison estate to ensure prisons are safe, get offenders off drugs and into education and work. We will also improve the

effectiveness of supervision in the community. This will reduce reoffending and the need for prison places.

**Paul Flynn:** [\[55393\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment her Department has made of causes of the increase in the prison population since 2004.

**Mr Sam Gyimah:**

The Government published in July 2016 "Story of the Prison Population 1993 – 2016". This is available on gov.uk.

## ■ Prisoners: Suicide

**Luciana Berger:** [\[52460\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of suicides which took place in prisons were by people who were not on the Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork programme in prison in each year since 2010.

**Mr Sam Gyimah:**

The Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) process is used to provide multi-disciplinary case management for prisoners assessed as being at risk of self-harm or suicide.

### **SELF-INFLICTED DEATHS <sup>1</sup> WHERE PRISONERS WERE NOT ON AN OPEN ACCT <sup>2</sup>, ENGLAND AND WALES, 2010 TO 2015**

2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016

3

*Self-inflicted deaths where prisoners were not on an open ACCT*

Number	45	39	41	49	59	55	55
Proportion	78%	67%	67%	64%	66%	61%	62%

1. If a prisoner was not subject to the ACCT (Assessment Care in Custody and Teamwork) process at the time of the incident that resulted in death then the prisoner would be described as not being on an open ACCT.
  2. Due to the number of deaths that remain unclassified (awaiting further information) in recent year(s), considerable caution should be used when comparing with earlier periods.
- (3) Data up to 30th September only

### ■ Prisons: Civil Disorder

**Richard Burgon:** [\[56821\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many concerted indiscipline incidents of each type have occurred in each prison establishment in each month since May 2010.

**Mr Sam Gyimah:**

The number of incidents of concerted indiscipline, broken down by type, for each prison in England and Wales is published on gov.uk.

### ■ Prisons: Finance

**Richard Burgon:** [\[55487\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to paragraph 5.17 of the Autumn Statement 2016, how much of the £500 million of extra funding to enable the recruitment of 2,500 extra prison officers and wider reforms will be spent on (a) recruitment costs, (b) salaries, (c) pensions and (d) wider reforms.

**Mr Sam Gyimah:**

The Justice Secretary announced major reforms to the prison system in the Prison Safety and White Paper published on 3 November, to cut reoffending and help reduce crime.

As announced at Autumn Statement last month, £100 million annually will be allocated to the Ministry of Justice to implement measures to improve safety in prisons and wider reforms to the whole criminal justice system. We will be investing more than £100 million to recruit, train and pay for an additional 2,500 prison officers, helping us to implement the new dedicated prison officer role.

### ■ Prisons: Hostage Taking

**Richard Burden:** [\[56822\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many hostage incidents in which a (a) prison officer and (b) prisoner was taken hostage there have been in each prison establishment in each year since 2010.

**Mr Sam Gyimah:**

The number of hostage incidents, broken down by type of hostage, for each prison in England and Wales is published on gov.uk.

### ■ Prisons: Unmanned Air Vehicles

**Richard Burden:** [\[56823\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many incidents involving the use of drone technology have been recorded at each type of prison facility in each of the last three years.

**Mr Sam Gyimah:**

I refer the Hon Member to my answer to PQ 33806.

There were 2 reported incidents in 2014 and 33 reported incidents in 2015. The Ministry of Justice intends to routinely publish information on prison drone incidents in the future and 2016 data will be provided in due course.

We remain vigilant to all incidents involving drones and take the threat they pose to prison security very seriously. A range of methods to counter the threat posed by drones are being trialled and evaluated for their effectiveness across the prison estate. We have already introduced new legislation to further strengthen our powers, making it illegal to land a drone in prison or to use a drone to drop in contraband. Anyone found using a drone in an attempt to get contraband into prisons can be punished with a sentence of up to two years imprisonment. We take a zero tolerance approach to smuggling of contraband into prisons and work closely with the police and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to ensure those caught are prosecuted.

Note: All figures have been drawn from live administrative data systems. Care is taken when processing and analysing the returns, but the detail collected is subject to the inaccuracies inherent in any large scale recording system.

## ■ Security

**Helen Goodman:**

[\[51415\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 19 October 2016 to Question 48793, whether her Department requires foreign jurisdictions to meet human rights standards set out in the European Convention on Human Rights before considering the provision of prison and security-related services to them.

**Mr Sam Gyimah:**

We are not involved in, or actively considering, the provision of prison and security-related services for profit overseas at the present time. Were we to be asked to provide such services in the future, it would be on the basis of cost recovery only, and would be conducted fully in line with UK Government human rights policy which is published on the gov.uk website.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

## ■ Lough Foyle

**Mr Nigel Dodds:**

[\[56613\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what recent discussions the Government has had with the Government of the Irish Republic on ownership of Lough Foyle.

**James Brokenshire:**

The regulation of activities in Lough Foyle is the responsibility of the Loughs Agency, a cross-border body established under the Belfast Agreement of 1998. We remain fully committed to these arrangements and continue to work closely with the Irish Government over improvements to the management of the Loughs.

**Mr Gregory Campbell:**

[56714]

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, whether he plans to take steps to resolve the ownership of the waters and seabed of Lough Foyle before 1 April 2019.

**James Brokenshire:**

The regulation of activities in Lough Foyle is the responsibility of the Loughs Agency, a cross-border body established under the Belfast Agreement of 1998. We remain fully committed to these arrangements and continue to work closely with the Irish Government over improvements to the management of the Lough. Like the Irish Government, we do not anticipate these issues forming part of the negotiations over the UK's exit from the European Union.

#### ■ Northern Ireland Office: Work Experience

**Louise Haigh:**

[56313]

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, how many unpaid internships there are in his Department.

**Kris Hopkins:**

There are no unpaid internships in the Department.

### TRANSPORT

#### ■ Bus Services

**Anna Turley:**

[56806]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what support his Department provides to communities seeking to establish their own not-for-profit bus operator.

**Andrew Jones:**

Community bus services can provide valuable connections for people living in areas where commercial services are not viable, helping people who might otherwise be isolated. Bodies who wish to run a local bus service on a non-profit basis may apply to the Traffic Commissioner for a Section 22 Community Bus Permit, which allows the holder to operate without the need for a full public service vehicle (PSV) operator's licence.

**Anna Turley:**

[56807]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent estimate he has made of the number of bus miles on English roads in (a) 2017, (b) 2018, and (c) 2019.

**Andrew Jones:**

The Department publishes estimates of bus miles on local bus services in England up to 2015/16 in statistical table bus0203: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/bus02-vehicle-distance-travelled#table-bus0203>. However, forecasts of these figures for future years are not available.

**Anna Turley:** [\[56809\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the (a) benefits and (b) methods of increasing passenger involvement in bus service procurement.

**Andrew Jones:**

Procurement of bus services where these are not provided commercially is a matter for local authorities. The Government has made no formal assessment, but would encourage local authorities to consult bus passengers about changes they propose to make to the services they procure. Transport Focus has produced a best practice toolkit to help local authorities do this.

As part of the Bus Services Bill proposals, authorities will be required to consult Transport Focus and other organisations representative of users of local services on their plans to take forward a partnership or franchising scheme. The Bill also requires authorities to give careful thought to how they intend to consult users to obtain views on how well the scheme is working.

## ■ Community Transport

**Anna Turley:** [\[56808\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the benefits of not-for-profit delivery of community transport operators.

**Andrew Jones:**

The Government has made no recent formal assessment of the benefits of the not-for-profit delivery of community transport operators. Such operators provide accessible and inclusive transport to communities and people who might otherwise be isolated. The Government's support for the sector can be seen in the recent Community Transport Minibus Fund, which is providing over 300 organisations with new minibuses to help them continue their work.

## ■ Department for Transport: Personnel Management

**Louise Haigh:** [\[56119\]](#)

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

**Mr John Hayes:**

There are around 115 people in the HR profession employed across the central Department and its four Executive Agencies.

A total of 109 people within the profession hold professional qualifications in HR and HR-related fields.

Records of prior HR experience in human resources, for people employed in human resources roles, are not held centrally within the Department for Transport. The information requested could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.



## ■ Department for Transport: Work Experience

Louise Haigh:

[\[56134\]](#)

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

**Mr John Hayes:**

There are no internships which are unpaid in the Department for Transport and its Executive Agencies.

The Civil Service runs the Summer Diversity Internship Programme, which is a two month placement and is paid. The Civil Service also runs the Early Diversity Internship Programme which is for a week only (and more akin to work experience) – it provides expenses to encourage applications and ensure there is no financial loss.

## ■ Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency

Richard Burden:

[\[56387\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions his Department has had with the the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency on resolving the grievances raised in the eight complaints investigated by the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman in October 2016.

**Andrew Jones:**

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency's (DVLA) Chief Executive apologised to the eight customers affected and paid appropriate compensation before the report was published. There is one case for evidenced financial loss awaiting action from the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman before a final settlement can be reached.

## ■ Driving: Licensing

Richard Burden:

[\[56386\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency assesses people's fitness to drive within the targets set by the Government.

**Andrew Jones:**

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) receive more than 600,000 medical cases every year and the majority are dealt with swiftly and correctly. A significant number of those notifications will be complex cases where drivers have multiple medical conditions or take multiple medications. Typically complex cases need further investigation, often involving the expert opinion and input of the driver's GP, consultants, specialists and other medical professionals.

The DVLA has recruited over 100 additional staff. This has led to significant improvements in the time taken to deal with medical licensing applications.

It is also recruiting additional medical staff to deal with the most complex cases, which will include an additional 10 doctors and 10 nurses.

**■ East Anglia Rail Franchise**

**Mr Douglas Carswell:** [\[56700\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make it his policy to ensure that the East Anglia rail franchise has integrated operating teams between train services and infrastructure.

**Paul Maynard:**

The Secretary of State outlined his vision for the future alignment of track and train in the Written Ministerial Statement laid on 6 December. East Midlands and South Eastern are the first franchises in the franchise pipeline and we will continue to develop this model as further franchises are renewed.

**■ East Midlands Trains: Franchises**

**Andy McDonald:** [\[56734\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will include the provision of four fast trains per hour between St Pancras and Luton Airport Parkway in his Department's consultation on the new East Midlands franchise.

**Paul Maynard:**

The East Midlands franchise consultation plans to consult on service frequency and capacity requirements on a variety of routes throughout the franchise, including a specific question referencing service frequency at Luton Airport Parkway.

**■ High Speed 2 Railway Line**

**Lilian Greenwood:** [\[56125\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish a map that identifies the High Speed 2 Phase One geographic construction zones covering (a) area south, (b) area central and (c) area north; and if he will place in the Library copies of the Invitations to Tender for the (i) enabling works contracts for each such zone and (ii) main works contracts for Phase One of High Speed 2.

**Andrew Jones:**

As part of the Invitation to Tender for the Main Works Civil Contracts, tenderers were provided with a high level overview of the geographical area split for those particular contracts.

HS2 Ltd will publish this in due course.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:** [\[56540\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, which local authorities his Department has consulted on the progress of plans for the construction of High Speed 2 since May 2015.

**Andrew Jones:**

The Department has conducted four consultations since May 2015, all of which relate in various ways to preparation and planning for the construction of High Speed Two. As

these were public consultations, all local authorities were of course able to respond to these. The consultations were:

- Decision Document HS2 Phase Two: West Midlands to Crewe Property Consultation 2015 (CM 9286). May 2016.
- High Speed Two Phase 2a: West Midlands to Crewe Design Refinement Consultation (CM 9285). September 2016.
- HS2 Crewe to Manchester, West Midlands to Leeds: Route Refinement Consultation 2016. (D1) November 2016
- High Speed Two Phase 2b Crewe to Manchester West Midlands to Leeds: Property Consultation 2016 (D2). November 2016

At the conclusion of each consultation, a list of all respondents is published on GOV.UK

In addition to formal consultation, there is also extensive and ongoing engagement with local authorities along the HS2 line of route.

#### ■ High Speed 2 Railway Line: Buckinghamshire

**Mrs Cheryl Gillan:** [\[56831\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what security arrangements have been put in place at properties in Buckinghamshire purchased by HS2.

**Andrew Jones:**

Appropriate, risk assessed, site specific security arrangements have been put in place at properties purchased by HS2.

**Mrs Cheryl Gillan:** [\[56832\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what properties have been purchased by HS2 in Buckinghamshire.

**Andrew Jones:**

Information on properties purchased by HS2 in Buckinghamshire is contained in the attached document.

**Attachments:**

1. HS2 Properties in Buckinghamshire [056832 - HS2 Properties in Buckinghamshire.pdf]

**Mrs Cheryl Gillan:** [\[56833\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, for what reasons no regional Factsheet covering Buckinghamshire has been published by HS2.

**Andrew Jones:**

A community update containing information on the central area of Phase One is due to go out to communities along the proposed route in early January. This will update communities on some of the engagement activity carried out in the area, as well as wider progress on the project.

In terms of a specific factsheet just covering Buckinghamshire, this is something that HS2 can look into if raised as part of its regular community engagement activity. HS2 carries out regular meetings with residents and communities throughout Buckinghamshire, and this will continue in the New Year.

**Mrs Cheryl Gillan:** [\[56834\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what insurance cover is in place on properties purchased by HS2 in Buckinghamshire.

**Andrew Jones:**

The Department does not insure properties purchased by HS2 with an insurance company; it self-insures.

## ■ Metropolitan Line

**Bob Blackman:** [\[56736\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what representations his Department has received from (a) the Mayor of London and (b) Transport of London on the cost of the Croyley rail link; and whether the Government plans to provide additional funding to support the development of that link.

**Andrew Jones:**

Since taking over management of the Croyley Rail Link in November 2015, Transport for London (TfL) has been reviewing the main work contracts. From discussions between officials in the Department and in TfL, we are aware that, as a result of prices received from the supply chain, the costs of the scheme are currently higher than the agreed budget. We understand TfL is considering how best to deal with this.

At a meeting with the Mayor on 5 December the Secretary of State for Transport re-confirmed the importance that the Government attaches to the scheme which will deliver significant transport benefits and significantly boost economic growth in Watford and the wider north west London area. Indeed, the Government, together with local councils and the Local Enterprise Partnership, has already committed substantial funding to this scheme and nearly 85% of the total budgeted cost.

Under the terms of the funding agreement in place for the scheme, TfL committed to the agreed budget of £284.4m and so agreed to meet any costs incurred over that budget. Conversely, they would retain the full amount of any cost savings. The Department will not be providing any additional funding for the scheme and expects TfL to complete it as agreed.

**Bob Blackman:** [\[56923\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the deficit is for the delivery of the Croyley rail link; and what plans his Department has for allocating additional funding required for that rail link.

**Bob Blackman:**

[\[56924\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what information the Government holds on Transport for London's deficit for the delivery of the Croyley rail link; and if he will make a statement.

**Andrew Jones:**

As set out in my answer to my Hon Friend, earlier today (UIN 56736), the delivery of this scheme is a matter for Transport for London (TfL). TfL have made a commitment to deliver it within the resources that have been made available to them, under an agreement which means that they will benefit if the scheme can be delivered at a lower cost while accepting and absorbing any cost overruns. The Department does not have any detailed information on the most recent cost estimates for the scheme's delivery, which are entirely a matter for TfL, and does not intend to make any further funding available.

## ■ **Mirfield Station**

**Paula Sherriff:**

[\[56778\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 1 December 2016 to Question 55070, which funds are potentially available for redevelopment of Mirfield railway station.

**Paul Maynard:**

The Department for Transport and Network Rail are considering significant rail capacity and train performance improvement works coupled with speed improvements on the Transpennine Main Line in the Mirfield area. This may require the station platforms to be moved and any new works would need to meet modern accessibility standards.

As part of their franchise agreement obligations, Arriva Rail North has committed to invest £45m across its station estate through a Station Improvement Fund. There is a wide range of other funding sources that could also support any necessary investment, including from local authorities and local enterprise partnerships.

## ■ **Motor Vehicles: Safety**

**Jim Fitzpatrick:**

[\[56093\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the British Road Safety Statement, published in December 2015, what progress has been made on the revision of government buying guidelines to promote the uptake of procuring safer vehicles.

**Andrew Jones:**

The Department for Transport (DfT) is working with the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) - who own the Government Buying Standards (GBS) for vehicle procurement - on an update that will promote the purchase of safer and cleaner vehicles where appropriate. New standards are expected by 2017.

## ■ Railways: Technology

**Andrew Selous:**

[\[907831\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has assessed the potential merits of developing magnetic levitation trains as part of the Government's industrial strategy.

**Paul Maynard:**

The Department for Transport continually monitors the development of rail technology. The high costs of conventional magnetic levitation trains and their incompatibility with existing rail networks are likely to limit the market opportunities for this technology. We are however also assessing the potential for the development of hyperloop technologies in the UK which may also use magnetic levitation. The Department's Science Advisory Council intends to publish a paper on hyperloop in early 2017 setting out its position on the technical credibility of the concept and the opportunities it offers to UK industry given our technology and engineering expertise.

## ■ Rolling Stock

**Dr Sarah Wollaston:**

[\[56270\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to accelerate access for train-operating companies delivering services (a) to the South West and (b) nationally to new passenger rolling stock.

**Paul Maynard:**

Improvements in rolling stock are part of the Government's investment in the railways that will deliver better journeys for passengers.

In relation to the South West of England specifically, in July 2015 the Department announced that Great Western Railway would be acquiring 29 brand new Hitachi AT300 bi-mode trains for longer distance services between London and the South West of England.

Nationally, new train procurements including Thameslink, Crossrail and the Great Western/East Coast Intercity Express Programme will see over 5000 new carriages delivered to operators between now and the end of 2020.

In 2016 alone we have announced that over 1900 new carriages will be delivered by the franchising programme over the next five years, including over 500 into the Northern and TransPennine franchises, 211 for Great Western, 150 for Great Northern and 1043 for East Anglia.

## ■ Transport: Carbon Emissions

**Philip Davies:**

[\[56223\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the average amount of CO<sub>2</sub>, in grammes, emitted per metric tonne of freight coming into or leaving the UK was, per kilometre of transportation, for (a) air freight, (b) road transport via the Channel tunnel, (c) rail via the

Channel tunnel and (d) sea freight for the most recent 10 years for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr John Hayes:**

This information is not available at this level of detail. Information is published on carbon dioxide emissions by transport mode in Table TSGB0307 at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/tsgb03>.

## WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

### ■ Equal Pay

**Sarah Champion:**

[56053]

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what assessment she has made of the implications of the analysis by the Office for National Statistics of time use data, published on 10 November 2016, on the Government's work to tackle the gender pay gap; and if she will make a statement.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

I have considered the analysis undertaken by the Office for National Statistics. The report demonstrates that women carry out an overall average of 60% more unpaid work than men. On average men do 16 hours per week of such unpaid work, which includes adult care and child care, laundry and cleaning, to the 26 hours of unpaid work done by women per week.

This has relevance to our efforts to close the gender pay gap as this may be one of the factors that affects the number of hours that women work which in turn affects the gender pay gap. I am pleased to confirm that the draft regulations, requiring large employers to publish details of their gender pay gap, were laid in the house on Tuesday.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### ■ Department for Work and Pensions: Personnel Management

**Louise Haigh:**

[56121]

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

**Caroline Nokes:**

Records of prior Human Resources (HR) experience and qualifications in HR, for people employed in HR roles in the civil service, are not held centrally within the Department for Work & Pensions. The information requested could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ **Department for Work and Pensions: Work Experience**

**Louise Haigh:** [\[56132\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many unpaid internships there are in his Department.

**Caroline Nokes:**

There are no unpaid internships. The Civil Service runs the Summer Diversity Internship Programme, which is a two month placement and is paid. The Civil Service also runs the Early Diversity Internship Programme which is for a week only (and more akin to work experience) – it provides expenses to encourage applications and ensure there is no financial loss.

■ **Jobcentres: Closures**

**Chris Stephens:** [R] [\[56766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what criteria his Department uses to determine whether a jobcentre earmarked for closure should go out to public consultation; and if he will make a statement.

**Damian Hinds:**

There is no statutory requirement for consultation on Jobcentre closures. We have agreed, however, that where the distance from the current location to the proposed alternative Jobcentre is over three miles or 20 minutes away by public transport, we will undertake public consultation to inform our final decisions on closure and alternative service delivery options.

■ **Jobcentres: Glasgow**

**Patrick Grady:** [\[56759\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what financial support will be made available to jobseekers in Glasgow who will face additional travel costs and time in the event of the closure of their current Jobcentre Plus office.

**Damian Hinds:**

The department is committed to retaining an accessible Jobcentre network and continuing to serve customers in all areas of the country. Increasingly, our customers access many of our services on-line. This includes claiming benefits, looking for jobs and keeping us informed of their efforts to find work. We tailor our service so that face-to-face contact can be focused on those who need extra support from us.

The reimbursement of travel costs is available to claimants when they are required to attend the Jobcentre for appointments other than mandatory fortnightly signing appointments. The department will advise customers on alternative Jobcentre locations, taking into account travel and access to the local labour market. In offices over three miles or 20 minutes away by public transport, we will carry out local consultation prior to implementing any changes to help inform decisions about additional provision, such as outreach services.



**Patrick Grady:** [\[56761\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate he has made of the number of additional sanctions likely to be issued in enlarged jobcentres in Glasgow as a result of increased travel distances and time for users relocated from centres that have closed.

**Damian Hinds:**

We do not expect any of the changes to our estate to result in additional benefit entitlement sanctions. The department will support customers through the change of their Jobcentre's location.

**Chris Stephens:** [\[R\] \[56765\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many of the eight Glasgow jobcentres earmarked for closure will be subject to public consultation; and if he will make a statement.

**Damian Hinds:**

There are three Jobcentres that are subject to public consultation.

**Chris Stephens:** [\[R\] \[56767\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will publish the equality impact assessment made on the proposals to close the Glasgow jobcentres that was announced on 7 December 2016; and if he will make a statement.

**Damian Hinds:**

We will be undertaking an equality analysis as part of the detailed planning for service reconfiguration. This will include feedback from public consultation in those locations where this applies. A decision regarding publication of the equality analysis will be made at that time.

**Chris Stephens:** [\[R\] \[56768\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will publish the travel times to the nearest jobcentre from each of those eight jobcentres earmarked for closure in Glasgow; and if he will make a statement.

**Damian Hinds:**

The department has written to all Members of Parliament and Members of the Scottish Parliament who have a Jobcentre affected by these announcements in their constituency. These letters provide details of travel times to the nearest Jobcentres by car and public transport.

For offices over three miles or 20 minutes away by public transport, we will carry out local consultation prior to implementing any changes to help inform decisions about additional provision, such as outreach services.

The reimbursement of travel costs is available to claimants when they are required to attend the jobcentre for appointments other than mandatory fortnightly signing appointments.

**■ Jobcentres: Scotland**

**Patrick Grady:** [56723]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what discussions he had with his counterparts in the Scottish Government on the proposed closure of job centres in Glasgow before the announcement of those closures was made on 7 December 2016.

**Damian Hinds:**

The department has been in discussion with local authorities, Skills Development Scotland and the Scottish Government for some time now regarding our estates strategy. This has included exploring co-locations in places where this makes sense for all parties. As DWP is currently renegotiating leases on its entire estate portfolio, commercial sensitivities have limited our ability for detailed discussions with Scottish Government on specific site proposals.

The announcement made on 7 December 2016 included commencement of public consultation on three proposed closures. We remain committed to working with Scottish Government to ensure effective support for unemployed people.

**Patrick Grady:** [56760]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether he plans to meet with his counterparts in the Scottish Government to discuss the Jobcentre Plus estate in Scotland before making any further announcements on the future of that estate.

**Damian Hinds:**

I will be meeting with Members of Parliament this week to discuss these announcements further.

**■ Social Security Benefits: Garston and Halewood**

**Maria Eagle:** [56509]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people in Garston and Halewood constituency have received sanctions on their benefit payments in each year since 2010.

**Damian Hinds:**

The available information on Jobseeker's Allowance and Employment and Support Allowance sanction decisions, by parliamentary constituency, is published and can be found at: <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>:

Guidance on how to extract the information required can be found at: <https://sw.stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

**Maria Eagle:** [56510]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people in Garston and Halewood constituency have had more than one sanction in their benefit payments in each year since 2010.

**Damian Hinds:**

The information required is not readily accessible and to provide this information would incur a disproportionate cost.

The available information on Jobseeker's Allowance and Employment and Support Allowance sanction decisions, by parliamentary constituency, is published and can be found at: <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/> :

Guidance on how to extract the information required can be found at: <https://sw.stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

## MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

### WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

#### ■ Banks: Gender

Sarah Champion: [\[56057\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, if she will take steps to encourage banks to include a non-binary gender option on their official documents.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 8 December 2016. The correct answer should have been:**

Caroline Dineneage:

The Equality and Human Rights Commission is the regulator for the public sector equality duty set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. The Commission uses a range of levers to ensure local authorities and other public bodies comply with the requirements of the duty, from provision of guidance through to enforcement activity where it considers there to be a strategic benefit.

In light of the Brighton University report highlighted by the Honourable Member, the Commission will be writing to the Local Government Association (LGA) drawing its attention to the findings of the research and of the Commission's evidence of the key equality challenges facing lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, and asking the LGA to remind local authorities of their legal obligations under the public sector equality duty.

**We encourage all service providers, including financial services, to provide a welcoming environment for all customers, including transgender and non-binary customers.**

**To support this aim, we published 'Providing services for transgender customers: a guide' in November 2015 to help service providers ensure transgender people are welcomed, included and valued as customers, clients, users or members, and to ensure they are treated fairly and appropriately. It also aims to help service providers comply with the law.**

**We welcome the fact that some banks, such as the Metro Bank, allow customers to select non-binary as a gender option.**

## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

### TREASURY

#### ■ ECOFIN: 6 December 2016

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr Philip Hammond):

[\[HCWS349\]](#)

A meeting of The Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN) was held in Brussels on 6 December 2016. EU Finance Ministers discussed the following items:

#### **Early morning session**

Ministers were briefed on the outcomes of the 5 December meeting of the Eurogroup and the European Commission presented an update on the current economic situation.

#### **Investment Plan for Europe**

Ministers discussed proposals for the Investment Plan for Europe and reached a general approach on the Commission's proposal to amend the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) legislation as part of the planned extension beyond its original 2015-2018 lifetime. Ministers also discussed draft council conclusions on measures to tackle bottlenecks to investment identified under the Third Pillar of the Investment Plan for Europe.

#### **Anti-Tax-Avoidance Directive 2**

Ministers discussed the Commission's proposals on the Anti-Tax Avoidance Directive (ATAD2).

#### **Enhanced cooperation in the area of Financial Transaction Tax**

Ministers received an update on the proposal for a Council Directive implementing enhanced cooperation in the area of financial transaction tax.

#### **Banking Union: Risk-reduction Measures**

The Council Presidency presented its new proposals, published on November 23, to revise the capital and resolution frameworks for banks and large investment firms, which was followed by an exchange of views.

#### **Anti-Money Laundering Directive**

The Council Presidency provided an update on the discussions for proposal for a Directive on the prevention of the use of the financial system for the purposes of money laundering or terrorist financing.

#### **Current Financial Service Legislative Proposals**

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

#### **VAT digital package**

The Commission presented on the Digital Single Market VAT Package.

**Deepening the Economic and Monetary Union: Follow-up on the 5 Presidents' Report**

The Commission provided information on the Five Presidents' Report: Completing Europe's Economic and Monetary Union.

**Improving the Predictability and Transparency of the Stability and Growth Pact**

Ministers endorsed draft Council conclusions on improving the Predictability and Transparency of the Stability and Growth Pact.

**Report on Strategic Issues in the Area of Customs by the High Level Group of Customs Directors General**

Ministers were informed about the outcome of the pilot meeting of the High Level Group of Directors General for customs policy, taxation and customs co-operation on 25 October 2016.

**European Semester 2017**

The Commission presented to Ministers on the publication of the 2017 Annual Growth Survey (AGS) and Alert Mechanism Report (AMR), which was followed by an exchange of views.

**Implementation of the Banking Union**

Ministers discussed the current state of play regarding implementation of Banking Union within the Eurozone.

**Fight against the Financing of Terrorism**

The Commission gave a presentation on the fight against the Financing of Terrorism.

**Capital Markets Union**

The Commission provided information on the Capital Markets Union.

**COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT****■ Neighbourhood Planning**

**Minister of State for Housing & Planning & Minister for London (Gavin Barwell):**  
[\[HCWS346\]](#)

Neighbourhood planning was introduced by the Localism Act 2011, and is an important part of the Government's manifesto commitment to let local people have more say on local planning. With over 230 neighbourhood plans in force and many more in preparation, they are already a well-established part of the English planning system. Recent analysis suggests that giving people more control over development in their area is helping to boost housing supply – those plans in force that plan for a housing number have on average planned for approximately 10% more homes than the number for that area set out by the relevant local planning authority.

The Government confirms that where a planning application conflicts with a neighbourhood plan that has been brought into force, planning permission should not normally be granted. However, communities who have been proactive and worked hard to bring forward neighbourhood plans are often frustrated that their plan is being undermined because their local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year land supply of deliverable housing sites.

This is because Paragraph 49 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date, and housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

As more communities take up the opportunity to shape their area we need to make sure planning policy is suitable for a system with growing neighbourhood plan coverage. Building on proposals to further strengthen neighbourhood planning through the Neighbourhood Planning Bill, I am today making clear that where communities plan for housing in their area in a neighbourhood plan, those plans should not be deemed to be out-of-date unless there is a significant lack of land supply for housing in the wider local authority area. We are also offering those communities who brought forward their plans in advance of this statement time to review their plans.

This means that relevant policies for the supply of housing in a neighbourhood plan, that is part of the development plan, should not be deemed to be 'out-of-date' under paragraph 49 of the National Planning Policy Framework where all of the following circumstances arise at the time the decision is made:

- This written ministerial statement is less than 2 years old, or the neighbourhood plan has been part of the development plan for 2 years or less;
- the neighbourhood plan allocates sites for housing; and
- the local planning authority can demonstrate a three-year supply of deliverable housing sites.

This statement applies to decisions made on planning applications and appeals from today. This statement should be read in conjunction with the National Planning Policy Framework and is a material consideration in relevant planning decisions.

My Department will be bringing forward a White Paper on Housing in due course. Following consultation, we anticipate the policy for neighbourhood planning set out in this statement will be revised to reflect policy brought forward to ensure new neighbourhood plans meet their fair share of local housing need and housing is being delivered across the wider local authority area. It is, however, right to take action now to protect communities who have worked hard to produce their neighbourhood plan and find the housing supply policies are deemed to be out-of-date through no fault of their own.

On 7 July 2016, my Rt Hon Friend, the Member for Great Yarmouth (Brandon Lewis), extended for a period of 6 months the criteria for consideration of the recovery of planning appeals to include proposals for residential development over 25 dwellings in areas where a

qualifying body has submitted a neighbourhood plan proposal to the local planning authority but the relevant plan has not been made (Hansard HCWS74). In order to allow time for the Neighbourhood Planning Bill to complete its passage through Parliament, and in the light of other potential policy changes currently under consideration, I am now extending that period for a further 6 months from today.

#### ■ ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Minister for Local Government (Mr Marcus Jones):** [\[HCWS351\]](#)

On 19 October 2016, I announced my intention, after careful consideration of the recommendation of the Commissioner team, to return licensing functions to Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council. On the same day, representations were invited from the Authority regarding this intention. I have now considered the representations, including from the Leader and the Chief Executive, and I am satisfied that the Council is now able to exercise this service area in compliance with the best value duty, and that the people of Rotherham can have confidence that this will be the case.

Therefore, today I am exercising my powers under section 15 of the Local Government Act 1999 to return licensing; including all associated executive and non-executive functions, to the Council. Handing back this function will allow some democratic control to be returned and is an important milestone for the Council, which has demonstrated steady progress in its improvement journey.

Today, the Education Secretary and I have issued further Directions amending the Directions issued on 11 February 2016 that return this service area to the Authority. With effect from 13 December, Councillors will be responsible for decision making in this area. The Commissioners will continue to provide oversight on licensing as well as the set of functions returned in February 2016 and ensure that they are exercised in accordance with the statutory best value duty. Commissioners also continue to retain powers in additional service areas including children's services (including all services relating to child sexual exploitation); adult social care and audit.

I am placing a copy of the documents associated with this announcement in the Library of the House and on my Department's website.

### CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

#### ■ Telecommunications Council

**Minister of State for Digital and Culture (Matt Hancock):** [\[HCWS347\]](#)

The EU Council of Ministers' Telecommunications Council took place in Brussels on 2nd December 2016. I represented the UK at this Council. As is procedure, this Statement sets out a formal record of that meeting.

The first item was a policy debate on the two legislative instruments and two Communications that form the European Commission's recently-published Connectivity package:



- the European Electronic Communications Code Directive (First reading - EM 12252/16);
- Regulation on Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (First reading - EM12257/16);
- "Communication on 5G for Europe: An Action Plan" (EM12279/16); and
- "Communication on Connectivity for a Competitive Digital Single Market - Towards a European Gigabit Society" (EM12364/16).

My intervention was as per the pre-Council Statement.

The Council then adopted a General approach on Amending Regulation (EU) No 531/2012 as regards rules for wholesale roaming markets (First reading - EM13555/13).

The Council was then provided with an update from the Slovak Presidency on the Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on cross-border parcel delivery services (First reading - EM9706/16). There was no substantive debate on this item.

Council then adopted a partial general approach on the Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulations as regards the promotion of Internet connectivity in local communities (First reading - EM 12259/16).

This was then followed by three items under AOB led by the Commission, the first being on fair use policy in the context of roaming services, followed by information on Digital Single Market initiatives and finally under AOB, current Internet Governance issues. There were no substantive debates on any of these items.

Finally, the Maltese delegation informed the Council of their priorities for their forthcoming Presidency before Council adjourns until the next meeting in Q2 2017.

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

### ■ Provision of equipment to the 4th Land Border Regiment of the Lebanese Armed Forces

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr Tobias Ellwood):** [\[HCWS350\]](#)

Contagion from the worsening crisis in Syria is having a direct effect on its neighbours, particularly in areas adjacent to Lebanon's eastern border. The UK remains firmly committed to Lebanon's stability and security. Our support to the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) aims to minimise contagion from the Syrian conflict and combat the spread of Daesh. As part of this commitment, since 2012 the UK has been assisting the LAF, through the Rapid Land Border Security Assistance Project, to establish and mentor the LAF Land Border Regiments (LBRs). Lebanon faces a number of budgetary pressures, including the cost of hosting 1.2 million Syrian refugees, and would be unable to fund the LBRs without UK support. This project is the main pillar of our defence cooperation with Lebanon and our efforts to protect stability in the region. The mission of the LBRs is to observe, identify, deter and deny activities by illegal armed actors in the near border areas, in line with agreed international human rights

standards. Between 2012 and 2016, approximately £38m of Conflict Pool and Conflict Security and Stability funds were allocated to provide observation, protection, mobility and communications equipment to 1st, 2nd, and 3rd LBRs, and to establish key elements of a 4th LBR, as well as a programme of training and mentoring.

The command element of the 4th LBR has been established, and is preparing its deployment plan to cover the remaining 25% of the borders with Syria, from Aarsal to Masnaa. Recent Daesh actions in the Aarsal area pose a threat to UK and Lebanese security, and make it imperative that the LAF completes the expansion of the LBRs southwards. This is part of an overall strategy to bring the entire eastern border with Syria back under the authority of the State.

We intend to provide a package of £4,867,665.18 of observation and operating equipment for the continued development of the 4th LBR of the Lebanese Armed Forces. It will be funded by the Government's Conflict, Security and Stability Fund. The equipment has been assessed under the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria. There are no objections to the release of these items to the LAF.

The proposed provision of equipment has been scrutinised and approved by a senior, cross-Whitehall Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) Approval Board, which has confirmed that it is in line with the Government's strategic objectives. FCO officials have also assessed the project for human rights risks, using the Overseas Security and Justice Assistance guidelines established by the former Foreign Secretary in 2011. They concluded that the risk of human rights violations arising from the project's delivery could be successfully mitigated.

If, during the period of four parliamentary sitting days beginning on the date on which this statement was made before the House of Commons, a Member signifies an objection by giving notice of a Parliamentary Question or a Motion relating to the minute, or by otherwise raising the matter in the House, final approval will be withheld pending an examination of the objection.

## INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### ■ Foreign Affairs Council for Development November 2016

**The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for International Development (James Wharton):** [\[HCWS348\]](#)

On 28 November, I attended the Foreign Affairs Council for Development in Brussels. The meeting was chaired by the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission, Federica Mogherini. A provisional report of the meeting and Conclusions adopted will be deposited in the Library of the House for the convenience of members.

The UK is leaving the EU. While we remain a member we will continue to play a full role in line with our rights and obligations and represent the interests of the people of the United Kingdom

*European Consensus on Development*

The Council discussed the European Commission proposal on a new European Consensus on Development following a presentation by Neven Mimica, the Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development. Discussion of a new Consensus, in light of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, centred on retaining the fundamental focus on poverty eradication and human development, but with calls for more work on tackling the root causes of migration; engaging civil society and the private sector; and ensuring greater links between development and humanitarian work. I emphasised the need to finish the job on the Millennium Development Goals, but to also go beyond aid to support countries emerging from poverty.

#### *A Renewed Partnership with Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific ("Post-Cotonou")*

Development Commissioner Mimica set out a proposal to renew the EU's partnership with Africa, the Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) when the Cotonou Agreement expires in 2020. I highlighted the UK's desire for a differentiated approach towards partner countries at different stages of development and called for a light-touch framework which gives flexibility to work with different developing country partners as well as non-EU donors, saying that the UK wanted to take a full part in the debate now and could be a partner in future. I also welcomed the broad focus on Africa and the continued importance of the EU's relationship with the Caribbean and the Pacific. HRVP Mogherini concluded that more work needed to be done to achieve a common position before a negotiating mandate could be proposed next year.

#### *Energy and Development*

Council Conclusions on energy and development were agreed by the Council during a lunch discussion attended by Ministers and Maroš Šef

Commission with responsibility for the Energy Union. Vice President Šef

importance of improving linkages between energy and sustainable development. I

emphasised the opportunity provided by enhanced private sector involvement in renewable energy investments.

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#### *Migration and Development*

HRVP Mogherini led discussions between Member States that built on the various initiatives that had been launched since last year's Valletta Summit, including the Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, the new Partnership Framework and ongoing negotiations on the External Investment Plan. On the Partnership Framework, the UK joined other Member States in calling for a full assessment on the effectiveness of progress with current priority countries before further expansion.

#### *Other Agenda Items*

Ministers adopted several sets of Council Conclusions, including on mainstreaming digital solutions and technologies in EU development policy, the Court of Auditors report on humanitarian aid to the Great Lakes region, energy and development, and the EU common position for the 2<sup>nd</sup> High Level meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation. Details of these Council Conclusions will also be placed in the Library of the House.