



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 29 November 2016 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:42 P.M., 29 November 2016). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Carbon Sequestration

Fiona Bruce:

[54710]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what research the Government is conducting on carbon capture and the energy-making process.

Jesse Norman:

Since 2015, Government has spent approximately £11 million on a range of carbon capture projects supporting research and development in CO₂ storage, carbon capture technologies and CCS feasibility studies.

The Department has also commissioned research into the potential of carbon capture and utilisation in the UK and the next generation UK based carbon capture technologies. These will complete in 2017. Additionally, the Government Energy Entrepreneurs Fund has funded approximately £1.6 million in support to innovative carbon capture technologies.

Phase 5 of this Fund opened on 30 October 2016. This is an additional £9 million of funding which is available for CCS innovation projects. Further information can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/energy-entrepreneurs-fund-phase-5>.

■ Energy: Prices

Glyn Davies:

[54535]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the (a) mode and (b) mean length of time is that Big Six energy customers stay on their supplier's standard variable tariff.

Jesse Norman:

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy does not hold information on the length of time that a customer has been on the same tariff.

Glyn Davies:

[54582]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what proportion of domestic energy consumers switched tariff in each of the last three years; and what proportion of those consumers were switching from standard variable tariffs to fixed rate tariffs.

Jesse Norman:

Data is published by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) on switching. The data is collected by Ofgem and republished by BEIS in Table 2.7.1 of which can be found online (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/quarterly-domestic-energy-switching-statistics>).

The number of domestic energy supplier switches as a proportion of total customer numbers in Great Britain is as follows:

| YEAR | PROPORTION OF ELECTRICITY CUSTOMERS SWITCHING SUPPLIER | PROPORTION OF GAS CUSTOMERS SWITCHING SUPPLIER |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 2013 | 12% | 10% |
| 2014 | 11% | 10% |
| 2015 | 12% | 12% |

This is calculated by combining all switches made within the year, divided by the total domestic customers. Multiple switches made by the same customer within each year are counted as separate switches. The number of customer switching from standard variable to fixed rate tariffs is not collected or held by BEIS.

Glyn Davies:

[54583]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many domestic consumers whose energy was supplied by one of the Big Six suppliers and who were on a standard variable tariff switched tariff (a) with the same supplier and (b) to a new supplier in each of the last three years.

Jesse Norman:

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy collect data on the type of tariff which customers are on for the big six energy suppliers as part of our domestic fuels inquiry. We do not collect or hold data for customers and therefore cannot identify how long a customer has been with the same supplier or which customers have moved to a new supplier.

■ Fracking

Fiona Bruce:

[54711]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government on the potential effect of the Government's policy on fracking on local communities.

Jesse Norman:

I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave her on 2nd November 2016 to Question UIN 50945:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-10-28/50945/>.

■ Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund

Peter Kyle:

[54712]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the total value is of the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund.

Joseph Johnson:

As part of the National Productivity Investment Fund, the Chancellor of the Exchequer has provided £4,745m of new funding for Research and Development between 2017-18 and 2020-21. This includes a new Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund to direct some of that investment to a number of priority technologies. Further details of the funding will be set out in due course.

■ **Magnox: Redundancy Pay**

Sue Hayman: [\[53819\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect on Magnox workers' pensions of those pensions being included in the redundancy cap.

Jesse Norman:

[Holding answer 23 November 2016]: The Government is aware of the particular context that Site Licence Companies operate in and has worked to understand the implications of the cap on exit payments; it should be noted that the public sector exit payment cap will cover payments made in relation to leaving employment. This includes additional pension top-up payments paid by the employer as part of an exit package.

■ **Nuclear Power: Redundancy Pay**

Sue Hayman: [\[53820\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has met employers in the nuclear industry in relation to their pensions being included as part of the redundancy caps in the public sector.

Jesse Norman:

[Holding answer 23 November 2016]: Ministers in the Department of Energy and Climate Change and in this Department have met with Trade Union representatives to discuss workforce reform issues across the nuclear decommissioning estate, including the application of the public sector exit payments cap. The most recent meeting took place in October of this year.

■ **Post Offices**

Gill Furniss: [\[54761\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many post offices are in Bargain Booze shops; where each of those post offices are located; and in what branches each of those post offices has opened.

Gill Furniss: [\[54795\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many post office branches are located in off-licences; where each of those branches is located; and on what date each of those branches was opened.

Margot James:

The location and provision of its post offices branches is the responsibility of Post Office Limited.

I have asked Paula Vennells, the Chief Executive of Post Office Limited, to write to the Hon Member on this matter and provide the information requested. A copy of her reply will be placed in the libraries of the House.

■ **Public Houses: Tenants****Mr Laurence Robertson:**[\[54778\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many and what proportion of pub tenants are protected pub tenants.

Margot James:

The Pubs Code took effect on 21 July 2016 and regulates the relationship between tied pub tenants in England and Wales and the six pub-owning companies which operate 500 or more tied pubs.

We estimate that approximately 11,500 tied pub tenants are covered by the Code.

■ **Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme****Graham Jones:**[\[54505\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many new applications have been made to the domestic Renewable Heat Incentive scheme since it opened in April 2014 for (a) air-source and (b) ground and water-source heat pumps; and what the annual cost to the public purse was of each of those subsidies.

Jesse Norman:

The following tables show the number of total applications for air source heat pumps and ground source heat pumps under the domestic Renewable Heat Incentive. The latest application data the department has is up to the end of October 2016; as such 2016 does not represent a full year of applications.

| AIR SOURCE HEAT PUMPS | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 |
|-------------------------------------|------------|-------------|-------------|
| Total applications (new and legacy) | 7,689 | 13,714 | 4,783 |
| Actuals and Accruals | £1,873,300 | £11,027,489 | £13,317,544 |
| GROUND SOURCE HEAT PUMPS | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 |
| Total applications (new and legacy) | 3,127 | 3,727 | 1,131 |

GROUND SOURCE HEAT
PUMPS

| | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 |
|----------------------|------------|-------------|-------------|
| Actuals and Accruals | £3,073,978 | £16,554,779 | £19,054,131 |

CABINET OFFICE

■ Cabinet Office: Breastfeeding

Alison Thewliss:

[\[54368\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what (a) facilities and (b) other support his Department provides for (i) visitors and (ii) staff for (A) lactating mothers and (B) the expressing of breast milk.

Ben Gummer:

The Civil Service has a history of working to increase the support and opportunities available to parents across the Civil Service.

The law requires all employers to provide somewhere for a breastfeeding employee to rest and lie down, in line with Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992.

Spaces in buildings are provided for breast-feeding, whether they be staff or visitors.

■ Cabinet Office: EU Law

Mary Creagh:

[\[54189\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, 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 his Department cannot immediately be brought into UK law upon the UK leaving the EU.

Ben Gummer:

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.

The Government will set out the content of the Bill and its implications in due course.

■ Civil Servants: Recruitment

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[54076\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the minimum competency criteria are for evaluating applications for civil service job opportunities for applicants with a sensory disability.

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[54077\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps are being taken to ensure that there is consistency in the evaluation criteria for civil service positions.

Ben Gummer:

All Civil Service departments and agencies are required to follow the regulations and instructions outlined in the Civil Service Management Code. The Code requires departments to recruit candidates who are able to do the work required to meet business needs subject to reasonable adjustments under the terms of the Equality Act 2010. All government departments have signed up to the Disability Confident Employer Scheme which promotes an inclusive culture.

Under the Civil Service Management Code, departments and agencies have authority to determine their own practices and procedures, and prescribe qualifications for specific roles.

The level at which Civil Service roles are placed is evaluated by individuals trained in Job Evaluation and Grading methodology. For consistency, this training is provided by a single supplier.

■ Constituencies

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[\[54390\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will estimate the amount the Government has spent on the 2018 boundary review to date; and if he will make a statement.

Chris Skidmore:

Following laws passed by Parliament, the independent and impartial Boundary Commissions are currently consulting on their proposals to deliver the Boundary Review, and they will submit their final proposals to Parliament in autumn 2018. These reforms will ensure fair and equal representation for the voting public across the United Kingdom by the next general election, and also delivers on the Government's manifesto pledge to reduce the size of the Commons which will save an estimated £66 million over the course of a Parliament.

Equalising the size of constituencies in the Boundary Review will ensure everyone's vote will carry equal weight. Without such boundary reforms, MPs could end up representing constituencies based on data that is over 20 years' old, disregarding significant changes in demographics, house building and migration. As it stands, some constituencies have twice as many electors than other constituencies and this cannot be right.

The four Boundary Commissions have, to date, spent approximately £2.3 million on the conduct of the current Boundary Review. This is money which would be wasted under the Labour Party's proposals to try to block and delay this independent Review (as per the divisions of 18 November 2016, *Official Report*, Columns 563-666).

TREASURY

■ Banks: EU Action

Chris Leslie: [54299]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the recent EU Commission capital requirement directive proposal for foreign banks operating in the EU to set aside specific capital within EU intermediary holding companies on the long-term interests of the UK as a global financial centre; and if he will make a statement.

Simon Kirby:

Following publication of the proposal on 23rd November, we are performing analysis to evaluate the impact of these rules. How much the proposals might affect individual EEA groups operating in the UK would depend on their particular group structure.

The rules are not final, but are the starting point for negotiations. The proposals will be taken forward in Council and the European Parliament, and the UK will continue to engage fully in that process, where we will robustly defend Britain's interest.

The UK already requires that subsidiaries of large foreign financial firms in London are well capitalised, meeting local capital and liquidity requirements.

■ Children: Poverty

Dan Jarvis: [54871]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with external organisations on the effect of the Autumn Statement 2016 on child poverty.

Dan Jarvis: [54872]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of the Autumn Statement 2016 on child poverty.

Mr David Gauke:

This Government is committed to tackling the root causes of disadvantage and poverty, and not just the symptoms. The Government have introduced two new measures that will drive real action on worklessness and educational attainment – the two areas that we know can make the biggest difference to disadvantaged children and their families. The Government will publish a report on these measures by March 2017.

HM Treasury ministers and officials have meetings with a wide variety of organisations in the public and private sectors as part of the process of policy development and delivery.

Details of ministerial and permanent secretary meetings with external organisations on departmental business are published on a quarterly basis at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-ministers-meetings-hospitality-gifts-and-overseas-travel>

The Government continues to perform all its legal duties with respect to equalities.

■ Credit Cards: Fees and Charges

Jim Shannon:

[54238]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions his Department has had with credit card companies on changes to the charges which apply to people using their cards.

Simon Kirby:

Treasury Ministers and officials meet with a wide range of companies and organisations to discuss relevant issues.

Details of ministerial meetings with external organisations on departmental business are published on a quarterly basis and are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-ministers-meetings-hospitality-gifts-and-overseas-travel>

■ Death: Weather

Dan Jarvis:

[54873]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of the Autumn Statement 2016 on excess winter deaths.

Mr David Gauke:

The Government is determined to ensure that the NHS is focused on delivering for patients this winter. The NHS does extensive preparation for winter every year and takes such preparations very seriously. This year, for example, NHS England has made provision for winter preparedness funding of £400m, and has launched with Public Health England a national campaign to help guide patients and the public on how to keep healthy and safe during the winter season. Flu vaccinations have also begun earlier than in recent years, with over 5 million jabs having already been administered. As part of this, for the first time ever, children in year 3 will be offered the flu vaccine – meaning an additional 600,000 children will be protected this winter, making this the largest flu vaccination programme to date. The Department of Health is also working with the NHS and social care leaders to deliver the A&E Improvement Plan and ensure that appropriate staffing levels are in place throughout the Christmas and New Year periods.

Additionally, the Cold Weather Plan brings together national and local government, NHS England and the social care system to reduce cold-related harm. The Government also provides Winter Fuel Payments, Cold Weather Payments and the Warm Home Discount to help the elderly and vulnerable keep warm over winter. More broadly, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer outlined at the Autumn Statement, the Government remains committed to the spending plans for the NHS outlined at the Spending Review 2015. The NHS will receive £10 billion a year more in government funding by 2020-21 than in 2014-15. This is a significant investment and will help to ease the pressures on hospitals and GPs.

■ Domestic Visits: Copeland

Mr Jamie Reed: [\[54674\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he next plans to visit Copeland constituency.

Simon Kirby:

The Chancellor will visit constituencies across the UK in due course. All his visits are recorded in the transparency data published on gov.uk.

■ Economic Growth

Ben Howlett: [\[907552\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to support economic growth outside London and the South East.

Simon Kirby:

Creating an economy that works for everyone is a key priority of this Government. At the Autumn Statement, the government announced allocations worth £1.8bn from the Local Growth Fund to all English regions, including £191 million for the South West. This is on top of the £230.7 million the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership have already received. We are investing more than £100 billion in infrastructure across the UK over the course of this Parliament, whilst devolution deals are giving areas the tools they need to make the right economic decisions. This includes the government's deal with the West of England.

Mrs Anne-Marie Trevelyan: [\[907560\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to support economic growth outside London and the South East.

Simon Kirby:

Creating an economy that works for everyone is a key priority of this Government. At the Autumn Statement, the government announced allocations worth £1.8bn from the Local Growth Fund to all English regions, including £556 million for the North of England. This is on top of the £329.9 million the North East LEP have already received. We remain committed to the Northern Powerhouse and Midlands Engine and are investing £13 billion in transport across the North over the course of this parliament.

Kevin Hollinrake: [\[907561\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to support economic growth outside London and the South East.

Simon Kirby:

Creating an economy that works for everyone is a key priority of this Government. At the Autumn Statement, the government announced allocations worth £1.8bn from the Local Growth Fund to all English regions, including £556 million for the North of England. This is on top of the £122.2 million York, North Yorkshire and Humber LEP have already received. We remain committed to the Northern Powerhouse and Midlands

Engine and are investing £13 billion in transport across the North over the course of this parliament.

■ **Economic Growth: Midlands**

Jack Dromey: [\[54824\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, when the Government plans to publish the Midlands Engine strategy.

Mr David Gauke:

As announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer at the Autumn Statement, the Midlands Engine strategy will be published shortly.

■ **Equitable Life Assurance Society: Compensation**

Mr Christopher Chope: [\[54772\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Ministerial Statement of 18 November 2016, HCWS 269, if he will ensure that the £53.9 million due to policy holders who could not be paid will be allocated and distributed among other former Equitable Life policy holders.

Simon Kirby:

As announced in Summer Budget 2015, and after more than four years of operation, the Equitable Life Payment Scheme is now closed. As a result the Payment Scheme is in the process of winding down. I will meet with a delegation of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Justice for Equitable Life Policy Holders.

■ **Financial Services: Euro**

Stephen Timms: [\[54075\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what his policy is on maintaining euro-denominated clearing in the UK after the UK leaves the EU; and if he will make a statement.

Mr David Gauke:

As previously stated by the Chancellor during Treasury Oral questions on 25 October 2016, euro-denominated clearing forms an important part of the overall financial structure in London. For financial services in particular, securing the best possible deal means recognising the importance of access to EU markets. The Government will keep on doing what it takes to see the UK's financial industry remains a world leader.

■ **Fiscal Policy: Disability**

Marie Rimmer: [\[907551\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that people with disabilities are not disproportionately affected by the Government's fiscal policies.

Mr David Gauke:

The Government has protected the value of disability benefits, exempting these payments from the uprating freeze and exempting those in receipt of them from the benefit cap.

Since 2010, real-terms spending on disability benefits has increased by more than £3bn, and disability spending will be higher in every year to 2020, compared to both 2010 and today.

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[907554\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that people with disabilities are not disproportionately affected by the Government's fiscal policies.

Mr David Gauke:

The Government has protected the value of disability benefits, exempting these payments from the uprating freeze and exempting those in receipt of them from the benefit cap.

Since 2010, real-terms spending on disability benefits has increased by more than £3bn, and disability spending will be higher in every year to 2020, compared to both 2010 and today.

■ Fiscal Policy: Females

Liz McInnes:

[\[907562\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to ensure that women are not disproportionately affected by the Government's fiscal policies.

Jane Ellison:

The Government is helping more women than ever before to start businesses and get the support they need to work.

In the last parliament, 2.2 million women were taken out of income tax. This year's increase in the personal allowance will lift over 680,000 further people out of income tax by 2017/18, of whom over 60% will be women.

Around two thirds of those who will benefit from the National Living Wage are estimated to be women.

The planned doubling of the free childcare entitlement for working families with three- and four-year-olds is worth up to £5,000 per child per year.

It is also equally important for the future finances of both women and men that the Government remains committed to tackling the deficit and strengthening the economy.

■ Housing Benefit: Young People

Graham Jones:

[R] [\[907558\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the savings to the public purse which will accrue from changes in housing benefit for people under 21 years of age.

Mr David Gauke:

The Government is ending automatic entitlement to the housing element of Universal Credit – which is gradually replacing Housing Benefit – for out-of-work 18-21 years olds. This is forecast to save £100m over this Parliament.

■ Local Enterprise Partnerships: West Midlands

Jack Dromey:

[\[54826\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to publish the amount of funding the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership will receive under the Growth Deal announced in paragraph 3.49 of the Autumn Statement 2016.

Mr David Gauke:

The Autumn Statement announced that the government will award £1.8 billion to Local Enterprise Partnerships across England. LEPs in the Midlands will receive a total of £392 million. A further £556 million will go to the North of England, £151 million to the East of England, £492 million to London and the South East, and £191 million to the South West. Awards to individual LEPs will be announced in the coming months.

■ Low Pay

Mr Stephen Hepburn:

[\[907555\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the number of people receiving low pay.

Simon Kirby:

This government is giving low paid workers a pay rise with the National Living Wage set to rise to £7.50 in April. And we are reforming the welfare system to ensure it always pays to earn more. But in the longer term raising productivity is key to higher pay, which is why we're investing in innovation and infrastructure.

■ Overseas Aid

Patrick Grady:

[\[907557\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much and what proportion of public spending from departments other than the Department for International Development will be classified as official development assistance in 2016-17 for the purpose of the International Development Act 2002.

Mr David Gauke:

Based on Spending Review 2015 assumptions, departments other than the Department for International Development will spend £2.51 billion on Official Development

Assistance. This is approximately 18% of DEL spending and does not include Cross-Government Funds, some of which may be spent by DFID. Provisional spending on ODA for 2016 will be published in Statistics on International Development in Spring 2017.

Departments can spend Official Development Assistance under legal bases other than the International Development Act 2002.

■ Pensions

Natalie McGarry: [\[53996\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to integrate a state pension summary into the pensions dashboard.

Simon Kirby:

The aim of a pensions dashboard is to enable savers to see all their pension savings digitally and in one place. For many people, state pension will form an important part of their overall retirement income.

The Government is working closely with industry in designing and delivering a pensions dashboard by 2019 and will continue to explore how and when we can make state pension information available as part of this.

Natalie McGarry: [\[53997\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the pensions dashboard has functionality built in to prevent people from overspending their lump sums.

Simon Kirby:

The aim of a pensions dashboard is to enable savers to see all their pension savings digitally and in one place.

We will work closely with industry in designing and delivering a pensions dashboard by 2019. This will include looking at a range of potential options and features which could form part of any pensions dashboard.

The Government's Pension Wise service provides free, impartial guidance to people seeking to access their pension savings, including help on making their money last.

■ Public Expenditure

Dan Jarvis: [\[54874\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish the full analysis undertaken by his Department's tax and benefit microsimulation model on the Autumn Statement 2016.

Mr David Gauke:

The Government published analysis showing the impact of taxation, welfare and public spending decisions taken at Autumn Statement 2016. This distributional analysis used HM Treasury's microsimulation model.

This analysis can be found at:

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

■ **Public Expenditure: Scotland**

Alan Brown: [54717]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Autumn Statement 2016, Table 2.1, line 32, what proportion of that total spend is subject to Barnett consequentials; and what the subsequent value is of Barnett consequential funding allocated to Scotland.

Alan Brown: [54735]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Autumn Statement 2016, table 2.1, line 10, what proportion of that total spend is subject to Barnett consequentials; and what the subsequent value is of Barnett consequential funding allocated to Scotland.

Alan Brown: [54736]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Autumn Statement 2016, table 2.1, line 9, what proportion of that total spend is subject to Barnett consequentials; and what the subsequent value is of Barnett consequential funding allocated to Scotland.

Alan Brown: [54737]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Autumn Statement 2016, table 2.1, line 8, what proportion of that total spend is subject to Barnett consequentials; and what the subsequent value is of Barnett consequential funding allocated to Scotland.

Alan Brown: [54738]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Autumn Statement 2016, table 2.1, line 16, what proportion of that total spend is subject to Barnett consequentials; and what the subsequent value is of Barnett consequential funding allocated to Scotland.

Alan Brown: [54739]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Autumn Statement 2016, table 2.1, line 31, what proportion of that total spend is subject to Barnett consequentials; and what the subsequent value is of Barnett consequential funding allocated to Scotland.

Mr David Gauke:

The lines in the Autumn Statement document which the Hon. Member's questions refer to consolidate funding allocations in relation to some broad areas of government responsibility, such as housing and transport. However, at fiscal events such as Budget and Autumn Statement, the Barnett formula is applied to individual spending allocations. The table below sets out the Barnett consequentials for the Scottish Government of spending decisions taken at Autumn Statement 2016 within each of the categories highlighted by the references in the Hon. Member's questions.

| Measure | UK Government spending Subject to Barnett Consequentials | | | | Barnett Consequential for Scotland | | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| | 2017-18 | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2017-18 | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 |
| | £million | | | | £million | | | |
| National Productivity Investment Fund | | | | | | | | |
| Housing (Capital) | 745 | 1,225 | 1,722 | 1,645 | 73 | 120 | 169 | 161 |
| Transport (Capital) | 354 | 619 | 539 | 823 | 35 | 60 | 52 | 79 |
| Telecoms (Capital) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Right to Buy: expand pilot (Resource) | 150 | 50 | 0 | - | 15 | 5 | 0 | - |
| MoJ Prison Safety (Resource) | 113 | 216 | 166 | - | 10 | 20 | 15 | - |
| Grammar Schools expansion (Capital) | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | | 5 | 5 | 5 |

■ Science and Technology: Investment

Suella Fernandes:

[\[907559\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what fiscal steps he is taking to encourage investment in innovative UK science and technology projects.

Simon Kirby:

- As my RHF the Prime Minister announced last Monday, the government is significantly increasing investment in R&D, rising to an extra £2 billion a year by 2020-21.
- This includes an Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund, which will support collaborations between businesses and the UK's world-leading science base.
- This will ensure the UK remains an attractive place for businesses to invest in innovative research, and that the next generation of discoveries is made, developed and produced in Britain.

■ State Retirement Pensions: Females

Yvonne Fovargue:

[\[907550\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what fiscal steps his Department is taking to assist women born in the 1950s who are affected by changes in state pension age equalisation.

Jane Ellison:

This issue was debated during the passage of the Pensions Act 2011 and the Government made concessions worth £1.1bn.

As a result, no women will experience increases of more than 18 months. In fact, for 81% of all the women affected by the changes, the increase to their State Pension age will not exceed 12 months.

The Government has no plans to introduce further transitional arrangements.

■ Tax Evasion

Rebecca Long Bailey:

[\[53985\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many civil or criminal cases against people related to tax evasion have been made as a result of information supplied by the (a) Child Maintenance Group and (b) parents whose child maintenance awards have been directly affected by such evasion.

Jane Ellison:

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) does not centrally collate the management information that would be required to provide the requested data.

■ Taxation: Forms

Stephen Timms:

[\[54672\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many P800 adjustments were issued to individual taxpayers to correct for an over or under-payment of income tax in (a) 2010-11, (b) 2011-12 and (c) 2012-13.

Jane Ellison:

At the end of every tax year HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) electronically reviews all individual PAYE records to see whether or not the correct amount of tax and National Insurance Contributions for the year has been paid. Where there is an under or overpayment, HMRC notifies the individual through issuing form P800.

For 2012-13, of the 45.3 million accounts reviewed, there were 5.65 million P800 forms issued. HMRC does not hold comparable figures for the tax years prior to 2012-13.

■ Treasury: Breastfeeding

Alison Thewliss:

[\[54385\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what (a) facilities and (b) other support his Department provides for (i) visitors and (ii) staff for (A) lactating mothers and (B) the expressing of breast milk.

Simon Kirby:

The Treasury has one first aid room and two recovery rooms in its London office and one in its Norwich office. These rooms can be used by members of staff and visitors who are lactating mothers and those who need to express their milk.

The rooms are private, kept locked when not in use and are equipped with refrigerators where the mothers can safely store their breast milk. Also provided in these rooms are a sink with running hot and cold water (in the First Aid room only), antibacterial wipes, paper towels, comfortable seats and a bed if needed to rest. The rooms are heated but are also provided with electric cooling fans should they be required. Breast feeding mothers are given time to express their milk whilst at work.

There are First Aiders and an occupational health adviser on site should they be required to provide other support. The Treasury also provides e-learning and risk assessment for new and expectant mothers to ensure their health and safety whilst at work.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS■ **Bishop of London****Sir Peter Bottomley:**[\[54965\]](#)

To ask the right hon. Member for Meriden, representing the Church Commissioners, if the Church Commissioners will make it their policy that the next nominee for the Bishop of London will ordain both women and men as priests.

Dame Caroline Spelman:

The nomination to the See of London is a matter for the Crown Nominations Commission rather than the Church Commissioners. Nominations to episcopal sees are made within the context of the House of Bishops' Declaration on Ministry of Bishops and Priests, which expressly recognises that those who, on grounds of theological conviction, are unable to receive the ministry of women bishops and priests continue to be within the spectrum and teaching and tradition of the Anglican Communion, and affirms the importance of there continuing to be bishops within the Church of England to enable ministry to be provided to such persons. However, as part of the usual consultation process for nominations to diocesan sees, anyone wishing to comment on the needs of the vacant diocese or the wider church is invited to write to the Prime Minister's Appointments Secretary and the Archbishops' Secretary for Appointments. Any such submissions will inform the Commission's work.

■ **Clergy: Peterborough****Michael Fabricant:**[\[54985\]](#)

To ask the right hon. Member for Meriden, representing the Church Commissioners, what assessment the Church of England has made of the appropriateness of procedures and practice relating to the Dean of Peterborough Cathedral standing down.

Dame Caroline Spelman:

On 22 July 2016 Very Revd Charles Taylor announced his resignation from the Deanery of Peterborough with effect from 2 October 2016. His farewell service took place at the Cathedral on 1 October 2016. There has been no reason to review the appropriateness of procedures and practice relating to the resignation.

In July the Bishop of Peterborough announced his decision to hold a formal Bishop's visitation of the cathedral to investigate and report on the financial management and the overall governance of the Cathedral. At the time the Bishop noted that "The Cathedral is going through a cash flow crisis. It is taking too long to pay some bills, and paying the staff at the end of the month has been a close thing twice recently." In response to requests from the Bishop and cathedral Chapter the Church Commissioners have provided advice, support, and financial backup to help the cathedral in this situation. Whilst some progress is being made, this week the Commissioners intend to increase the loan facility they have made available to the cathedral.

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**■ Affordable Housing****Mr Jim Cunningham:**[\[54024\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the number of affordable homes built in each parliamentary constituency in each of the last five years.

Gavin Barwell:

The information is not available at constituency level. Statistics on affordable homes delivered within each local authority are published in Live Table 1008C at the link below. The figures include new build and acquisitions.

Source: [Tables 1006 to 1009: additional social rent and affordable rent dwellings](#) ; sheet "Live Table 1008C"

■ Communities and Local Government: Departmental Responsibilities**Catherine West:**[\[53887\]](#)

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

Mr Marcus Jones:

The Prime Minister has instructed all departments to identify potential opportunities that will arise in their areas from EU Exit. The Government is united in its ambition to deliver a successful withdrawal from the EU and a new relationship with Europe, and departments will work together to deliver this.

■ Communities and Local Government: Staff

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[53940\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what the cost of the Cities and Local Growth Unit has been in each year of its operation.

Andrew Percy:

As indicated in the Answer of 13 April 2016 to Question 33796, the Department has estimated the running costs of Cities and Local Growth Unit for 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16 to be £2.52 million, £6.88 million and £9.57 million respectively. The figure is low in 2013-14 as the Unit was established three months before the end of the financial year. The Unit's costs for April to October 2016 are £5.14 million. These figures include pay and non-pay costs.

■ Communities and Local Government: West Midlands

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[54022\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 17 November 2016 to Question 52835, how many full-time equivalent civil servants employed within the Cities and Local Growth Unit are based in the West Midlands.

Andrew Percy:

There are currently 13.1 full-time equivalent civil servants employed within the Cities and Local Growth Unit who are based in the West Midlands.

■ Homelessness: Greater Manchester

Rebecca Long Bailey: [\[53981\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the level of homeless need in Greater Manchester.

Rebecca Long Bailey: [\[53982\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what estimates he has made of the number of people who were homeless in (a) Salford and (b) Greater Manchester in each year since 2010.

Rebecca Long Bailey: [\[53983\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what information his Department holds on the number of homeless people in (a) Salford and (b) Greater Manchester with a (i) disability and (ii) mental health condition.

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. From 2010/11 to 2016/17, councils in Greater

Manchester received a combined total of £18,459,856 in Homelessness Prevention Funding.

The Department has recently launched a £20 million programme to establish a network of ambitious Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer areas to develop innovative new approaches to prevent homelessness. Greater Manchester has agreed to be one of the early adopters of this approach.

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.

Statistics on homelessness acceptances for each local authority in England can be found in live table 784:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness#homelessness-summary-local-authority-level-tables>

Homelessness statistics record those households who are accepted as homeless and owed the statutory homelessness duty by priority need category. The statistics record the lead reason someone is vulnerable and in priority need, such as those vulnerable as a result of disability or mental health condition. Of the households who are in priority need as a result of dependent children then this will be recorded as the lead reason, rather than any disability or mental health condition they may additionally have.

■ Local Government Finance: Birmingham

Jack Dromey:

[54822]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, when he plans to publish funding allocations for Birmingham City Council.

Mr Marcus Jones:

My Department has already published local authority allocations for each year of this Parliament as part of the four year funding offer. Birmingham City Council is among the 97% of councils that have accepted this offer. The government will soon consult on a statutory provisional local government finance settlement for 2017-18 in the normal way.

■ Mayors: Yorkshire and the Humber

Greg Mulholland:

[54096]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what recent discussions he has had with local authorities in Yorkshire on creating a Mayor of Yorkshire role.

Andrew Percy:

The Government has made clear that a significant devolution of powers and funding to a local area requires the accountability provided by an elected Mayor. We have been equally clear that devolution is a bottom-up process, and that while devolution must take place across a functional economic area, the precise geography is in the first place a matter for local areas. Within Yorkshire, we remain committed to working in partnership with local authorities to implement devolution for the Sheffield City Region, which includes the creation of an elected Mayor.

Night Shelters**Rebecca Long Bailey:**[\[53980\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what plans his Department has for the future support of voluntary night shelters.

Mr Marcus Jones:

Voluntary shelters, in partnership with local authorities and the wider homelessness sector, can play an important role in supporting vulnerable homeless people, especially during the winter months. It is important that while providing homeless people with somewhere safe to stay, projects also direct people to the support they need to recover from their homelessness crisis in the long term.

But nobody should ever have to face a homelessness crisis in the first place. That is why in October, we made a £40 million Homelessness Prevention Programme available to local authorities to provide an innovative approach to tackling homelessness, with prevention at its heart. This includes two funds specifically targeted at preventing rough sleeping, and providing support to rough sleepers with the most complex needs. At Autumn Statement, we committed a further £10 million to the rough sleeping fund, bringing the total programme to £50 million.

Second Homes**Dr Sarah Wollaston:**[\[53987\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, with reference to paragraph 6.6 of the Autumn Statement 2015, if he will publish the application process for applying for extra funding for local authorities in areas affected by high levels of second home ownership.

Dr Sarah Wollaston:[\[53988\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, with reference to paragraph 6.6 of the Autumn Statement 2015, when his Department plans to make available the proposed extra funding for communities affected by high levels of second home ownership.

Gavin Barwell:

The Department for Communities and Local Government remains committed to providing the funding indicated at Budget 2016 to support community led housing in

areas affected by high levels of second home ownership. We will announce the allocation process for this funding shortly.

■ Social Rented Housing

Tulip Siddiq: [53877]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, whether it will be the responsibility of local authorities to collect information on household income in relation to the introduction of the pay to stay scheme.

Tulip Siddiq: [53878]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how many housing associations have indicated that they intend to introduce the pay to stay provisions of the Housing and Planning Act 2016.

Tulip Siddiq: [53879]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if he will publish his Department's estimate of the administrative costs to local authorities of the introduction of the pay to stay scheme.

Tulip Siddiq: [53880]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, when the guidance on implementation of the pay to stay scheme will be made available to local authorities; and if he will ensure this is before the introduction of that scheme in April 2017.

Gavin Barwell:

The Government's position was made clear in my Written Statement of 21 November.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2016-11-21/HCWS274/>.

■ Social Rented Housing: South East

Henry Smith: [53875]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if he will increase the pay to stay income threshold for South East England to that of Greater London.

Gavin Barwell:

The Government's position was made clear in my Written Statement of 21 November.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2016-11-21/HCWS274>

■ West Midlands Combined Authority: Finance

Jack Dromey: [54823]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how much grant funding West Midlands Combined Authority will receive in financial year 2017-18 for (a)

adult education, (b) transport, (c) the Work and Health Programme, (d) business support and (e) any other sources of funding by grant.

Andrew Percy:

The West Midlands Combined Authority will receive a total of £70 million grant funding in 2017/18. This is separate to the funding that local authorities receive individually and is broken down as follows:

- (a) Adult education: £Nil
- (b) Transport: £33.5 million
- (c) Work and Health Programme: £Nil
- (d) Business support: £Nil
- (e) Any other sources of funding by grant: £36.5 million (Gain share)

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Broadband

Louise Haigh: [\[54820\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what recent estimate she has made of the number of households capable of receiving 30 megabits a second.

Louise Haigh: [\[54835\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what recent estimate she has made of the number of households consistently receiving speeds of 30 megabits a second or above.

Matt Hancock:

Ofcom has reported that in summer 2016, 88% of premises were capable of receiving speeds of more than 30Mbps. Thinkbroadband report current availability at 30Mbps for 91.42% of premises, with 92% being able to receive speeds above 24Mbps.

■ London Eye: Prices

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[53930\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, if she will take steps to encourage the operators of the London Eye to increase the affordability of that attraction's prices for lower income families.

Tracey Crouch:

Tourism should be accessible for all however it is not for us to intervene in the pricing strategies of private organisations and their attractions.

We believe in the benefits of free access for all to permanent collections of National Museums and galleries.

■ Mobile Broadband

Grant Shapps: [\[54044\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment her Department has made of the potential use of macro hot spot roaming in areas that suffer from poor mobile coverage.

Matt Hancock:

Improving mobile connectivity across the UK, including in rural and hard to reach areas is a priority for the Government. The licence obligations arising from the December 2014 agreement have locked in investment of £5 billion and are delivering improved coverage across the UK with Ofcom's Communications Market Report (August 2016). Our regulatory reforms to mobile planning laws and proposed reform of the Electronic Communications Code will support further investment and improvements. Roaming was considered in the 2014 consultation and rejected in favour of the legally binding licence obligations on each MNO to provide voice/SMS text coverage to at least 90% of the UK's landmass. Roaming would discourage investment and potentially increase complete not spots.

■ Mobile Phones

Grant Shapps: [\[54045\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what procedures are in place for consumer compensation if the 90 per cent geographic voice coverage target set by Ofcom across the UK mobile network is not achieved by the end of 2017.

Matt Hancock:

Improving mobile connectivity across the UK is a priority for the Government, and the licence obligations on mobile operators are legally binding and enforceable by Ofcom. The Government's Digital Economy Bill, currently going through Parliament, will strengthen Ofcom's enforcement powers by enabling it to issue fines to mobile phone companies that fail to meet their licence obligations.

Grant Shapps: [\[54597\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what steps the Government is taking to make operating in areas with poor or non-existent mobile coverage commercially viable for mobile operators.

Matt Hancock:

Improving mobile connectivity across the UK, especially in those areas where coverage is poor, is a priority for the Government. The licence obligations arising from the December 2014 agreement have locked in investment of £5 billion and are delivering improved coverage across the UK.

To support industry, our regulatory reforms to mobile planning laws in England, which came into force on 24 November, and the proposed reform of the Electronic Communications Code, currently being taken forward through the Digital Economy Bill, are making it easier and cheaper for mobile operators to roll out new infrastructure, and extend or replace existing infrastructure. This will help tackle not-spots and deliver improved connectivity that people need across the UK.

■ Mobile Phones: Standards

Grant Shapps: [\[54043\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, if she will make it her policy to enable Ofcom to fine mobile operators who do not provide the promised level of service.

Matt Hancock:

Ofcom has powers to set general conditions that it considers appropriate for protecting the interests of the end-users of public electronic communications services. Breaches of conditions are enforceable by Ofcom. The Digital Economy Bill makes explicit Ofcom's power to require communications providers to adhere to defined automatic compensation regimes.

■ Social Networking

Tom Watson: [\[53857\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the implications for her Department's policies of trends in the level of dissemination of fake news by social media; and if she will make a statement.

Matt Hancock:

We are currently considering the implications of the dissemination of fake news on social media sites.

■ Television: Ethnic Groups

Chi Onwurah: [\[54773\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what comparative assessment she has made of trends in levels of television programming by and for BME groups in the US and UK.

Matt Hancock:

The Government has not made a comparative assessment of trends in the levels of television programming by and for BME groups in the US and the UK. The Government is committed to diversity and social mobility in the broadcasting sector. Ministers have hosted a number of roundtables to encourage the broadcasting industry, and other creative industries, to involve more people from BME groups in making content both in front and behind the camera and to ensure that their content and programming serves all audiences. The Government has, as part of the BBC's updated Royal Charter, given the BBC new diversity duties to ensure it better serves diverse audiences including BME groups.

DEFENCE■ **Antiship Missiles****Wayne David:**[\[54839\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he plans to replace the GWS 60/Harpoon Block 1C anti-ship missiles when they are withdrawn from Royal Navy service at the end of 2016.

Harriett Baldwin:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 24 November 2016 to Question number 53477 to the hon. Member for Portsmouth South (Mrs Flick Drummond).

Attachments:

1. Guided Weapons [Hansard Extract 24 November 2016, HOC 53477.docx]

■ **Burma: Military Aid****Valerie Vaz:**[\[54867\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has undertaken a review of offering further training to the Burmese military to take account of recent serious human rights violations by the Burmese military against Rohingya civilians in Rakhine State and against ethnic Kachin civilians in Kachin State and northern Shan State, Burma.

Valerie Vaz:[\[54868\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what information his Department holds on whether any Burmese Army soldiers who have received training from the UK are involved in military operations against the Rohingya in Rakhine State.

Valerie Vaz:[\[54899\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has undertaken any evaluation of how training the Burmese military has led to improvements in human rights.

Mike Penning:

The Ministry of Defence does not provide combat training to the Burmese military. We do provide educational training to the Burmese military in the form of programmes delivered by the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom on the role of the military in a democracy, leadership and English language training. The British Government does not hold information on whether any Burmese Army soldiers who have received educational training from the UK are involved in military operations against the Rohingya in Rakhine State, nor have we undertaken any evaluation of how educational training provided to the Burmese military has led to improvements in human rights. Our programme of engagement with the Burmese military remains under continual review.

■ HMS Illustrious

Dr Julian Lewis: [\[54153\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what his policy is on assessing the relative merits of (a) scrapping and (b) preserving the aircraft carrier Illustrious for the nation; and if he will make a statement.

Harriett Baldwin:

HMS Illustrious retired from service with the Royal Navy on 1 August 2014. In October 2013 the Disposal Services Authority (DSA) announced a competition to seek innovative reuse bids to retain the ship in the UK, with part or all of it developed for heritage purposes. This competition was completed in November 2015, but no suitable bidder was identified. Recycling was the only remaining viable option.

Dr Julian Lewis: [\[54154\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the contract with the Turkish company to scrap the aircraft carrier Illustrious makes provision for that contract to be set aside if a viable bid is made to preserve it for the nation.

Harriett Baldwin:

While the Disposal Service Authority Notice of Sale for the recycling contract did include a statement that '*The issue of this notice is not a commitment by the Secretary of State of Defence ... to commit to a sale as a result of this notice and this process may be discontinued at any time should a ... heritage option be forthcoming.*', this statement only related to the process of selling the vessel, which was completed when the contract was awarded in August 2016. No heritage bids were received in response to the Notice of Sale.

Dr Julian Lewis: [\[54155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the letter from Artis Legal, bidding to preserve the aircraft carrier Illustrious, what obligations exist for the Dispersal Services Authority to obtain the best financial return to the public purse; and if he will make a statement.

Harriett Baldwin:

The Disposal Services Authority is mandated to obtain the best possible return to the UK taxpayer.

Dr Julian Lewis: [\[54156\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he plans to respond to the letter from Artis Legal including a bid to purchase the aircraft carrier Illustrious by a consortium of UK businessmen.

Harriett Baldwin:

I replied to this letter on 22 November 2016.

Dr Julian Lewis:

[\[54157\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will make it his policy not to approve the departure to Turkey from Portsmouth of the aircraft carrier *Illustrious* until the bid to purchase it for preservation has been fully considered and a decision made on its viability.

Harriett Baldwin:

The departure of the hulk of *Illustrious* from HM Naval Base Portsmouth will allow the Royal Navy to prepare for the arrival of the first of the Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft carriers, HMS *Queen Elizabeth*, in 2017.

We have considered the merits of the outline proposal made by a business consortium to purchase *Illustrious* and concluded that it is not sufficiently viable to cancel the sale of the vessel for recycling.

■ MOD Caledonia

Douglas Chapman:

[\[54854\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what discussions he has had with Fife Council on the disposal of MoD Caledonia.

Douglas Chapman:

[\[54928\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what discussions he has had with Fife Council on MoD Caledonia and the reallocation of land use in the Fife Plan to include housing on that site.

Mark Lancaster:

"A Better Defence Estate" is a military-led review. Ministry of Defence (MOD) officials wrote to Fife Council to inform them of the Department's plans to optimise the estate; as set out in "A Better Defence Estate", and the impact upon MOD Caledonia. The letter sets out the potential disposal timeframe and invites engagement at official level. Officials will engage fully with Fife Council, prior to the sites disposal in 2022, in order to understand how the site could best support the local area.

■ Railways: Veterans

Justin Tomlinson:

[\[54836\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will make it his policy to establish a separate railcard for armed forces veterans as part of his policy initiatives arising from the Armed Forces Covenant.

Justin Tomlinson:

[\[54837\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will make it his policy to extend the criteria for the use of the HM Forces railcard to veterans.

Mark Lancaster:

HM Forces Railcard is governed by a contract between the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC) and the Ministry of Defence. The provision of the railcard is a concession and not a condition of service. The terms and conditions are periodically

reviewed by the Department and ATOC, and there are currently no plans to extend the current concession or establish a separate railcard for Service veterans.

■ **Rolls-Royce**

Mr Roger Godsiff: [\[54219\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 18 November 2016 to Question 52514, how many meetings on what dates since December 2013 involving routine engagement between Ministers and officials of his Department and Rolls Royce included a discussion of the Serious Fraud Office investigation into Rolls Royce.

Harriett Baldwin:

Available Ministry of Defence records indicate that the Serious Fraud Office investigation into Rolls-Royce was referred to during one routine meeting between the company and the then Minister for Defence Equipment, Support and Technology on 5 March 2014.

It should be noted that this was a reference to the existence of the investigation, but that there was no discussion of the substance of the investigation itself.

Records of meetings between Rolls-Royce and defence officials are not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

■ **Warships: Shipbuilding**

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[54821\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, for what reasons publication of the National Shipbuilding Strategy has been delayed.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[54838\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he plans to publish the National Shipbuilding Strategy.

Harriett Baldwin:

I am delighted that Sir John Parker has submitted his independent report to inform the UK National Shipbuilding Strategy. The Chief Secretary and I received Sir John's report ahead of the Autumn Statement, as promised at the Budget 2016 (HC 901, article 2.284).

The publication of Sir John's report was not delayed. The Government has today published Sir John's report and covering letter in full, and copies have been placed in the Library of the House.

We will study Sir John's recommendations and will publish a full and considered response, and implementation plan, in spring 2017. This response will be the National Shipbuilding Strategy.

EDUCATION**■ Apprentices**

Helen Jones: [54355]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate she has made of the time it will take to process all applications for the new Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers.

Helen Jones: [54357]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many responses have been received to the consultation on the proposed Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers; and if she will publish all such responses.

Robert Halfon:

The new Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers will encourage diversity and competition in the provider market, supporting quality and employer choice. In August, the Skills Funding Agency published a discussion paper on proposals for the Register and sought feedback through a range of channels, including 597 responses through an online survey and focus groups with employers and providers. On 25 October 2016, we published the final proposals for the Register and set out how we have taken on board feedback from employers and providers:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/register-of-apprenticeship-training-providers-policy-information>

The Register opened for applications on 25 October. The first selection of providers will be drawn from those that successfully complete their applications by 25 November. Results will be available to applicants in early March 2017.

■ Apprentices: Bristol South

Karin Smyth: [54214]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many (a) men and (b) women in Bristol South constituency began apprenticeships in (i) construction skills, (ii) engineering, (ii) IT and telecoms, (iv) IT user, (v) hairdressing, (vi) beauty therapy, (vii) health and social care and (viii) retail in each of the last five years.

Robert Halfon:

The table below shows the number of apprenticeship starts over the last five academic years for men and women in the Bristol South constituency in the following frameworks: construction skills, engineering, IT and telecoms, IT user, hairdressing, beauty therapy, health and social care, and retail.

Table- Apprenticeship starts on selected frameworks by gender, Bristol South, 2011/12 to 2015/16

| FEMALE | | | | | | MALE | | | | |
|-------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Frameworks | 2011/12 | 2012/13 | 2013/14 | 2014/15 | 2015/16 | 2011/12 | 2012/13 | 2013/14 | 2014/15 | 2015/16 |
| Beauty Therapy | 10 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Construction - Skills | - | - | - | - | - | 60 | 70 | 50 | 60 | 80 |
| Engineering | - | - | - | - | - | 10 | 10 | 20 | 20 | 20 |
| Hairdressing | 70 | 50 | 50 | 40 | 40 | 10 | 10 | 10 | - | 10 |
| Health and Social Care | 160 | 140 | 190 | 200 | 140 | 30 | 20 | 30 | 20 | 30 |
| IT and Telecoms Professionals | - | - | - | - | 10 | 20 | 10 | 20 | 10 | 20 |
| IT User | - | 10 | - | - | - | - | 10 | - | - | - |
| Retail | 60 | 30 | 20 | 20 | 10 | 40 | 30 | 10 | 10 | 10 |

Note:

Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

A '-' indicates there have been less than 5 apprenticeship starts

Data on apprenticeship starts by framework and gender at national level is available for the 2002/03 to 2014/15 academic years at the following link:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/534296/apprenticeships-starts-by-framework-level-and-gender.xls

■ **Apprentices: Females**

Karin Smyth:

[54215]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to improve the take-up of apprenticeships by women in construction, IT and engineering.

Robert Halfon:

We are continuing to challenge perceptions of apprenticeships through our marketing and campaigns. We consider women within any marketing activities to ensure we promote strong female role models. The female apprentices in our 'Get In Go Far'

marketing campaign work in a wide variety of sectors including print, software development and project engineering.

We are extending opportunity to all by encouraging more people, particularly girls, to study STEM subjects and take up apprenticeships in these sectors. We will be working with partners to encourage action, through apprenticeship ambassadors, STEM ambassadors and wider culture change to celebrate the value and excitement of engineering.

■ Institute for Apprenticeships

Louise Haigh: [\[54109\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether a decision has been made on the location of the new Institute for Apprenticeships.

Robert Halfon:

There is an ongoing assessment of potential sites for the Institute for Apprenticeships and a final decision will be announced shortly.

■ Pupils: Chronic Illnesses

Mr Jamie Reed: [\[54885\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many schools have been judged by Ofsted to not provide the necessary level of support to children with medical conditions in each of the last five years.

Edward Timpson:

We do not hold this information. Ofsted inspectors make graded judgements on the effectiveness of leadership and management; the quality of teaching, learning and assessment; pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare; and pupils' outcomes.

In making these judgements, inspectors will evaluate the experience of particular individuals and groups, including those with medical needs, and this will inform the overall judgment of the school. These evaluations may not always be visible in the report, as Ofsted inspectors will be careful not to identify individual pupils.

We know how important it is that children with medical conditions are supported to enjoy a full education. That is why in 2014 we introduced a new duty to require governing bodies to make arrangements to support pupils with medical conditions and have provided statutory guidance outlining schools' responsibilities in this area.

We continue to work with organisations with experience in supporting children with medical conditions to help raise awareness of the duty.

■ Teachers: Training

Tulip Siddiq: [\[54828\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many entrants to the early years initial teacher training programme received a government bursary of what amount in each year since 2013-14.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Head of Profession for Statistics for the Department is currently reviewing the data collected on early years initial teacher training. The first stage of our review into early years data has focussed on the entrants into early years initial teacher training and we are pleased to have published statistics for these in this year's initial teacher training census. The second stage of our review is focussing on outcomes, such as completion rates. We are unable to provide any data while this review is ongoing - but we will be publishing information on this in due course.

Tulip Siddiq: [\[54829\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many entrants to the early years initial teacher training programme have (a) completed, (b) withdrawn from and (c) failed to finish that programme in (i) 2013-14, (ii) 2015-16 and (iii) 2016-17.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Head of Profession for Statistics for the Department is currently reviewing the data collected on early years initial teacher training. The first stage of our review into early years data has focussed on the entrants into early years initial teacher training and we are pleased to have published statistics for these in this year's initial teacher training census. The second stage of our review is focussing on outcomes, such as completion rates. We are unable to provide any data while this review is ongoing - but we will be publishing information on this in due course.

Tulip Siddiq: [\[54830\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many new entrants of the early years initial teacher training programme received a bursary and subsequently withdrew or failed to complete the course in each year since that programme was established.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Head of Profession for Statistics for the Department is currently reviewing the data collected on early years initial teacher training. The first stage of our review into early years data has focussed on the entrants into early years initial teacher training and we are pleased to have published statistics for these in this year's initial teacher training census. The second stage of our review is focussing on outcomes, such as completion rates. We are unable to provide any data while this review is ongoing - but we will be publishing information on this in due course.

Tulip Siddiq: [\[54831\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what her Department's target number for new entrants to early years initial teacher training programme has been for each academic year

since that programme was established; and what that target is for each of the next three years.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Department has never used a workforce supply model for early years initial teacher training, and as a consequence did not define a need for new entrants in 2016/17. We have an ambition to grow the number of graduates who are entering the early years teaching profession, and make places available to meet the demand from the market.

■ Training: Standards

Helen Jones:

[\[54356\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what evidence the Skills Funding Agency will require from training providers to prove that they are a high quality training provider; and what steps will be taken to verify the information so submitted.

Robert Halfon:

The Skills Funding Agency requires organisations applying to the new Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers to supply evidence of recent Ofsted and/or QAA outcomes.

The Skills Funding Agency is also asking applicants to respond to questions about, for example, how the applicant's apprenticeship offer meets the needs of learners and employers, and engages, challenges, and inspires apprentices.

The information submitted will be evaluated according to the Agency's standard processes for evaluating applications to its training registers.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Agriculture: Subsidies

Sue Hayman:

[\[54834\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many farmers have been underpaid under the 2015 Basic Payments Scheme.

George Eustice:

The RPA said it would investigate BPS 2015 claims where there is a discrepancy between the claim information and that held on the Rural Payments Service through a planned reconciliation process. This started after the BPS 2016 application window and looked at an initial stock of 13,607 claims for England. The agency continues to review new queries as they arise.

■ Animals: Advertising

Diana Johnson:

[\[54164\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many inappropriate advertisements for animals were removed from websites as a result of work with the Pet Advertising Advisory Group and other bodies in each year since 2009-10.

George Eustice:

Defra does not keep records of the number of inappropriate advertisements for pet animals removed from websites. In 2014 the Pet Advertising Advisory Group ran a pilot exercise covering the UK over 12 months which resulted in around 130,000 inappropriate adverts being removed from websites.

■ Ash Dieback Disease

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[54544\]](#)

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 tackling the recent outbreak of ash dieback disease; and if she will make a statement.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

We are monitoring and managing ash dieback and have invested over £6 million into research.

A surveillance programme involving Government, industry, conservation groups and the public enables us to monitor the disease and to target resources effectively. Our annual programme of surveillance costs over £40k per annum

Investing in research on the development of tolerant trees is one of our key commitments in response to the disease. Ash trees have a very wide genetic diversity, and have the potential for great levels of resistance compared to other tree species that have been affected by diseases.

The Government-funded research and screening trial of 155,000 ash saplings is unprecedented in its scope and has now identified native ash trees that show tolerance to ash dieback, raising the possibility of using selective breeding to develop strains of trees that are tolerant to the disease.

■ Beaches: Standards

Derek Thomas: [\[54862\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what her plans are for replacing the EU Blue Flag Scheme to ensure the cleanliness of beaches, protection of wildlife and the enforcement of sea regulations after the UK has left the EU.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

Blue Flag is an international award certified by the Foundation for Environmental Education and is independent of the UK Government and the EU.

The Secretary of State has made clear that we will keep working to improve our environment and make sure it is protected for future generations.

■ Bovine Tuberculosis

James Gray: [\[54747\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the annual value is, excluding testing costs on farm or in a laboratory, of TB reactor salvage to the Government.

George Eustice:

Defra received £8.8m in 2015/16 in salvage receipts for TB reactor cattle.

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: EU Law

Mary Creagh: [\[54194\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 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.

George Eustice:

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.

■ Environment Protection

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[54541\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans she has for the 25 year environment plan to include accountability mechanisms to ensure that new policies from the Department for (a) Communities and Local Government, (b) Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, (c) Transport and (d) International Development are assessed as to their effect on natural capital.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

In line with our manifesto, the Government is committed to being the first generation to leave the natural environment of England in a better state than that in which we found it. We are working across Government to develop a 25 year environment plan to deliver this. It will include responsibilities for the whole of Government.

The Treasury is in the process of updating the Green Book appraisal guidance to include natural capital. This will help all Government departments take better account of the impacts on and contributions to protecting and improving the natural environment.

■ Environment Protection: Public Consultation

John Mc Nally: [\[54298\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how members of the public will be able to contribute to her Department's upcoming consultation on the 25 Year Plan for the environment.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

In line with its manifesto, the Government is committed to being the first generation to leave the natural environment of England in a better state than that in which we found it. We are developing a 25 year environment plan to deliver this.

The first step towards developing the plan will be to publish soon a consultative document open to all to contribute either online or by mail. We will use the feedback from this to help develop the full plan itself next year.

■ Fisheries: Patrol Craft

Mrs Madeleine Moon: [\[54224\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many offshore patrol vessels the UK has at its disposal to monitor fish stocks, and if she will make a statement.

Mrs Madeleine Moon: [\[54225\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans she has to increase the number of offshore patrol vessels to monitor fish stocks; and if she will make a statement.

Mrs Madeleine Moon: [\[54226\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the need for offshore patrol vessels capable of patrolling the UK's Exclusive Economic Zone once the UK leaves the EU; and if she will make a statement.

George Eustice:

The Royal Navy provides up to three vessels for the purposes of fisheries control, including the enforcement of EU fishing quotas in the offshore waters of England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Fisheries control in the waters off Scotland is the responsibility of the Scottish Government.

Cefas has one vessel which undertakes scientific research in offshore waters, including the monitoring of fish stocks.

Work is also being conducted to scope the utility of using other vessels, such as those owned and operated by Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities, for offshore monitoring.

Operating outside the Common Fisheries Policy will give us the opportunity to establish a new fisheries regime that better meets the UK's needs. We are reviewing all aspects of fisheries management, including the future requirements for patrol vessels, and will

work with stakeholders, Devolved Administrations and other Government Departments to agree the most effective way to achieve this.

■ Flood Control: Capital Investment

Sue Hayman:

[\[54833\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to paragraph 3.25 of the Autumn Statement 2016, which schemes will receive the £20 million of investment in new flood defences.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

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

The schemes are as follows;

- Burton Upon Trent Flood Alleviation Scheme,
- Otley Flood Alleviation Scheme; and
- Stainforth Dunston Hill Flood Alleviation Works.

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

■ Flood Control: Cumbria

Sue Hayman:

[\[54825\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much has been spent from the public purse on flood (a) defence and (b) prevention schemes in Cumbria in each of the last 10 years.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The table below summarises Government capital spend on flood and coastal risk management schemes in Cumbria for each year between April 2007 and March 2016. These investments included funding for flood alleviation schemes in Carlisle, completed in 2010 at a cost of £22.5 million, and Penrith, costing £5.6 million and completed in 2011. Flood alleviation schemes in Keswick and Cockermouth were also completed in 2012 and 2013 at a cost of £6 million and £4.4 million respectively.

| YEAR | GOVERNMENT CAPITAL INVESTMENT FOR CUMBRIA (IN £M) |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------|
| 2007/08 | 8.314 |
| 2008/09 | 11.354 |
| 2009/10 | 12.483 |
| 2010/11 | 9.507 |
| 2011/12 | 6.328 |

| YEAR | GOVERNMENT CAPITAL INVESTMENT FOR CUMBRIA (IN £M) |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------|
| 2012/13 | 4.291 |
| 2013/14 | 2.394 |
| 2014/15 | 2.086 |
| 2015/16 | 2.502 |

The Environment Agency does not retain historic spend data prior to 2007 which can be split by specific geographic regions consistently. This is due to different financial accounting systems being in place prior to 2007

■ Floods: West Midlands

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[54280\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what analysis her Department has made of the risk of flooding in the West Midlands; and if she will make a statement.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The Environment Agency has undertaken detailed flood risk analysis for the West Midlands. Flood risk information is available under 'check flood risk' on the gov.uk website. This information includes specific climate change forecasts for each catchment. There are nearly 30,000 properties at risk of flooding from rivers across the West Midlands with many of these rivers being culverted or underground in cities. Surface water flooding is also a significant challenge in urban areas.

■ Livestock: Antibiotics

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[54040\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate she has made of the level of antibiotic use in meat-producing animals in each of the last five years; and if she will make a statement.

George Eustice:

The latest report (UK-VARSS 2015) was published on GOV.UK on the 17 November 2016. The report contains sales of antibiotics indicated for food-producing animals. As an agreed harmonised EU method is used to calculate these data it also includes horses.

The report shows that sales reduced by 10% from 62mg/PCU in 2014 to 56mg/PCU in 2015, taking it to the lowest level in four years.

■ Rural Development Programme: Countryside

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[\[54283\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate she has made of (a) the total and value of grants issued under the Countryside Productivity Scheme in each of the last five years; and if she will make a statement.

George Eustice:

To date, 297 grant funding agreements have been issued for capital grants with a total value of £6,617,384. These are contributing to projects with a total cost of £17.9 million.

108 of the grant funding agreements, with a value of £1,170,980, were issued in 2015. The remaining 189, with a value of £5,446,404 have been issued to date in 2016. Countryside Productivity grants were not available prior to 2015.

■ Total Allowable Catches

Angela Smith:

[\[54517\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will make it her policy to ensure that total allowable catch quota top-ups for stocks subject to the landing obligation in 2017 will not increase the total catch and associated fishing mortality above scientifically advised levels.

George Eustice:

The total allowable catch (TAC) figures proposed by the European Commission for quota stocks for 2017 are based on scientific advice from the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. The forthcoming negotiations at December Council where the TAC figures for 2017 will be finalised will take into account the scientific advice provided.

Before the introduction of the landing obligation, TACs were set at a lower level to account for the mortality caused by discarding. Once stocks come under the landing obligation, TAC top-ups are allocated by the European Commission to account for discarding no longer taking place. The rationale for top-ups is that although top-ups result in extra quota being directed to fishermen, the total catch mortality will not increase, as fishermen will be landing what they catch.

TAC uplift provides practical flexibility to the fishing industry and helps them to adapt to the landing obligation during its phased introduction from 2015 to 2019. The UK Government supports this approach.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

■ Burma: Rohingya

Valerie Vaz: [\[54864\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he has raised with Burma State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi (a) the banning of media from areas of Rakhine State, (b) government blocking of humanitarian aid to Rohingya in Rakhine State and (c) the sacking of Myanmar Times journalist Fiona MacGregor for reporting on the mass rape of ethnic Rohingya women.

Alok Sharma:

We have raised the situation in Rakhine with the Government of Burma, including with State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi as well as the Ministers for Defence, Home Affairs, Border Affairs, Immigration, and Information.

The Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my noble Friend, the Rt Hon Baroness Anelay of St Johns, visited Burma from 9-12 November. She urged Burmese Government Ministers to resume immediate humanitarian access to the affected areas in Northern Rakhine and for a full and independent investigation into all reports of human rights violations. The Government of Burma has committed publicly to do so. We have also raised the importance of access and freedom for media personnel in Burma.

■ China: Taiwan

Jim Shannon: [\[54088\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Chinese counterpart on that country's relationship with Taiwan.

Alok Sharma:

I discussed Taiwan with Assistant Minister Liu Haixing on 15 August 2016 during my visit to Beijing. British and Chinese officials also regularly exchange views on this topic. We reiterate that the UK's position on Taiwan remains unchanged and that issues should be settled by the people on both sides of the Strait.

■ China: Transplant Surgery

Fiona Mactaggart: [\[54279\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has held with his counterparts in China on that country's organ transplant programme; and if he will make a statement.

Alok Sharma:

We continue to engage the Chinese authorities on our concerns surrounding their organ transplant programme. I opened the UK-China Human Rights Dialogue on 27 October, where my officials raised these concerns, and also allegations of forced organ removals, with the Chinese delegation. My officials have raised the issue separately with the

Chinese Embassy and our Embassy in Beijing has received information from the National Health and Family Planning Commission in China about their handling of organ transplants.

As my Rt Hon Friend the Member for Rutland and Melton (Sir Alan Duncan MP), the Minister for Europe and the Americas, stated in a Westminster Hall debate on 11 October 2016: "Although I do not doubt the need to maintain close scrutiny of organ transplant practices in China, we believe that the evidence base is not sufficiently strong to substantiate claims about the systematic harvesting of organs from minority groups. Indeed, based on all the evidence available to us, we cannot conclude that this practice of "organ harvesting" is definitely happening in China."

■ Climate Change

Catherine West:

[\[54731\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with the Minister of State for Climate Change and Industry on the Government's approach to tackling climate change.

Alok Sharma:

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Boris Johnson), discussed international climate change matters with the Minister of State for Climate Change and Industry, my Hon. Friend the Member for Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner, in October and corresponded on the Government's approach ahead of the recent UN Climate Conference in Marrakesh. In recent months, Ministers from the two Departments have also discussed cross-government programmes related to international climate objectives.

■ Democratic Republic of Congo: Elections

Chi Onwurah:

[\[54774\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what reports he has received on the decision by President Kabila of the Democratic Republic of Congo to delay elections due to take place in November 2016 until April 2018; and whether he has made an assessment of the adequacy of the funding made available by the EU for those elections.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

DFID Parliamentary Under Secretary of State Mr Wharton visited the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) on the 18-20 November. He met the Prime Minister, the Minister for Interior/Security, the main opposition leader, the speaker of the lower house of Parliament and leader of President Kabila's political grouping. Mr Wharton discussed elections with all interlocutors and pressed them to show the flexibility necessary to reach an inclusive deal on timely elections and transition.

I visited the DRC in August where I discussed elections with the DRC government and pressed them to make more progress towards holding timely elections. I also met opposition figures, and emphasised the importance of elections to the DRC's continuing

development. The embassy in Kinshasa maintains a regular dialogue with the Government of the DRC about the postponement of the elections to April 2018.

EU funding for elections is dependent on the DRC government meeting conditions set out in UN Security Council resolution 2277. The conditions include a transparent election process based on an inclusive political agreement and a clear timetable approved by stakeholders. We are working closely with EU partners in support of this.

■ **Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Breastfeeding**

Alison Thewliss: [\[54375\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what (a) facilities and (b) other support his Department provides for (i) visitors and (ii) staff for (A) lactating mothers and (B) the expressing of breast milk.

Sir Alan Duncan:

Across the UK Estate we provide a range of rooms that can be used by nursing mothers and mothers wishing to express. Room options include our first aid rooms, wellbeing rooms which are private and any meeting room where there is adequate privacy.

Expressed milk can be stored in any office refrigerator. Arrangements are set out in our FCO intranet pages.

■ **Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Departmental Responsibilities**

Catherine West: [\[54231\]](#)

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

Alok Sharma:

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) is working hand in glove with the Department for Exiting the EU to support the Government as we work towards a smooth exit from the EU on the best possible terms.

■ **Foreign and Commonwealth Office: EU Law**

Mary Creagh: [\[54196\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 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 his Department cannot immediately be brought into UK law upon the UK leaving the EU.

Sir Alan Duncan:

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. The Government will set out the content of the Bill and its implications in due course.

■ **Ilois: Finance**

Danny Kinahan: [\[53936\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he plans to take to ensure that the £40 million compensation for Chagossian people will be effectively distributed.

Sir Alan Duncan:

I refer the hon. Member to my response to PQ 53323 of 24 November.

■ **North Korea: Diplomatic Relations**

Jim Shannon: [\[54089\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Chinese counterpart on steps to improve relations between North Korea and the UK.

Alok Sharma:

The focus of discussions between the UK and China on North Korea is how we both use our relations to dissuade Pyongyang from pursuing nuclear weapons. I discussed this objective with Assistant Foreign Minister Liu Haixing on 15 August 2016 during my visit to Beijing, and I raised it most recently with the Chinese Ambassador on 27 October 2016.

■ **Russia: Foreign Relations**

Andrew Rosindell: [\[54166\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the implications for its policy on relations with Russia of the election of Donald Trump as President-elect of the US.

Sir Alan Duncan:

The challenges presented by Russia are one of a number of areas where we look forward to working with the new administration once President-elect Trump takes office.

■ **Sudan: International Assistance**

Jim Shannon: [\[54237\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions his Department has had with the UN on trends in the number of attacks on aid workers in Sudan.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

We work closely with the United Nations Agencies to support safe access for humanitarian workers to vulnerable communities in Sudan and to monitor levels of

violence against them. This involves regular discussions with the heads of these agencies in Sudan as well as discussions with specialist staff involved in the provision of their security. We regularly lobby the Government of Sudan to fulfil its obligations to provide a safe operating environment for humanitarian actors.

■ **UK Special Representative for Climate Change**

Catherine West: [\[54732\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he plans to retain the role of Special Representative for Climate Change within his Department.

Alok Sharma:

Climate change is one of the important global issues that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office works on through diplomacy around the world. Following entry into force of the Paris Agreement, UK climate diplomacy is focussed on ensuring its full implementation and effective follow up, and maximising the commercial opportunities for British business that a global transition to a low-carbon economy affords. We are therefore exploring options for senior representation on climate change to ensure the UK remains at the forefront of international efforts.

■ **UK Special Representative for Climate Change: Public Appointments**

Catherine West: [\[54733\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, when he plans to appoint a new Special Representative for Climate Change.

Alok Sharma:

The Foreign Secretary is considering options for the Special Representative on Climate Change. An announcement will be made in due course.

■ **USA: British Indian Ocean Territory**

Mr Andrew Smith: [\[53986\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what the annual average payment was to the Government from the US Administration for its use of the Chagos Islands.

Alok Sharma:

The United Kingdom does not lease the Territory to the US, therefore it receives no financial payment.

■ **USA: Climate Change**

Catherine West: [\[54730\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his US counterpart on international co-operation to tackle climate change.

Alok Sharma:

The Government works regularly with the US on a whole range of energy issues and will continue to do so. My Hon Friend, the Minister of State for Climate Change and Industry (Nick Hurd) discussed this issue with the US Energy Secretary, Ernest Moritz, during the UN Climate Change Conference in Marrakesh earlier this month.

HEALTH■ **Antidepressants****Luciana Berger:**[\[54879\]](#)

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

Nicola Blackwood:

Information on the number of prescription items for antidepressants¹ dispensed each month in the community in England is in the following table.

| MONTH ² | NUMBER OF PRESCRIPTION ITEMS (000s) |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| August 2011 | 3,956.5 |
| September 2011 | 4,089.4 |
| October 2011 | 3,877.8 |
| November 2011 | 4,072.8 |
| December 2011 | 4,195.5 |
| January 2012 | 4,030.3 |
| February 2012 | 3,939.9 |
| March 2012 | 4,272.6 |
| April 2012 | 3,945.3 |
| May 2012 | 4,377.8 |
| June 2012 | 4,017.5 |
| July 2012 | 4,186.9 |
| August 2012 | 4,308.6 |
| September 2012 | 4,078.1 |
| October 2012 | 4,381.9 |
| November 2012 | 4,361.7 |

| MONTH ² | NUMBER OF PRESCRIPTION ITEMS (000s) |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| December 2012 | 4,266.7 |
| January 2013 | 4,416.6 |
| February 2013 | 3,999.8 |
| March 2013 | 4,323.0 |
| April 2013 | 4,410.3 |
| May 2013 | 4,569.2 |
| June 2013 | 4,247.4 |
| July 2013 | 4,606.4 |
| August 2013 | 4,485.0 |
| September 2013 | 4,382.7 |
| October 2013 | 4,684.1 |
| November 2013 | 4,527.7 |
| December 2013 | 4,674.2 |
| January 2014 | 4,780.9 |
| February 2014 | 4,312.6 |
| March 2014 | 4,660.4 |
| April 2014 | 4,627.9 |
| May 2014 | 4,793.8 |
| June 2014 | 4,614.2 |
| July 2014 | 4,948.9 |
| August 2014 | 4,617.5 |
| September 2014 | 4,859.5 |
| October 2014 | 5,090.6 |
| November 2014 | 4,642.1 |
| December 2014 | 5,199.7 |
| January 2015 | 4,973.7 |

| MONTH ² | NUMBER OF PRESCRIPTION ITEMS (000s) |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| February 2015 | 4,613.1 |
| March 2015 | 5,123.1 |
| April 2015 | 4,980.8 |
| May 2015 | 4,879.9 |
| June 2015 | 5,110.1 |
| July 2015 | 5,326.6 |
| August 2015 | 4,827.2 |
| September 2015 | 5,193.6 |
| October 2015 | 5,264.7 |
| November 2015 | 5,108.2 |
| December 2015 | 5,620.6 |
| January, 2016 | 5,131.6 |
| February 2016 | 5,102.7 |
| March 2016 | 5,355.8 |
| April 2016 | 5,457.8 |
| May 2016 | 5,247.3 |
| June 2016 | 5,468.1 |
| July 2016 | 5,360.9 |

Source : Prescription Cost Analysis system data provided by the NHS Business Services Authority.

Notes :

¹ Based on the British National Formulary classification system prior to edition 70

² Information is only available for the period August 2011 – July 2016

■ Department of Health: Cars

Mr Mark Hendrick:

[\[53210\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the cost to the public purse was of providing hire cars for officials of his Department based at (a) Richmond House, London and (b) Quarry House, Leeds in 2015.

David Mowat:

Spend as identified from vehicle hire car category data held in the Department's Business Management System invoice expenditure for the 2015-16 financial year is £5,419, however, it does not specify whether originating from either Quarry House or Richmond House. To establish the existence of the required detail would attract disproportionate costs as all individual invoice records would need to be searched.

■ **General Practitioners: Training**

Dr Andrew Murrison: [R] [[54414](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many students undertook the MRCGP exam in each year since 2014.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The Department does not hold this information.

Information, including statistics, on students taking the Membership of the Royal College of General Practitioners (MRCGP) exam is available on the website of the Royal College of General Practitioners.

■ **Health Services: Finance**

Mr Virendra Sharma: [[54067](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, when NHS England will announce final funding decisions for the treatments considered through its specialised commissioning prioritisation process.

David Mowat:

NHS England will be announcing the outcome of this year's annual specialised commissioning prioritisation round once it has fully considered the implications of the recent Court of Appeal decision on pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) for HIV, and the impact this might have on those treatments and interventions awaiting prioritisation.

Until then, clinicians can continue to apply for funding on behalf of patients for treatments and interventions awaiting prioritisation, where there is clinically exceptional or clinically critically urgent need.

■ **Health Services: Foreign Nationals**

Mr Laurence Robertson: [[54780](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will assess the potential merits of issuing qualifying patients with medical identification cards as part of his Department's policy on health tourism; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Philip Dunne:

Non-European Economic Area (EEA) migrants coming to the United Kingdom for more than six months pay a health surcharge as part of their visa application fee, before being able to access National Health Service care. They will be issued with Biometric Residence Permits which can be presented to indicate entitlement to free care.

Visitors from the EEA are asked to bring a valid European Health Insurance Card which will cover them for treatment that becomes necessary during a visit to the UK until their planned return.

Guidance to NHS trusts advises them on asking the right questions to establish their patients' eligibility to free healthcare. We have also developed a system whereby a patient's chargeable status, once this is known, is flagged on the patient's summary care record so that others within the NHS with the appropriate accreditation can see this information. This makes the process of assessing patient's eligibility simpler and more effective.

■ Heart Diseases: Screening

Jim Shannon: [54086]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will introduce genetic testing for inherited heart conditions.

Nicola Blackwood:

National Health Service genetic testing is already available for a range of inherited cardiac conditions. Further information on the available NHS genetic tests is published by the UK Genetic Testing Network (UKGTN) and is available at:

www.ukgt.nhs.uk

The UKGTN 'Guide to Specialised Services for Rare Genetic Disorders' lists those genetic tests that have been evaluated and approved for use in the NHS.

In addition, the 100,000 Genomes Project aims to sequence the whole human genomes of NHS patients with a rare disease or cancer. 193 rare diseases are currently live for recruitment including a number of cardiovascular disorders. Researchers and clinicians have formed the Genomics England Clinical Interpretation Partnership (GeCIP) to analyse data from the project to better understand disease and develop new diagnostics and treatments. Cardiovascular diseases are one of the research domains the GeCIP is focussing on.

■ Hospital Beds

Conor McGinn: [54768]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many hospital bed days were lost in (a) St Helens North constituency, (b) Merseyside and (c) the UK due to a lack of social care provision available for people being discharged from hospital in each year from 2010 to 2016.

Conor McGinn: [54770]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many hospital bed days were lost in (a) St Helens, (b) Merseyside and (c) the UK due to delays in discharging patients in each year from 2010 to 2016.

David Mowat:

The information is not available in the format requested. The following table shows the number of days where patients were ready to return home or transfer to another form of care but were still occupying a bed in each financial year from 2010-11 to 2015-16. The information is shown for all delayed days regardless of responsibility, and then those delayed days for which the local authority rather than NHS provider accepted responsibility.

Number of delayed transfer of care days, 2011-12 to 2015-16

| YEAR | ST HELENS ² | MERSEYSIDE ³ |
|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| All delays | | |
| 2011-12 | 2,929 | 20,899 |
| 2012-13 | 3,073 | 23,853 |
| 2013-14 | 3,002 | 23,321 |
| 2014-15 | 1,790 | 21,727 |
| 2015-16 | 2,281 | 29,431 |
| Delays for which the local authority was responsible | | |
| 2011-12 | 1,373 | 8,231 |
| 2012-13 | 1,063 | 6,914 |
| 2013-14 | 660 | 3,658 |
| 2014-15 | 298 | 4,525 |
| 2015-16 | 369 | 9,345 |

Source : delayed transfers of care, NHS England

Notes :

1. Data for this collection are available from August 2010. Therefore, the first financial year shown is 2011-12.
2. The information is collected by local authority and by NHS provider, but not by parliamentary constituency. St Helens is defined as the local authority.
3. Merseyside is defined as the five local authorities of Knowsley, Liverpool, St Helens, Sefton, and Wirral.
4. A time series for England is published at:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/delayed-transfers-of-care/2016-17-data/>

Health is a devolved matter in the rest of the United Kingdom.

1. Allocation of delays is by local authority of residence, irrespective of who is responsible for the delay.

■ Hospitals: Waiting Lists

Conor McGinn:

[\[54767\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many people in (a) St Helens North constituency, (b) Merseyside and (c) the UK that waited longer than 18 weeks between GP referral and beginning hospital treatment.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The information is not available in the format requested. Consultant-led referral to Treatment Waiting Times is published by NHS England, by clinical commissioning group (CCG) and provider. The following table shows the number of patients that started consultant-led treatment in September 2016 that waited 18 weeks and over from general practitioner (GP) referral in St Helens, Merseyside and England.

Number of patients in St Helens ¹, Merseyside ² and England ³ that started consultant-led treatment in September 2016 that waited 18 weeks and over from GP referral

| AREA | NUMBER OF PATIENTS ⁴ |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| St Helens Clinical Commissioning Group | 513 |
| Merseyside | 3,244 |
| England | 171,135 |

Source: Consultant-led referral to treatment, NHS England

Notes:

1. The information is collected by CCG and by provider, but not by parliamentary constituency. NHS St Helens is the closest match to St Helens North constituency.
2. Merseyside is defined as the following CCGs: Knowsley, Liverpool, South Sefton, St Helens, Wirral.
3. Information is shown for England. Health is a devolved matter in the rest of the United Kingdom.
4. Includes patients whose wait ended during the month with an admission to hospital, and patients whose wait ended during the month for reasons other than an admission (for example, they were seen in outpatients).

■ Mental Health Services

Luciana Berger: [\[54877\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many referrals to the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies programme ended after (a) entering treatment and (b) completing treatment without receiving an assessment in each clinical commissioning group in each year since 2010.

Nicola Blackwood:

Initial contact with the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies programme involves some form of assessment, before a patient enters treatment, in conjunction with discussion between the patient presenting and the Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner or High Intensity Therapist in order to design an effective treatment programme and agree interventions.

■ Mental Health Services: Expenditure

Luciana Berger: [\[54876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 23 November 2016 to Question 53657, whether the figures given on mental health spending for 2014-15 and 2015-16 include specialist commissioning by NHS England.

Nicola Blackwood:

No. The Answer referred only to spending by clinical commissioning groups.

■ Neuromuscular Disorders: South East

Rehman Chishti: [\[53945\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that people with muscle-wasting conditions living in Kent, Surrey or Sussex have access to a local neuromuscular care adviser.

David Mowat:

Since 1 April 2013, NHS England has been responsible for commissioning specialised neurological services, which includes services for patients with neuromuscular disorders. NHS England has published a service specification for neurological care, which sets out what providers must have in place to offer evidence-based, safe and effective services. The specification can be found at:

www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/d04-neurosci-spec-neuro.pdf

NHS England advises that, until summer 2016, a neuromuscular care advisor was in post at King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, the main neurosciences centre for the south east, and provided a co-ordinator service to London and the south east of England. Since the post holder left the role, the Trust has been reviewing the post and funding mechanisms.

NHS England advises that a number of meetings have taken place and a business case has been developed to take to clinical commission groups to agree funding and the

service model. The Department is advised that the Sussex Collaborative of NHS organisations has confirmed that it is planning to employ a care advisor.

■ **NHS England: Accountability**

Mr Virendra Sharma:

[54066]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will make it his policy to require NHS England to conduct its annual specialised commissioning prioritisation process in line with guidance issued in January 2016 by the Cabinet Office on consultation principles.

David Mowat:

NHS England takes Cabinet Office guidance on consultation principles into account when making commissioning decisions.

In relation to the annual specialised commissioning prioritisation round, both the methodology that is being followed, and each individual policy proposition being considered, has been subject to extensive engagement and public consultation. A copy of NHS England's response to this consultation can be found here:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/commissioning/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2016/06/prioritisation-method-cons-response.pdf>

■ **NHS: North West**

Conor McGinn:

[54769]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will publish all correspondence between NHS England and (a) St Helens City Council, (b) St Helens Clinical Commissioning Group and (c) St Helens and Knowsley Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust on sustainability and transformation plans.

Mr Philip Dunne:

NHS England has advised it has no plans to publish all correspondence between NHS England and St. Helens City Council, St. Helens Clinical Commissioning Group and St Helens and Knowsley NHS Trust on Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs).

Cheshire and Merseyside STP was published on 16 November 2016.

■ **Patients: Death**

Justin Madders:

[54875]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what information his Department holds on future death reports that have been issued in relation to NHS trusts in each of the last five years.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The Department holds no specific information on Prevention of Future Deaths reports issued to National Health Service trusts. The Department is aware only of those Prevention of Future Deaths Reports that are sent to it by Coroners.

Prevention of Future Deaths reports and responses are published by the Chief Coroner at:

<https://www.judiciary.gov.uk/about-the-judiciary/office-chief-coroner/pfd-reports>

■ Pharmacy

Diana Johnson: [54056]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment the Regulatory Policy Committee has made of the regulatory impact assessment published by his Department in relation to recently announced plans for community pharmacy.

Diana Johnson: [54058]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what recommendations the Regulatory Policy Committee has made on recently announced plans for (a) community pharmacy and (b) the Pharmacy Access Scheme.

David Mowat:

Under the Better Regulation Framework, the provision of public services by commercial organisations, such as community pharmacies, does not constitute a business activity.

The provision of NHS Pharmaceutical Services is therefore exempt from the Better Regulation principles and it would not have been appropriate to seek any assessment from the Regulatory Policy Committee for our proposals for community pharmacy in 2016/17 and beyond.

■ Vitamin B12

Luciana Berger: [54878]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many people were prescribed vitamin B12 treatment for a mental health condition in each year since 2010.

Nicola Blackwood:

Information on the number of people prescribed a particular treatment or the medical condition treated is not collected centrally.

HOME OFFICE

■ Animal Experiments

Henry Smith: [52550]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the accuracy and independence of retrospective reporting by researchers performing scientific procedures on animals, as a method for assessing the severity of suffering experienced by animals subjected to such procedures; and if she will make a statement.

Mr Ben Wallace:

Project licence holders or suitably qualified individuals acting on their behalf are expected to classify actual severity at the end of the series of procedures based on day-to-day observations of the animals, and submit the data to the regulator as part of the annual returns process. The regulator has published guidance on the assessment and reporting of the actual severity experienced by animals that have undergone regulated procedures. The first requirement to report actual severity to the regulator was from 1 January 2015 for procedures ending in 2014 and are published at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-of-scientific-procedures-on-living-animals>

The Home Department has not conducted a systematic review of the available data from 2014 and 2015.

■ Asylum: Young People**Philip Davies:**[\[52848\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 11 November 2016 to Question 50781, on asylum: young people, for what reasons the planned trial of the use of voluntary dental x-rays did not go ahead in 2012.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The planned trial did not go ahead in 2012 because the Chief Scientist expressed concerns about the scientific basis of the trial.

■ Common Travel Area**Lady Hermon:**[\[54397\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if her Department will take steps to put the Common Travel Area between the UK and Ireland on a statutory basis; and if she will make a statement.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The Common Travel Area (CTA), founded upon administrative agreements, has been reflected in each state's application of national immigration policy. The CTA is specifically recognised in the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam and a Protocol to the European Treaties at Amsterdam, which provides that the two states may "continue to make arrangements between themselves relating to the movement of persons between their territories".

There is an ongoing joint programme of work to strengthen the external border of the CTA and facilitate legitimate travel. The Prime Minister and the Taoiseach have stated their intention for both countries to work together to maintain the CTA.

Lady Hermon:[\[54398\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if her Department will take steps to put on statutory basis the Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2011 by the UK and

Ireland to strengthen the Common Travel Area arrangement; and if she will make a statement.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The 2011 Joint Ministerial Statement regarding cooperation on measures to secure the external Common Travel Area border sets out the intent to improve cooperation. This joint programme includes investment in border procedures, increased data sharing to inform immigration and border security decisions, interoperable passenger data systems, including the collection and use of passenger data, and harmonised visa policy and processes. In the coming months, as the UK prepares to leave the EU, we will strengthen cooperation with our partners in the Republic of Ireland and secure a deal that works in the interests of both countries.

■ **Counter-terrorism**

Chris Evans: [\[51248\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the Prevent Strategy in countering radicalisation.

Mr Ben Wallace:

Prevent is a key part of the UK's counter-terrorism strategy (CONTEST). Prevent safeguards and supports individuals who are vulnerable to exploitation for radical purposes. Prevent is working. It has made a significant impact in preventing people being drawn into terrorism.

Working with industry and the police we have secured the removal of 220,000 pieces of terrorist material since February 2010. Since 2012, over 1000 people have received support through our Channel programme which safeguards those most at risk of radicalisation. More than 150 attempted journeys to the Syria/Iraq conflict area were disrupted in 2015. This includes action by the family courts. The courts have protected 50 children (from around 20 families) from being taken to the conflict area in 2015. To build resilience in communities against radicalisation in 2015/16, we have delivered 142 projects reaching over 42,000 participants.

■ **Criminal Proceedings: Republic of Ireland**

Lady Hermon: [\[54399\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if her Department will take steps to seal an agreement with Ireland on introducing equivalent Schengen criminal justice provisions between the UK and Ireland after the UK leaves the EU; and if she will make a statement.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The UK will in due course be leaving the EU but the importance of law enforcement co-operation with our EU and global allies, including Ireland, has not changed.

We are exploring options for cooperation arrangements once the UK has left the EU but it is too early to speculate at this stage what future arrangements may look like.

We will do what is necessary to keep people safe, but it would be wrong to set out unilateral positions on specific measures in advance of negotiations.

The Government has been clear it would not be right to provide a running commentary on negotiations.

■ Cybercrime

Amanda Solloway:

[52208]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to reduce the incidence of cyber-fraud; and by what means she plans to advise the public of the steps to take to protect themselves against such fraud.

Mr Ben Wallace:

In February this year the Government launched the Joint Fraud Taskforce, a partnership of government, law enforcement and the banks to collectively tackle fraud. The Taskforce is looking at new ways to ensure individuals have the tools and knowledge to protect themselves from fraudsters. A Joint Fraud Taskforce partner, Financial Fraud Action UK, recently launched a nation-wide fraud prevention campaign 'Take 5' which advises that individuals take five minutes to consider what they are being asked to do, especially if being pressured to take an unusual course of action such as transferring funds to an unknown individual.

The Government's Cyber Aware campaign aims to help small business and individuals protect themselves from cyber criminals by adopting simple secure online behaviours such as having a strong password and always downloading the latest software updates. Cyber Aware works with a range of public and private sector partners to embed cyber security advice into a range of every day touch points, including Get Safe Online, whose remit is to help individuals and small businesses safeguard themselves against fraud and other online data threats.

The Home Office has also invested in new IT for the Action Fraud / National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) capability. Benefits of the new system will include an improved reporting system and better information for victims as well as more disseminations of crime packages to forces, and better identification of vulnerable victims.

■ Deportation: Democratic Republic of Congo

Chi Onwurah:

[54734]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have been removed to the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2016.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The information requested is published in table rt_05_q (returns data tables) in 'Immigration Statistics, April - June 2016', available from the Home Office website at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/546781/returns5-q2-2016-tabs.ods

■ Detention Centres: Renfrewshire

Gavin Newlands: [\[54172\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the implications for her Department's policies of Renfrewshire Council's refusal to grant planning permission for a short-term immigration detention centre near Glasgow Airport.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

Following Renfrewshire Council's refusal of planning permission for a short term holding facility near Glasgow airport the Government is considering its position in relation to the right of appeal. The intended closure of Dungavel immigration removal centre is dependent upon a successful planning application for a new short term holding facility.

■ Immigration: EEA Nationals

Maria Eagle: [\[54028\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will ensure that EEA citizens who (a) have resided in the UK for a period exceeding five years and (b) are married to a UK citizen are able to obtain permanent residency in the UK without the need for them to have comprehensive sickness insurance.

Maria Eagle: [\[54029\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to review the requirement for EEA citizens to have comprehensive sickness insurance when applying for permanent resident status in the UK as a result of the vote to leave the EU.

Maria Eagle: [\[54030\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications for permanent resident status from EEA citizens have been rejected since June 2015 on the grounds of the applicant not having comprehensive sickness insurance.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

EEA citizens and their family members have the right to enter, live and acquire permanent residence in other Member States when certain conditions are met. This includes, in some cases, a requirement to hold comprehensive sickness insurance. These rights are set out in the Free Movement Directive (Directive 2004/38/EC), which all Member States are bound by. The UK has implemented the Directive through the Immigration (European Economic Area) Regulations 2006.

At present the UK remains in the EU, and as such, EU citizens continue to be subject to the rights and responsibilities set out in existing legislation which governs the exercise of free movement in the UK.

There are a number of options as to how EU migration might work once we have left. We are considering various options and it would be wrong to set out further positions at this stage.

The information requested regarding rejected applications is not collated on centrally held statistical databases and could only be produced at disproportionate cost by examination of individual case files.

■ **Iraq: Refugees**

Jim Shannon: [\[54142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if the Government will reassess and extend the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement scheme to accept minorities from Iraq who have been persecuted by Daesh.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme is intended to help vulnerable Syrian nationals. Iraqi nationals are eligible for resettlement under our other, global resettlement schemes such as Gateway and Mandate. They may also qualify for resettlement under the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme (VCRS) established earlier this year, which is not restricted to Syrian nationals.

■ **Maxim Bakiyev**

Mr Roger Godsiff: [\[54011\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what processes were followed by her Department when granting Maxim Bakiyev asylum; and if she will make a statement.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

We have a long established practice of not routinely commenting on individual asylum cases. Reasons for this include data protection. All claims for asylum are considered on their individual merits and are subject to a series of background and security checks before any form of leave is granted.

■ **Money Laundering**

Tom Brake: [\[53290\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether any investigations into UK citizens who hold nominee directorships which pertain to companies suspected of money laundering have been undertaken in the last 10 years.

Mr Ben Wallace:

Investigations into suspected money laundering activities are undertaken by a number of operational agencies in the UK. The specific information requested, in relation to such investigations, is not held centrally.

Tom Brake: [\[54608\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has carried out any investigations into UK companies being used as money laundering vehicles since 2010.

Mr Ben Wallace:

Within the National Crime Agency, the Economic Crime Command leads the national response to economic crime, including money laundering. Other law enforcement agencies also carry out investigations into money laundering involving UK companies.

■ **Passports**

Jonathan Ashworth: [\[54641\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many UK passport holders there are in each (a) Westminster parliamentary constituency, (b) local authority area and (c) region of the UK; and what proportion of the population in each of those areas those figures represent.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

We are unable to provide data as requested as it is not available on our data system. In order for us to extract the information and have this data categorised as requested would take Her Majesty's Passport Office over the £850 limit for enquiries.

■ **Primates: Animal Experiments**

Henry Smith: [\[52551\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent representations her Department has received from primate users to reassess its prospective assessment of the term severe for non-human primates subjected to head and/or body restriction and water and/or food restriction on neuroscience research.

Mr Ben Wallace:

The Home Office regulator maintains engagement with the neuroscience community, as recommended by the Weatherall report 2006. To understand the ongoing relevance of primate research the regulator attended meetings in 2016, arranged by funders and neuroscientists, at which severity assessment was discussed. The regulator also engages regularly and pro-actively with the breadth of stakeholders across the life science community through to animal protection and welfare groups.

Henry Smith: [\[52552\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will maintain a severity level of severe for procedures on non-human primates involved in neuroscience research that involves restraining the animals by the head and/or body for several hours every day and the use of fluid and/or food restriction while they are forced to undergo repetitive tests.

Mr Ben Wallace:

During the harm-benefit analysis the Home Office will assign the severity classification in accordance with European Directive 2010/63/EU which has been transposed into the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (as amended) and is published at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consolidated-version-of-aspa-1986>

All non-human primate project licence applications which are potentially severe severity are also considered by the Government's independent scientific advisory body, the

Animals in Science Committee, for scrutiny and advice before a decision is taken on whether, and on what terms, they may be granted.

Henry Smith:

[52553]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what criteria her Department applies when considering applications for licencing neuroscience research on (a) non-human primates in general and (b) on primates which involves head and/or body restraint and/or fluid and/or food restriction in particular.

Mr Ben Wallace:

Animal welfare is at the forefront of any decision to use animals in research, and the Regulator requires robust evidence that the research complies fully with the principles of the 3Rs (replacement, refinement and reduction). In addition, Inspectors require a justification for the use of non-human primates, setting out what results they contribute to the project that no other animal could provide.

Applications which involve head and/or body restraint and/or fluid and/or food restriction also require particular explanation and justification as to why those techniques are needed and how they can be refined to reduce suffering. The Home Office regulator considers every application, including the associated severity assessment, for a project licence on a case by case basis.

Home Office Inspectors, all with veterinary or medical qualifications, conduct a harm-benefit analysis to ensure that any harm that may be caused to animals is justified by the potential benefits. The regulator has published operational guidance, detailing how project licence applications are assessed, and further advice on how the harm-benefit analysis process applies to all project licence assessments.

Henry Smith:

[52554]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many project licences her Department has approved for scientific procedures on non-human primates that involve head and/or body restraint and/or fluid and or food restriction in each of the last five years; and what the severity limit for each such procedure was.

Mr Ben Wallace:

The prospective severity classification takes account of the highest severity likely to be experienced by any animal used in the protocol. The information related to prospective severity for scientific procedures on non-human primates that involve head and/or body restraint and/or fluid and or food restriction in each of the last 5 years is not held centrally and can be obtained only at disproportionate cost. The number and actual severity of procedures conducted on non-human primates can be found in the "Annual Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals" published here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-of-scientific-procedures-on-living-animals>

■ Refugees: Children

Jess Phillips: [54458]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many unaccompanied children were transferred from Italy to the UK as Dublin III transfers in each month in (a) 2014, (b) 2015 and (c) 2016.

Jess Phillips: [54459]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many children have been transferred from Italy to the UK under section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016.

Jess Phillips: [54460]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many children are awaiting assessment or transfer from Italy to the UK under section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016.

Jess Phillips: [54475]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for how long each child who was subsequently transferred to the UK under a Dublin III transfer was in Italy before that transfer to the UK (a) from first date of arrival in Italy, (b) from the date of appointment of their guardian, (c) from the date of registering their asylum claim, (d) from the date when TCR was made, (e) from the date when TCR was accepted and (f) on the date when the transfer took place.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The Government is fully committed to the efficient and timely operation of the Dublin Regulation and we are working closely with EU partners, including the Italian authorities to identify, assess and transfer children to the UK who may qualify under the Dublin Regulation or section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016.

The Dublin Regulation specifies a range of time limits within which requests to accept responsibility must be made and replies received, which vary depending on the circumstances of the case. The Dublin Regulation states that in all cases requests should be made as quickly as possible.

We have a long standing secondee working in Italy and have established a dedicated team in the Home Office Dublin Unit to lead on family reunion cases for unaccompanied children. The secondee's role includes facilitating the application of section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016.

At present we do not publish data on cases covered by the Dublin Regulation. Eurostat, the EU's statistics agency, regularly publishes Member State figures, which you can find at http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Dublin_statistics_on_countries_responsible_for_asylum_application

Stella Creasy: [54522]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many children are waiting assessment or transfer from Italy to the UK under section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016.

Stella Creasy:

[54523]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many children have been transferred from Italy to the UK under section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 since that Act came into force.

Stella Creasy:

[54556]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Dublin III transfers of unaccompanied children from Italy to the UK there have been in each month of the last five years.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

At present we do not publish data on cases covered by the Dublin Regulation. Eurostat, the EU's statistics agency, regularly publishes Member State figures, which you can find at http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Dublin_statistics_on_countries_responsible_for_asylum_application

We are working closely with the Italian authorities to identify children who qualify to be transferred to the UK under the Dublin Regulation or section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016. We have a long-standing secondee working in Italy and have established a dedicated team in the Home Office Dublin Unit to lead on family reunion cases for unaccompanied children. The secondee's role includes facilitating the application of section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016.

■ Travel Restrictions

Mr Dominic Raab:

[54525]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 22 November 2016 to Question 53413, how many people suspected by UK law enforcement of involvement in (a) organised crime, (b) financial crime and (c) serious human rights abuses have been subject to visa bans to prevent them from coming to the UK in each of the last eight years.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The specific information being asked for is not available in the format requested. The total number of visa refusals can be found in the published stats at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-april-to-june-2016/list-of-tables#visas>

The published statistics include all visa refusals. It is not possible to provide specific reasons for refusal without incurring disproportionate cost. The statistics only include cases where a UK visa application has been made and therefore do not provide a clear record of all those subject to a visa ban. It would exceed the disproportionate cost threshold to provide this breakdown.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**■ Department for International Development: Breastfeeding**

Alison Thewliss: [\[54378\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what (a) facilities and (b) other support her Department provides for (i) visitors and (ii) staff for (A) lactating mothers and (B) the expressing of breast milk.

Rory Stewart:

DFID has two headquarters in the UK. Both buildings have a nursing mothers' room that can be accessed by staff and visitors. The rooms are appropriately furnished and equipped with a fridge to allow the safe storage of breast milk at the correct temperature.

Our Parent Support Network provides peer support for DFID parents, soon-to-become parents, and those with caring responsibilities for children.

■ Department for International Development: Departmental Responsibilities

Catherine West: [\[54533\]](#)

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

Rory Stewart:

In line with all Government departments, DFID is working to identify potential opportunities that will arise from EU Exit. The Government is united in its ambition to deliver a successful exit from the EU and form a new relationship with the EU. DFID will continue working with other departments to deliver this.

■ Department for International Development: EU Law

Mary Creagh: [\[54199\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, 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.

James Wharton:

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.

■ Developing Countries: Renewable Energy

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[54162\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of the proportion of Government investment in energy support that is currently spent on decentralised renewable energy in developing countries.

James Wharton:

DFID makes ongoing assessments of specific needs across the energy spectrum, covering on-grid as well as decentralised off-grid renewable energy.

The UK Government is playing a leading role in improving energy access in developing countries. This includes a strong focus on decentralised renewable energy, reflecting its important role in achieving energy access.

DFID's energy work is aligned with the Global Goals, particularly Goal 7, to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all by 2030 and increased use of renewable energy. This draws on international evidence, such as the Global Tracking Framework which demonstrates that global progress to date on both energy access and renewables needs to be stepped up to meet 2030 goals. Leveraging private investment with donor finance will be critical in meeting the scale of the challenge.

■ International Citizen Service: Scotland

Margaret Ferrier:

[\[54426\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how many people participated in the International Citizens Services from (a) Rutherglen and Hamilton West constituency and (b) Scotland in each of the last five years; and if she will make a statement.

Rory Stewart:

The International Citizen Service (ICS) aims to be representative of young people in Britain, both in terms of diversity and reaching all regions of the country.

Table 1 shows how many participants there were from Rutherglen and Hamilton West constituency. One additional volunteer has been selected to take part in 2017.

TABLE 1

| Year | Number of participants |
|------|------------------------|
| 2012 | 0 |
| 2013 | 3 |
| 2014 | 2 |
| 2015 | 3 |
| 2016 | 3 |

TABLE 1

| | |
|--------------|-----------|
| Total | 11 |
|--------------|-----------|

Table 2 provides a breakdown of participants from Scotland.

TABLE 2

| Year | Number of participants |
|--------------|-------------------------------|
| 2012 | 24 |
| 2013 | 110 |
| 2014 | 201 |
| 2015 | 265 |
| 2016 | 224 |
| Total | 824 |

■ Overseas Aid

Mr Graham Brady: [\[54394\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what projects funded by her Department in which countries have had work carried out relating to that project in a third country in the last 12 months for which figures are available; and for each such project in (a) that country and (b) the third country, what the (i) cost, (ii) purpose and (iii) location was of that work.

Rory Stewart:

In line with international standards on ODA reporting DFID publishes a range of statistics on the benefiting country of our aid programmes, these are available from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-international-development/about/statistics>

DFID has always delivered some programmes which are located in one country and benefit another developing country or countries. These include programmes delivered by multilateral organisations, programmes that benefit an entire region and research into the problems of developing countries. It would be costly and complex to gather and aggregate the precise type of information requested, but a range of project level information is available from the Development Tracker: www.devtracker.co.uk.

■ Palestinians: Overseas Aid

Gordon Henderson:

[\[54121\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, which independent auditor vets UK aid to the Palestinian Territories; and whether that auditor is regulated by any UK regulator.

Rory Stewart:

All organisations which receive funding from DFID are required to provide independently audited financial statements. The United Nations Board of Auditors provides independent external audit services for UN programmes while competitive bidding processes are conducted to appoint auditors for other programmes.

Recent audits of DFID's programmes in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) have been conducted by Talal Abu Ghazaleh & Co, El Wafa and Price Waterhouse Cooper. Price Waterhouse Cooper is regulated by the UK's Financial Reporting Council.

Talal Abu Ghazaleh & Co and El Wafa are based in Jordan and the OPTs respectively, and are therefore not regulated by any British regulator. The National Audit Office, the principal state audit body in the United Kingdom, also provides independent external audit of DFID's spending in the OPTs.

■ Sierra Leone: Politics and Government

Catherine West:

[\[53883\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what recent assessment she has made of the humanitarian situation in Sierra Leone.

James Wharton:

The Secretary of State recently returned from Sierra Leone and saw first-hand that although the Ebola crisis has ended, the country faces major development challenges, including some of the worst child and infant mortality rates in the world.

Ebola has made these challenges worse and reversed, for example, much of the progress in health made since the civil war, with high numbers of health staff dying and sharp falls in essential services, such as treatment of malaria and immunisation. UK support is helping the Government of Sierra Leone to build up better health services and save lives, ensure children get a better education, increase access to water and sanitation, and lay the groundwork for increased economic development.

Our cross-government response to the 2014/15 Ebola crisis saved lives and stopped the outbreak decimating development in Sierra Leone. Halting the disease in West Africa was the single most important way of preventing Ebola from infecting people in the UK.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE■ **Business: East Midlands****David Mackintosh:**[\[53865\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps his Department has taken to improve awareness among businesses in the East Midlands of (a) exporting opportunities and (b) government support for exporting.

Mark Garnier:

On the 14th November the Department for International Trade (DIT) launched a public beta of the new GREAT.gov.uk platform to improve the awareness of exporting opportunities and government support available to businesses. This coincided with the launch of 'Exporting is GREAT' marketing activity that drives businesses to the new platform. GREAT.gov.uk aims to inspire UK businesses to export, provide more tailored support and advice online, build on peer to peer networks and connect UK supply with global demand through the promotion of real-time export opportunities. To complement this digital platform, DIT provides a range of face to face support to businesses in the East Midlands through market and sector events, exporting essential workshops and face to face meetings with International Trade Advisers (ITAs). Over the last two months support across the East Midlands has included :

- A Masterclass in Intellectual Property Rights in Nottinghamshire.
- A Rail Meet the Buyer event in Derbyshire.
- A Digital Trade advice clinic in Leicestershire.
- An event on a Re-opening of the Iranian Market with Northamptonshire Chamber in Northampton.
- A Food & Drink Business Growth Expo with the Leicestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEEP) in Leicestershire.
- An Exporting Is It For You? Workshop in Lincolnshire.
- One to one meetings for businesses with experts from the British Chamber in Mexico held in Derbyshire

■ **Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement****Barry Gardiner:**[\[54793\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, which Government Minister represented the UK during EU discussions on its negotiating lines relating to geographical indications on the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement.

Greg Hands:

The Government took part in EU discussions on negotiating lines relating to geographical indicators for the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) in 2011, at which time the Minister of State for Trade and Investment was my noble friend Lord Green of Hurstpierpoint.

■ **Department for International Trade: Freedom of Information**

Barry Gardiner: [\[54481\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether he has made an assessment of the adequacy of the number of staff in his Department who have responsibility for processing freedom of information requests.

Greg Hands:

I refer to the hon Member to the answer I gave him on the 28th of November, UIN 54495.

■ **Department for International Trade: Pay**

Liam Byrne: [\[53862\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what the salary will be for non-executive board members in his Department.

Liam Byrne: [\[53863\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what his plans are for the number of hours worked per week by non-executive board members in his Department.

Greg Hands:

Department for International Trade (DIT) Non-Executive Board Members are offered a fee of £15,000 per annum in line with the Non-Executive Directors of the Bank of England. Lead Non-Executives and the Chairs of the Audit and Risk Committee are offered a further £5,000 per annum. Claimed fees are included within the annual departmental accounts, in accordance with the Government Financial Reporting Manual. The Chair of UK Export Finance Board sits on the DIT Departmental Board in an ex-officio capacity and is subject to separate arrangements with UK Export Finance.

In the course of their duties, DIT Non-Executive Board Members will be expected to prepare for and attend Departmental Board Meetings, of which there will be ten per year, and work outside of these to continue scrutinising and supporting the Department's work. They will sit on other committees around the Department and will contribute to wider cross-Government working.

■ **Department for International Trade: Staff**

Barry Gardiner: [\[54794\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many officials his Department employs; and what proportion of those officials worked in the Civil Service prior to July 2016.

Greg Hands:

As of 25 November, the Department for International Trade had 2709 people working on its agenda, including those deployed overseas. Since 2016 the Department for International Trade (including UK Export Finance) has hired 46 people who had not worked in the civil service previously.

■ Food: Exports

Barry Gardiner: [\[54703\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to his Department's press release entitled, Global ambitions for British food and drink could boost economy by nearly £3 billion, if he will publish the methodology used to calculate that the International Action Plan for Food and Drink could benefit the UK economy by £2.9 billion over five years.

Mark Garnier:

These calculations were based on the economic and statistical analysis of market trends, along with information from industry and the Department for International Trade's global network which identified opportunities for each market. This was also based on the predicted outcomes of ongoing market access work which will generate new opportunities.

■ Heritage Foundation

Barry Gardiner: [\[54865\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether in his meeting with Heritage Foundation staff during his trip to the US in July 2016, he discussed (a) climate change and (b) pharmaceuticals.

Greg Hands:

My Rt hon Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade spoke at a Heritage Foundation lunch during his July visit to the USA. The main topic was the formation of the Department for International Trade and the UK's priorities on trade and our EU renegotiation.

■ Mexico

Tim Loughton: [\[54706\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what meetings he and Ministers of his Department have had with members of the Mexican government in (a) Mexico and (b) London in the last 12 months.

Greg Hands:

My noble Friend the Minister of State for Trade Policy (Lord Price) visited Mexico in April 2016 and met with the President, the Finance Secretary, the Secretary for the Economy, the Minister of State for Trade Policy and the Chief Executive of the state oil company Pemex, who has a seat in Cabinet.

Earlier this month he visited Mexico again meeting with the Secretary for the Economy, the Minister of State for Trade Policy and the Deputy Foreign Minister.

■ Overseas Trade: Mexico

Tim Loughton: [\[54704\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps the Government is taking to increase trade with Mexico.

Greg Hands:

We have a close working relationship with the Mexican Government and are working to increase bilateral trade. During the State Visit to the UK by President Enrique Peña Nieto in March 2015 we held the first meeting of the UK/Mexico Senior Business Leaders Group. In the last year we have made use of ministerial visits to Mexico to promote trade interests including visits by my noble Friend the Minister of State for International Trade Lord Price and ministers from across Government. The DIT team in Mexico are working on 10 High Value Campaigns for exports, and attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into the UK and ensure that British companies benefit from commercial opportunities.

■ Trade Agreements**Barry Gardiner:**[\[54498\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps he plans to take to ensure that all future trade and investment deals are consistent with the UK's international obligations to tackle climate change.

Greg Hands:

[Holding answer 28 November 2016]: The Prime Minister has established the Department for International Trade to promote British trade across the world, and the Department's ministers will provide further information on its strategy and policies over the coming months.

The UK continues to be a global leader on climate action, as demonstrated by our recent ratification of the Paris Agreement and agreement of the UK's Fifth Carbon Budget in July. The UK has long supported the promotion of our values globally and this will continue as we leave the EU. While we remain members of the EU, the UK will participate constructively in EU decision making on trade issues, including on environmental provisions within trade agreements.

■ Trade Agreements: Mexico**Tim Loughton:**[\[54705\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what preparation work is being conducted on negotiating a trade deal with Mexico after the UK has left the EU.

Greg Hands:

My noble Friend the Minister of State for Trade Policy (Lord Price) recently visited Mexico to discuss the UK-Mexico trading relationship. Officials are exploring how best to ensure continuity for businesses as the UK leaves the EU, and we are taking advantage of all the opportunities available to us to ensure that Britain becomes the global leader in free trade once we leave the EU.

■ World Trade Organisation

Stephen Timms: [\[54653\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what discussions the UK representative at the World Trade Organisation has had on future arrangements which may be necessary when the UK leaves the EU; and if he will make a statement.

Greg Hands:

[Holding answer 28 November 2016]: The UK Permanent Representative to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) engages with a range of partners on trade issues, including the WTO Secretariat and other WTO members. In leaving the EU our goal will be to minimise disruption to our trading relationships with other WTO members.

JUSTICE

■ Courts and Tribunals: Fees and Charges

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[53939\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the total amount of unpaid (a) court and (b) tribunal fees was in each of the last five years; and if she will make a statement.

Sir Oliver Heald:

There are no unpaid court or tribunal fees. Cases do not proceed unless fees are paid or remitted.

HMCTS offers fee remission to those people who, according to ability to pay criteria, are exempt from paying court fees.

■ Offenders

Richard Burgon: [\[54002\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether data on numbers of offenders breached by a community rehabilitation company is given on request to the local police force.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

All Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) have information sharing agreements in place with local police forces. CRCs would consider and respond to any request from the police for information about breaches of community sentences in line with the terms of these agreements.

■ Prisons: Drugs

Luciana Berger: [\[54880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent assessment she has made of the prevalence of the use of the psychoactive substance, spice, in prisons.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The emergence of psychoactive substances in our prisons has been a game changer. We take a zero tolerance approach drugs in prisons. In response to the growing use of

dangerous psychoactive substances, we have developed innovative new drug testing, trained over 300 drug detection dogs to specifically detect psychoactive substances and introduced new legislation, which makes it a criminal offence to possess any psychoactive substance in a custodial institution.

An important tool in assessing the use of drugs in prisons is via Random Mandatory Drug Testing (MDT). We introduced innovative testing for psychoactive substances as part of MDT in September this year. Data on use of psychoactive substances will be published alongside data for other drugs as part of official statistics next year.

■ Rape: Trials

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[54072\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when she plans to Answer Question 49066, tabled on 18 October 2016 by the right hon. Member for Camberwell and Peckham, on the use of complainants' previous sexual history in rape cases.

Sir Oliver Heald:

I can confirm that PQ 49066 was answered on 22nd November 2016.

■ Reoffenders

Richard Burgon: [\[54003\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, on how many occasions during the last four years a serious further offence investigation involving probation services in England and Wales concluded that an offender had missed more than two appointments with those services without reasonable excuse; and on how many occasions the offender was not taken back to court as a result.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The information requested is not held centrally and could be obtained at disproportionate cost

■ Social Security Benefits: Appeals

Tulip Siddiq: [\[53876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what proportion of First-Tier tribunal (Social Security and Child Support) users represented themselves as litigants in person; and what proportion of those tribunals found in favour of the appellant.

Sir Oliver Heald:

In the period April to June 2016 (the latest quarter for which data are available) 45% of First-tier Tribunal (Social Security and Child Support) appellants attended their tribunal hearing without a representative being present. In 66% of these hearings the appellant was successful.

The tribunal process is designed to be as informal and user friendly as possible and the panel will help an appellant to provide it with the relevant evidence. This helps

individuals to understand the process and to take part without the need for professional representation.

Note: The appellant may have had a representative at some point in the appeals process; however these data highlight those appeals where the appellant attended a tribunal hearing without a representative being present.

■ Work Capability Assessment: Appeals

Tulip Siddiq: [\[53881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate her Department has made of the (a) average cost of a fit for work appeal and (b) total cost to the public purse of such appeals from July 2013 to June 2015.

Sir Oliver Heald:

The information requested is not held centrally.

TRANSPORT

■ Bus Services: Rural Areas

Susan Elan Jones: [\[53891\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the Government's policy is on bus service provision in rural areas.

Andrew Jones:

The Government is very conscious of the importance of bus services to rural communities, which provide them with vital links to local services. Decisions on which individual bus services in rural areas they wish to subsidise are of course a matter for individual English local authorities.

That said, we were able to protect Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) funding as part of the Spending Review last year. Government pays out approximately £250 million a year to support bus services in England outside London through BSOG, which is especially important in helping to protect services in rural areas.

We are also currently piloting the Total Transport initiative, which is exploring how local authorities and other agencies can work together to commission transport services more effectively in rural and isolated areas.

Support for bus services in Wales would be a matter for the Welsh Assembly Government.

■ Motorways: Repairs and Maintenance

Mr Laurence Robertson: [\[54779\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with Highways England on its policy of contraflow and reducing lane size during maintenance or other work on motorways; and if he will make a statement.

Mr John Hayes:

I have asked Highways England to look at shortening the length of roadworks to reduce the impact on road users. Following my discussions with them, Highways England are working towards utilising shorter lengths and looking at whether they can safely increase speed limits through roadworks, which will improve the overall customer experience and minimise disruption.

Contraflows (utilising the opposite carriageway) and reducing lane size can be used to allow for more lanes to be opened during maintenance and other works on a motorway and the UK guidance on roadworks layouts is contained within the Traffic Signs Manual Chapter 8.

Highways England are currently testing running traffic through roadworks at 60mph whilst they undertake technology commissioning on a future smart motorway scheme on M1 J34-35a near Sheffield in South Yorkshire.

■ Railways: Capital Investment**Sue Hayman:**[\[54881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to paragraph 4.8 of the Autumn Statement 2016, which projects will receive funding for rail resilience.

Paul Maynard:

The Secretary of State for Transport announced on 17 November an additional £10m funding to help strengthen the resilience of the railway line from Exeter to Newton Abbot via Dawlish. In addition, we have asked Network Rail to develop schemes to improve the resilience of the rail network to flooding in the Axe Valley (Devon) and around the River Irwell in Manchester. The Department will continue to discuss with Network Rail other priorities for investment to improve resilience.

■ River Thames: Bridges**Adam Holloway:**[\[53929\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the potential number of vehicles using (a) the Dartford River Crossing and (b) a Lower Thames Crossing in each direction following the opening of a Lower Thames Crossing broken down by each option under consideration for that crossing in (i) the month before opening, (ii) the month after opening, (iii) each month in the fifth year after opening, (iv) each month of the tenth year after opening, (v) each month in the fifteenth year after opening and (vi) each month in the twentieth year after opening.

Mr John Hayes:

Highways England does not hold the data for the specific dates requested.

Highways England carried out traffic modelling as part of the appraisal process for the Lower Thames Crossing. Modelling was conducted for the years 2025 and 2041. The categorisation of crossings was for the current use of the Dartford Crossing and was categorised into local, regional and long-distance traffic. The appraisal and data was available as part of the materials to inform public consultation held earlier this year.

Analysis is ongoing to better understand the categorisation of traffic flows and traffic modelling as part of the wider analysis of the 47,034 responses to the public consultation that took place earlier this year.

Highways England will be reporting findings and a recommendation to the Department for Transport. The Secretary of State for Transport will take a decision on the location, route and type of crossing in due course.

■ Roads: Capital Investment

Sue Hayman: [\[54832\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to paragraph 3.25 of the Autumn Statement 2016, on which schemes the £100 million of investment in road resilience projects referred to will be spent.

Andrew Jones:

The Autumn Statement on 23 November 2016 announced £100 million would be made available from 2017/18 to improve resilience to flooding on our road network. The Department for Transport will now develop criteria to be published in due course for which local highway authorities can submit bids to the Department.

WALES

■ Wales Office: Information Officers

Jo Stevens: [\[54765\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, how many staff of his Department at each civil service grade are employed in a press or communications role.

Guto Bebb:

There are six staff in the Office of the Secretary of State for Wales working in a press or communications role, supporting three Ministers. Their respective civil service (CS) grades are shown below:

| CS GRADE | NO. OF STAFF |
|----------------------------------|--------------|
| SCS Pay Band 1 | 1 |
| Grade 7 | 1 |
| Senior Information Officer (SIO) | 1 |
| Information Officer (IO) | 3 |

Jo Stevens: [\[54766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, how many staff of his Department are employed in its (a) press and (b) communications department.

Guto Bebb:

There are six staff working in the communications department of the Office of the Secretary of State for Wales supporting its three Ministers, five of whom deal with press matters as part of their broader remits.

■ **Wales Office: Staff**

Jo Stevens:

[\[54764\]](#)

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

Alun Cairns:

Work relating to exiting the EU forms part of the policy portfolio of most Wales Office staff.

■ **Wales Office: Temporary Employment**

Jo Stevens:

[\[54763\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, how much his Department has spent on agency staff in each year since 2009.

Guto Bebb:

The Departmental spend on agency workers is set out below:

| FINANCIAL YEAR | TOTAL SPEND £ |
|----------------|---------------|
| 2009/10 | 11,378 |
| 2010/11 | 32,047 |
| 2011/12 | 36,603 |
| 2012/13 | 38,903 |
| 2013/14 | 114,023 |
| 2014/15 | 258,545 |
| 2015/16 | 56,561 |

The expenditure on agency costs increased in 2013/14 and 2014/15 because of the need to fill at short notice a number of business critical posts temporarily whilst recruitment campaigns were underway.

WORK AND PENSIONS■ **Carer's Allowance**

Patrick Grady: [\[54762\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people will lose entitlement to carer's allowance as a result of increases to the national minimum wage taking their income over the earning limit for that allowance.

Penny Mordaunt:

The impact that a carer's earnings, including those receiving the National Minimum Wage, will have on their entitlement to Carer's Allowance (CA) will depend on the number of hours they work a week and their net salary for CA purposes once allowable deductions have been made.

The CA earnings limit will be increasing from £110 to £116 a week from April 2017. This 5% increase outstrips the current average increase in earnings. Up to 2,000 carers will benefit from this change.

■ **Children: Maintenance**

Rebecca Long Bailey: [\[53984\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when he expects the planned new procedures to tackle child maintenance evasion by non-resident parents who fail to declare their full income for tax purposes to be rolled out across the Child Maintenance Service.

Caroline Nokes:

We have recently introduced a specialist team to the 2012 scheme of maintenance; the Financial Investigation Unit (FIU). The team has expert knowledge and experience, and many of the Child Maintenance Service's (CMS) procedures already steer caseworkers to the FIU if faced with unpicking potentially complex income arrangements (such as those of the self-employed, company directors, or clients with "non-standard" income streams).

The FIU currently investigates cases within the "New Case" and "Complaints" areas of the CMS. Its impact is currently being evaluated and, subject to confirmation that impact is as positive as early indications suggest, use of the FIU will be rolled-out to all parts of the CMS in early 2017.

If we find a Non-Resident Parent has misrepresented their income, we can prosecute if such action would be in the public interest. The FIU can also make referrals to HMRC, if they believe tax fraud has occurred.

However, this final option is also open to anyone; if they are aware of someone committing tax fraud, this can be reported to HMRC through the gov.uk website.

■ Employment and Support Allowance: Appeals

Tulip Siddiq: [\[53882\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate his Department has made of the cost to the public purse of all fit-for-work decisions made in initial assessments for employment and support allowance which were subsequently overturned at appeal for each (a) month and (b) year from July 2013 to date.

Penny Mordaunt:

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

■ Employment Schemes: Expenditure

Stephen Timms: [\[54673\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much was spent from the public purse through the Work Choice programme on employment support in each of the last six years.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Departmental Annual Report for 2015/2016 includes the final outturn numbers for Employment Programmes from 2011/12 to 2015/16 (page 123 of the report), which includes Work Choice.

The annual spend on Work Choice for the years requested is as follows:

| YEAR | AMOUNT £M |
|---------|-----------|
| 2015/16 | 124 |
| 2014/15 | 88 |
| 2013/14 | 86 |
| 2012/13 | 83 |
| 2011/12 | 79 |
| 2010/11 | 32 |

■ Jobcentres: Older People

Tim Loughton: [\[54707\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many older people champions are employed in job centres.

Tim Loughton: [\[54708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the role is of older people champions in job centres.

Damian Hinds:

We have seven older claimant champions across the jobcentre network, one operating in each of the GB regions. These were introduced in April 2015 to increase awareness among Work Coaches of the barriers faced by older claimants. The Champions work collaboratively with 34 District Leads, along with other colleagues, to raise the profile of older claimants at an operational level, highlight the benefits of employing older people and provide advice and best practice to share nationally.

Occupational Pensions**Natalie McGarry:**[\[54000\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps he is taking to ensure (a) low, fair and transparent charges and (b) robust standards in auto-enrolment schemes; and if he will ensure the good governance and fair conversion of pension provision in such schemes into income.

Richard Harrington:

Automatic enrolment will give around 11 million people the opportunity to save into a workplace pension scheme, all of which must meet qualifying criteria and minimum requirements. The Government is committed to ensuring that the schemes into which savers are automatically enrolled are well run and protected from high and unfair charges. In April 2015 we introduced a 0.75% default fund charge cap and placed new governance requirements on trustees and Independent Governance Committees (IGCs) to consider the value for money of the costs and charges faced by scheme members.

We continue to work to improve the transparency of costs and charges. Asset managers will be required to disclose costs to trustees and IGCs, and regulations will require publication of costs and charges. In 2017, we will be reviewing automatic enrolment including the quality requirements for pension schemes and how the certification requirements (which allow employers to use existing pension schemes to meet their automatic enrolment duties) are working. We will ban member-borne commission charges in occupational pension schemes used for automatic enrolment and also review the level of the default fund charge cap.

To support members taking advantage of the pension freedoms we will set a cap on early exit charges at 1% for existing members of occupational pension schemes and a ban on these charges for new members of occupational pension schemes (subject to Parliamentary approval) in October 2017. The Government continues to monitor the pensions landscape and will take action where appropriate to ensure that pension scheme members are treated fairly when they seek to access their pension savings.

Pension Protection Fund**Mr Gavin Shuker:**[\[54286\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment he has made of the level of equality of treatment of different business types under the Pension Protection Fund Levy; and if he will make a statement.

Richard Harrington:

The Pension Protection Fund (PPF) is an independent body which pays compensation to members of defined benefit occupational pension schemes where the sponsoring employer becomes insolvent and the scheme is unable to cover the accrued pension liabilities. The PPF is funded from a combination of the transferred scheme funds, recoveries from the insolvent employer, investment return and a levy on eligible schemes. Under the Pensions Act 2004, the levy is set by the PPF independently of the Government.

Mr Gavin Shuker:[\[54305\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent discussions his Department has held with (a) Experian and (b) the Pension Protection Fund (PPF) on the equitable treatment of businesses under the PPF levy.

Richard Harrington:

The Pension Protection Fund (PPF) is an independent body which pays compensation to members of defined benefit occupational pension schemes where the sponsoring employer becomes insolvent and the scheme is unable to cover the accrued pension liabilities. The PPF is funded from a combination of the transferred scheme funds, recoveries from the insolvent employer, investment return and a levy on eligible schemes. Under the Pensions Act 2004, the levy is set by the PPF independently of the Government. The Department has therefore held no discussions on this matter.

Mr Gavin Shuker:[\[54472\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment he has made of the effect on mutual societies of changes in assessing the relative risk under the Pension Protection Fund levy.

Richard Harrington:

The Pension Protection Fund (PPF) is an independent body which pays compensation to members of defined benefit occupational pension schemes where the sponsoring employer becomes insolvent and the scheme is unable to cover the accrued pension liabilities. The PPF is funded from a combination of the transferred scheme funds, recoveries from the insolvent employer, investment return and a levy on eligible schemes. Under the Pensions Act 2004, the levy is set by the PPF independently of the Government.

■ Pensions: Self-employed**Natalie McGarry:**[\[53995\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans the Government has put in place to support self-employed people to save into a pension; and if he will make a statement.

Richard Harrington:

The self-employed can choose to save into pension schemes such as NEST and attract tax relief on their contributions. Further information and guidance on pension savings

options can also be found through organisations like the Pensions Advisory Service and the Money Advice Service. However, the Government is aware that, while overall pension participation is rising, participation in pension schemes among the self-employed has not had a similar experience. We also recognise that self-employment is growing, and we are committed to ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to save for a secure future.

In 2017, the Government will be reviewing automatic enrolment - our key private pension reform - to ensure that it continues to work for employers and individuals. The position of the self-employed and other people who do not come within automatic enrolment deserves attention. I will be announcing the scope of the review before the end of the year.

■ Social Security Benefits

Kirsten Oswald: [54499]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many (a) medical and (b) work capability assessments were conducted to assess claimants' eligibility for each benefit for which his Department is responsible in each of the last two years.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Department does not record the information you have requested on (a) medical assessments for Personal Independence Payment. The information on (b) work capability assessments can be accessed from <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/esa-outcomes-of-work-capability-assessments-including-mandatory-reconsiderations-and-appeals-september-2016>.

Kirsten Oswald: [54500]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what number and proportion of claimants for each benefit administered by his Department require a home visit for the purpose of conducting medical or work capability assessments.

Penny Mordaunt:

Information on the number of home assessments completed is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

■ Social Security Benefits: Disability

Dr Lisa Cameron: [R] [54600]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what his Department's policy is on the provision of support for disabled people whose condition precludes them from attending face to face assessments.

Penny Mordaunt:

The decision as to whether a paper-based review or a home visit is appropriate is made by the Healthcare Professional. Their decision on whether to do so is based on evidence provided by the claimant to support their claim including all medical evidence from the claimant's GP, hospital doctor or other appropriate clinicians.

■ Social Security Benefits: Homelessness

Rebecca Long Bailey:

[[53979](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of benefit sanctions on levels of homelessness.

Damian Hinds:

The Department has not made such an assessment.

Housing Benefit payments are not affected by the imposition of a sanction. Sanctions apply to the JSA payment or UC equivalent only.

The departments aim is to assess and appropriately consider the support needs of anyone whose housing conditions are stopping them from finding and keeping a job. Support is based on individual needs and circumstances and is there to help homeless claimants find sustainable living accommodation, which in turn helps to remove barriers to employment.

The homeless easement under JSA allows Work Coaches to treat certain homeless claimants as meeting job seeking conditions for periods of longer than one week. There is no limit on the number of occasions in which it can be applied; and It is dependent upon the claimant taking reasonable action to find living accommodation.

On 16 November 2016, the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions announced that immediate access to hardship payments will be extended to homeless claimants and those with mental health conditions.

■ Social Security Benefits: Scotland

Margaret Ferrier:

[[54545](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make an estimate of the number of people in Scotland subject to a benefit sanction who have used food banks in the last 12 months.

Damian Hinds:

The Department does not hold this information.

■ State Retirement Pensions

Ian Blackford:

[[54428](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what his policy is on the minimum written notice to be given to people who will be affected by future changes to the state pension age.

Richard Harrington:

The Government has committed not to change the legislation relating to State Pension age for those people who are within 10 years of reaching it. This provides these individuals with the certainty they need to plan for the future

We recognise the importance of ensuring people are aware of any changes to their State Pension age and we use a number of different means to do this. In the past, these have included writing to people and targeted communications campaigns. However, we continue to look at the most effective way to ensure people are aware of any changes. Anyone can find out their State Pension age with our online calculator or the 'Check your State Pension' statement service.

■ State Retirement Pensions: Females

Ian Blackford:

[\[54135\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what minimum written notice was given to women affected by state pension age increases under the Pensions Act 1995 and Pensions Act 2011.

Richard Harrington:

Between April 2009 and March 2011, the Department mailed all women born between 6th April 1950 and 5th April 1953, informing them of their State Pension age under the 1995 Pensions Act. This involved sending 1.16 million letters to the affected females.

Following the 2011 changes, DWP wrote to all individuals directly affected to inform them of the change to their State Pension age. This applied to women born between 6th April 1953 and 5th April 1960. These letters were sent between January 2012 and November 2013. This involved sending 5.77 million letters to the affected males and females.

In addition to writing directly to those affected, the Government provided a range of information in order for all individuals to be able to find out their State Pension age and conditions of their benefits. For example, following the Pensions Act 1995, State Pension estimates, issued to individuals on request, made the changes clear. DWP also ran a pensions education campaign in 2004, which included informing people of the future equalisation of State Pension.

■ Universal Credit

Neil Gray:

[\[54827\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the oral contribution of the Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work of 17 November 2016, Official Report, columns 462 to 464, whether the hardship fund, flexible support fund and other third-party deals will compensate new claimants in full for the loss of the work-related activity group payments.

Penny Mordaunt:

We remain committed to ensuring that people have the best support possible to move closer to the labour market and, when they are ready, into work. The change to the ESA work-related activity component will only apply to new claims. There will be no cash losers among those who are already in receipt of ESA and we aim to protect existing ESA claimants who temporarily leave the benefit to try out work and then return to ESA. We will bring forward draft regulations in due course setting out the detail.

■ **Welfare Reform and Work Bill**

Stephen Timms:

[\[54869\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the oral contribution by the Minister of State for Welfare Reform of 27 January 2016, in the House of Lords, Official Report, column 1315, on the Welfare Reform and Work Bill, whether the £60 to £100 million per year proposed under his Department's Green Paper on work, health and disability to be spent on supporting employment and support allowance claimants into work is in addition to or instead of funding currently being spent in the Work Programme and in Work Choice.

Penny Mordaunt:

The £60 - £100 million per year is additional funding that will deliver a broad range of employment and health support. This will be in tandem with the change to the ESA Work-Related Activity Component and UC Limited Capability for Work element. As set out in the Work, Health and Disability Green Paper some of it will be used to fund additional places on Work Choice and the Work and Health Programme when it is launched.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

DEFENCE

■ Coalition Operations against Daesh

Secretary of State for Defence (Sir Michael Fallon): [\[HCWS292\]](#)

The Coalition has today published its findings from an incident report into the Coalition air strikes in Dayr Az Zawr on 17 September 2016.

While the report has concluded that the decision to identify the targets as Daesh military objectives was both reasonable and supported by the weight of information available at the time, post-strike analysis indicates it more likely than not that a Syrian Regime aligned force was struck after being mistaken for Daesh.

The Ministry of Defence will always carefully examine any credible evidence that suggests we have struck a target in error. We have contributed fully to the Coalition's investigation into this incident.

The UK Armed Forces operate under strict Rules of Engagement, which govern the use of force, and we take all reasonable steps to avoid non-combatant casualties. All strikes conducted by the RAF are carried out in accordance with robust Rules of Engagement, UK interpretation of the Law of Armed Conflict and rigorous targeting processes and are approved through a strict assessment process undertaken by a team including British military, policy and legal advisers.

Both the Coalition and the UK are reviewing the report's conclusions and we will act on any lessons identified in order to mitigate the risks of such an error recurring.

■ Sir John Parker's Independent Report to Inform the National Shipbuilding Strategy

Secretary of State for Defence (Sir Michael Fallon): [\[HCWS288\]](#)

Sir John Parker has submitted his independent report to inform the United Kingdom National Shipbuilding Strategy. He has consulted widely with Government, industry and the Trades Unions during his work.

I have today placed copies of the report in the Library of the House and it will be made available on the Government website, gov.uk.

The report is a balanced critique of the challenges faced by Government and industry in the naval shipbuilding sector in recent years. However, Sir John has identified a "renaissance" in a range of regional shipyards across the United Kingdom where he has found entrepreneurial attitudes and an enthusiasm to embrace change. His report includes 34 far-reaching recommendations to transform the United Kingdom's shipbuilding industry which will lay the foundations for a modern, efficient and competitive sector capable of meeting the country's future defence and security needs. It will also bring prosperity benefits for shipyards and their supply chains across the country. These are for the Ministry of Defence (MOD), wider Government and industry to consider.

The Government welcomes the report and is committed to delivering a modern National Shipbuilding Strategy. We see it as a vital part of our industrial strategy focusing on increasing economic growth across the country and investing in a more skilled workforce: which is this Government's approach for rebalancing Britain and delivering an economy that works for everyone, not just a privileged few. While many of the recommendations are for Government, the themes of Sir John's report (modern digital engineering, industrial innovation, competitiveness, focus on apprenticeships and jobs, export focus) also show where industry, working with Government, needs to invest in order to increase opportunities for the shipbuilding sector across the United Kingdom and enable it to thrive and grow. It also means using our shipbuilding expertise to become a leading producer of ships for export. We must use the opportunities that Brexit provides to become a global trading power again.

Shipbuilding is an important part of our economy. The MOD estimates that the Government spent around £1.4 billion on shipbuilding and repair in Financial Year 2014-15, of which approximately 96% was spent with five UK prime contractors. Around 15,000 people are directly employed in UK shipbuilding and repair, with an additional 10,000 jobs indirectly supported through the wider supply chain in the UK. Realising Sir John's ambition for shipbuilding would benefit the whole of the United Kingdom.

Our vision therefore is for a strong shipbuilding sector, backed up by a modern industrial strategy.

It is important that the Government gives Sir John's work the full consideration that it deserves. I have asked officials, working with others across Government, to examine the report and recommendations, and to discuss them with industry. The Government will then publish a full and considered response and implementation plan in spring 2017. This response will be the National Shipbuilding Strategy.

I would like to place on record my thanks to Sir John for providing such a thorough analysis of naval shipbuilding and recommendations for a new era of co-operation and drive across the shipbuilding enterprise.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ November Agriculture Council

The Minister of State for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (George Eustice):
[\[HCWS289\]](#)

I represented the UK at the Agriculture and Fisheries Council on 14 and 15 November in Brussels.

Commissioner Vella presented a proposal for a Council Regulation setting deep sea fishing opportunities for 2017 and 2018. Commissioner Vella noted there were challenges in setting total allowable catches (TACs). The UK, Poland, Sweden and Denmark stressed the need to protect stocks, although Denmark noted that the TACs should not be lowered too far or these stocks would become obstacles to fully implementing the landing obligation. A

compromise text mitigated some of the proposed cuts, whilst still providing adequate protections, and was therefore unanimously agreed.

Commissioner Vella presented proposals for the North Sea Multi-Annual Plan (MAP). The UK, Sweden, Germany, Denmark, Belgium and Poland expressed their general support for the proposal. However, the UK, echoed by France and Denmark had concerns that some of the additional controls would increase the administrative burden without any commensurate benefit.

Mr Cees Veerman, Chairman of the Agricultural Markets Taskforce (AMT), presented the report of the AMT and the main recommendations within it, which set the agenda for future work. They included strengthening market transparency, and setting out a framework including a list of prohibited, basic Unfair Trading Practices (UTPs) which would carry the penalty of sanctions. The UK welcomed that the AMT largely based the recommendations for UTPs on the work of the UK Groceries Code Adjudicator.

Commissioner Hogan and Vice-President Katainen presented the DG AGRI report on the cumulative impact of Free Trade Association (FTA) concessions on agriculture. Commissioner Hogan stressed that it did not represent a projected outcome of the 12 ongoing or potential EU-third country FTAs within its scope. The report analysed the cumulative economic impacts of tariff liberalisation through two theoretical scenarios. Overall, the conclusions were balanced and confirmed potential for net trade gains. Vice-President Katainen set the report in the context of the EU's wider free trade, jobs and growth agenda. The UK underlined its longstanding support for tariff-free access and reduced non-tariff barriers, but noted that agriculture goes beyond questions of simple economics.

Any other business items

- The UK introduced an item on behalf of the North Western Waters regional group on the landing obligation. It drew attention to the good progress made so far in implementing the landing obligation, a key part of the last reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), but also the potential problem of choke species had to be dealt with. The UK presented ongoing work in the regions on this issue and pressed the Commission to heed it. The UK points were supported by Portugal, Germany, Ireland, Denmark, Belgium, France, Spain, the Netherlands, Latvia and Sweden, with many thanking the UK for bringing this important issue to the table.
- Greece voiced their concerns that the difference between customary names and standard names for Geographical Indication protected products undermined the EU system. The Commission pushed back by pointing out that the current legal wording ensures sufficient security.
- Commissioner Andriukaitis announced that the Commission will establish and host the first meeting of the Animal Welfare Platform, which will discuss best practice in this field, during the Maltese Presidency. The UK's support for this call and the need for a review of rest periods in line with current scientific advice was praised by several animal welfare charities via online media platforms.

- Denmark raised concerns about the increased use of antimicrobials in the veterinary sector in some Member States and called for immediate action. The UK, along with eight other Member States supported this call.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

■ Amendment of terms for the Contingent Liability arising from the Loan Guarantee Agreement with the World Bank Group Covering an IBRD Loan to the Government of Iraq

The Secretary of State for International Development (Priti Patel): [\[HCWS291\]](#)

I have today laid a departmental Minute outlining updated details of a contingent liability of the US Dollar equivalent of £360 million which the Department for International Development (DFID) has undertaken, in respect of the World Bank Group.

On 25 October, I laid a departmental Minute setting out DFID's intention to guarantee a portion of a forthcoming Development Policy Loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) arm of the World Bank to the Government of Iraq, subject to finalising the details of the terms of the guarantee. Further consideration of the implications of the original arrangements for the treatment of the World Bank by credit rating agencies has led me to amend the element of the proposal relating to the treatment of any payments recovered from the Government of Iraq, in the event of a default and the guarantee subsequently being triggered.

The revised proposal entails the World Bank transferring the right to pursue and retain recoveries to the UK Government, should it wish to do so. This amendment to the guarantee arrangement will avoid undermining the Bank's preferred creditor status, which is so critical to its ability to borrow at very favourable rates from the market and pass these on to its borrowers.

The change to the treatment of recoveries should have minimal, if any, impact on the probability of a default by the Government of Iraq. There remain strong incentives for Iraq avoiding entering into arrears as doing so would lead to the IBRD not agreeing any new lending, and not providing any lending agreed under existing loans; it would also entail the payment of penalty charges by the Government of Iraq.

In the event that a default did occur, and the guarantee is called, the UK would still provide compensation to the World Bank, in proportion to the UK's guaranteed share of the overall IBRD loan. If this liability is called, provision for any DFID payment would be sought through the normal Supply procedure.

TRANSPORT■ **EU Transport Council**

Secretary of State for Transport (Chris Grayling):

[\[HCWS290\]](#)

I will attend the only Transport Council under the Slovakian Presidency (the Presidency) taking place in Brussels on Thursday 1st December.

The Presidency is aiming for a general approach on the proposed Regulation on common rules in the field of civil aviation safety and establishing a European Union Aviation Safety Agency. The proposed general approach embodies the principle of proportionality and encourages the use of performance based regulations. It also makes small but appropriate extensions to the scope of the European Aviation Safety Agency's responsibilities.

The Presidency is also aiming for general approaches on two proposals aimed to simplifying and streamlining existing passenger ship safety legislation.

The first of these is an amending Directive on safety rules and standards for passenger ships. This Directive sets harmonised safety standards for seagoing passenger ships operating on domestic routes throughout the UK, and the proposed amendments look to simplify the current legislation. In particular, this deregulatory approach proposes that standards for passenger ships below 24m are better suited to regulation at national level.

The second is a proposal for a Directive on a system of inspections for the safe operation of ro-ro ferry and high-speed passenger craft in regular service. The proposed revision updates, clarifies and simplifies the existing survey (inspection) requirements for ro-ro ferries and high-speed passenger craft, while maintaining the same level of safety and key delivery mechanisms.

There will be a progress report on a related proposal to amend two Directives; one on the registration of persons sailing on board passenger ships operating to or from ports of the Member States of the Community, and one on reporting formalities for ships arriving in and/or departing from ports of the Member States. Negotiations are at an early stage, and the Presidency's progress report summarises the discussions so far. Discussions on this proposal will continue during the forthcoming Maltese presidency in 2017.

The Presidency has proposed a policy debate on the extension of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) and Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) blending, which provides further funding for EFSI. The proposal will continue to enhance the financial case for projects and value for money from the EU budgets.

Under Any Other Business, the Commission will provide an update on the outcome of the 39th Assembly of the International Civil Aviation Organisation held in September and October 2016, combined with the latest developments in the International Maritime Organisation. The Commission will also provide information on the state of play on security in the transport sector, its planned package of road initiatives, road safety, developments in EU-type approval legislation and the progress made on the implication of the 'emissions irregularities'. The Commission will update on the state of play on GALILEO, present its European Strategy for Low Emission Mobility, and provide information on its initiative on

“Women in Transport”. The Cyprus Delegation will provide information on the draft common aviation area agreement between the Republic of Turkey and the European Union and its Member States. The Dutch Delegation will then update the Council on cooperation in the field of connected and automated driving. Finally, the Maltese delegation will inform the Council on the work programme for their forthcoming Presidency.