



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 2 December 2016 and the information is correct at the time of publication (03:59 P.M., 02 December 2016). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

### CONTENTS

<b>ANSWERS</b>	<b>5</b>		
ATTORNEY GENERAL	5	■ Flood Control: Capital Investment	10
■ Barristers	5	■ Infrastructure	10
■ Serious Fraud Office: Finance	5	■ National Productivity Investment Fund	10
■ Serious Fraud Office: Staff	5	■ National Productivity Investment Fund: Staff	11
BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY	6	■ Sanitary Protection: VAT	11
■ Arctic: Temperature	6	■ Self-employed: Fraud	11
■ Climate Change Convention	6	■ Welfare Tax Credits	12
■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Billing	7	CHURCH COMMISSIONERS	12
■ Energy: Meters	7	■ Church of England: Peterborough	12
■ Fairtrade Initiative	7	COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT	12
■ Kids Company: Insolvency	8	■ Communities and Local Government: Billing	12
■ Public Houses: Tenants	8	■ First Time Buyers: Greater London	13
■ Royal Bank of Scotland	8	■ Leasehold	13
CABINET OFFICE	8	■ Public Houses: Non-domestic Rates	13
■ Government Departments	8	CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT	14
■ Government Departments: Extended Ministerial Offices	9	■ Arts: EU Grants and Loans	14
■ Policy	9	■ Creative Industries Council: Industrial Relations	14
TREASURY	9		
■ Balance of Trade	9		
■ Employee Ownership	10		

■ Department for Culture, Media and Sport: Ministerial Policy Advisers	15	■ Rural Development Programme: Countryside	26
■ Journalism: Russia	15	■ Salmon: Scotland	27
■ Members: Correspondence	16	■ Sugar: Imports	27
■ Openreach: Broadband	16	EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION	27
■ Public Libraries	16	■ Common Travel Area	27
■ Sports: Equality	17	■ Department for Exiting the European Union: Procurement	28
■ Television: Russia	17	FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE	28
DEFENCE	18	■ BBC World Service: Russia	28
■ Armed Forces: Railways	18	■ British Indian Ocean Territory: Construction	29
■ Duke of Lancaster's Regiment	19	■ British Indian Ocean Territory: Post Offices	29
■ Fulwood Barracks	19	■ British Indian Ocean Territory: Sailing Boats	29
■ Ministry of Defence: Billing	19	■ British Indian Ocean Territory: Visits	30
■ Ministry of Defence: Compensation	20	■ Sudan: Arrests	30
■ Radioactive Materials: Transport	20	■ Turkey: Press Freedom	30
■ Red Snapper Group	21	HEALTH	31
■ Type 45 Destroyers	21	■ Capita	31
■ Warships: Shipbuilding	21	■ Capita: Primary Health Care	31
EDUCATION	22	■ Care Homes	31
■ Children: Day Care	22	■ Health Services: Finance	32
■ Department for Education: Breastfeeding	22	■ Hull York Medical School	32
■ Health Professions: Training	23	■ Patients: Transport	32
ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS	23	■ Prescriptions	33
■ Aviation: Noise	23	■ Surgery: Vale of York	33
■ Birds of Prey: Licensing	23	HOME OFFICE	34
■ Bovine Tuberculosis	24	■ Asylum: Greater London	34
■ Flood Control	24	■ Child Sexual Abuse Independent Panel Inquiry	34
■ Ivory: Imports	25	■ Immigrants: Health Services	35
■ Motor Vehicles: Waste Disposal	26		
■ Nature Conservation	26		

■ Marriage Certificates: Mothers	35	WOMEN AND EQUALITIES	47
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	36	■ Policy	47
■ Madagascar: Droughts and Famine	36	WORK AND PENSIONS	48
■ Mozambique: Droughts and Famine	36	■ Atos Healthcare: Standards	48
INTERNATIONAL TRADE	37	■ Carer's Allowance	48
■ Department for International Trade: Disclosure of Information	37	■ Children: Maintenance	49
■ Department for International Trade: Ministerial Policy Advisers	37	■ Employment and Support Allowance: Disability	50
■ Department for International Trade: Small Businesses	37	■ Food Banks: Scotland	51
■ Department for International Trade: Staff	37	■ Personal Independence Payment: Appeals	51
■ Foreign Investment in UK	38	<b>MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS</b>	<b>53</b>
■ Origin Marking	38	TREASURY	53
■ Trade Agreements	38	■ Concentrix: Standards	53
■ Trade Agreements: Australia	38	■ Concentrix: Telephone Services	57
■ Trade Agreements: Trade Unions	39	■ Revenue and Customs: Concentrix	59
JUSTICE	39	■ Welfare Tax Credits	80
■ Cremation	39	■ Welfare Tax Credits: Payments	82
TRANSPORT	43	<b>WRITTEN STATEMENTS</b>	<b>85</b>
■ Govia Thameslink Railway	43	BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY	85
■ Railways: Standards	44	■ PUBLICATION OF GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON THE DUTY TO REPORT ON PAYMENT PRACTICES AND POLICIES, AND OF UPDATED DRAFT REGULATIONS	85
■ Roads: Tunnels	44	CABINET OFFICE	87
■ Shipping: Carbon Emissions	45	■ Publication of Government Grant Standards	87
WALES	45	COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT	88
■ Apprentices: Wales	45	■ LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS	88
■ Funerals: Wales	46	■ Supporting local newspapers	89
■ Wales Office: Alcoholic Drinks	46		
■ Wales Office: Christmas	47		

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT	90	TRANSPORT	90
■ Telecommunications Council	90	■ Rail update - Southern	90

**Notes:**

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

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

## ANSWERS

### ATTORNEY GENERAL

#### ■ Barristers

**Nick Thomas-Symonds:** [\[55171\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, in how many cases the Crown Prosecution Service instructed QCs when the defence case was not presented by a QC in each year since 2010; and what proportion of the total number of cases brought to court that figure represented.

**Robert Buckland:**

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) does not maintain a central record of whether the defendant was represented by junior or senior counsel. This information could only be obtained by examining CPS case files, which would incur disproportionate cost.

#### ■ Serious Fraud Office: Finance

**Nick Thomas-Symonds:** [\[55015\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of blockbuster funding for the Serious Fraud Office and the effect of the funding model on the body's staffing and resources.

**Robert Buckland:**

The Serious Fraud Office (SFO) blockbuster funding model allows the SFO the flexibility to take on the complex and high value cases for which it was established. SFO officials meet regularly with my staff and with Treasury officials to review the financial position and we will continue to work closely with Treasury colleagues to ensure that the SFO has an effective and sustainable funding model.

#### ■ Serious Fraud Office: Staff

**Nick Thomas-Symonds:** [\[55016\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, how many contract and temporary staff the Serious Fraud Office employed annually from 2010 to the most recent period for which figures are available; and what the cost was of that employment for each such year.

**Robert Buckland:**

The average number of temporary contract staff employed annually by the Serious Fraud Office (SFO) since 2010 and the cost of that employment is detailed in the table below. The figure for 2016-17 is the actual number of temporary contract staff engaged by the SFO as at 31 October.

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Temporary	£3.693m	£2.296m	£2.672m	£3.926m	£4.646m	£6.991m	£3.735m

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Staff Cost							
Temporary Staff FTE	20	51	29	36	69	106	113

The Serious Fraud Office operates a flexible resourcing model due to the demand-led nature of its casework and to take account of the mix of core and blockbuster funding. The majority of temporary staff are assigned to work on blockbuster cases and the number of such cases has increased since 2010.

Prior to April 2014 the SFO did not maintain a centralised record of temporary staffing and the figures prior to that date are estimates.

## BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

### ■ Arctic: Temperature

**Margaret Ferrier:** [\[54700\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if his Department will commission research on the reasons for the unseasonably high temperatures being recorded in the Arctic.

**Mr Nick Hurd:**

HMG funds a number of organisations, including NERC funded centres and the Met Office Hadley Centre, which are world-leaders in climate research and are active in Arctic research; this includes the monitoring of Arctic temperatures and understanding the reasons for observed changes in temperature.

### ■ Climate Change Convention

**Barry Gardiner:** [\[54996\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for what reasons the UK was not a signatory to the Joint Statement issued by the High Ambition Coalition ministers on 11 November 2016 during the 22nd Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

**Mr Nick Hurd:**

*[Holding answer 30 November 2016]:* The UK didn't sign the Joint Statement issued by a Group of High Ambition Coalition members on 11 November 2016 because we considered that the best way for the UK to communicate with the new US administration was through normal channels given the long history that the UK and the United States have of working together on climate change and many other issues.

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

**Tim Farron:**

[55444]

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

**Margot James:**

The Department does not differentiate between small, medium or larger businesses as many smaller businesses can be found throughout the supply chain. The performance for ex-DECC and ex-BIS in the 15/16 financial year resulted in 98.8% and 96.7% of supplier invoices being paid within 5 working days.

■ **Energy: Meters**

**Callum McCaig:**

[55315]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment the Government has made of whether the 2020 target for smart meter development will be met (a) on time and (b) within budget.

**Jesse Norman:**

The smart metering rollout is making good progress, with over 4.2 million smart meters already installed as of end June 2016. The national data and communications infrastructure for smart metering (provided by the Data and Communications Company) is now live across the country, and the Government is committed to energy suppliers offering every household and small business in Great Britain a smart meter by the end of 2020.

The latest Cost-Benefit Analysis for the smart metering programme, which can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/smart-meter-roll-out-gb-cost-benefit-analysis>, estimates overall net benefits of £5.7 billion.

■ **Fairtrade Initiative**

**Margaret Ferrier:**

[54698]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent steps he has taken to encourage retailers to stock more Fairtrade products and adopt Fairtrade principles.

**Margot James:**

The stocking of Fairtrade products and the adoption of Fairtrade principles by retailers are commercial matters for the companies concerned.

The Government is committed to supporting Fairtrade around the world. Over the last six years, the Department for International Development (DFID) has provided £18m to Fairtrade International to support their work and strengthen the global Fairtrade system. This includes Fairtrade producer and worker organizations that are the drivers of inclusive economic, environmental and social development in their communities around

the world. DFID continues to actively engage with Fairtrade on a variety of projects and campaigns, such as the upcoming Fairtrade Fortnight.

■ **Kids Company: Insolvency**

**Paul Flynn:** [\[55391\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will publish the findings of the insolvency investigation relating to Kids Company when it is completed.

**Margot James:**

The Official Receiver sent a report regarding the winding up of Kids Company to creditors including Cabinet Office and HMRC on 1 October 2015. The Official Receiver's enquiries into the affairs of Kids Company are continuing, and it would not be appropriate for us to comment on an ongoing investigation.

■ **Public Houses: Tenants**

**Mr Laurence Robertson:** [\[55379\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 29 November 2016 to Question 54778, what estimate he has made of the total number of tied pub tenants in England and Wales.

**Margot James:**

The Department does not hold figures on the total number of tied pub tenants in England and Wales.

■ **Royal Bank of Scotland**

**Mr David Hanson:** [\[54814\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to his oral contribution of 8 November 2016, Official Report, column 1395, on the Royal Bank of Scotland, when he plans to write to the right hon. Member for Delyn.

**Margot James:**

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State wrote to the right hon. Member for Delyn on 28 November.

## CABINET OFFICE

■ **Government Departments**

**Nick Herbert:** [\[55312\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, which departments have held board meetings (a) with and (b) without their Secretary of State or ministerial head in attendance since 13 July 2016; what the date was of all such meetings; who attended each such meeting; and if he will make a statement.



**Ben Gummer:**

This information is not held centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

■ **Government Departments: Extended Ministerial Offices**

**Nick Herbert:**

[55310]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, which departments have Extended Ministerial Offices; who the members are of each such Extended Offices; and if he will make a statement.

**Ben Gummer:**

I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 15 September 2016 to UIN: 45740.

■ **Policy**

**Nick Herbert:**

[55311]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, which projects are currently commissioned for external policy advice (a) from the Ministerial Contestable Policy Fund and (b) by any other means; and if he will make a statement.

**Ben Gummer:**

The Contestable Policy Fund ran from June 2012- June 2015 and is now closed. A full list of projects supported by the CPF can be found on [Gov.uk](http://Gov.uk).

## TREASURY

■ **Balance of Trade**

**Barry Gardiner:**

[54692]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has commissioned cost-benefit analysis of the potential effect of the UK leaving the single market and the customs union on the UK's balance of trade.

**Barry Gardiner:**

[54967]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what research his Department has commissioned on the effect on the UK's future trade balance of the UK leaving the customs union.

**Mr David Gauke:**

The Government continues to undertake a range of analyses to inform the UK's position for the upcoming EU exit negotiations. We are seeking the best possible arrangement for trade in goods and services and the work being conducted reflects this.

The UK's future relationship with the EU will be contingent on the exit negotiations and the Government will not provide a running commentary on these negotiations.

## ■ Employee Ownership

**Margaret Ferrier:** [54693]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate his Department has made of the number of participants in the Employee Shareholder Status scheme in (a) Rutherglen and Hamilton West constituency, (b) Scotland and (c) the UK.

**Jane Ellison:**

Details of the number of employees receiving Employee Shareholder Status shares in the tax year 2013 to 2014, the latest year for which data is available, are in Table 14.9 contained in the Capital Gains Tax Statistics published on Gov.uk - [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/capital-gains-tax-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/capital-gains-tax-statistics). Breakdown by geographical areas is not available.

## ■ Flood Control: Capital Investment

**Mary Creagh:** [54791]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to paragraph 3.25 of the Autumn Statement 2016, whether that investment in flood defence and resilience measures is in addition to the investment in flood defences announced in the March 2016 Budget.

**Mr David Gauke:**

The £170 million flood defence and resilience funding announced at Autumn Statement 2016 is an allocation from the £700m announced in the March 2016 Budget.

## ■ Infrastructure

**Sir Hugo Swire:** [55352]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to commission technical advisory committees to oversee and review large infrastructure projects.

**Mr David Gauke:**

The Chancellor announced at the Autumn Statement 2016 that the Chief Secretary to the Treasury will chair a new ministerial group that will oversee the delivery of priority infrastructure projects.

The Infrastructure and Projects Authority has a mandate to ensure timely and cost effective delivery of the government's infrastructure priorities alongside other major government projects and programmes.

The National Infrastructure Commission will help solve complex infrastructure problems by providing robust and impartial analysis of the country's long-term infrastructure needs.

## ■ National Productivity Investment Fund

**Diana Johnson:** [55307]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much of the National Productivity Investment Fund money will be spent in each NUTS 1 region.

**Mr David Gauke:**

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

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

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

**■ National Productivity Investment Fund: Staff****Diana Johnson:**[\[55308\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many full-time equivalent staff will be employed in administering the National Productivity Investment Fund; and how many such staff will be employed in each NUTS 1 region.

**Mr David Gauke:**

The National Productivity Investment Fund will be administered by HM Treasury in collaboration with relevant departments and expert bodies, as set out in paragraph 3.9 of the Autumn Statement.

**■ Sanitary Protection: VAT****Alison Thewliss:**[\[55090\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the timetable is for VAT no longer to be applicable on women's sanitary products.

**Jane Ellison:**

As outlined in the Finance Bill debate earlier this year, the UK continues to push for a VAT zero-rate for women's sanitary products at the EU level to enable us to introduce it at the earliest opportunity.

**■ Self-employed: Fraud****Justin Madders:**[\[54857\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to tackle bogus self-employment.

**Jane Ellison:**

HM Revenue and Customs' (HMRC's) Employment Status and Intermediaries Team focuses on employment status and employment intermediary risks. Where companies are believed to have misclassified individuals as self-employed, HMRC establishes the facts of the case and will take steps to ensure that all the appropriate tax, National Insurance contributions, interest and penalties are paid.

In addition, the Government announced at Autumn Statement 2016 that, following consultation, it would reforms the intermediaries legislation (commonly known as IR35) to improve the compliance of those working off-payroll through Personal Service Companies in the public sector.

#### ■ Welfare Tax Credits

**Stephen Timms:** [\[55382\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, on what date the powers of the Tax Credits (Income Thresholds and Determination of Rates) (Amendment) Regulations 2016, approved on 7 March 2016 were first used automatically to change and reduce claimants' tax credit awards.

**Jane Ellison:**

The regulations came into effect from 6<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

### CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

#### ■ Church of England: Peterborough

**Mr Stewart Jackson:** [\[55309\]](#)

To ask the right hon. Member for Meriden, representing the Church Commissioners, pursuant to the Answer of 24 November 2016 to Question 53954, what issues remain which preclude the swift expediting of contracts being exchanged in respect of the disposal of land at Phase 2 Paston Reserve, Peterborough; and if she will make a statement.

**Dame Caroline Spelman:**

There are a few remaining commercially sensitive negotiations which are currently taking place between the Church Commissioners for England, Taylor Wimpey plc and the Homes and Communities Agency who jointly own the site at Paston Reserve. The Church Commissioners hope to be in a position to update the Hon member for Peterborough with progress on the development at the meeting they have with his office on the 18<sup>th</sup> January 2017.

### COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

#### ■ Communities and Local Government: Billing

**Tim Farron:** [\[55445\]](#)

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

**Mr Marcus Jones:**

*[Holding answer 2 December 2016]:* Central Government Departments aim to pay 80% of undisputed and valid invoices within 5 days, with the remainder paid within 30 days.

The Department for Communities and Local Government paid 87.5% of such invoices within 5 days. We are unable to break the figures from our system down to show the percentage relating to payments for small businesses specifically without a significant outlay of resource and analysis.

We have published our overall payment performance data at:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications?departments%5B%5D=department-forcommunities-and-local-government&publication\\_type=transparency-data](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications?departments%5B%5D=department-forcommunities-and-local-government&publication_type=transparency-data)

## ■ First Time Buyers: Greater London

**Stephen Timms:** [55441]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the number of first-time home buyers in (a) Greater London, (b) the London Borough of Newham and (c) East Ham constituency in each of the last 10 years.

**Gavin Barwell:**

The Department's English Housing Survey provides estimates of the number of recent (bought within the last three years) first time buyers in London. The latest figures can be found in AT1.6 here:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/501068/2014-15\\_Section\\_1\\_Households\\_tables\\_and\\_figures\\_FINAL.xlsx](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/501068/2014-15_Section_1_Households_tables_and_figures_FINAL.xlsx)

The department does not hold information on the number of first time buyers in the London Borough of Newham or the East Ham constituency.

## ■ Leasehold

**Justin Madders:** [54776]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of regulation of long-term leasehold properties.

**Gavin Barwell:**

The Government is aware of concerns about the quality of service provided by some managing agents. That is why we introduced legislation ensuring that property management agents belong to an approved redress scheme. There are Codes of Practice in place that can be applied by the courts to raise standards.

We are working with a number of partners, including the Law Commission, and are exploring whether further changes are required to address issues in this area.

## ■ Public Houses: Non-domestic Rates

**Graham Evans:** [54675]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if he will make an estimate of the number of pubs that will benefit from the extension of rural rates relief.

**Mr Marcus Jones:**

As of 31 December 2014, 4,690 businesses were in receipt of mandatory rural rate relief. The Department does not hold data on how many of these businesses are pubs,

so it is not possible to estimate the number of pubs that will benefit from the extension of rural rate relief. As announced at Autumn Statement we are doubling the level of rural rate relief. Eligible pubs and petrol stations with a rateable value of £12,500 or below will benefit from 100% relief.

## CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

### ■ Arts: EU Grants and Loans

**Kevin Brennan:** [\[55455\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what recent estimate she has made of the amount of funding from the EU which is spent on arts-related projects in the UK in each year since 2010.

**Matt Hancock:**

The Chancellor has guaranteed structural and investment fund projects in the UK that are signed even after the Autumn Statement. In addition, projects where UK organisations bid directly and competitively for EU funding will be guaranteed by the UK Government if the bids are won before our departure from the EU, regardless of whether or not the projects continue after departure. Funding for other projects will be honoured by the government if they are good value for money and are in line with domestic strategic priorities.

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

Information on EU funding through the Creative Europe programme for arts organisation, programmes and projects can be found in the answer to the PQ 31508 at the following website:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-03-16/31508/>

A number of arts and cultural projects have also received funding through the European Regional Development Fund during the same period. The Department for Communities and Local Government is the UK responsible body for this funding, and details of recipients are published on the DCLG website.

### ■ Creative Industries Council: Industrial Relations

**Kevin Brennan:** [\[55456\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what plans she has to include representatives of the workforce on the Creative Industries Council.

**Matt Hancock:**

Membership of the Creative Industries Council is drawn from a wide range of businesses and trade bodies. It is reviewed annually to ensure it remains relevant and reflective of the sector. This process is led by the Council's industry co-Chair. Organisations and individuals interested in being involved in the Council's work can do this through a range of Council sub-groups, details of which can be found at [www.thecreativeindustries.co.uk](http://www.thecreativeindustries.co.uk).

**■ Department for Culture, Media and Sport: Ministerial Policy Advisers****Tom Watson:**[\[55205\]](#)

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

**Matt Hancock:**

There are no unpaid advisors currently based in the Broadband Delivery Unit.

**■ Journalism: Russia****Ian Austin:**[\[55317\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what progress has been made on the complaint by Brendan Chilton to Ofcom on Sputnik's reporting of the murder of Jo Cox MP.

**Matt Hancock:**

Ofcom has confirmed it has not received a complaint from Brendan Chilton about the service Sputnik.

**Ian Austin:**[\[55320\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, how many times (a) Russia Today and (b) Sputnik has been found to be in breach of its legal requirement to report news with due impartiality in the last three years.

**Matt Hancock:**

Ofcom has confirmed that, in the last three years, it has found RT in breach of the requirements to ensure that news is presented with due impartiality on two occasions. Ofcom's full findings can be found in the links below. Ofcom has not published any findings about the service Sputnik.

News RT, 22 May 2014, 07:00

Issue 261 of Ofcom's Broadcast Bulletin, published on 8 September 2014:  
[https://www.ofcom.org.uk/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0020/50069/obb261.pdf](https://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/50069/obb261.pdf)

News RT, 1 March 2014, 16:00, 3 March 2014, 21:00, 5 March 2014, 09:00, 6 March 2014, 12:00

Issue 266 of Ofcom's Broadcast Bulletin, published on 10 November 2014  
[https://www.ofcom.org.uk/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0025/47635/obb266.pdf](https://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0025/47635/obb266.pdf)

■ **Members: Correspondence**

**Greg Mulholland:** [55388]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, when she plans to respond to the letter of 15 November 2016 from the hon. Member for Leeds North West on the UK's participation in the 2023 European Capital of Culture award.

**Matt Hancock:**

A response will be submitted to the hon. Member's letter in due course.

■ **Openreach: Broadband**

**Tim Farron:** [55518]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department plans to take in response to the recent ruling by Ofcom on the separation of BT and its Openreach division to support community groups to upgrade broadband connections in their local areas.

**Matt Hancock:**

Ofcom has now announced how it plans to implement its recommendations for the relationship between BT Group and Openreach. We are clear that a more independent Openreach is needed to benefit consumers and the UK's digital infrastructure. We welcome Ofcom's determination to tackle these issues, to give certainty to consumers, industry and investors in the UK's broadband infrastructure to improve service and the level of investment.

DCMS has published guidance on its website for community groups who are interested in implementing community-led broadband solutions at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-led-broadband-schemes/introduction-to-community-led-schemes>. BDUK also provides subsidies for upgrades in broadband connectivity for any premises that only have access to speeds of less than 2Mbps. This will continue throughout 2017 and will not be affected by Ofcom's recent announcement.

■ **Public Libraries**

**Kevin Brennan:** [55452]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, how much funding the Leadership for Libraries Task Force has received from the public purse; and what the purpose of that funding is.

**Mr Rob Wilson:**

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) provided £250,000 funding to establish and support the Libraries Taskforce in 2015/16, and is providing further funding of £500,000 per year from 2016/17 to 2019/20. This covers the costs of five



core staff and Taskforce administrative costs. Furthermore, in 2015/16, Arts Council England provided £100,000 to the Taskforce to fund their secondment of library staff and £74,000 to provide consultancy support for the Society of Chief Librarians (SCL) in developing their bid to become a supplier on the Digital Training and Support Framework and to support the Taskforce in gathering specific evidence on the financial and other benefits that libraries deliver.

The Taskforce's role is to provide leadership and help to reinvigorate the public library network in England. It enables the delivery of the recommendations from the Independent Library Report for England and builds upon and adds value to existing good practice, partnerships and other activities that are already supporting public libraries.

Additional information about the Taskforce's funding and its activities is published in the six month progress reports on gov.uk and can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/progress-reports>

**Kevin Brennan:**

[55453]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what the timetable is for the publication of the final Libraries Task Force report.

**Mr Rob Wilson:**

The report was published on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2016.

## ■ Sports: Equality

**Chi Onwurah:**

[55347]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of bringing forward legislative proposals to introduce into UK law something similar to Rooney's law in the US; and if she will make a statement.

**Tracey Crouch:**

The Government is committed to tackling inequality so that everyone can reach their full potential. That is why we have one of the strongest legal frameworks in the world for tackling discrimination and promoting equality for all. The Rooney rule applies specifically to American Football's National Football League and the Government has no plans to introduce a similar provision in the UK. However, the Government has welcomed the English Football League's Football League rule change from this season that ensures their clubs will always interview at least one applicant from a Black Asian or Minority Ethnic background when coaching positions open up at Academy level with a number of clubs voluntarily agreeing to take that approach also for the head coach roles when in a formal recruitment process.

## ■ Television: Russia

**Ian Austin:**

[55318]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, how many complaints Ofcom has received on Russia Today's reporting of the US Presidential election in 2016.

**Matt Hancock:**

Ofcom has confirmed it received one complaint about RT's (formerly Russia Today) coverage of the 2016 US Presidential elections. Ofcom assessed the complaint and decided that it did not raise issues warranting further investigation. The decision not to investigate the complaint was published in Ofcom's Broadcast and On Demand Bulletin on 21 November 2016, available at:

[https://www.ofcom.org.uk/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0023/94271/Issue-317.pdf](https://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0023/94271/Issue-317.pdf) (see page 104).

**Ian Austin:**[\[55319\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, how many open investigations Ofcom has into the impartiality of Russia Today.

**Matt Hancock:**

Ofcom has confirmed it is currently investigating whether two programmes broadcast on RT were presented with due impartiality.

**DEFENCE****■ Armed Forces: Railways****Justin Tomlinson:**[\[55492\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 29 November 2016 to Question 54837, when the next scheduled review is of the HM Forces Railcard.

**Justin Tomlinson:**[\[55493\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 29 November 2016 to Question 54837, if he will estimate the cost of extending the availability of the HM Forces Railcard to veterans.

**Harriett Baldwin:**

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) does not have a scheduled review in place, however;

MOD officials and members of the Rail Delivery Group (RDG) last considered this issue in 2013. The issue will be raised at the next meeting with the RDG later this month.

The RDG operate the current concession and any estimate in terms of costs and the decision to extend the eligibility is a matter for the Association of Train Operating Companies. When the issue was considered in 2013 it was estimated that there were approximately 4.8 million individuals who may have been eligible.

Service veterans who are members of the Volunteer Reserve are eligible for the HM Forces Railcard, and may also be eligible for other National Railcards (the Veterans Concessionary Travel Scheme for example) which include the various fares and offers made to travellers by the UK Rail Operators. Although these do not cover every personal situation they do provide an option for many rail users. Further details can be found at [www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk) (Discounts) and [www.railcard.co.uk](http://www.railcard.co.uk)

## ■ Duke of Lancaster's Regiment

**Mr Mark Hendrick:** [\[55443\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when the decision was made to move the Duke of Lancaster's Regiment from Fulwood, Preston.

**Harriett Baldwin:**

"Better Defence Estates" is a military-led plan as part of the 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review.

The sites for disposal announced by my right hon. Friend, the Defence Secretary on 7 November 2016 as part of the Better Defence Estate Strategy, were approved by the respective single Service Chiefs before the strategy was agreed by the Defence Board on 30 September.

## ■ Fulwood Barracks

**Mr Mark Hendrick:** [\[55357\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what valuations have been made of the Fulwood Barracks site in the last five years; and what surveys have been made of that site during that period.

**Mr Mark Hendrick:** [\[55358\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what proposals had been agreed on or before 29 November 2016 relating to the Duke of Lancaster's Regiment, Lancashire Infantry Museum, Fulwood Barracks, Preston and its contents after the closure of the barracks.

**Mark Lancaster:**

In developing the Better Defence Estate Strategy, the Department undertook a high-level analysis of site valuations, including Fulwood Barracks. These valuations are commercially sensitive and will continue to be refined as we develop specific disposal opportunities as laid out in the Better Defence Estate Strategy.

The market value of Ministry of Defence (MOD) property is normally only assessed when it comes up for disposal, and valuations are not released as to do so could prejudice the market.

Any necessary surveys will be carried out once a site has been identified for disposal in accordance with the Department's standard disposal procedures.

No decisions have yet been made relating to the Lancaster Infantry Museum. The MOD's future role with respect to the museum and its contents will be determined as part of the disposal process for the site.

## ■ Ministry of Defence: Billing

**Tim Farron:** [\[55446\]](#)

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

**Harriett Baldwin:**

The Ministry of Defence is committed to implementing a prompt payment policy with contractors of all sizes and throughout the supply chain. In line with the prompt payment code, we aim to pay 80% of our invoices within five working days. Our latest statistics show that, for the first two quarters of 2016-17, we paid nearly 97% of our invoices within five days and 99.9% within 30 days.

More information about our payment performance is published on gov.uk at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ministry-of-defence-supplier-invoicing-and-payment-information>.

A comprehensive breakdown of the proportion of on-time payments specifically made to smaller businesses is not held.

**■ Ministry of Defence: Compensation****Lucy Powell:**[\[54689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what his policy is on the issuing of compensation of ex gratia payments to civilians killed or injured by UK airstrikes.

**Mike Penning:**

The Ministry of Defence normally pays compensation only where it accepts that it is or might be held legally liable for the harm in question. These payments are distinguished from ex gratia payments, which require the consent of HM Treasury. In the special circumstances of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan HM Treasury authorised the Department to make ex gratia payments in theatre in appropriate circumstances to nationals of those countries who had suffered harm or damage as a result of UK military activities: information on such payments was published annually. No such authorisations are currently in force, and any proposal to make ex gratia compensation payments to civilians killed or injured by UK airstrikes would require HM Treasury approval on an exceptional basis. There are currently no such proposals.

**■ Radioactive Materials: Transport****Mr Jim Cunningham:**[\[55451\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of the movement of defence nuclear material across UK road and rail; and if he will make a statement.

**Harriett Baldwin:**

The cost of the transportation of defence nuclear material across UK road and rail is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

## ■ Red Snapper Group

**Sir Henry Bellingham:** [\[54966\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 21 November 2016 to Questions 52667 and 52666, whether the £2.97 million paid to Red Snapper investigators for expenses is included in, or in addition to, the £20.8 million paid to Red Snapper since 2013.

**Mike Penning:**

The £2.97 million paid to Red Snapper investigators through expenses is included in the £20.8 million paid to Red Snapper since 2013.

## ■ Type 45 Destroyers

**Mrs Madeleine Moon:** [\[55378\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the unit production cost for each ship in the Type 45 class was as calculated when they were accepted off contract; and if he will make a statement.

**Harriett Baldwin:**

The unit production cost for a Type 45 Destroyer was calculated in 2013 at £633 million. This figure included the cost of the Type 45 platform and the Sea Viper missile system, but did not include the development costs of the Type 45 platform.

## ■ Warships: Shipbuilding

**Oliver Colville:** [\[55349\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will make it his policy that Devonport dockyard is considered a potential location for the building of new ships as part of his National Shipbuilding Strategy.

**Harriett Baldwin:**

As the hon. Member will be aware, although ship building in Devonport has ceased, the dockyard plays a leading role in UK naval ship repair, maintenance and support.

The Government published Sir John Parker's independent report to inform the National Shipbuilding Strategy in full on 29 November. It is important that the Government gives Sir John's work the full consideration that it deserves. I have asked Ministry of Defence officials, working with others across Government, to examine the report and recommendations, and to discuss them with Industry. Sir John has set Industry the challenge to deliver higher productivity and shorter build cycle times, and it will be for Industry to consider the optimum locations to base their shipbuilding work.

The Government's response in spring 2017, which will be the National Shipbuilding Strategy, will detail how we are dealing with all of Sir John's recommendations.

## EDUCATION

## ■ Children: Day Care

**Tulip Siddiq:** [52476]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the financial effect on childcare providers of the grace period proposed by the Government's publication, 30 hour free childcare entitlement: delivery mode, Government consultation response.

**Caroline Dineneage:**

As outlined in the consultation on the operational delivery of 30 hours, we are fully committed to implementing a grace period policy which strikes the balance of providing continuity of care for the child, is affordable for the taxpayer and practical to administer for local authorities and providers.

To smooth the process of administering the grace period, we will develop the existing national Eligibility Checking Service (which local authorities already use to check eligibility for free early learning for two-year-olds) to automatically calculate the grace period, minimising administrative burdens on local authorities and providers. We will also set a national grace period to ensure simplicity and clarity for parents and providers, and fair, consistent arrangements for children and families irrespective of where they live.

**Tulip Siddiq:** [52478]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will publish the contract she has signed with Childcare Works to ensure that local authorities and childcare providers are ready for the roll-out of the 30 hour free childcare entitlement.

**Caroline Dineneage:**

It is central government practice to publish all contracts on GOV.UK. I intend to publish the contract for Childcare Works in due course at:

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Search>

## ■ Department for Education: Breastfeeding

**Alison Thewliss:** [54372]

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

**Caroline Dineneage:**

The Department for Education's main office in London and other Department sites in Coventry, Darlington, Manchester and Sheffield have rooms available for use by nursing mothers. The Nottingham site is a conference centre, with overnight accommodation facilities.

My department has issued guidance to managers on the support available to new and expectant mothers.

## ■ Health Professions: Training

Justin Madders:

[55447]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many UCAS applications have been received for (a) nursing, (b) midwifery and (c) other allied health professional courses for admission in the academic year 2017-18; and how many such applications were received at the same point in the admissions cycle for the years (i) 2014-15, (ii) 2015-16 and (iii) 2016-17.

Joseph Johnson:

Data regarding the number of UCAS applications for nursing, midwifery and other allied health professional courses are not published at this point in the admissions cycle.

End of cycle figures for nursing and other subjects allied to medicine for 2014-15 and 2015-16 have been published as part of the UCAS end of cycle data resources. The data is available here: [https://www.ucas.com/sites/default/files/eoc\\_data\\_resource\\_2015-dr3\\_015\\_03.pdf](https://www.ucas.com/sites/default/files/eoc_data_resource_2015-dr3_015_03.pdf)

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### ■ Aviation: Noise

Dr Tania Mathias:

[55351]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will bring forward proposals to amend part 3 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to make medically unsafe levels of noise from aircraft a statutory nuisance.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

No.

### ■ Birds of Prey: Licensing

Kerry McCarthy:

[55491]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what amount of financial loss to a shooting estate can be grounds for granting a licence to kill buzzards.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

Natural England considers applications for licences to control wildlife on a case by case basis, taking account of relevant factors including, for example, financial impacts. Given the range of circumstances under which a licence may be applied for it is not possible to specify a level of financial loss.

Kerry McCarthy:

[55497]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what criteria Natural England uses for decisions on the granting of licences to kill buzzards.

**Kerry McCarthy:** [55498]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when the criteria used by Natural England for the granting of licences to kill buzzards were set; and when those criteria were last formally reviewed.

**Dr Thérèse Coffey:**

The criteria Natural England uses for decisions on granting of licences to control buzzards are set out in guidance published on the Government website at:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/552509/6\\_Lethal\\_control\\_Internal\\_Guidance\\_Note\\_Redacted.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/552509/6_Lethal_control_Internal_Guidance_Note_Redacted.pdf)

This guidance was formally reviewed following the result of the McMorn Judicial Review ruling and revised guidance was published on 3 May 2016.

## ■ Bovine Tuberculosis

**James Gray:** [54746]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the total cost of transport and lairage is for TB reactor cattle travelling the furthest distance.

**George Eustice:**

The cost for using the six contracted abattoirs for reactor removal is calculated per mile and this varies depending on the number of animals in the batch.

The maximum distance travelled would generally be 199 miles.

If travelling 199 miles:

- 1-5 animals would cost £407.95.
- 6-10 animals would cost £489.54
- 11-17 animals would cost £561.18
- 17+ animals would cost £610.93

## ■ Flood Control

**Sue Hayman:** [54898]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, on how many of the flood defence and prevention schemes that were announced in Budget 2016 construction has begun.

**Dr Thérèse Coffey:**

The additional funding announced in the Budget 2016 has enabled the Environment Agency to progress 16 flood risk management schemes. All of these were in the early stages of development requiring funding certainty to progress further. The additional funding has ensured no further contributions are required and enabled the design to commence.



Of these, one scheme, the Calder Valley Flood Risk Reduction Scheme has already started construction. The remaining schemes are in the design stages and the Environment Agency expect construction to start shortly.

The schemes progressed by the additional funding will better protect at least 7,500 homes from flooding when completed.

#### ■ Ivory: Imports

**Mr Jim Cunningham:** [55380]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 24 November 2016 to Question 53336, what estimate she has made of the total value of ivory imports for which import permits were issued in each of the last five years; and if she will make a statement.

**Dr Thérèse Coffey:**

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) does not hold information on the total value of ivory imports for which import permits were issued in each of the last five years.

**Mr Jim Cunningham:** [55381]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 24 November 2016 to Question 53336, what information her Department collects for the purpose of issuing import permits; and if she will make a statement.

**Dr Thérèse Coffey:**

Import permit evidence is supplied to the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) by customers in accordance with the requirements of EC CITES Regulation 338/97 and 865/06. Each application received at APHA is considered on its own individual merits.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/355267/cites-gn1a.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/355267/cites-gn1a.pdf)

**Mr Jim Cunningham:** [55450]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate she has made of the number of requests for the importation of ivory which have been rejected in the last five years; and if she will make a statement.

**Dr Thérèse Coffey:**

Import permits for bringing ivory into the UK are managed on behalf of Defra by the Animal and Plant Health Agency. The number of permits refused in the last five years is shown below:

IVORY TYPE	NUMBER OF IMPORT PERMITS REFUSED
Tusks	7
Carvings	34

On the 21 September 2016 the Secretary of State, announced plans for a ban on sales of modern day ivory – ivory that is less than 70 years old - putting UK rules on ivory sales among the world's toughest.

The Government will consult on plans for the ban early next year, seeking views from conservationists, traders and other relevant parties to ensure clear rules and guidance for those operating within the law, while cracking down on illegal sales.

#### ■ Motor Vehicles: Waste Disposal

**Mr David Hanson:** [\[54513\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many exports of end-of-life vehicles were found to (a) not have and (b) have the required consent for each year since 2010.

**Dr Thérèse Coffey:**

The number of end-of-life vehicles found not to have the required consent is set out in the answer to PQ 54514. No figures are available for the numbers of end-of-life vehicles that had consent because vehicles categorised as B1250 are classed as green list waste, which is not automatically subject to notification.

#### ■ Nature Conservation

**Kerry McCarthy:** [\[55383\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether her Department plans to change its policies to reflect the outcomes of the International Union for Conservation of Nature World Conservation Congress 2016; and what her priorities for those policies are after that Congress.

**Dr Thérèse Coffey:**

Defra will consider the outcomes of this year's Congress as it develops and implements its policies in relation to the Resolutions and Recommendations adopted by the Congress.

#### ■ Rural Development Programme: Countryside

**Mr Jim Cunningham:** [\[54282\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many rejected applications for funding from the Countryside Productivity Scheme there have been in each of the last five years; and if she will make a statement.

**George Eustice:**

To date 618 applications have been received for Countryside Productivity grants and 175 have been rejected. Of the 175 applications for funding which have been rejected, 164 of these were rejected in 2015 and 11 in 2016. Countryside Productivity grants were not available prior to 2015.

298 grant funding agreements have been issued for capital grants with a total value of £6,670,284. 108 agreements were issued for a total value of £1,170,980 in 2015. 190 funding agreements were issued for a total value of £5,499,304 in 2016.

Of the remaining applications, 34 were incomplete, 94 were withdrawn, 2 have been recently received and are being checked for completeness before appraisal, 6 are in appraisal and 9 have been recently approved but are waiting for contracts.

#### ■ Salmon: Scotland

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[55274\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions her Department has had with the Scottish government on changes in the number of salmon available to anglers in the 2016 season.

**George Eustice:**

All four Fisheries Administrations exchange information on salmon management in their countries on an ad hoc basis and in preparation for, and at, the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation meeting in June each year. However, discussions regarding the availability of salmon to anglers in Scotland for 2016 is a matter for the Scottish Government.

#### ■ Sugar: Imports

**Keith Vaz:**

[\[55156\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions her Department has had with the Department of Health on the potential health implications of the lifting of EU sugar quotas.

**George Eustice:**

The removal of EU sugar beet quotas will allow British growers to move towards competing with other sugar producers around the world. The Government's Childhood Obesity Plan includes a range of actions to support families in reducing their sugar consumption, including a new Soft Drinks Industry Levy on sugary drinks and a challenge to industry to reduce 20% of sugar from the products that contribute most sugar to children's diets by 2020. Defra meets regularly with the Department for Health and Public Health England to discuss these and other issues.

### EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION

#### ■ Common Travel Area

**Jonathan Edwards:**

[\[54887\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what steps he plans to take to ensure the Common Travel Area is maintained after the UK leaves the EU.

**Mr David Jones:**

The Common Travel Area predates the UK's and the Republic of Ireland's membership of the European Union. The UK and Irish Governments are committed to maintaining it and to preserving the rights of Irish and British nationals when in the other State. The Government is working closely with Ireland to consider the implications of the UK's exit from the EU and to maintain the open borders that UK and Irish citizens enjoy. The focus going forward is on securing a deal that is in the interests of both of the UK and Ireland.

■ **Department for Exiting the European Union: Procurement**

**Liz McInnes:** [\[55321\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, whether his Department has awarded any contracts to private companies to assist in the process of the UK leaving the EU.

**Mr David Jones:**

The Department for Exiting the European Union has used the services of a number of consulting firms to help with departmental set-up and planning. A small number of individuals are currently on secondment from consultancy firms and external organisations. Going forward, the Department will make further use of external support and recruitment as appropriate to ensure it has the right expertise to deliver its objectives.

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 1 December 2016 to the Question 55210 and 55211.

**FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE**

■ **BBC World Service: Russia**

**Ian Austin:** [\[55355\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether the Government plans to increase the funding made available for BBC World Service broadcasting in Russia.

**Alok Sharma:**

We welcome the recent announcement by the BBC of its plans to enhance its Russian service, drawing on the Government's £289 million investment in the BBC World Service over the next four years. It is as important as ever that Russian speakers, wherever they are, have a choice in the media they consume and access to reliable and objective information. The BBC has a crucial role to play as a strong and objective voice providing independent, impartial, and accurate news in Russian.

### ■ British Indian Ocean Territory: Construction

**Patrick Grady:** [\[54666\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, when the Government last made an assessment of the safety and stability of manmade structures of the outer islands of the British Indian Ocean Territory; and when the Government next plans to make such an assessment.

**Sir Alan Duncan:**

No official structural surveys have been made of the manmade structures on the Outer Islands. However a British patrol regularly checks these islands. Guidance for visiting yachtspeople makes clear that these structures are unsound and are out of bounds. Those who enter the structures do so at their own risk. Fines are issued to those who are caught damaging buildings.

### ■ British Indian Ocean Territory: Post Offices

**Patrick Grady:** [\[54664\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what arrangements are in place for the ownership and management of the British Indian Ocean Territories post office.

**Sir Alan Duncan:**

The British Indian Ocean (BIOT) Post Office on Diego Garcia is managed and run by Sure, the on-island telecoms provider through a contract with the BIOT Administration. The Post Office is located in a building owned and managed by Sure.

**Patrick Grady:** [\[54665\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many customers have used the British Indian Ocean Territories post office (a) in person and (b) online in each year for which records are available.

**Sir Alan Duncan:**

Definitive numbers are not available.

### ■ British Indian Ocean Territory: Sailing Boats

**Patrick Grady:** [\[54701\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, for how many years the Government has been issuing mooring permits for yachts visiting the British Indian Ocean territory; and how many such permits have been issued in each year for which records are available.

**Sir Alan Duncan:**

The British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT) is not a tourist destination and permits to moor in the Outer Islands of BIOT are only issued where this is necessary to facilitate a vessel's safe passage across the Indian Ocean. Laws specifically enabling the Administration of BIOT to issue mooring permits (or the equivalent) were introduced in December 1993,

but records of the total number of such permits issued only go back to 2004. The following numbers have been recorded: 2004 - 2; 2005 - 3; 2006 - 4; 2007 - 40; 2008 - 68; 2009 - 82; 2010 - 99; 2011 - 42; 2012 - 41; 2013 - 27; 2014 - 36; 2015 - 51; 2016 - 17 (to date).

■ **British Indian Ocean Territory: Visits**

**Patrick Grady:** [\[54702\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department takes to monitor the (a) number and (b) behaviour of private visitors to the British Indian Ocean territory.

**Sir Alan Duncan:**

The only private visitors to the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT) are yachtspeople who stop off in the Outer Islands of the Territory if they have been granted a permit. The masters of vessels which have been issued mooring permits are expected to provide daily updates to British Forces HQ on their position whilst in the waters of the Territory and to ensure compliance with all conditions attached to the permission to enter the Territory. These waters are regularly patrolled and monitored by Visiting Vessels Control Officers and other authorised persons, who are empowered to take all necessary action against those who breach any condition imposed by a mooring permit, or who otherwise act in a way that is contrary to the law.

■ **Sudan: Arrests**

**Kevin Brennan:** [\[55454\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to the government of Sudan on the recent arrest of opposition party leaders in that country.

**Mr Tobias Ellwood:**

We are deeply concerned at the recent arrests of a number of opposition party leaders in Sudan, and have raised our concerns directly with the government of Sudan in both London and Khartoum. Most recently, the UK Special Representative for Sudan and South Sudan raised this issue with the Sudanese Ambassador to London on 30 November.

■ **Turkey: Press Freedom**

**Helen Goodman:** [\[54852\]](#)

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

**Sir Alan Duncan:**

We continue to follow developments in Turkey closely and underline the importance of the rule of law and the protection of freedom of expression.

I raised these issues during my visit to Turkey on 19 October, and most recently with Turkey's Minister for Europe, Omer Celik, in a phone call on 7 November. HMG also regularly discusses such issues in international fora.

The EU issued a statement on 8 November expressing concern at recent events in Turkey, including the detention of MPs.

## HEALTH

### ■ Capita

**Julie Cooper:** [\[55385\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of using the option in Capita's contract with NHS England to extend the term of that contract from seven to 10 years.

**David Mowat:**

It will be for NHS England to decide the merits of the option to extend the contract, which commenced in September 2015 and is thus some way away from its end date.

### ■ Capita: Primary Health Care

**Sir Nicholas Soames:** [\[55306\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will undertake an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Primary Care Support Service contract outsourced by NHS England to Capita; and if he will make a statement.

**David Mowat:**

NHS England is ensuring that the Department is informed of progress to rectify issues with the contract, and the overall effectiveness of the services provided.

### ■ Care Homes

**Mr Laurence Robertson:** [\[55322\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he is taking to ensure that there are sufficient care home places for people discharged from hospital but unable to go home; and if he will make a statement.

**David Mowat:**

The Care Act 2014 placed duties on local authorities making them responsible for ensuring there is an effective pool of quality providers of social care in their area with capacity to meet the needs of their local population. The Department is supporting local authorities to influence their local market through improved market facilitation and commissioning to ensure that local markets are effective.

The Department has worked with the Association of Directors for Adult Social Services, Local Government Association, the care sector and other partners to produce a wide range of guidance and support about market shaping and commissioning. We have

brought this together in an online Hub that is now published on GOV.UK at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-social-care-market-shaping/adult-social-care-market-shaping>

The Department continues to monitor capacity and effectiveness of the market.

The Department recognises concern about delayed transfers of care from hospitals; we are working closely with local government and the National Health Service to support the market and improve transfers out of hospital, including work with the independent care and voluntary sectors to encourage local health and care systems to utilise all capacity and support available to improve discharge.

#### ■ Health Services: Finance

**Justin Madders:**

[54859]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, with reference to the proposals for changes to the arrangements for evaluating and funding drugs and other health technologies appraised through NICE's technology appraisal and highly specialised programmes, published on 13 October 2016, what international evidence was taken into account when setting out the proposals for the (a) implementation and (b) level of the budget impact threshold.

**Nicola Blackwood:**

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and NHS England have advised that the proposals to implement a budget impact threshold, and the level of that threshold, were based on consideration of the frequency and magnitude of high budget impact technologies that have recently received a positive recommendation from NICE, rather than any attempt to compare the different affordability challenges faced by different health economies around the world.

#### ■ Hull York Medical School

**Diana Johnson:**

[55340]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many of the additional up to 1,500 medical training places the Government plans to provide from September 2018 will be available to the Hull York Medical School.

**Mr Philip Dunne:**

The distribution of additional medical school places will form part of a public consultation planned for early 2017. It is not possible to confirm additional places for any medical school at this stage.

#### ■ Patients: Transport

**Karen Lumley:**

[54925]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if his Department will take steps to ensure that (a) financially vulnerable and (b) less mobile members of society are not disadvantaged by any increase in journey times between points of (i) primary and (ii) acute health care services.



**Mr Philip Dunne:**

Determining the location of services is a matter for clinical commissioning groups based on their clinical expertise and the providers in their local health economy.

Patient transport services are available to meet an individual's transport needs where this is clinically appropriate and the Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme supports those on low incomes or in receipt of qualifying benefits.

## ■ Prescriptions

**Julie Cooper:**

[\[55384\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether his Department has issued guidance to GPs on stopping the issuing of repeat prescriptions without an appointment.

**David Mowat:**

The Department has not issued guidance to general practitioners on stopping the issuing of repeat prescriptions without an appointment.

When issuing repeat prescriptions or prescribing with repeats, prescribers are expected to make sure that procedures are in place to monitor whether the medicine is still safe and necessary for the patient.

## ■ Surgery: Vale of York

**Justin Madders:**

[\[55448\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what representations he has received on the decision by Vale of York Clinical Commissioning Group to place restrictions on routine surgery for patients who smoke or are clinically obese; and if he will make a statement.

**Justin Madders:**

[\[55449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether his Department or NHS England has assessed the effect on patients of restrictions being placed on routine surgery for patients who smoke or are clinically obese.

**Nicola Blackwood:**

Individual clinical commissioning groups (CCG) are responsible for commissioning the care that will provide the best possible outcomes for their patients in line with their legal duties and National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidance. As such, it is for Vale of York CCG to make an assessment of what impact on patients its decisions will have.

Vale of York CCG has made clear that every patient's case will be considered in the light of their own particular circumstances and on the basis of clinical need.

**HOME OFFICE**■ **Asylum: Greater London**

**Stephen Timms:** [\[55442\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications for asylum seekers housed in (a) Greater London, (b) the London Borough of Newham and (c) East Ham constituency have been refused in each year since 2010.

**Mr Robert Goodwill:**

Whilst we can provide data on the current addresses of asylum claimants, data on the place of residence at the time of initial decision could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

The latest version of the asylum transparency agenda can be found at: Asylum transparency data: August 2016 - Publications - GOV.UK

■ **Child Sexual Abuse Independent Panel Inquiry**

**Lisa Nandy:** [\[49520\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many meetings took place between Liz Sanderson and the Secretary of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, John O'Brien; on what dates those meetings took place; and who was present at each such meeting.

**Lisa Nandy:** [\[49521\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many meetings took place between Liz Sanderson and members of the panel of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse; on what dates those meetings took place; and who was present at each such meeting.

**Lisa Nandy:** [\[49522\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many meetings were held between Dame Lowell Goddard and Liz Sanderson in connection with the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse; who was present at each such meeting; and if she publish the minutes of those meetings.

**Sarah Newton:**

Liz Sanderson was the then Home Secretary's special adviser. The Department holds no records of separate meetings or conversations between Ms Sanderson and Dame Lowell Goddard, panel members or the statutory officers. However, she routinely attended the Home Secretary's meetings, including with Dame Lowell Goddard and panel members during the appointment processes. She also had occasional conversations with the Secretary to the Inquiry.

## ■ Immigrants: Health Services

**Martyn Day:**

[\[54677\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 7 July 2016 to Question 41770, what proportion of the funding raised by the Immigration Health Surcharge in 2015-16 was paid by people resident in the UK and eligible to pay national insurance.

**Mr Robert Goodwill:**

The immigration health surcharge aims to ensure that temporary, non-EEA migrants make a fair contribution to the cost of healthcare in the UK, in line with their immigration status. Temporary, non-EEA migrants have not built up the long-term relationship and contribution to the UK that a permanent resident has built up, and will build up, over the course of their lifetime. It is, therefore, the migrant's immigration status that determines whether or not they pay the surcharge, not their tax or national insurance contributions.

The Government recognises that migrants who pay the surcharge may contribute to the economy in a number of ways, including by paying income tax and national insurance and this contribution is reflected in the surcharge levels, which are set below the average per capita cost to the NHS of treating non-EEA temporary migrants.

## ■ Marriage Certificates: Mothers

**Tulip Siddiq:**

[\[55490\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Answer of 9 February 2016 to Question 25738, what subsequent steps have been taken in preparing a timetable for legislative proposals to amend marriage certificates so that they include the mother's name.

**Mr Robert Goodwill:**

It is accepted that to only include the details of the fathers of the couple and not that of the mothers in a marriage register entry is outdated and that the names of both parents should be included. The Home Office continues to work with all interested parties to consider the most efficient and effective way of achieving this change.

Any change to the marriage register entry would involve amending computer systems and changes to legislation. We continue to seek suitable legislative opportunities to bring forward reform in this area and a timetable will be made available as soon as an opportunity arises to legislate.

**INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT****■ Madagascar: Droughts and Famine**

**Liz McInnes:** [\[55361\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, if her Department will make additional assistance available to Madagascar for famine relief and support in dealing with drought.

**James Wharton:**

The UK has responded quickly and generously to the El Nino related drought in southern Africa, in fulfilment of our pledge to lead global humanitarian responses and leverage support from others. DFID has provided £4.68million through UN agencies for the humanitarian response to the impact of El Nino in Madagascar and we continue to monitor the situation closely and will consider further support if the situation deteriorates.

Existing UK support includes funding for UNICEF and FAO emergency operations for nutrition, water and sanitation. It also includes agricultural and livestock assistance to vulnerable households to reduce their food insecurity and protect their livelihoods.

**■ Mozambique: Droughts and Famine**

**Liz McInnes:** [\[55360\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, if her Department will make additional assistance available to Mozambique for famine relief and support in dealing with drought.

**James Wharton:**

The UK has responded quickly to the El Nino related drought in Southern Africa, in fulfilment of our pledge to lead global humanitarian responses and leverage support from others. The UK has provided over £170 million in Southern Africa to meet urgent humanitarian needs, including in Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Zambia, Lesotho and Madagascar.

Combined with the wider economic crisis, El Nino threatens to undermine development gains and stability in Mozambique. In July 2016, Ministers approved the allocation of £25 million to provide assistance to around 250,000 people until the end of March 2017, when the next harvest is expected. UK funding is supporting a market-based approach for food and seed provision to secure better value for money. UK funding is also supporting the treatment of malnutrition and improved access to safe water and sanitation.

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE****■ Department for International Trade: Disclosure of Information**

**Barry Gardiner:** [\[55350\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 28 November 2016 to Question 54497, for what reasons his Department has not yet published quarterly data on Ministerial meetings on the gov.uk website.

**Greg Hands:**

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

**■ Department for International Trade: Ministerial Policy Advisers**

**Barry Gardiner:** [\[54849\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the Answer of 26 July 2016 to Question 43064, when he plans to publish a list of his special advisers.

**Greg Hands:**

I refer the hon Member to my previous answer of 26<sup>th</sup> July, UIN 43064.

**■ Department for International Trade: Small Businesses**

**Barry Gardiner:** [\[55489\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 28 November 2016 to Question 54496, if he will provide a list of the representatives from small and medium-sized enterprises officials of his Department have met since July 2016.

**Greg Hands:**

The Department for International Trade actively engages SMEs in all areas of its business. Details of meetings are not held centrally and therefore could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

**■ Department for International Trade: Staff**

**Barry Gardiner:** [\[54843\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 21 July 2016 to Question 43019, how many civil servants in his Department primarily working on trade policy had prior experience of trade negotiations.

**Greg Hands:**

The Department of International Trade already has a strong and capable trade policy team which has more than doubled in size since 23 June. Over the coming months we will be developing that team to build the world class negotiating strengths needed to deliver the best outcomes for the UK. We will continue to hire the the brightest and best talent from within the UK civil service and look to enhance our team by drawing on expertise from elsewhere.

**■ Foreign Investment in UK**

**Barry Gardiner:** [\[54842\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 8 September 2016 to Question 906161, how many of the priority global high-value export campaigns and campaigns for foreign direct investment are planned to begin before 31 March 2017; and if he will make it his policy to publish regular summaries of the effect of those campaigns.

**Greg Hands:**

The Department has 191 priority high-value export campaigns for exports, and 250 campaigns for Foreign Direct Investment. At present there are no plans to introduce further campaigns before 31 March 2017. Although the Department will continue to remain responsive to new opportunities to trade around the world as they emerge. The impact of these campaigns will be summarised within the Department's Annual Report.

**■ Origin Marking**

**Barry Gardiner:** [\[54894\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether his Department has generated any updated estimates of the administrative and compliance costs for British firms linked to rules of origin since the estimates in research published alongside the Balance of Competences Review were produced.

**Greg Hands:**

The Department for International Trade has not produced any analysis on this issue that extends the work done for the Balance of Competences Review. HM Treasury's paper on the long term economic impact of EU membership and the alternatives refers to studies conducted by other institutions on the impact of rules of origin, but these do not specifically focus on the UK.

**■ Trade Agreements**

**Barry Gardiner:** [\[54714\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what plans the Government has to embed the precautionary principle in UK domestic law as a basis for future bilateral trade agreements.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government will in due course consider all options in the design and content of future bilateral trade agreements. Until the UK leaves the EU, we will remain subject to EU trade agreements and trade policy.

**■ Trade Agreements: Australia**

**Barry Gardiner:** [\[54691\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment he has made of potential merits of the proposal by Tony Abbot for a free trade deal between the UK and

Australia that abolishes tariffs and quotas on all goods, gives mutual recognition of industry standards and qualifications and allows people to move freely between the two countries.

**Greg Hands:**

The UK and Australia have a strong trade relationship, with more than £8 billion in UK exports to Australia in 2015. We have established a UK-Australia Trade Working Group to develop this relationship further and start discussions on the option of a future ambitious and comprehensive UK-Australia Free Trade Agreement. The UK has not made assessments at this stage about any external proposals for a specific type of future agreement.

■ **Trade Agreements: Trade Unions**

**Barry Gardiner:** [54850]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what engagement he has had with trade unions on negotiating priorities for the UK's new trading arrangements.

**Greg Hands:**

The Department for International Trade has been engaging widely since the referendum, and has received a number of submissions from trade unions which will inform trade policy development. The Department plans further engagement with trade unions in due course, welcomes submissions and meeting requests at the [trade.consultation@trade.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:trade.consultation@trade.gsi.gov.uk) mailbox.

## JUSTICE

■ **Cremation**

**Diana Johnson:** [54722]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will meet with the constituent of the hon. member for Kingston Upon Hull North, Linda Spring, to discuss the loss of the ashes of her son, Raymond, in 1996.

**Diana Johnson:** [54723]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will ensure that the National Cremation Working Group assesses the potential merits of changes to policy arising from the loss of the ashes of William, the son of Tina Trowhill, in 1994.

**Diana Johnson:** [54724]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will take steps to support an inquiry by Hull City Council into the loss of the ashes of Tina Trowhill's son, William, in 1994.

**Diana Johnson:** [54725]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will ensure that the National Cremation Working Group assesses the potential merits of changes to policy arising from the loss of the ashes of the triplets of Andrea Tracey in 2006.

**Diana Johnson:** [\[54726\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will meet the constituent of the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull North, Andrea Tracey, to discuss the loss of the ashes of her triplets in 2006.

**Diana Johnson:** [\[54727\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will ensure that the National Cremation Working Group assesses the potential merits of changes to policy arising from the loss of the ashes of Raymond, the son of Linda Spring, in 1996.

**Diana Johnson:** [\[54728\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will take steps to support an inquiry by Hull City Council into the loss of the ashes of Linda Spring's son, Raymond, in 1996.

**Dr Phillip Lee:**

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

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

Hull City Council has assured us that it has provided the information that it holds to all bereaved parents who have approached it about their babies' cremations. This includes Linda Spiring, Andrea Tarsey and Tina Trowhill.

**Alan Johnson:** [\[54799\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will meet the constituent of the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle, Jenni Murray, to discuss the loss of the ashes of her son, Jake, in 2002.

**Alan Johnson:** [\[54800\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will take steps to support an inquiry by Hull City Council into the loss of the ashes of Angela Hughes' son, Reece, in 1996.



**Alan Johnson:** [\[54801\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will meet the constituent of the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle, Louise Medlam, to discuss the loss of the ashes of her daughter, Chloe, in 1996.

**Alan Johnson:** [\[54802\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will take steps to support an inquiry by Hull City Council into the loss of the ashes of Louise Medlam's daughter, Chloe, in 1996.

**Alan Johnson:** [\[54803\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will meet the constituent of the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle, Angela Hughes, to discuss the loss of the ashes of her son, Reece, in 1996.

**Alan Johnson:** [\[54804\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will take steps to support an inquiry by Hull City Council into the loss of the ashes of Jenni Murray's son, Jake, in 2002.

**Alan Johnson:** [\[54805\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will ensure that the National Cremation Working Group assesses the potential merits of changes to policy arising from the loss of the ashes of Jake, the son of Jenni Murray in 2002.

**Alan Johnson:** [\[54806\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will ensure that the National Cremation Working Group assesses the potential merits of changes to policy arising from the loss of the ashes of Chloe, the daughter of Louise Medlam, in 1996.

**Alan Johnson:** [\[54807\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will ensure that the National Cremation Working Group assesses the potential merits of changes to policy arising from the loss of the ashes of Reece, the son of Angela Hughes, in 1996.

**Dr Phillip Lee:**

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

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

statutory forms which will come into effect in 2017. The Working Group, which includes Action for Ashes Hull, will also assist us in developing new codes of practice, training and information for bereaved families.

Hull City Council has assured us that it has provided the information that it holds to all bereaved parents who have approached it about their babies' cremations. This includes Jenni Murray, Angela Hughes and Louise Walker.

**Karl Turner:** [\[54808\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will meet the constituent of the hon. Member for Kingston Upon Hull East, Judith Drury, to discuss the loss of the ashes of her son, Benjamin, in 1994.

**Karl Turner:** [\[54809\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will take steps to support an inquiry by Hull City Council into the loss of the ashes of Judith Drury's son, Benjamin, in 1994.

**Karl Turner:** [\[54810\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will ensure that the National Cremation Working Group assesses the potential merits of changes to policy arising from the loss of the ashes of Benjamin, the son of Judith Drury, in 1994.

**Karl Turner:** [\[54811\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will meet the constituent of the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull East, Emma Whitley, to discuss the loss of the ashes of her son, Connor, in 1996.

**Karl Turner:** [\[54812\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will take steps to support an inquiry by Hull City Council into the loss of the ashes of Emma Whitley's son, Connor, in 1996.

**Karl Turner:** [\[54816\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will ensure that the National Cremation Working Group assesses the potential merits of changes to policy arising from the loss of the ashes of Connor, the son of Emma Whitley, in 1996.

**Karl Turner:** [\[54817\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will meet with the constituent of the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull East, Joanne Dix, to discuss the loss of the ashes of her son, Michael, in 1994.

**Karl Turner:** [\[54818\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will take steps to support an inquiry by Hull City Council into the loss of the ashes of Joanne Dix's son, Michael, in 1994.

**Karl Turner:**

[\[54819\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will ensure that the National Cremation Working Group assesses the potential merits of changes to policy arising from the loss of the ashes of Michael, the son of Joanne Dix, in 1994.

**Dr Phillip Lee:**

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

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

Hull City Council has assured us that it has provided the information that it holds to all bereaved parents who have approached it about their babies' cremations. This includes Judith Dawson, Emma Price and Joanne Dix.

## TRANSPORT

### ■ Govia Thameslink Railway

**Kelvin Hopkins:**

[\[55324\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has written to hon. Members to say that pressure by trade union leaders has prompted staff working for Govia Thameslink Railway to call in sick.

**Paul Maynard:**

It is apparent that as the industrial dispute on Southern has continued, staff sickness levels have risen. Both publicly and in correspondence with hon. Members, we have consistently called for the union to stop all industrial action - which is not about jobs or safety - and which is doing nothing but hurting passengers, not least when Driver Only Operation is already in operation on the network.

**Kelvin Hopkins:**

[\[55345\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of which aspects of the Govia Thameslink Railway remedial plan have (a) been and (b) not been achieved.

**Paul Maynard:**

Govia Thameslink Railway have delivered the commitments detailed in the Remedial Plan to date, including exceeding the key requirement to maintain a minimum number of drivers. The other requirements which are due to be delivered at a later stage will be kept under review by the Department.

**Kelvin Hopkins:** [\[55353\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what information his Department holds on the number of delays and cancellations that have been caused on Govia Thameslink Railway Driver Operation Only (P) services by faulty rolling stock in the last 12 months.

**Paul Maynard:**

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

## ■ Railways: Standards

**Kelvin Hopkins:** [\[55323\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what information his Department has received on the number of delays or cancellations caused on national rail services by faulty rolling stock in the last 12 months.

**Paul Maynard:**

The Department does not hold information for the number of delays or cancellations caused by faulty rolling stock.

**Kelvin Hopkins:** [\[55354\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what information his Department holds on the number of delays or cancellations that have been caused on national Driver Operation Only (P) services by faulty rolling stock in the last 12 months.

**Paul Maynard:**

Train operators report the number of cancellations and delay minutes that they are responsible for which includes delays caused by faulty rolling stock. This information is not segregated by type of operation.

## ■ Roads: Tunnels

**Mr Clive Betts:** [\[54918\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress has been made on the consideration of the feasibility of a road tunnel between Sheffield and Manchester; and what the timetable is for future such consideration.

**Mr John Hayes:**

The Stage Three report on the Trans Pennine Tunnel Strategic Study was published on 28 November 2016. The report sets out the strategic case for a new link between the M60 and M1 and identified five potential route options. However, further work is

required to understand fully the user and wider economic benefits of such a link. This work will take place during 2017.

#### ■ Shipping: Carbon Emissions

**Philip Davies:**

[55369]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department holds data on the amount of carbon dioxide emitted from ships transporting coal from Colombia to the UK for the last 10 years up to the latest year for which data is available; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr John Hayes:**

The Department for Transport does not hold data on the amount of carbon dioxide emitted from ships transporting coal from Colombia to the UK.

### WALES

#### ■ Apprentices: Wales

**Gerald Jones:**

[55359]

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, how many apprenticeships he expects there to be in Wales in each of the next five years.

**Alun Cairns:**

Skills policy is a devolved matter in Wales, and therefore it is up to the Welsh Government to decide what proportion of its Block Grant is allocated to funding apprenticeships and skills policy.

The UK Government is committed to creating 3 million apprenticeships across the UK by the end of this parliament, and to support and encourage businesses to take on apprenticeships has announced the apprenticeship levy. There has been a long standing commitment that Wales will get its fair share from this levy. Last month HM Treasury announced that £128m will be allocated to Wales in the first year alone.

The Welsh Government can now choose whether to implement similar arrangements to England – where the apprenticeship budget is forecast to more than double in cash terms between 2010-11 and 2019-20, and employers in England can claim back their levy simply by investing in apprenticeship training, or put in place their own alternative arrangements to help the number of apprenticeships in Wales grow over the next five years.

**Jo Stevens:**

[55515]

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what assessment he has made of the effect of the UK's decision to leave the EU on the number of Welsh apprenticeship places.

**Alun Cairns:**

Skills and apprenticeships in Wales are devolved to the Welsh Government. The Welsh Government's apprenticeship programme is funded with support from the European

Social Fund. Following the decision to leave the European Union, the Chancellor has provided guarantees for EU funding such that where the Welsh Government sign up to structural and investment fund projects under their current EU budget allocation prior to Brexit, the UK government will ensure they are funded to meet these commitments.

**Jo Stevens:** [\[55517\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, how much funding there has been for apprenticeships in Wales in each year since 2010; and how many apprenticeships were funded in full or in part by such funding in each such year.

**Alun Cairns:**

Skills policy is a devolved matter in Wales, and therefore it is up to the Welsh Government to decide what proportion of its Block Grant is allocated to funding apprenticeships and skills policy.

#### ■ Funerals: Wales

**Jo Stevens:** [\[55516\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what estimate he has made of the average cost of funerals in Wales in each year since 2010.

**Alun Cairns:**

The Wales Office has made no assessment of the cost of funerals.

The Department for Work and Pensions however makes Funeral Expenses Payments to people on qualifying income-based benefits and tax credits who are arranging a funeral. Funeral Expenses Payments make a significant contribution towards the costs of a simple, respectful funeral.

#### ■ Wales Office: Alcoholic Drinks

**Jo Stevens:** [\[55145\]](#)

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

**Guto Bebb:**

*[Holding answer 1 December 2016]:* The Departmental spend on alcoholic beverages for official functions since 2009 is set out below:

FINANCIAL YEAR	SPEND £
2009/10	308.66
2010/11	Nil
2011/12	Nil
2012/13	232.65
2013/14	629.24

FINANCIAL YEAR	SPEND £
2014/15	347.29
2015/16	668.47

The Department did not purchase alcohol in 2010-11 and 2011-12. The alcohol used at official functions in those years was from stock that had been purchased by the previous Administration. Ministers also purchased alcohol directly for some functions. The Department holds no records of Ministers' personal expenditure.

The increase in the total cost of alcohol purchased in 2012-13 to 2015-16 reflects the Wales Office's increased profile in supporting and promoting business and economic investment in Wales e.g. the department hosted events to promote Welsh businesses and inward investment into Wales, and specific events to promote Wales International Shipping Week and commemorating the Dylan Thomas centenary.

#### ■ Wales Office: Christmas

**Jo Stevens:** [\[55386\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, how much his Department spent on staff Christmas functions in each year since 2010.

**Jo Stevens:** [\[55387\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, how much his Department plans to spend on staff Christmas functions in 2016.

**Guto Bebb:**

Nothing. The Department does not fund staff Christmas functions.

## WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

#### ■ Policy

**Paul Flynn:** [\[55392\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what assessment she has made of the implications for Government policy of the statement from the Equalities and Human Rights Commission on engaging people on contentious issues in a responsible and considered way.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

I have read the letter from the Equalities and Human Rights Commission. I would like to take this opportunity to reassure the honourable member that Government always seeks to engage people in a responsible and considered way.

**WORK AND PENSIONS**■ **Atos Healthcare: Standards****Caroline Lucas:**[\[54919\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make an assessment of whether the premises used by Atos Healthcare to conduct personal independence payment (PIP) assessments at Queensbury House, Brighton (a) complies with relevant equalities legislation, (b) offers sufficient protection of confidentiality to those attending assessments, (c) has toilets accessible on the same floor as assessments take place, (d) has sufficient space for wheelchairs in the waiting area and (e) is a suitable premises for PIP assessments; and if he will make a statement.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

All premises used by Atos Healthcare in carrying out Personal Independence Payment assessments adhere to Equality Act 2010 guidelines and cover all aspects of the building, from external access to the width of corridors and doorways and the suitability of assessment rooms. Whilst Atos does not own all of the buildings used for assessments, which is the case in Brighton, it ensures that suitable conditions including disabled-access, confidentiality and, suitable toilet facilities are available at all its Assessment Centre locations.

Atos has a duty of care to both staff and claimants to minimise any risk of harm and every effort is made to ensure that assessments are carried out in the safest possible environment.

■ **Carer's Allowance****Paul Blomfield:**[\[55467\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make it his policy for carers who are in full-time education to receive carer's allowance.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

The Government recognises and appreciates the vital contribution made by carers in supporting the most vulnerable in society including the elderly and those with disabilities.

The Government thinks it is right that people in full-time education should be supported by the educational maintenance system, via its range of loans and grants, and not the social security system. That is why, as a general principle, full-time students are usually precluded from entitlement to income-related and income-maintenance benefits.

However, the Government thinks it is important that carers maintain links with the education system and therefore carers are able to undertake part-time education and still receive Carer's Allowance.

**Paul Blomfield:**[\[55481\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will raise the earnings limit for eligibility for the carer's allowance.



**Penny Mordaunt:**

An increase to the Carer's Allowance earnings limit from April 2017 was announced by my Hon Friend, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Welfare Delivery in Written Statement HCWS287 on 28.11.16.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2016-11-28/HCWS287/>

**■ Children: Maintenance****Margaret Ferrier:****[54694]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many Child Support Agency (a) arrears-only and (b) arrears cases involving a current liability for a child there are in Rutherglen and Hamilton West constituency.

**Caroline Nokes:**

As of June 2016 there were 1,340 arrears only cases and 430 arrears cases involving current liability in the Rutherglen and Hamilton West constituency held by the Child Support Agency.

Notes:

- 1) Numbers are rounded to the nearest 10.
- 2) Cases have been allocated to a parliamentary constituency by matching the residential postcode of the parent with care or non-resident parent for all cases administered on the CS2 and CSCS computer systems and cases managed off system to the Office for National Statistics Postcode Directory.
- 3) A case is classed as having a 'Current Liability' if it is open, has children of a qualifying age and has a positive liability (i.e. assessment to pay maintenance). This includes cases due to pay via Maintenance Direct.

**Margaret Ferrier:****[54695]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many (a) parents with care and (b) non-resident parents there are in Rutherglen and Hamilton West constituency with a Child Support Agency case.

**Caroline Nokes:**

As of June 2016 there were 1,930 parents with care and 2,150 non-resident parents with a Child Support Agency case in the Rutherglen and Hamilton West constituency.

1. Figures rounded to the nearest 10.
2. Cases have been allocated to a parliamentary constituency by matching the residential postcode of the parent with care or non-resident parent for all cases administered on the CS2 and CSCS computer systems and cases managed off system to the Office for National Statistics Postcode Directory.

**Margaret Ferrier:**

[\[54696\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the total amount of child maintenance arrears is in (a) Rutherglen and Hamilton West constituency and (b) Scotland.

**Caroline Nokes:**

**Child Support Agency**

a) As at June 2016 the total value of arrears on cases in the Rutherglen and Hamilton West constituency stood at £5.30m.

b) As at June 2016 the total value of arrears on cases in Scotland stood at £280.11m.

**Child Maintenance Service**

Information on geographical breakdowns on the Child Maintenance Service is not routinely recorded for management information purposes and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Notes:

1) Numbers are rounded to the nearest 10,000.

2) Cases have been allocated to a parliamentary constituency by matching the residential postcode of the parent with care or non-resident parent for all cases administered on the CS2 and CSCS computer systems and cases managed off system to the Office for National Statistics Postcode Directory.

**Derek Thomas:**

[\[54863\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps he is taking to improve the child maintenance system to ensure payments due are received.

**Caroline Nokes:**

The Child Maintenance System offers choice to all parents, so that those who can collaborate and manage their maintenance arrangements themselves are helped to do so through Direct Pay and those who cannot, have access to the statutory service through the Collect and Pay service. In circumstances where on-going maintenance arrangements break down we work with parents to re-establish payments in order to get money to children quicker.

To ensure parents fulfil their financial responsibilities towards their children we have at our disposal a range of strong enforcement powers which we are continually reviewing and looking to improve. We are currently reviewing our arrears and compliance strategy, and will undertake a public consultation on a proposed new strategy in 2017.

■ **Employment and Support Allowance: Disability**

**Stephen Timms:**

[\[54866\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the oral contribution of the Minister of State for Welfare Reform of 27 January 2016, Official Report, HL1315, on the Welfare Reform and Work Bill, whether he plans for spending on employment support

for disabled people to be greater or less after the implementation of the policies in his Department's recent Green Paper on work, health and disability.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

The Work, Health and Disability Green Paper, published last month, launched the Department's consultation so we can listen to disabled people, their families and friends, service providers, employers, and anyone else who wants to see change. Proposals focus on changes that can be made to the welfare system, by employers and across health services to ensure that the health needs and employment aspirations of disabled people and people with long-term health conditions are better supported. The Department is not looking at implementing specific policies during the consultation period, other than the ones specifically announced in the Green Paper.

At Spending Review 2015, we announced a real terms increase in investment in employment support for disabled people and people with health conditions. As part of this real terms increase in investment, the Green Paper provided additional detail on the practical support to be made available for claimants with limited capability for work from April 2017, rising from £60m in 2017/19 to £100m in 2020/21.

■ **Food Banks: Scotland**

**Margaret Ferrier:**

[\[54669\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will take steps to make an estimate of the number of customers of his Department in Scotland who are using the services of food banks.

**Damian Hinds:**

The Department does not hold information on the number of customers using the services of food banks and is therefore unable to provide an estimate.

■ **Personal Independence Payment: Appeals**

**Ian C. Lucas:**

[\[55494\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many times his Department has appealed against a tribunal decision reinstating a personal independence payment award in the last 12 months.

**Ian C. Lucas:**

[\[55495\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many appeals made by his Department against a tribunal decision awarding personal independence payment have been successful in the last 12 months.

**Ian C. Lucas:**

[\[55496\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average length of time taken was by his Department for a decision on whether to appeal a tribunal decision to award personal independence payment.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

Appeals generally are against the original award decision and in many cases would be to adjust a successful award to a higher level rather than being against a nil decision.

Appeals to the Upper Tribunal can only be made where a decision is believed to be erroneous in law; appeals cannot be made solely on the facts.

From 1 November 2015 to 31 October 2016 the Department made 215 applications to appeal a First-tier Tribunal decision relating to Personal Independence Payment (PIP) to the Upper Tribunal.

During that period, 69 of the Department's applications for appeal on PIP were successful, resulting in the decision being remitted to another First-tier Tribunal hearing.

The Department's applications are submitted in line with The Tribunal Procedure (First-tier Tribunal) (Social Entitlement Chamber) Rules 2008, Rules 34(4) and 38(3)(a). The Department has one month to request the Statement of Reasons following the issue of a Tribunal decision. Following the issue of the Statement of Reasons the Department then has a further month to consider whether to make an application to appeal against the First Tier decision.

Information relating to average time taken for a decision on whether to appeal a tribunal decision to award PIP is not held and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

## MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

### TREASURY

#### ■ Concentrix: Standards

Louise Haigh:

[44833]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the average length of time taken to reinstate tax credits after an erroneous cancellation by the contractor since the start of his Department's contract with Concentrix.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 12 September 2016. The correct answer should have been:**

Jane Ellison:

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and SYNEX-Concentrix have arrangements for regular and frequent communications including weekly and monthly meetings as well as other discussions on a day-to-day basis.

Since the beginning of the contract between SYNEX-Concentrix and HMRC in November 2014 to 11 September 2016, SYNEX-Concentrix have considered around 667,000 cases of which around 103,000 cases have been amended

The total savings in Annually Managed Expenditure were £2.3 million in 2014-15, £122.3 million in 2015-16 and £159.5 million in 2016-17 to mid- August 2016. The total to date is £284.1 million since commencement of the contract in November 14.

SYNEX-Concentrix has achieved the 75 day service level agreement throughout the contract period to date.

Since the contract variation in October 2015 to the end of August 2016, there have been a) 13 Amber Green Failures, b) 9 Amber failures, c) 10 red failures and d) 13 Black Failures of Key Performance Indicators. During this same period there have been 1,410 checks of these indicators.

Since the start of the contract, the average waiting time for SYNEX-Concentrix to answer telephone calls has been 6 minutes and 53 seconds and the maximum waiting time for one individual was 1 hour 5 minutes and 34 seconds.

Since the contract commenced in November 2014 to mid-August 2016, the average length of time taken between SYNEX-Concentrix starting to work a mandatory reconsideration and SYNEX-Concentrix making a decision is 23 days.

These cases are not generally erroneous, but tend to arise when further information is provided by the claimant, allowing SYNEX-Concentrix to review the case after the initial decision has been made.

There are currently no tax credit Mandatory Reconsiderations being worked by SYNEX-Concentrix that are over the target timescale. The table below provides the number of

mandatory reconsiderations and appeals that have been received in each financial year since the commencement of the contract.

APPEALS	NUMBER RECEIVED
2014/15	<del>0</del> <b>3</b>
2015/16	<del>365</del> <b>383</b>
2016/17 to mid- <del>31</del> August 16	<del>167</del> <b>169</b>
<b>Mandatory Reconsiderations</b>	<b>Number Received</b>
2014/15	<del>436</del> <b>76</b>
2015/16	<del>2042</del> <b>7904</b>
2016/17 to mid- <del>31</del> August 16	<del>7989</del> <b>3495</b>

The total number of appeals received is about 0.08% of all decisions SYNEX-Concentrix made in the same period. The total number of Mandatory Reconsiderations received is about 1.6% of all decisions SYNEX-Concentrix made.

Tax credits claimants are asked to provide information within 30 days when undergoing checks for error and fraud.

The information about the estimate of the number of recipients of child tax credit and working tax credit whose payments have been erroneously stopped in each year from 2010 to date is not available in the form requested.

However, if a claimant believes that an incorrect decision ~~5~~ has been made, they are able to request a review (now known as a Mandatory Reconsideration). If a claimant believes the review decision to be wrong, they may appeal to an independent tribunal. During reviews or at appeal, additional information is often provided that could have supported the original claim, had it been made available earlier in the process. The proportion of reviews and appeals that result in the original decision being changed remains small in proportion to the total number of cases processed.

Tax credits are often reinstated when information to support the claim is provided after the initial decision has been taken. Since November 2014 to mid-August 2016 the Contractor has amended 6,755 decisions following the receipt of a mandatory reconsideration. Since the start of the contract to mid-August 2016 the Authority has amended 280 decisions following consideration of customer appeals from a total of around 660,000 cases where SYNEX-Concentrix has completed its checks.

HMRC does not hold information on how many of these were reinstated following a cancellation and how many were adjusted following an amendment to an award.

For reasons of commercial sensitivity, HMRC does not disclose its intent around either Clauses B5 or E6 of the contract. For similar reasons, HMRC does not publish the reports completed at the end of each Measurement Period at this time nor disclose the number

and value of fines and penalties incurred by SYNEX-Concentrix under its contract with HMRC.

Louise Haigh:

[\[44834\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of current tax credit cases that are not being dealt with within the target timescale agreed with Concentrix.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 12 September 2016.**

**The correct answer should have been:**

Jane Ellison:

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and SYNEX-Concentrix have arrangements for regular and frequent communications including weekly and monthly meetings as well as other discussions on a day-to-day basis.

Since the beginning of the contract between SYNEX-Concentrix and HMRC in November 2014 to 11 September 2016, SYNEX-Concentrix have considered around 667,000 cases of which around 103,000 cases have been amended

The total savings in Annually Managed Expenditure were £2.3 million in 2014-15, £122.3 million in 2015-16 and £159.5 million in 2016-17 to mid- August 2016. The total to date is £284.1 million since commencement of the contract in November 14.

SYNEX-Concentrix has achieved the 75 day service level agreement throughout the contract period to date.

Since the contract variation in October 2015 to the end of August 2016, there have been a) 13 Amber Green Failures, b) 9 Amber failures, c) 10 red failures and d) 13 Black Failures of Key Performance Indicators. During this same period there have been 1,410 checks of these indicators.

Since the start of the contract, the average waiting time for SYNEX-Concentrix to answer telephone calls has been 6 minutes and 53 seconds and the maximum waiting time for one individual was 1 hour 5 minutes and 34 seconds.

Since the contract commenced in November 2014 to mid-August 2016, the average length of time taken between SYNEX-Concentrix starting to work a mandatory reconsideration and SYNEX-Concentrix making a decision is 23 days.

These cases are not generally erroneous, but tend to arise when further information is provided by the claimant, allowing SYNEX-Concentrix to review the case after the initial decision has been made.

There are currently no tax credit Mandatory Reconsiderations being worked by SYNEX-Concentrix that are over the target timescale. The table below provides the number of mandatory reconsiderations and appeals that have been received in each financial year since the commencement of the contract.

APPEALS	NUMBER RECEIVED
2014/15	0 3
2015/16	365 383
2016/17 to mid- 31 August 16	167 169
<b>Mandatory Reconsiderations</b>	<b>Number Received</b>
2014/15	436 76
2015/16	2042 7904
2016/17 to mid- 31 August 16	7989 3495

The total number of appeals received is about 0.08% of all decisions SYNnex-Concentrix made in the same period. The total number of Mandatory Reconsiderations received is about 1.6% of all decisions SYNnex-Concentrix made.

Tax credits claimants are asked to provide information within 30 days when undergoing checks for error and fraud.

The information about the estimate of the number of recipients of child tax credit and working tax credit whose payments have been erroneously stopped in each year from 2010 to date is not available in the form requested.

However, if a claimant believes that an incorrect decision has been made, they are able to request a review (now known as a Mandatory Reconsideration). If a claimant believes the review decision to be wrong, they may appeal to an independent tribunal. During reviews or at appeal, additional information is often provided that could have supported the original claim, had it been made available earlier in the process. The proportion of reviews and appeals that result in the original decision being changed remains small in proportion to the total number of cases processed.

Tax credits are often reinstated when information to support the claim is provided after the initial decision has been taken. Since November 2014 to mid-August 2016 the Contractor has amended 6,755 decisions following the receipt of a mandatory reconsideration. Since the start of the contract to mid-August 2016 the Authority has amended 280 decisions following consideration of customer appeals from a total of around 660,000 cases where SYNnex-Concentrix has completed its checks.

HMRC does not hold information on how many of these were reinstated following a cancellation and how many were adjusted following an amendment to an award.

For reasons of commercial sensitivity, HMRC does not disclose its intent around either Clauses B5 or E6 of the contract. For similar reasons, HMRC does not publish the reports completed at the end of each Measurement Period at this time nor disclose the number and value of fines and penalties incurred by SYNnex-Concentrix under its contract with HMRC.



## ■ Concentrix: Telephone Services

Louise Haigh:

[44829]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the (a) average and (b) maximum waiting time for telephone calls to be answered by Concentrix has been since the start of his Department's contract with that company.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 12 September 2016. The correct answer should have been:**

Jane Ellison:

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and SYNnex-Concentrix have arrangements for regular and frequent communications including weekly and monthly meetings as well as other discussions on a day-to-day basis.

Since the beginning of the contract between SYNnex-Concentrix and HMRC in November 2014 to 11 September 2016, SYNnex-Concentrix have considered around 667,000 cases of which around 103,000 cases have been amended

The total savings in Annually Managed Expenditure were £2.3 million in 2014-15, £122.3 million in 2015-16 and £159.5 million in 2016-17 to mid- August 2016. The total to date is £284.1 million since commencement of the contract in November 14.

SYNnex-Concentrix has achieved the 75 day service level agreement throughout the contract period to date.

Since the contract variation in October 2015 to the end of August 2016, there have been a) 13 Amber Green Failures, b) 9 Amber failures, c) 10 red failures and d) 13 Black Failures of Key Performance Indicators. During this same period there have been 1,410 checks of these indicators.

Since the start of the contract, the average waiting time for SYNnex-Concentrix to answer telephone calls has been 6 minutes and 53 seconds and the maximum waiting time for one individual was 1 hour 5 minutes and 34 seconds.

Since the contract commenced in November 2014 to mid-August 2016, the average length of time taken between SYNnex-Concentrix starting to work a mandatory reconsideration and SYNnex-Concentrix making a decision is 23 days.

These cases are not generally erroneous, but tend to arise when further information is provided by the claimant, allowing SYNnex-Concentrix to review the case after the initial decision has been made.

There are currently no tax credit Mandatory Reconsiderations being worked by SYNnex-Concentrix that are over the target timescale. The table below provides the number of mandatory reconsiderations and appeals that have been received in each financial year since the commencement of the contract.

### APPEALS

### NUMBER RECEIVED

2014/15

0 3

APPEALS	NUMBER RECEIVED
2015/16	<del>365</del> 383
2016/17 to mid- 31 August 16	<del>167</del> 169
<b>Mandatory Reconsiderations</b>	<b>Number Received</b>
2014/15	<del>436</del> 76
2015/16	<del>2042</del> 7904
2016/17 to mid- 31 August 16	<del>7989</del> 3495

The total number of appeals received is about 0.08% of all decisions SYNnex-Concentrix made in the same period. The total number of Mandatory Reconsiderations received is about 1.6% of all decisions SYNnex-Concentrix made.

Tax credits claimants are asked to provide information within 30 days when undergoing checks for error and fraud.

The information about the estimate of the number of recipients of child tax credit and working tax credit whose payments have been erroneously stopped in each year from 2010 to date is not available in the form requested.

However, if a claimant believes that an incorrect decision has been made, they are able to request a review (now known as a Mandatory Reconsideration). If a claimant believes the review decision to be wrong, they may appeal to an independent tribunal. During reviews or at appeal, additional information is often provided that could have supported the original claim, had it been made available earlier in the process. The proportion of reviews and appeals that result in the original decision being changed remains small in proportion to the total number of cases processed.

Tax credits are often reinstated when information to support the claim is provided after the initial decision has been taken. Since November 2014 to mid-August 2016 the Contractor has amended 6,755 decisions following the receipt of a mandatory reconsideration. Since the start of the contract to mid-August 2016 the Authority has amended 280 decisions following consideration of customer appeals from a total of around 660,000 cases where SYNnex-Concentrix has completed its checks.

HMRC does not hold information on how many of these were reinstated following a cancellation and how many were adjusted following an amendment to an award.

For reasons of commercial sensitivity, HMRC does not disclose its intent around either Clauses B5 or E6 of the contract. For similar reasons, HMRC does not publish the reports completed at the end of each Measurement Period at this time nor disclose the number and value of fines and penalties incurred by SYNnex-Concentrix under its contract with HMRC.

## ■ Revenue and Customs: Concentrix

Louise Haigh:

[44655]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the HM Revenue and Customs Benefits and Credits, Error and Fraud Adding Capacity 444 contract between SYNEX-Concentrix UK Limited and HM Revenue and Customs, if he will publish the reports completed at the end of each Measurement Period on key performance indicators and standard performance indicators since that contract commenced.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 12 September 2016. The correct answer should have been:**

Jane Ellison:

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and SYNEX-Concentrix have arrangements for regular and frequent communications including weekly and monthly meetings as well as other discussions on a day-to-day basis.

Since the beginning of the contract between SYNEX-Concentrix and HMRC in November 2014 to 11 September 2016, SYNEX-Concentrix have considered around 667,000 cases of which around 103,000 cases have been amended

The total savings in Annually Managed Expenditure were £2.3 million in 2014-15, £122.3 million in 2015-16 and £159.5 million in 2016-17 to mid- August 2016. The total to date is £284.1 million since commencement of the contract in November 14.

SYNEX-Concentrix has achieved the 75 day service level agreement throughout the contract period to date.

Since the contract variation in October 2015 to the end of August 2016, there have been a) 13 Amber Green Failures, b) 9 Amber failures, c) 10 red failures and d) 13 Black Failures of Key Performance Indicators. During this same period there have been 1,410 checks of these indicators.

Since the start of the contract, the average waiting time for SYNEX-Concentrix to answer telephone calls has been 6 minutes and 53 seconds and the maximum waiting time for one individual was 1 hour 5 minutes and 34 seconds.

Since the contract commenced in November 2014 to mid-August 2016, the average length of time taken between SYNEX-Concentrix starting to work a mandatory reconsideration and SYNEX-Concentrix making a decision is 23 days.

These cases are not generally erroneous, but tend to arise when further information is provided by the claimant, allowing SYNEX-Concentrix to review the case after the initial decision has been made.

There are currently no tax credit Mandatory Reconsiderations being worked by SYNEX-Concentrix that are over the target timescale. The table below provides the number of mandatory reconsiderations and appeals that have been received in each financial year since the commencement of the contract.

APPEALS	NUMBER RECEIVED
---------	-----------------

2014/15	0 3
2015/16	365 383
2016/17 to mid- 31 August 16	167 169

Mandatory Reconsiderations	Number Received
----------------------------	-----------------

2014/15	436 76
2015/16	2042 7904
2016/17 to mid- 31 August 16	7989 3495

The total number of appeals received is about 0.08% of all decisions SYNEX-Concentrix made in the same period. The total number of Mandatory Reconsiderations received is about 1.6% of all decisions SYNEX-Concentrix made.

Tax credits claimants are asked to provide information within 30 days when undergoing checks for error and fraud.

The information about the estimate of the number of recipients of child tax credit and working tax credit whose payments have been erroneously stopped in each year from 2010 to date is not available in the form requested.

However, if a claimant believes that an incorrect decision has been made, they are able to request a review (now known as a Mandatory Reconsideration). If a claimant believes the review decision to be wrong, they may appeal to an independent tribunal. During reviews or at appeal, additional information is often provided that could have supported the original claim, had it been made available earlier in the process. The proportion of reviews and appeals that result in the original decision being changed remains small in proportion to the total number of cases processed.

Tax credits are often reinstated when information to support the claim is provided after the initial decision has been taken. Since November 2014 to mid-August 2016 the Contractor has amended 6,755 decisions following the receipt of a mandatory reconsideration. Since the start of the contract to mid-August 2016 the Authority has amended 280 decisions following consideration of customer appeals from a total of around 660,000 cases where SYNEX-Concentrix has completed its checks.

HMRC does not hold information on how many of these were reinstated following a cancellation and how many were adjusted following an amendment to an award.

For reasons of commercial sensitivity, HMRC does not disclose its intent around either Clauses B5 or E6 of the contract. For similar reasons, HMRC does not publish the reports completed at the end of each Measurement Period at this time nor disclose the number and value of fines and penalties incurred by SYNEX-Concentrix under its contract with HMRC.

Louise Haigh:

[44656]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the HM Revenue and Customs Benefits and Credits, Error and Fraud Adding Capacity 444 contract between SYNEX-Concentrix UK Limited and HM Revenue and Customs, how many (a) amber green performance failures, (b) amber performance failures, (c) red performance failures and (d) black performance failures have been incurred by the contractor.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 12 September 2016. The correct answer should have been:**

Jane Ellison:

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and SYNEX-Concentrix have arrangements for regular and frequent communications including weekly and monthly meetings as well as other discussions on a day-to-day basis.

Since the beginning of the contract between SYNEX-Concentrix and HMRC in November 2014 to 11 September 2016, SYNEX-Concentrix have considered around 667,000 cases of which around 103,000 cases have been amended

The total savings in Annually Managed Expenditure were £2.3 million in 2014-15, £122.3 million in 2015-16 and £159.5 million in 2016-17 to mid- August 2016. The total to date is £284.1 million since commencement of the contract in November 14.

SYNEX-Concentrix has achieved the 75 day service level agreement throughout the contract period to date.

Since the contract variation in October 2015 to the end of August 2016, there have been a) 13 Amber Green Failures, b) 9 Amber failures, c) 10 red failures and d) 13 Black Failures of Key Performance Indicators. During this same period there have been 1,410 checks of these indicators.

Since the start of the contract, the average waiting time for SYNEX-Concentrix to answer telephone calls has been 6 minutes and 53 seconds and the maximum waiting time for one individual was 1 hour 5 minutes and 34 seconds.

Since the contract commenced in November 2014 to mid-August 2016, the average length of time taken between SYNEX-Concentrix starting to work a mandatory reconsideration and SYNEX-Concentrix making a decision is 23 days.

These cases are not generally erroneous, but tend to arise when further information is provided by the claimant, allowing SYNEX-Concentrix to review the case after the initial decision has been made.

There are currently no tax credit Mandatory Reconsiderations being worked by SYNEX-Concentrix that are over the target timescale. The table below provides the number of mandatory reconsiderations and appeals that have been received in each financial year since the commencement of the contract.

APPEALS	NUMBER RECEIVED
---------	-----------------

2014/15	0 3
2015/16	365 383
2016/17 to mid- 31 August 16	167 169

Mandatory Reconsiderations	Number Received
----------------------------	-----------------

2014/15	436 76
2015/16	2042 7904
2016/17 to mid- 31 August 16	7989 3495

The total number of appeals received is about 0.08% of all decisions SYNEX-Concentrix made in the same period. The total number of Mandatory Reconsiderations received is about 1.6% of all decisions SYNEX-Concentrix made.

Tax credits claimants are asked to provide information within 30 days when undergoing checks for error and fraud.

The information about the estimate of the number of recipients of child tax credit and working tax credit whose payments have been erroneously stopped in each year from 2010 to date is not available in the form requested.

However, if a claimant believes that an incorrect decision has been made, they are able to request a review (now known as a Mandatory Reconsideration). If a claimant believes the review decision to be wrong, they may appeal to an independent tribunal. During reviews or at appeal, additional information is often provided that could have supported the original claim, had it been made available earlier in the process. The proportion of reviews and appeals that result in the original decision being changed remains small in proportion to the total number of cases processed.

Tax credits are often reinstated when information to support the claim is provided after the initial decision has been taken. Since November 2014 to mid-August 2016 the Contractor has amended 6,755 decisions following the receipt of a mandatory reconsideration. Since the start of the contract to mid-August 2016 the Authority has amended 280 decisions following consideration of customer appeals from a total of around 660,000 cases where SYNEX-Concentrix has completed its checks.

HMRC does not hold information on how many of these were reinstated following a cancellation and how many were adjusted following an amendment to an award.

For reasons of commercial sensitivity, HMRC does not disclose its intent around either Clauses B5 or E6 of the contract. For similar reasons, HMRC does not publish the reports completed at the end of each Measurement Period at this time nor disclose the number and value of fines and penalties incurred by SYNEX-Concentrix under its contract with HMRC.

Louise Haigh:

[44719]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the (a) number and (b) value of fines and penalties incurred by SYNEX-Concentrix under its contract with HM Revenue and Customs relating to error and fraud.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 12 September 2016.**

**The correct answer should have been:**

Jane Ellison:

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and SYNEX-Concentrix have arrangements for regular and frequent communications including weekly and monthly meetings as well as other discussions on a day-to-day basis.

Since the beginning of the contract between SYNEX-Concentrix and HMRC in November 2014 to 11 September 2016, SYNEX-Concentrix have considered around 667,000 cases of which around 103,000 cases have been amended

The total savings in Annually Managed Expenditure were £2.3 million in 2014-15, £122.3 million in 2015-16 and £159.5 million in 2016-17 to mid- August 2016. The total to date is £284.1 million since commencement of the contract in November 14.

SYNEX-Concentrix has achieved the 75 day service level agreement throughout the contract period to date.

Since the contract variation in October 2015 to the end of August 2016, there have been a) 13 Amber Green Failures, b) 9 Amber failures, c) 10 red failures and d) 13 Black Failures of Key Performance Indicators. During this same period there have been 1,410 checks of these indicators.

Since the start of the contract, the average waiting time for SYNEX-Concentrix to answer telephone calls has been 6 minutes and 53 seconds and the maximum waiting time for one individual was 1 hour 5 minutes and 34 seconds.

Since the contract commenced in November 2014 to mid-August 2016, the average length of time taken between SYNEX-Concentrix starting to work a mandatory reconsideration and SYNEX-Concentrix making a decision is 23 days.

These cases are not generally erroneous, but tend to arise when further information is provided by the claimant, allowing SYNEX-Concentrix to review the case after the initial decision has been made.

There are currently no tax credit Mandatory Reconsiderations being worked by SYNEX-Concentrix that are over the target timescale. The table below provides the number of mandatory reconsiderations and appeals that have been received in each financial year since the commencement of the contract.

APPEALS	NUMBER RECEIVED
2014/15	0 3
2015/16	365 383

APPEALS	NUMBER RECEIVED
2016/17 to mid-31 August 16	<del>167</del> 169
<b>Mandatory Reconsiderations</b>	<b>Number Received</b>
2014/15	<del>436</del> 76
2015/16	<del>2042</del> 7904
2016/17 to mid-31 August 16	<del>7989</del> 3495

The total number of appeals received is about 0.08% of all decisions SYNnex-Concentrix made in the same period. The total number of Mandatory Reconsiderations received is about 1.6% of all decisions SYNnex-Concentrix made.

Tax credits claimants are asked to provide information within 30 days when undergoing checks for error and fraud.

The information about the estimate of the number of recipients of child tax credit and working tax credit whose payments have been erroneously stopped in each year from 2010 to date is not available in the form requested.

However, if a claimant believes that an incorrect decision has been made, they are able to request a review (now known as a Mandatory Reconsideration). If a claimant believes the review decision to be wrong, they may appeal to an independent tribunal. During reviews or at appeal, additional information is often provided that could have supported the original claim, had it been made available earlier in the process. The proportion of reviews and appeals that result in the original decision being changed remains small in proportion to the total number of cases processed.

Tax credits are often reinstated when information to support the claim is provided after the initial decision has been taken. Since November 2014 to mid-August 2016 the Contractor has amended 6,755 decisions following the receipt of a mandatory reconsideration. Since the start of the contract to mid-August 2016 the Authority has amended 280 decisions following consideration of customer appeals from a total of around 660,000 cases where SYNnex-Concentrix has completed its checks.

HMRC does not hold information on how many of these were reinstated following a cancellation and how many were adjusted following an amendment to an award.

For reasons of commercial sensitivity, HMRC does not disclose its intent around either Clauses B5 or E6 of the contract. For similar reasons, HMRC does not publish the reports completed at the end of each Measurement Period at this time nor disclose the number and value of fines and penalties incurred by SYNnex-Concentrix under its contract with HMRC.



Louise Haigh:

[44720]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department plans to exercise Clause E6 on extension of the initial contract period of HM Revenue and Customs' contract with SYNEX-Concentrix relating to error and fraud after 5 May 2017.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 12 September 2016.**

**The correct answer should have been:**

Jane Ellison:

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and SYNEX-Concentrix have arrangements for regular and frequent communications including weekly and monthly meetings as well as other discussions on a day-to-day basis.

Since the beginning of the contract between SYNEX-Concentrix and HMRC in November 2014 to 11 September 2016, SYNEX-Concentrix have considered around 667,000 cases of which around 103,000 cases have been amended

The total savings in Annually Managed Expenditure were £2.3 million in 2014-15, £122.3 million in 2015-16 and £159.5 million in 2016-17 to mid- August 2016. The total to date is £284.1 million since commencement of the contract in November 14.

SYNEX-Concentrix has achieved the 75 day service level agreement throughout the contract period to date.

Since the contract variation in October 2015 to the end of August 2016, there have been a) 13 Amber Green Failures, b) 9 Amber failures, c) 10 red failures and d) 13 Black Failures of Key Performance Indicators. During this same period there have been 1,410 checks of these indicators.

Since the start of the contract, the average waiting time for SYNEX-Concentrix to answer telephone calls has been 6 minutes and 53 seconds and the maximum waiting time for one individual was 1 hour 5 minutes and 34 seconds.

Since the contract commenced in November 2014 to mid-August 2016, the average length of time taken between SYNEX-Concentrix starting to work a mandatory reconsideration and SYNEX-Concentrix making a decision is 23 days.

These cases are not generally erroneous, but tend to arise when further information is provided by the claimant, allowing SYNEX-Concentrix to review the case after the initial decision has been made.

There are currently no tax credit Mandatory Reconsiderations being worked by SYNEX-Concentrix that are over the target timescale. The table below provides the number of mandatory reconsiderations and appeals that have been received in each financial year since the commencement of the contract.

#### APPEALS

#### NUMBER RECEIVED

2014/15

0 3

2015/16

365 383

APPEALS	NUMBER RECEIVED
2016/17 to mid- 31 August 16	<del>167</del> 169
<b>Mandatory Reconsiderations</b>	<b>Number Received</b>
2014/15	<del>436</del> 76
2015/16	<del>2042</del> 7904
2016/17 to mid- 31 August 16	<del>7989</del> 3495

The total number of appeals received is about 0.08% of all decisions SYNnex-Concentrix made in the same period. The total number of Mandatory Reconsiderations received is about 1.6% of all decisions SYNnex-Concentrix made.

Tax credits claimants are asked to provide information within 30 days when undergoing checks for error and fraud.

The information about the estimate of the number of recipients of child tax credit and working tax credit whose payments have been erroneously stopped in each year from 2010 to date is not available in the form requested.

However, if a claimant believes that an incorrect decision has been made, they are able to request a review (now known as a Mandatory Reconsideration). If a claimant believes the review decision to be wrong, they may appeal to an independent tribunal. During reviews or at appeal, additional information is often provided that could have supported the original claim, had it been made available earlier in the process. The proportion of reviews and appeals that result in the original decision being changed remains small in proportion to the total number of cases processed.

Tax credits are often reinstated when information to support the claim is provided after the initial decision has been taken. Since November 2014 to mid-August 2016 the Contractor has amended 6,755 decisions following the receipt of a mandatory reconsideration. Since the start of the contract to mid-August 2016 the Authority has amended 280 decisions following consideration of customer appeals from a total of around 660,000 cases where SYNnex-Concentrix has completed its checks.

HMRC does not hold information on how many of these were reinstated following a cancellation and how many were adjusted following an amendment to an award.

For reasons of commercial sensitivity, HMRC does not disclose its intent around either Clauses B5 or E6 of the contract. For similar reasons, HMRC does not publish the reports completed at the end of each Measurement Period at this time nor disclose the number and value of fines and penalties incurred by SYNnex-Concentrix under its contract with HMRC.

Louise Haigh: [\[44811\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the HM Revenue and Customs Benefits and Credits, Error and Fraud Adding Capacity 444 contract between SYNnex-

Concentrix UK Limited and HM Revenue and Customs, what the standard length of notice under that contract is for providing evidence to the contractor of tax credit fraud and error cases.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 12 September 2016. The correct answer should have been:**

**Jane Ellison:**

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and SYNEX-Concentrix have arrangements for regular and frequent communications including weekly and monthly meetings as well as other discussions on a day-to-day basis.

Since the beginning of the contract between SYNEX-Concentrix and HMRC in November 2014 to 11 September 2016, SYNEX-Concentrix have considered around 667,000 cases of which around 103,000 cases have been amended

The total savings in Annually Managed Expenditure were £2.3 million in 2014-15, £122.3 million in 2015-16 and £159.5 million in 2016-17 to mid- August 2016. The total to date is £284.1 million since commencement of the contract in November 14.

SYNEX-Concentrix has achieved the 75 day service level agreement throughout the contract period to date.

Since the contract variation in October 2015 to the end of August 2016, there have been a) 13 Amber Green Failures, b) 9 Amber failures, c) 10 red failures and d) 13 Black Failures of Key Performance Indicators. During this same period there have been 1,410 checks of these indicators.

Since the start of the contract, the average waiting time for SYNEX-Concentrix to answer telephone calls has been 6 minutes and 53 seconds and the maximum waiting time for one individual was 1 hour 5 minutes and 34 seconds.

Since the contract commenced in November 2014 to mid-August 2016, the average length of time taken between SYNEX-Concentrix starting to work a mandatory reconsideration and SYNEX-Concentrix making a decision is 23 days.

These cases are not generally erroneous, but tend to arise when further information is provided by the claimant, allowing SYNEX-Concentrix to review the case after the initial decision has been made.

There are currently no tax credit Mandatory Reconsiderations being worked by SYNEX-Concentrix that are over the target timescale. The table below provides the number of mandatory reconsiderations and appeals that have been received in each financial year since the commencement of the contract.

APPEALS	NUMBER RECEIVED
2014/15	0 3
2015/16	365 383
2016/17 to mid- 31 August 16	467 169

APPEALS	NUMBER RECEIVED
Mandatory Reconsiderations	Number Received
2014/15	<del>436</del> 76
2015/16	<del>2042</del> 7904
2016/17 to mid-31 August 16	<del>7989</del> 3495

The total number of appeals received is about 0.08% of all decisions SYNnex-Concentrix made in the same period. The total number of Mandatory Reconsiderations received is about 1.6% of all decisions SYNnex-Concentrix made.

Tax credits claimants are asked to provide information within 30 days when undergoing checks for error and fraud.

The information about the estimate of the number of recipients of child tax credit and working tax credit whose payments have been erroneously stopped in each year from 2010 to date is not available in the form requested.

However, if a claimant believes that an incorrect decision has been made, they are able to request a review (now known as a Mandatory Reconsideration). If a claimant believes the review decision to be wrong, they may appeal to an independent tribunal. During reviews or at appeal, additional information is often provided that could have supported the original claim, had it been made available earlier in the process. The proportion of reviews and appeals that result in the original decision being changed remains small in proportion to the total number of cases processed.

Tax credits are often reinstated when information to support the claim is provided after the initial decision has been taken. Since November 2014 to mid-August 2016 the Contractor has amended 6,755 decisions following the receipt of a mandatory reconsideration. Since the start of the contract to mid-August 2016 the Authority has amended 280 decisions following consideration of customer appeals from a total of around 660,000 cases where SYNnex-Concentrix has completed its checks.

HMRC does not hold information on how many of these were reinstated following a cancellation and how many were adjusted following an amendment to an award.

For reasons of commercial sensitivity, HMRC does not disclose its intent around either Clauses B5 or E6 of the contract. For similar reasons, HMRC does not publish the reports completed at the end of each Measurement Period at this time nor disclose the number and value of fines and penalties incurred by SYNnex-Concentrix under its contract with HMRC.

Louise Haigh: [\[44812\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the HM Revenue and Customs Benefits and Credits, Errors and Fraud Adding Capacity 444 contract between SYNnex-

Concentrix UK Limited and HM Revenue and Customs, how many times the (a) contractor and (b) Authority has reinstated tax credits after an initial cancellation.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 12 September 2016.**

**The correct answer should have been:**

**Jane Ellison:**

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and SYNEX-Concentrix have arrangements for regular and frequent communications including weekly and monthly meetings as well as other discussions on a day-to-day basis.

Since the beginning of the contract between SYNEX-Concentrix and HMRC in November 2014 to 11 September 2016, SYNEX-Concentrix have considered around 667,000 cases of which around 103,000 cases have been amended

The total savings in Annually Managed Expenditure were £2.3 million in 2014-15, £122.3 million in 2015-16 and £159.5 million in 2016-17 to mid- August 2016. The total to date is £284.1 million since commencement of the contract in November 14.

SYNEX-Concentrix has achieved the 75 day service level agreement throughout the contract period to date.

Since the contract variation in October 2015 to the end of August 2016, there have been a) 13 Amber Green Failures, b) 9 Amber failures, c) 10 red failures and d) 13 Black Failures of Key Performance Indicators. During this same period there have been 1,410 checks of these indicators.

Since the start of the contract, the average waiting time for SYNEX-Concentrix to answer telephone calls has been 6 minutes and 53 seconds and the maximum waiting time for one individual was 1 hour 5 minutes and 34 seconds.

Since the contract commenced in November 2014 to mid-August 2016, the average length of time taken between SYNEX-Concentrix starting to work a mandatory reconsideration and SYNEX-Concentrix making a decision is 23 days.

These cases are not generally erroneous, but tend to arise when further information is provided by the claimant, allowing SYNEX-Concentrix to review the case after the initial decision has been made.

There are currently no tax credit Mandatory Reconsiderations being worked by SYNEX-Concentrix that are over the target timescale. The table below provides the number of mandatory reconsiderations and appeals that have been received in each financial year since the commencement of the contract.

APPEALS	NUMBER RECEIVED
2014/15	0 3
2015/16	365 383
2016/17 to mid- 31 August 16	167 169

APPEALS	NUMBER RECEIVED
Mandatory Reconsiderations	Number Received
2014/15	<del>436</del> 76
2015/16	<del>2042</del> 7904
2016/17 to mid-31 August 16	<del>7989</del> 3495

The total number of appeals received is about 0.08% of all decisions SYNnex-Concentrix made in the same period. The total number of Mandatory Reconsiderations received is about 1.6% of all decisions SYNnex-Concentrix made.

Tax credits claimants are asked to provide information within 30 days when undergoing checks for error and fraud.

The information about the estimate of the number of recipients of child tax credit and working tax credit whose payments have been erroneously stopped in each year from 2010 to date is not available in the form requested.

However, if a claimant believes that an incorrect decision has been made, they are able to request a review (now known as a Mandatory Reconsideration). If a claimant believes the review decision to be wrong, they may appeal to an independent tribunal. During reviews or at appeal, additional information is often provided that could have supported the original claim, had it been made available earlier in the process. The proportion of reviews and appeals that result in the original decision being changed remains small in proportion to the total number of cases processed.

Tax credits are often reinstated when information to support the claim is provided after the initial decision has been taken. Since November 2014 to mid-August 2016 the Contractor has amended 6,755 decisions following the receipt of a mandatory reconsideration. Since the start of the contract to mid-August 2016 the Authority has amended 280 decisions following consideration of customer appeals from a total of around 660,000 cases where SYNnex-Concentrix has completed its checks.

HMRC does not hold information on how many of these were reinstated following a cancellation and how many were adjusted following an amendment to an award.

For reasons of commercial sensitivity, HMRC does not disclose its intent around either Clauses B5 or E6 of the contract. For similar reasons, HMRC does not publish the reports completed at the end of each Measurement Period at this time nor disclose the number and value of fines and penalties incurred by SYNnex-Concentrix under its contract with HMRC.

Louise Haigh: [\[44813\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the HM Revenue and Customs Benefits and Credits, Error and Fraud Adding Capacity 444 contract between SYNnex-Concentrix UK Limited and HM Revenue and Customs, what assessment he has made of

compliance by the contractor with the 75-day target for dealing with high risk change of circumstances interventions; and if he will make a statement.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 12 September 2016.**

**The correct answer should have been:**

**Jane Ellison:**

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and SYNEX-Concentrix have arrangements for regular and frequent communications including weekly and monthly meetings as well as other discussions on a day-to-day basis.

Since the beginning of the contract between SYNEX-Concentrix and HMRC in November 2014 to 11 September 2016, SYNEX-Concentrix have considered around 667,000 cases of which around 103,000 cases have been amended

The total savings in Annually Managed Expenditure were £2.3 million in 2014-15, £122.3 million in 2015-16 and £159.5 million in 2016-17 to mid- August 2016. The total to date is £284.1 million since commencement of the contract in November 14.

SYNEX-Concentrix has achieved the 75 day service level agreement throughout the contract period to date.

Since the contract variation in October 2015 to the end of August 2016, there have been a) 13 Amber Green Failures, b) 9 Amber failures, c) 10 red failures and d) 13 Black Failures of Key Performance Indicators. During this same period there have been 1,410 checks of these indicators.

Since the start of the contract, the average waiting time for SYNEX-Concentrix to answer telephone calls has been 6 minutes and 53 seconds and the maximum waiting time for one individual was 1 hour 5 minutes and 34 seconds.

Since the contract commenced in November 2014 to mid-August 2016, the average length of time taken between SYNEX-Concentrix starting to work a mandatory reconsideration and SYNEX-Concentrix making a decision is 23 days.

These cases are not generally erroneous, but tend to arise when further information is provided by the claimant, allowing SYNEX-Concentrix to review the case after the initial decision has been made.

There are currently no tax credit Mandatory Reconsiderations being worked by SYNEX-Concentrix that are over the target timescale. The table below provides the number of mandatory reconsiderations and appeals that have been received in each financial year since the commencement of the contract.

APPEALS	NUMBER RECEIVED
2014/15	0 3
2015/16	365 383
2016/17 to mid- 31 August 16	167 169

APPEALS	NUMBER RECEIVED
Mandatory Reconsiderations	Number Received
2014/15	<del>436</del> 76
2015/16	<del>2042</del> 7904
2016/17 to mid-31 August 16	<del>7989</del> 3495

The total number of appeals received is about 0.08% of all decisions SYNEX-Concentrix made in the same period. The total number of Mandatory Reconsiderations received is about 1.6% of all decisions SYNEX-Concentrix made.

Tax credits claimants are asked to provide information within 30 days when undergoing checks for error and fraud.

The information about the estimate of the number of recipients of child tax credit and working tax credit whose payments have been erroneously stopped in each year from 2010 to date is not available in the form requested.

However, if a claimant believes that an incorrect decision has been made, they are able to request a review (now known as a Mandatory Reconsideration). If a claimant believes the review decision to be wrong, they may appeal to an independent tribunal. During reviews or at appeal, additional information is often provided that could have supported the original claim, had it been made available earlier in the process. The proportion of reviews and appeals that result in the original decision being changed remains small in proportion to the total number of cases processed.

Tax credits are often reinstated when information to support the claim is provided after the initial decision has been taken. Since November 2014 to mid-August 2016 the Contractor has amended 6,755 decisions following the receipt of a mandatory reconsideration. Since the start of the contract to mid-August 2016 the Authority has amended 280 decisions following consideration of customer appeals from a total of around 660,000 cases where SYNEX-Concentrix has completed its checks.

HMRC does not hold information on how many of these were reinstated following a cancellation and how many were adjusted following an amendment to an award.

For reasons of commercial sensitivity, HMRC does not disclose its intent around either Clauses B5 or E6 of the contract. For similar reasons, HMRC does not publish the reports completed at the end of each Measurement Period at this time nor disclose the number and value of fines and penalties incurred by SYNEX-Concentrix under its contract with HMRC.

Louise Haigh:

[\[44814\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the HM Revenue and Customs Benefits and Credits, Errors and Fraud Adding Capacity 444 contract between SYNEX-



Concentrix UK Limited and HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), if he will publish the guidance and procedures for communication between HMRC and Concentrix.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 12 September 2016.**

**The correct answer should have been:**

**Jane Ellison:**

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and SYNEX-Concentrix have arrangements for regular and frequent communications including weekly and monthly meetings as well as other discussions on a day-to-day basis.

Since the beginning of the contract between SYNEX-Concentrix and HMRC in November 2014 to 11 September 2016, SYNEX-Concentrix have considered around 667,000 cases of which around 103,000 cases have been amended

The total savings in Annually Managed Expenditure were £2.3 million in 2014-15, £122.3 million in 2015-16 and £159.5 million in 2016-17 to mid- August 2016. The total to date is £284.1 million since commencement of the contract in November 14.

SYNEX-Concentrix has achieved the 75 day service level agreement throughout the contract period to date.

Since the contract variation in October 2015 to the end of August 2016, there have been a) 13 Amber Green Failures, b) 9 Amber failures, c) 10 red failures and d) 13 Black Failures of Key Performance Indicators. During this same period there have been 1,410 checks of these indicators.

Since the start of the contract, the average waiting time for SYNEX-Concentrix to answer telephone calls has been 6 minutes and 53 seconds and the maximum waiting time for one individual was 1 hour 5 minutes and 34 seconds.

Since the contract commenced in November 2014 to mid-August 2016, the average length of time taken between SYNEX-Concentrix starting to work a mandatory reconsideration and SYNEX-Concentrix making a decision is 23 days.

These cases are not generally erroneous, but tend to arise when further information is provided by the claimant, allowing SYNEX-Concentrix to review the case after the initial decision has been made.

There are currently no tax credit Mandatory Reconsiderations being worked by SYNEX-Concentrix that are over the target timescale. The table below provides the number of mandatory reconsiderations and appeals that have been received in each financial year since the commencement of the contract.

APPEALS	NUMBER RECEIVED
2014/15	0 3
2015/16	365 383
2016/17 to mid- 31 August 16	167 169

APPEALS	NUMBER RECEIVED
Mandatory Reconsiderations	Number Received
2014/15	<del>436</del> 76
2015/16	<del>2042</del> 7904
2016/17 to mid-31 August 16	<del>7989</del> 3495

The total number of appeals received is about 0.08% of all decisions SYNEX-Concentrix made in the same period. The total number of Mandatory Reconsiderations received is about 1.6% of all decisions SYNEX-Concentrix made.

Tax credits claimants are asked to provide information within 30 days when undergoing checks for error and fraud.

The information about the estimate of the number of recipients of child tax credit and working tax credit whose payments have been erroneously stopped in each year from 2010 to date is not available in the form requested.

However, if a claimant believes that an incorrect decision has been made, they are able to request a review (now known as a Mandatory Reconsideration). If a claimant believes the review decision to be wrong, they may appeal to an independent tribunal. During reviews or at appeal, additional information is often provided that could have supported the original claim, had it been made available earlier in the process. The proportion of reviews and appeals that result in the original decision being changed remains small in proportion to the total number of cases processed.

Tax credits are often reinstated when information to support the claim is provided after the initial decision has been taken. Since November 2014 to mid-August 2016 the Contractor has amended 6,755 decisions following the receipt of a mandatory reconsideration. Since the start of the contract to mid-August 2016 the Authority has amended 280 decisions following consideration of customer appeals from a total of around 660,000 cases where SYNEX-Concentrix has completed its checks.

HMRC does not hold information on how many of these were reinstated following a cancellation and how many were adjusted following an amendment to an award.

For reasons of commercial sensitivity, HMRC does not disclose its intent around either Clauses B5 or E6 of the contract. For similar reasons, HMRC does not publish the reports completed at the end of each Measurement Period at this time nor disclose the number and value of fines and penalties incurred by SYNEX-Concentrix under its contract with HMRC.

Louise Haigh: [\[44815\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the HM Revenue and Customs Benefits and Credits, Errors and Fraud Adding Capacity 444 contract between SYNEX-Concentrix UK Limited and HM Revenue and Customs, how many mandatory appeals have

been received from recipients relating to decisions by the contractor in each financial year since the commencement of that contract.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 12 September 2016.**

**The correct answer should have been:**

**Jane Ellison:**

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and SYNEX-Concentrix have arrangements for regular and frequent communications including weekly and monthly meetings as well as other discussions on a day-to-day basis.

Since the beginning of the contract between SYNEX-Concentrix and HMRC in November 2014 to 11 September 2016, SYNEX-Concentrix have considered around 667,000 cases of which around 103,000 cases have been amended

The total savings in Annually Managed Expenditure were £2.3 million in 2014-15, £122.3 million in 2015-16 and £159.5 million in 2016-17 to mid- August 2016. The total to date is £284.1 million since commencement of the contract in November 14.

SYNEX-Concentrix has achieved the 75 day service level agreement throughout the contract period to date.

Since the contract variation in October 2015 to the end of August 2016, there have been a) 13 Amber Green Failures, b) 9 Amber failures, c) 10 red failures and d) 13 Black Failures of Key Performance Indicators. During this same period there have been 1,410 checks of these indicators.

Since the start of the contract, the average waiting time for SYNEX-Concentrix to answer telephone calls has been 6 minutes and 53 seconds and the maximum waiting time for one individual was 1 hour 5 minutes and 34 seconds.

Since the contract commenced in November 2014 to mid-August 2016, the average length of time taken between SYNEX-Concentrix starting to work a mandatory reconsideration and SYNEX-Concentrix making a decision is 23 days.

These cases are not generally erroneous, but tend to arise when further information is provided by the claimant, allowing SYNEX-Concentrix to review the case after the initial decision has been made.

There are currently no tax credit Mandatory Reconsiderations being worked by SYNEX-Concentrix that are over the target timescale. The table below provides the number of mandatory reconsiderations and appeals that have been received in each financial year since the commencement of the contract.

APPEALS	NUMBER RECEIVED
2014/15	0 3
2015/16	365 383
2016/17 to mid- 31 August 16	167 169

APPEALS	NUMBER RECEIVED
Mandatory Reconsiderations	Number Received
2014/15	<del>436</del> 76
2015/16	<del>2042</del> 7904
2016/17 to mid-31 August 16	<del>7989</del> 3495

The total number of appeals received is about 0.08% of all decisions SYNnex-Concentrix made in the same period. The total number of Mandatory Reconsiderations received is about 1.6% of all decisions SYNnex-Concentrix made.

Tax credits claimants are asked to provide information within 30 days when undergoing checks for error and fraud.

The information about the estimate of the number of recipients of child tax credit and working tax credit whose payments have been erroneously stopped in each year from 2010 to date is not available in the form requested.

However, if a claimant believes that an incorrect decision has been made, they are able to request a review (now known as a Mandatory Reconsideration). If a claimant believes the review decision to be wrong, they may appeal to an independent tribunal. During reviews or at appeal, additional information is often provided that could have supported the original claim, had it been made available earlier in the process. The proportion of reviews and appeals that result in the original decision being changed remains small in proportion to the total number of cases processed.

Tax credits are often reinstated when information to support the claim is provided after the initial decision has been taken. Since November 2014 to mid-August 2016 the Contractor has amended 6,755 decisions following the receipt of a mandatory reconsideration. Since the start of the contract to mid-August 2016 the Authority has amended 280 decisions following consideration of customer appeals from a total of around 660,000 cases where SYNnex-Concentrix has completed its checks.

HMRC does not hold information on how many of these were reinstated following a cancellation and how many were adjusted following an amendment to an award.

For reasons of commercial sensitivity, HMRC does not disclose its intent around either Clauses B5 or E6 of the contract. For similar reasons, HMRC does not publish the reports completed at the end of each Measurement Period at this time nor disclose the number and value of fines and penalties incurred by SYNnex-Concentrix under its contract with HMRC.

Louise Haigh: [\[44816\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the HM Revenue and Customs Benefits and Credits, Error and Fraud Adding Capacity 444 contract between SYNnex-Concentrix UK Limited and HM Revenue and Customs, what estimate he has made of the

total savings in annual managed expenditure in each financial year since the commencement of that contract.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 12 September 2016.**

**The correct answer should have been:**

**Jane Ellison:**

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and SYNEX-Concentrix have arrangements for regular and frequent communications including weekly and monthly meetings as well as other discussions on a day-to-day basis.

Since the beginning of the contract between SYNEX-Concentrix and HMRC in November 2014 to 11 September 2016, SYNEX-Concentrix have considered around 667,000 cases of which around 103,000 cases have been amended

The total savings in Annually Managed Expenditure were £2.3 million in 2014-15, £122.3 million in 2015-16 and £159.5 million in 2016-17 to mid- August 2016. The total to date is £284.1 million since commencement of the contract in November 14.

SYNEX-Concentrix has achieved the 75 day service level agreement throughout the contract period to date.

Since the contract variation in October 2015 to the end of August 2016, there have been a) 13 Amber Green Failures, b) 9 Amber failures, c) 10 red failures and d) 13 Black Failures of Key Performance Indicators. During this same period there have been 1,410 checks of these indicators.

Since the start of the contract, the average waiting time for SYNEX-Concentrix to answer telephone calls has been 6 minutes and 53 seconds and the maximum waiting time for one individual was 1 hour 5 minutes and 34 seconds.

Since the contract commenced in November 2014 to mid-August 2016, the average length of time taken between SYNEX-Concentrix starting to work a mandatory reconsideration and SYNEX-Concentrix making a decision is 23 days.

These cases are not generally erroneous, but tend to arise when further information is provided by the claimant, allowing SYNEX-Concentrix to review the case after the initial decision has been made.

There are currently no tax credit Mandatory Reconsiderations being worked by SYNEX-Concentrix that are over the target timescale. The table below provides the number of mandatory reconsiderations and appeals that have been received in each financial year since the commencement of the contract.

APPEALS	NUMBER RECEIVED
2014/15	0 3
2015/16	365 383
2016/17 to mid- 31 August 16	167 169

APPEALS	NUMBER RECEIVED
<b>Mandatory Reconsiderations</b>	<b>Number Received</b>
2014/15	<del>436</del> <b>76</b>
2015/16	<del>2042</del> <b>7904</b>
2016/17 to mid- <del>31</del> August 16	<del>7989</del> <b>3495</b>

The total number of appeals received is about 0.08% of all decisions SYNnex-Concentrix made in the same period. The total number of Mandatory Reconsiderations received is about 1.6% of all decisions SYNnex-Concentrix made.

Tax credits claimants are asked to provide information within 30 days when undergoing checks for error and fraud.

The information about the estimate of the number of recipients of child tax credit and working tax credit whose payments have been erroneously stopped in each year from 2010 to date is not available in the form requested.

However, if a claimant believes that an incorrect decision ~~s~~ has been made, they are able to request a review (now known as a Mandatory Reconsideration). If a claimant believes the review decision to be wrong, they may appeal to an independent tribunal. During reviews or at appeal, additional information is often provided that could have supported the original claim, had it been made available earlier in the process. The proportion of reviews and appeals that result in the original decision being changed remains small in proportion to the total number of cases processed.

Tax credits are often reinstated when information to support the claim is provided after the initial decision has been taken. Since November 2014 to mid-August 2016 the Contractor has amended 6,755 decisions following the receipt of a mandatory reconsideration. Since the start of the contract to mid-August 2016 the Authority has amended 280 decisions following consideration of customer appeals from a total of around 660,000 cases where SYNnex-Concentrix has completed its checks.

HMRC does not hold information on how many of these were reinstated following a cancellation and how many were adjusted following an amendment to an award.

For reasons of commercial sensitivity, HMRC does not disclose its intent around either Clauses B5 or E6 of the contract. For similar reasons, HMRC does not publish the reports completed at the end of each Measurement Period at this time nor disclose the number and value of fines and penalties incurred by SYNnex-Concentrix under its contract with HMRC.

Louise Haigh: [\[44830\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to exercise Clause B5 of his Department's contract with Concentrix and extend the length of that contract beyond its current expiry date.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 12 September 2016. The correct answer should have been:**

**Jane Ellison:**

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and SYNnex-Concentrix have arrangements for regular and frequent communications including weekly and monthly meetings as well as other discussions on a day-to-day basis.

Since the beginning of the contract between SYNnex-Concentrix and HMRC in November 2014 to 11 September 2016, SYNnex-Concentrix have considered around 667,000 cases of which around 103,000 cases have been amended

The total savings in Annually Managed Expenditure were £2.3 million in 2014-15, £122.3 million in 2015-16 and £159.5 million in 2016-17 to mid- August 2016. The total to date is £284.1 million since commencement of the contract in November 14.

SYNnex-Concentrix has achieved the 75 day service level agreement throughout the contract period to date.

Since the contract variation in October 2015 to the end of August 2016, there have been a) 13 Amber Green Failures, b) 9 Amber failures, c) 10 red failures and d) 13 Black Failures of Key Performance Indicators. During this same period there have been 1,410 checks of these indicators.

Since the start of the contract, the average waiting time for SYNnex-Concentrix to answer telephone calls has been 6 minutes and 53 seconds and the maximum waiting time for one individual was 1 hour 5 minutes and 34 seconds.

Since the contract commenced in November 2014 to mid-August 2016, the average length of time taken between SYNnex-Concentrix starting to work a mandatory reconsideration and SYNnex-Concentrix making a decision is 23 days.

These cases are not generally erroneous, but tend to arise when further information is provided by the claimant, allowing SYNnex-Concentrix to review the case after the initial decision has been made.

There are currently no tax credit Mandatory Reconsiderations being worked by SYNnex-Concentrix that are over the target timescale. The table below provides the number of mandatory reconsiderations and appeals that have been received in each financial year since the commencement of the contract.

APPEALS	NUMBER RECEIVED
2014/15	<del>0</del> <b>3</b>
2015/16	<del>365</del> <b>383</b>
2016/17 to mid- <del>31</del> <b>31</b> August 16	<del>167</del> <b>169</b>
<b>Mandatory Reconsiderations</b>	<b>Number Received</b>
2014/15	<del>436</del> <b>76</b>

APPEALS	NUMBER RECEIVED
---------	-----------------

2015/16	<del>2042</del> <b>7904</b>
2016/17 to mid-31 August 16	<del>7989</del> <b>3495</b>

The total number of appeals received is about 0.08% of all decisions SYNEX-Concentrix made in the same period. The total number of Mandatory Reconsiderations received is about 1.6% of all decisions SYNEX-Concentrix made.

Tax credits claimants are asked to provide information within 30 days when undergoing checks for error and fraud.

The information about the estimate of the number of recipients of child tax credit and working tax credit whose payments have been erroneously stopped in each year from 2010 to date is not available in the form requested.

However, if a claimant believes that an incorrect decision has been made, they are able to request a review (now known as a Mandatory Reconsideration). If a claimant believes the review decision to be wrong, they may appeal to an independent tribunal. During reviews or at appeal, additional information is often provided that could have supported the original claim, had it been made available earlier in the process. The proportion of reviews and appeals that result in the original decision being changed remains small in proportion to the total number of cases processed.

Tax credits are often reinstated when information to support the claim is provided after the initial decision has been taken. Since November 2014 to mid-August 2016 the Contractor has amended 6,755 decisions following the receipt of a mandatory reconsideration. Since the start of the contract to mid-August 2016 the Authority has amended 280 decisions following consideration of customer appeals from a total of around 660,000 cases where SYNEX-Concentrix has completed its checks.

HMRC does not hold information on how many of these were reinstated following a cancellation and how many were adjusted following an amendment to an award.

For reasons of commercial sensitivity, HMRC does not disclose its intent around either Clauses B5 or E6 of the contract. For similar reasons, HMRC does not publish the reports completed at the end of each Measurement Period at this time nor disclose the number and value of fines and penalties incurred by SYNEX-Concentrix under its contract with HMRC.

## ■ Welfare Tax Credits

Louise Haigh:

[\[45573\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 7 September 2016 to Question 44669, how many tax credit (a) awards have been considered and (b) error or fraud cases have been identified and corrected since the beginning of the contract between SYNEX Concentrix and HM Revenue and Customs.



**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 12 September 2016. The correct answer should have been:**

Jane Ellison:

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and SYNEX-Concentrix have arrangements for regular and frequent communications including weekly and monthly meetings as well as other discussions on a day-to-day basis.

Since the beginning of the contract between SYNEX-Concentrix and HMRC in November 2014 to 11 September 2016, SYNEX-Concentrix have considered around 667,000 cases of which around 103,000 cases have been amended

The total savings in Annually Managed Expenditure were £2.3 million in 2014-15, £122.3 million in 2015-16 and £159.5 million in 2016-17 to mid- August 2016. The total to date is £284.1 million since commencement of the contract in November 14.

SYNEX-Concentrix has achieved the 75 day service level agreement throughout the contract period to date.

Since the contract variation in October 2015 to the end of August 2016, there have been a) 13 Amber Green Failures, b) 9 Amber failures, c) 10 red failures and d) 13 Black Failures of Key Performance Indicators. During this same period there have been 1,410 checks of these indicators.

Since the start of the contract, the average waiting time for SYNEX-Concentrix to answer telephone calls has been 6 minutes and 53 seconds and the maximum waiting time for one individual was 1 hour 5 minutes and 34 seconds.

Since the contract commenced in November 2014 to mid-August 2016, the average length of time taken between SYNEX-Concentrix starting to work a mandatory reconsideration and SYNEX-Concentrix making a decision is 23 days.

These cases are not generally erroneous, but tend to arise when further information is provided by the claimant, allowing SYNEX-Concentrix to review the case after the initial decision has been made.

There are currently no tax credit Mandatory Reconsiderations being worked by SYNEX-Concentrix that are over the target timescale. The table below provides the number of mandatory reconsiderations and appeals that have been received in each financial year since the commencement of the contract.

APPEALS	NUMBER RECEIVED
2014/15	<del>0</del> <b>3</b>
2015/16	<del>365</del> <b>383</b>
2016/17 to mid- <del>31</del> <b>31</b> August 16	<del>167</del> <b>169</b>
<b>Mandatory Reconsiderations</b>	<b>Number Received</b>
2014/15	<del>436</del> <b>76</b>

APPEALS	NUMBER RECEIVED
2015/16	<del>2042</del> <b>7904</b>
2016/17 to mid- <b>31</b> August 16	<del>7989</del> <b>3495</b>

The total number of appeals received is about 0.08% of all decisions SYNEX-Concentrix made in the same period. The total number of Mandatory Reconsiderations received is about 1.6% of all decisions SYNEX-Concentrix made.

Tax credits claimants are asked to provide information within 30 days when undergoing checks for error and fraud.

The information about the estimate of the number of recipients of child tax credit and working tax credit whose payments have been erroneously stopped in each year from 2010 to date is not available in the form requested.

However, if a claimant believes that an incorrect decision has been made, they are able to request a review (now known as a Mandatory Reconsideration). If a claimant believes the review decision to be wrong, they may appeal to an independent tribunal. During reviews or at appeal, additional information is often provided that could have supported the original claim, had it been made available earlier in the process. The proportion of reviews and appeals that result in the original decision being changed remains small in proportion to the total number of cases processed.

Tax credits are often reinstated when information to support the claim is provided after the initial decision has been taken. Since November 2014 to mid-August 2016 the Contractor has amended 6,755 decisions following the receipt of a mandatory reconsideration. Since the start of the contract to mid-August 2016 the Authority has amended 280 decisions following consideration of customer appeals from a total of around 660,000 cases where SYNEX-Concentrix has completed its checks.

HMRC does not hold information on how many of these were reinstated following a cancellation and how many were adjusted following an amendment to an award.

For reasons of commercial sensitivity, HMRC does not disclose its intent around either Clauses B5 or E6 of the contract. For similar reasons, HMRC does not publish the reports completed at the end of each Measurement Period at this time nor disclose the number and value of fines and penalties incurred by SYNEX-Concentrix under its contract with HMRC.

## ■ Welfare Tax Credits: Payments

Louise Haigh:

[\[44782\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of recipients of (a) child tax credit and (b) working tax credit whose payments have been erroneously stopped in each year from 2010 to date.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 12 September 2016. The correct answer should have been:**

**Jane Ellison:**

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and SYNEX-Concentrix have arrangements for regular and frequent communications including weekly and monthly meetings as well as other discussions on a day-to-day basis.

Since the beginning of the contract between SYNEX-Concentrix and HMRC in November 2014 to 11 September 2016, SYNEX-Concentrix have considered around 667,000 cases of which around 103,000 cases have been amended

The total savings in Annually Managed Expenditure were £2.3 million in 2014-15, £122.3 million in 2015-16 and £159.5 million in 2016-17 to mid- August 2016. The total to date is £284.1 million since commencement of the contract in November 14.

SYNEX-Concentrix has achieved the 75 day service level agreement throughout the contract period to date.

Since the contract variation in October 2015 to the end of August 2016, there have been a) 13 Amber Green Failures, b) 9 Amber failures, c) 10 red failures and d) 13 Black Failures of Key Performance Indicators. During this same period there have been 1,410 checks of these indicators.

Since the start of the contract, the average waiting time for SYNEX-Concentrix to answer telephone calls has been 6 minutes and 53 seconds and the maximum waiting time for one individual was 1 hour 5 minutes and 34 seconds.

Since the contract commenced in November 2014 to mid-August 2016, the average length of time taken between SYNEX-Concentrix starting to work a mandatory reconsideration and SYNEX-Concentrix making a decision is 23 days.

These cases are not generally erroneous, but tend to arise when further information is provided by the claimant, allowing SYNEX-Concentrix to review the case after the initial decision has been made.

There are currently no tax credit Mandatory Reconsiderations being worked by SYNEX-Concentrix that are over the target timescale. The table below provides the number of mandatory reconsiderations and appeals that have been received in each financial year since the commencement of the contract.

APPEALS	NUMBER RECEIVED
2014/15	<del>0</del> <b>3</b>
2015/16	<del>365</del> <b>383</b>
2016/17 to mid- <del>31</del> <b>31</b> August 16	<del>167</del> <b>169</b>
<b>Mandatory Reconsiderations</b>	<b>Number Received</b>
2014/15	<del>436</del> <b>76</b>

APPEALS	NUMBER RECEIVED
2015/16	<del>2042</del> <b>7904</b>
2016/17 to mid- <b>31</b> August 16	<del>7989</del> <b>3495</b>

The total number of appeals received is about 0.08% of all decisions SYNEX-Concentrix made in the same period. The total number of Mandatory Reconsiderations received is about 1.6% of all decisions SYNEX-Concentrix made.

Tax credits claimants are asked to provide information within 30 days when undergoing checks for error and fraud.

The information about the estimate of the number of recipients of child tax credit and working tax credit whose payments have been erroneously stopped in each year from 2010 to date is not available in the form requested.

However, if a claimant believes that an incorrect decision has been made, they are able to request a review (now known as a Mandatory Reconsideration). If a claimant believes the review decision to be wrong, they may appeal to an independent tribunal. During reviews or at appeal, additional information is often provided that could have supported the original claim, had it been made available earlier in the process. The proportion of reviews and appeals that result in the original decision being changed remains small in proportion to the total number of cases processed.

Tax credits are often reinstated when information to support the claim is provided after the initial decision has been taken. Since November 2014 to mid-August 2016 the Contractor has amended 6,755 decisions following the receipt of a mandatory reconsideration. Since the start of the contract to mid-August 2016 the Authority has amended 280 decisions following consideration of customer appeals from a total of around 660,000 cases where SYNEX-Concentrix has completed its checks.

HMRC does not hold information on how many of these were reinstated following a cancellation and how many were adjusted following an amendment to an award.

For reasons of commercial sensitivity, HMRC does not disclose its intent around either Clauses B5 or E6 of the contract. For similar reasons, HMRC does not publish the reports completed at the end of each Measurement Period at this time nor disclose the number and value of fines and penalties incurred by SYNEX-Concentrix under its contract with HMRC.

## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

### BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

#### ■ PUBLICATION OF GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON THE DUTY TO REPORT ON PAYMENT PRACTICES AND POLICIES, AND OF UPDATED DRAFT REGULATIONS

Parliamentary Under-Secretary (Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy) (Margot James): [\[HCWS311\]](#)

Successful businesses create jobs, and are essential to economic growth. Late payment harms business cash-flow, hampers investment and in extreme cases can risk businesses' solvency. This puts a strain on any organisation, but is especially difficult for small businesses. As of June 2015, the overall level of late payment owed to small and medium sized businesses was reported as £26.8 billion. This is why it is crucial for Government to take action to create a more responsible payment culture, which enables all businesses to thrive and develop.

Today, Government will publish its response to the *Duty to Report on Payment Practices and Policies* consultation, and draft regulations to implement section 3 of the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015 for large companies and large limited liability partnerships to report on their payment practices and performance.

The duty to report on payment practices and performance

Following consideration of views received from stakeholders, large companies and large limited liability partnerships (LLPs) will be required to publish information about their payment practices and performance twice per financial year on a Government web service. They will be required to report on the following:

Narrative descriptions of:

- the organisation's payment terms. Including - standard contractual length of time for payment of invoices, maximum contractual payment period and any changes to standard payment terms and whether suppliers have been notified or consulted on these changes
- the organisation's process for dispute resolution related to payment

Statistics on:

- the average time taken to pay invoices from the date of receipt of invoice
- the percentage of invoices paid within the reporting period which were paid in 30 days or fewer, between 31 and 60 days, and over 60 days
- the proportion of invoices due within the reporting period which were not paid within agreed terms

Statements (i.e. a tick box) about:

- whether an organisation offers e-invoicing

- whether an organisation offers supply chain finance
- whether the organisation's practices and policies cover deducting sums from payments as a charge for remaining on a supplier's list, and whether they have done this in the reporting period
- whether the organisation is a member of a payment code, and the name of the code

If a company fails to publish a report as required, or publishes false information this will be a criminal offence, punishable by a fine on summary conviction.

I would like to draw Parliament's attention to two matters:

*Interest owed and paid*

The regulations do not include a requirement to report on the amount of interest owed and paid, which the previous Government committed to include. Businesses have suggested that this metric could be difficult to understand and implement. The Government will keep this metric under review, taking into account any lessons that the introduction of similar metrics to public sector reporting can teach us.

*Pay to Stay and Supplier Lists*

During the passage of the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act through Parliament the previous Government committed that these regulations would tackle so-called 'pay to stay' practices. These practices include instances where businesses require payments either for joining or for remaining on a supplier list.

The Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act allows the Government to require reporting on practices relating to payment of suppliers. As such, the draft regulations require businesses in scope to report on whether they deduct sums from payments to suppliers as a charge to remain on their list of suppliers. This does not cover all payments required from suppliers for joining or remaining on a supplier list. The Government will keep reporting on 'pay to stay' under review. The Small Business Commissioner, who will be in post from next year, will be able to tackle such unfair payment practices.

*The benefits*

This new reporting requirement for the UK's largest companies and limited liability partnerships (LLPs) will shine a light on payment practices. It will increase transparency and make payment behaviour a reputational boardroom issue. The large businesses already treating suppliers fairly and paying on time can use the data to highlight their track-record. Poor payment practices and performance will be exposed, alerting organisations to issues and encouraging them to improve.

**CABINET OFFICE****■ Publication of Government Grant Standards**

**Minister for the Constitution (Chris Skidmore):**

[\[HCWS308\]](#)

Today I am publishing new standards which will ensure the effectiveness of grant management across Government. These standards will be adopted by all departments to make sure that taxpayers' money, awarded through government grants, is properly agreed and spent.

The grants improvement programme aims to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of grant making across government. The programme includes incorporating recommendations from the Public Accounts Committee and Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee inquiries into Kids Company as well as reviewing grant programmes already underway.

The standards are a transparent, robust, and proportionate solution to manage risks in the government grants process.

We need to make sure the UK taxpayer is getting value for money and grants are awarded with sufficient scrutiny and more accountability. The detailed work we have undertaken since February with government departments, research organisations and the voluntary sector has enabled us to develop these standards through a constructive and collaborative process. They will protect taxpayers' money whilst at the same time, delivering key policy outcomes through our many partners.

The Government has engaged with a broad range of key partners, including those in the academic and research community, to understand the effect these standards will have on all sectors and to avoid any unintended consequences. Standards will also include a requirement for departments to ensure that grant agreements provide a clear outline of what the funding is to be spent on and how this would be monitored. They would put an end to grant money being wasted on activities not specified in the grant agreement, such as political lobbying.

Government grants are an important part of the funding mix for many charities. These new grants standards will protect the role of charities to speak out on behalf of the communities and people they benefit, whilst ensuring public funds are used as intended. They will help create new opportunities for the sector to work in partnership with government, increasing their social impact.

Copies of the associated documents will be placed in the Library of the House and published on gov.uk. Any future updates to the guidance will be published on gov.uk.

**COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT****■ LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**

Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (Sajid Javid):

[\[HCWS310\]](#)

On the 17 December 2014, my predecessor the then Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government confirmed that, having considered the report of the inspection by PriceWaterhouseCoopers LLP, the London Borough of Tower Hamlets was failing to comply with its best value duty. He therefore concluded that it was both necessary and expedient for him to exercise his intervention powers. A team of Commissioners were appointed to exercise functions of the Authority in relation to the making of grants, and the appointment of persons to and the removal of persons from the statutory offices of Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer for Local Elections. The Commissioners were also tasked with overseeing an improvement plan of the Council covering steps to strengthen the Council's core governance arrangements, publicity, contracting, property disposals to third parties and organisational cultural change.

Almost two years on, a number of challenges remain but there have been areas of significant progress. Following receipt of the Council's third six-monthly update against its Best Value Action Plan on 20 September and a report from the Commissioners on 11 October, I am today proposing, on the recommendation of the Commissioner team, my intention to return certain functions to the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.

After careful consideration of the Commissioners' report, I am satisfied that the Council is now able to exercise some of functions identified by the Commissioners in compliance with the best value duty, and that the local residents of Tower Hamlets can have confidence that this will be the case. I am therefore considering exercising my powers under section 15 of the Local Government Act 1999 to return to the Council functions in relation to grant-making, although I consider it necessary for the Commissioners to retain an oversight role over how this function is exercised for the remainder of the Direction period. Establishing new oversight arrangements in relation to grants will enable the Commissioners to advise and scrutinise the Council without clouding where ultimate responsibility lies. Finally, I am considering exercising my powers under section 15 of the 1999 Act to end the role the Commissioners have held in overseeing the Council's processes and practices for entering into contracts. Returning these functions represents a clear milestone on Tower Hamlets Council's road to recovery.

The Commissioners will provide oversight of the returned functions to ensure that they are exercised in accordance with the best value duty. In addition they will continue to oversee the Council's rigorous programme of improvement in relation to strengthening its core governance arrangements, publicity, property disposals to third parties, organisational cultural change and grants. I am inviting the Council to make representations on the proposals, which will be considered as part of my final decision.

I am placing a copy of the documents associated with these announcements in the Library of the House and on my department's website:



<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tower-hamlets-intervention-proposed-return-of-grants-function>.

## ■ Supporting local newspapers

**Minister for Local Government (Mr Marcus Jones):**

**[HCWS309]**

This government remains committed to protecting the independent press from unfair competition. A healthy local democracy requires the accountability that comes from scrutiny of councils by the press and the public.

The government has sought to take action against the practice, by a small number of local authorities, of publishing local authority newspapers, which given the frequency of their publication, can push out and undermine that independent press. A small number of councils continue to breach the recommendations of the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity about the frequency of publication for council newspapers.

Further to the Written Statement of 10 March 2015, Official Report, Column 8WS we have warned a small number of local authorities about their continued failure to comply with the provisions of the publicity code.

Today I am announcing the conclusions to date of the review into the actions of three of those authorities; the London Borough of Hackney, the London Borough of Newham and the London Borough of Waltham Forest.

In each case my Rt Hon Friend, the Secretary of State is minded to exercise his powers under the Local Government Act 1986 to direct the local authorities to comply by no later than 31 January 2017 with the provision in the March 2011 Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity that: "Where local authorities do commission or publish newsletters, news sheets or similar communications, they should not issue them more frequently than quarterly". Accordingly, the Secretary of State is today issuing to each of the three authorities a written notice of the direction he proposes to issue in each case.

In deciding to take this action, the Secretary of State has carefully considered the representations each of these local authorities has made in response to a notice given to it on 10 March 2015 of a proposed direction relating to frequency of publication of council newsletters, newsheets or similar publications. He has also considered other information available to him about each of the three councils' publicity, and had regard to an Equality Statement about enforcing the 2011 Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity.

Each authority now has 14 days to make written representations to the Secretary of State about the proposed direction. Following this, the Secretary of State will take his final decision in each case about whether or not to issue the local authority with a direction. Each decision will be taken on its own merits.

I will be placing copies of the documents associated with these announcements in the Library of the House.

**CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ **Telecommunications Council**

**Minister of State for Digital and Culture (Matt Hancock):** [\[HCWS312\]](#)

The Telecommunications Council will take place in Brussels on 2nd December 2016. I will represent the UK at this Council. Below are the agenda items and the positions I intend to adopt.

The first item is a policy debate on the two legislative instruments and two communications that form the just published EU Commission's Connectivity package - the European Electronic Communications Code (First reading - EM 12252/16) and Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (First reading - EM12257/16) and "5G for Europe : An Action Plan" (EM12279/16) and "Connectivity for a Competitive Digital Single Market - Towards a European Gigabit Society" (EM12364/16). My intervention will confirm that the UK supports the plan for a Gigabit Society and emphasise the importance of the Connectivity Package in stimulating investment by the private sector in fibre-based networks and 5G. I will also set out the UK's other priorities for the Electronic Communications Code, including respecting Member States' competence and retaining Member States' discretion over consumer protection and funding of the Universal Service Obligation. The Council will then be invited to adopt a General approach on Amending Regulation (EU) No 531/2012 as regards rules for wholesale roaming markets (First reading - EM). We will agree to the adoption of this general approach. The Council will then be provided with an update from the Slovak Presidency on the Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on cross-border parcel delivery services (First reading - EM9706/16). We do not expect a debate on this item and I do not intend to intervene. Finally, Member States will be invited to adopt a partial general approach on the Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulations as regards the promotion of Internet connectivity in local communities (First reading - EM 12259/16). The UK intends to agree to the adoption of this partial approach. This will be followed by three items under AOB led by the Commission, the first being on fair use policy in the context of roaming services, followed by information on Digital Single Market initiatives and finally under AOB, current Internet Governance issues. We do not currently intend to intervene on any of these items. Finally, the Maltese delegation will inform the Council of their priorities for their forthcoming Presidency before Council adjourns until the next meeting in Q2 2017.

**TRANSPORT**■ **Rail update - Southern**

**Secretary of State for Transport (Chris Grayling):** [\[HCWS307\]](#)

My Department has previously announced that 'Delay Repay 15' will be introduced first on the Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) franchise, and this will be available to customers from 11 December 2016. Passengers will be entitled to claim compensation if their train is delayed by 15 minutes or more, rather than 30 minutes as is now the case. This is recognised as one of the most generous compensation schemes in Europe, and this change means an even

better deal for passengers. 'Delay Repay 15' will be included in the specification for all new franchises in future.

Southern passengers have suffered from unprecedented and sustained disruption to their journeys during 2016 through a combination of factors, including RMT industrial action, track and signal failures, and operator poor performance. In recognition of this unprecedented disruption, passengers will be able to claim one payment against their 2016 season tickets from early next year. This one-off compensation scheme recognises that passengers have suffered, and demonstrates that the Government is on their side. This will be administered by GTR.

Passengers with a Brighton to London annual season ticket, for example, will get £371 back. Quarterly, regular monthly and weekly season ticket holders will also qualify for a one-off compensation payment.

Annual, quarterly, monthly and weekly season ticket holders using any Southern routes will be able to claim through the following process:

- In early January 2017 Southern will contact all customers on its database it believes qualify for a refund to confirm the amount due and the method of payment
- Pre-identified customers will need to login to a web portal to provide bank details, credit card details or web account details
- Customers do not need to contact Southern directly at this stage
- After customers who have been pre-identified have been contacted a web portal will be made available allowing:
  - pre-identified customers to confirm the method of payment they wish to use, and;
  - customers who believe they qualify to provide details for Southern to check and, if appropriate, make payment