

Daily Report

Friday, 3 February 2017

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 3 February 2017 and the information is correct at the time of publication (04:07 P.M., 03 February 2017). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ Crown Prosecution Service

Fiona Bruce:

[\[62297\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what the procedure is for presenting a case to the Crown Prosecution Service independently of the police.

Robert Buckland:

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) is the principal prosecuting authority for England and Wales. The functions of the Director of Public Prosecution (DPP) as head of the CPS are set out in section 3 of the Prosecution of Offences Act 1985.

The DPP may instigate a prosecution in any case investigated by the police or any of the Government departments or other agencies specifically set out in section 3 and in the exercise of any power specifically assigned to her by the Attorney General. There is no power to prosecute offences which have been investigated by any person or body not listed in section 3 or in an assignment, with the exception that the DPP may also institute criminal proceedings in any case where it appears to her to be appropriate to do so, including cases of particular importance or difficulty.

The use of this power is rare, and anyone approaching the CPS asking them to consider a case for prosecution under this section will usually be recommended to contact the police, as the CPS has no power to investigate a case.

In addition, section 6 of the same Act preserves the right of any individual to commence a private prosecution although the DPP may also take over such proceedings where it is appropriate.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Security

Jon Trickett:

[\[62603\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, which persons not employed by his Department and its agencies hold security passes entitling them to enter his Department's premises.

Margot James:

Civil Servants have the ability to work flexibly across government sites where there is a business need to do so. The issuing of all passes is controlled by the Department's Departmental Security Unit. Passes can also be issued to contractors, secondees and frequent visitors on a case by case basis in regards to specific business needs. Numbers of passes issued directly to non-Civil Servants for access to departmental buildings will fluctuate over the course of a year.

Civil Service Passes are underpinned by a strong physical security focus, clear processes and assurance.

■ **Employment: Disability**

Neil Gray:

[62184]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what financial support his Department has made available in 2016-17 to assist employers supporting disabled people.

Margot James:

[Holding answer 2 February 2017]: The Department for Work and Pension's (DWP) Access to Work scheme provides financial awards to disabled people in order to fund additional support above the level of an employer's statutory duty to make reasonable adjustments. This supports disabled people to retain work or take up new opportunities, but does not replace employers' duties under the Equality Act 2010.

In addition, Disability Confident supports this Government's commitment to halve the employment gap between disabled and non-disabled people by engaging with employers, who have a crucial role to play in ensuring disabled people are recruited, retained and developed in their careers. The scheme gives employers the opportunity to assess how Disability Confident their business is and sign up at one of three levels. They complete each level before moving on to the next.

DWP is currently trialling a Small Employer Offer, which provides small employers with a personalised package of support, including adaptations and advice and a payment of £500 after three months when they take on new employees who have a health condition or disability.

■ **EURATOM**

John Woodcock:

[62349]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of plans to leave Euratom on UK nuclear capacity, research and business plans.

Jesse Norman:

[Holding answer 2 February 2017]: Withdrawal from the Euratom Treaty will not diminish the UK's nuclear ambitions for its new build nuclear programme, and the Government remains committed to delivering a world leading nuclear programme in close collaboration with international counterparts. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has had detailed discussions with the nuclear industry since the Referendum and will continue to work closely with industry the negotiations progress.

As for research, the UK is a world leader in nuclear R&D and there is no intention to reduce ambition in this area.

■ Fossil Fuels

Caroline Lucas: [\[61852\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the proportion of known fossil fuels that need to be left in the ground to prevent global temperature changes above 1.5 degrees centigrade.

Mr Nick Hurd:

The Department has not made its own estimates of the proportion of global fossil fuel reserves that need to be left in the ground to prevent global temperature changes above 1.5 degrees centigrade.

In order to answer questions such as this, the Department is funding, along with NERC, a research programme on Understanding the Pathways to and Impacts of a 1.5 °C Rise in Global Temperature. Research from this programme will feed into a Special report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change on the 1.5°C ambition, due to be published in September 2018.

■ Groceries Code Adjudicator

Ian Murray: [\[62614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has to meet with farming unions and industry groups who formally declined to submit evidence to the Groceries Code Adjudicator Review.

Margot James:

The public consultation for the Review of the Groceries Code Adjudicator (GCA) ran from 18 October 2016 to 10 January 2017. During this period BEIS officials undertook several, widely publicised stakeholder events across the UK and met with a range of organisations and individuals to explain the purpose of the Review, how to respond and hear the views of those stakeholders who attended.

We have not been made aware of any groups who formally declined to submit evidence, but welcome the opportunity to discuss the Review more widely and would encourage such groups to contact BEIS if they would find this helpful.

■ Housing: Carbon Emissions

Steve McCabe: [\[61931\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 23 December 2016 to Question 57830, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his Department's policy on future funding for Green Open Homes of the recommendations in Bristol Green Doors report, Closing Doors on Green Open Homes Events, published in December 2016.

Jesse Norman:

The Department previously provided start-up funding to Green Open Homes, with the goal that it should become self-sustaining through industry support. As the Bristol

Green Doors report sets out, industry support has been limited so far, which is why Government financing ceased in 2015 as a result.

■ **New Businesses: Government Assistance**

Conor McGinn:

[62616]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much funding his Department has provided to start-up businesses in (a) St Helens, (b) Merseyside, (c) the North West and (d) England in each year since 2010.

Margot James:

The Department's main support programme for start-up businesses is the Start Up Loan programme. The following tables show the number and value of Start Up Loans issued since the programme was launched in 2012.

(A) ST HELENS

Year	Value (£)
2013	159030
2014	166000
2015	72961
2016	117950

(b) Merseyside

Year	Value
2012	14700
2013	2255214
2014	2613001
2015	1266860
2016	1397774

(c) the North West

Year	Value
2012	74200
2013	9133096
2014	9698183

(A) ST HELENS

2015	5270121
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2016	8633777
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(d) England

Year	Value
2012	740219.3
2013	60752665
2014	60474669
2015	52193345
2016	72521195

■ Science

David Simpson: [\[62311\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the Government has any plans to introduce a scheme similar to the Science and Society Community Challenge grant scheme in the next 12 months.

Joseph Johnson:

The Science and Society Community Challenge grant scheme offered support for pilot projects in any part of the UK engaging local communities in science. The Department has no current plans to introduce a similar scheme.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Electronic Warfare

Ian Lavery: [\[62245\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps the Government is taking beyond those outlined in the Cyber Security Strategy of November 2016 to defend the UK from cyber attacks from abroad.

Ben Gummer:

The Government is taking a number of ambitious steps to deliver the new National Cyber Security Strategy. This is supported by an increased, transformational investment of £1.9bn across a five year spending period.

A significant recent success was the launch of the National Cyber Security Centre. The Centre is working to deliver the National Cyber Security Strategy, to improve the UK's ability to respond to major cyber incidents, provide expert guidance on cyber

security and push technological innovation for better, more automatic large-scale cyber security.

■ **Parliamentary Contributory Pension Fund**

Caroline Lucas:

[61923]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what discussions Ministers or officials of his Department have had with representatives of the Parliamentary Contributory Pensions Fund on the review of its Statement of Investment Principles.

Ben Gummer:

The Chair of Trustees of the Parliamentary Contributory Pensions Fund, Brian Donohoe MP, wrote to me in January to consult me about their review of the scheme's Statement of Investment Principles (SIP). I have written back to the Trustees with my response.

TREASURY

■ **Alcoholic Drinks: Excise Duties**

Mrs Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

[62488]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect on the UK economy of the freeze in duty on spirits announced in the Budget 2016.

Jane Ellison:

The Government keeps all taxes under review, including alcohol duties, and is always willing to consider any evidence in relation to alcohol taxation policy.

■ **Day Care: Tax Allowances**

Angela Rayner:

[62469]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what distributional analysis his Department has undertaken of the impact of tax-free childcare.

Mr David Gauke:

HM Treasury publishes comprehensive distributional analysis that looks at all of the tax, welfare and public spending changes that affect households. Looking at Tax-Free Childcare in isolation would only present a partial picture of the support the government is providing for families. The last publication from Autumn Statement 2016 can be found online: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-statement-2016-documents>

The government is updating the impact assessment for Tax-Free Childcare to reflect changes made since the scheme was first announced. It will be published before the scheme launches early this year.

Angela Rayner:

[62615]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate his Department has made of the cost to the public purse of tax-free childcare in each year of this Parliament.

Mr David Gauke:

The estimated cost of Tax-Free Childcare in each year of this parliament is shown in the table below.

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Cost (£bn)	0.0	0.6	0.8	0.9	0.9	1.0

These estimates are published in the Office for Budget Responsibility's Economic and Fiscal Outlook - November 2016.

<http://budgetresponsibility.org.uk/efo/economic-and-fiscal-outlook-november-2016/>

■ Libya: Freezing of Assets

Andrew Rosindell:

[62636]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the value is of the assets of the Gaddafi family that are frozen in the UK.

Simon Kirby:

Following action at the United Nations, Council Regulation (EU) No 204/2011 of 2 March 2011 imposed an asset freeze against listed individuals and entities in view of the situation in Libya. Council Regulation (EU) No 204/2011 has since been repealed and replaced by Council Regulation (EU) 2016/44 with effect from 20 January 2016. The EU regulation, which has direct effect in the UK, requires that all assets owned or controlled by listed persons are frozen.

The approximate aggregate value of funds frozen in the UK (under EU Regulation 204/2011) was £ 9,467,630,000 at the close of business on 30 September 2015. The figures for the 2016 round of UK frozen funds reporting are in the process of being finalised and as such are not currently available. The frozen funds continue to belong to the individuals and entities listed under the Regulation and are not seized or otherwise held by HM Government. The figure is provided on an aggregate basis so as not to indirectly disclose the value of funds held by particular individuals or entities.

■ Soft Drinks: Taxation

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[62470]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what criteria he is using to determine which soft drinks will be subject to the soft drinks industry levy announced in the Budget 2016.

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[62471]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the potential revenue to the Exchequer from the proposed soft drinks industry levy.

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[\[62472\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the possible negative effect on businesses of the proposed soft drinks industry levy.

Jane Ellison:

As announced at Budget 2016, the levy will apply to added sugar soft drinks with total sugars above 5 grams per 100 millilitres.

The Government consulted on the detail of the soft drinks industry levy last year. In December 2016, we published our formal response to the consultation, alongside draft Finance Bill legislation, setting out further detail on the scope of the levy and those drinks included.

As for every Finance Bill measure, HM Revenue and Customs published a Tax Impact Information Note which included an updated impact assessment.

The Office for Budget Responsibility has estimated that the levy will raise £520m in the first year, £500 million in the second year, falling to £455m in the third year as more producers reformulate. These estimates are sensitive to the speed of reformulation.

■ **Tobacco: Excise Duties**

Dr James Davies:

[\[62443\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to publish the results of the HM Revenue and Customs consultation on sanctions for tobacco duty fraud, which closed on 28 August 2015.

Jane Ellison:

In 2015, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) invited views from other government departments, enforcement agencies, and representatives of business and public health groups on sanctions and wider action to tackle illicit tobacco. A summary of responses was sent to all respondents to this informal consultation on 15 Jan 2016.

Most respondents recognised the extensive range of criminal and civil sanctions available to HMRC and Border Force or through delivery partners, such as Trading Standards. The consensus was that more could be done to maximise the impact of existing sanctions and to explore additional sanctions with a particular focus on repeat offenders.

The Government announced at Budget 2016 that HMRC would formally consult on a range of proposals for tougher sanctions to tackle this problem. HMRC plans to launch the formal consultation later this year.

Mr Philip Hollobone:

[\[62474\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the point of revenue maximisation on tobacco excise.

Jane Ellison:

The Government believes that tobacco duties achieve a balance between two fiscal goals on tobacco; to raise revenue and to protect public health.

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT■ **Green Belt: North West****Conor McGinn:**[\[62480\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if he will estimate the proportion of land designated as greenbelt in each local authority area in the North West.

Gavin Barwell:

Published statistics on the area of designated Green Belt within each local authority area as at 31 March 2016 are available from Annex Table 1

at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/local-authority-green-belt-statistics-for-england-2015-to-2016>.

Published statistics on the area of each local authority as at 31 December 2016 are available from:

<http://ons.maps.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=a79de233ad254a6d9f76298e666abb2b> on the ONS Open Geography Portal. The 'area to mean high water (coastline)' measure is used to calculate the National Statistics figure on the proportion of England that is designated Green Belt.

■ **Health Services: Non-domestic Rates****Steve McCabe:**[\[62421\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the potential change to the costs of NHS operations in (a) Birmingham, Selly Oak constituency, (b) Birmingham and (c) the West Midlands as a result of proposed changes to the business rates system.

Steve McCabe:[\[62422\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Health on changes to the business rates system.

Steve McCabe:[\[62423\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the proposed increase in business rates for NHS hospitals, GP surgeries and other NHS services on the provision of adult social care.

Mr Marcus Jones:

Department for Communities and Local Government Ministers have regular discussions with our counterparts at the Department of Health, on a range of matters.

NHS properties, like almost all other buildings occupied by public bodies, have been subject to non-domestic rates since they were introduced. Operational costs related to property are taken into account at spending reviews in determining the overall level of funding for the NHS.

A £3.6 billion transitional relief scheme will provide support for the minority of properties which face an increase in rates as a result of the 2017 revaluation, and applies equally to public bodies such as the NHS.

■ **Housing: Construction**

Andrew Gwynne:

[62610]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what progress he has made on building one million new homes by 2020 since the announcement by the Prime Minister on 12 October 2015.

Gavin Barwell:

We have made good progress so far with 189,650 new homes delivered in 2015/16, up 11 per cent on 2014-15. However, there is clearly more to do and our forthcoming White Paper will set out a comprehensive package of reform to deliver the homes this country needs.

The Department publishes statistics on net additions which are available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-net-supply-of-housing>

■ **Public Houses: Non-domestic Rates**

Graham Jones:

[61810]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the number of public houses that will be affected by the planned changes in business rates from April 2017 in (a) East Lancashire and (b) the UK.

Mr Marcus Jones:

At revaluation, the government adjusts the value of business rates to reflect changes in the property market. An estimated three quarters of businesses will see no change or a fall in their bills from 1 April thanks to the business rates revaluation and reforms to Small Business Rate Relief. 600,000 businesses are set to pay no business rates at all. A £3.6 billion transitional relief scheme will provide support for the minority who do face an increase. It is not possible to estimate these figures for individual councils because it is for local authorities to assess eligibility for Small Business Rate Relief.

■ **Renewable Energy: Non-domestic Rates**

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[62444]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of exempting local community energy projects from business rates.

Mr Marcus Jones:

Most non-domestic properties are subject to business rates and set by the independent Valuation Office Agency. The 2016 Budget announced the biggest ever cut in business rates, worth over £6 billion across the next five years. From April 2017 we are permanently doubling the level of Small Business Rate Relief and increasing the thresholds so that 600,000 businesses will pay no business rates at all. We have also given local authorities wide-ranging, discretionary powers to grant business rates discounts. The Government has no plans to offer further relief in respect of community energy projects.

DEFENCE■ **Armed Forces****Sir Nicholas Soames:**[\[62236\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the establishment is of HQ Field Army by (a) rank and (b) responsibility.

Mike Penning:

HQ Field Army is established for 236 military posts, which includes 188 Regular, 12 Reservists, 6 RAF/exchange posts (EXI) and 30 Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS). The tables below show breakdown by rank.

REGULAR ARMY

Lieutenant General	1
Major General	1
Brigadier	4
Colonel	13
Lieutenant Colonel	42
Major	76
Captain	16
Warrant Officer 1	9
Warrant Officer 2	11
Staff Sergeant	5
Sergeant	5
Corporal	4
Lance Corporal	1

REGULAR ARMY

Total	188
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RESERVE

Major General	1
Lieutenant Colonel	2
Major	5
Captain	2
Warrant Officer 1	2
Total	12

RAF/ EXI

Colonel	2
Lieutenant Colonel	1
Major	1
Wing Commander	1
Squadron Leader	1
Total	6

FTRS

Lieutenant Colonel	6
Major	21
Warrant Officer 1	2
Warrant Officer 2	1
Total	30

The HQ is broken into the following areas of responsibility:

Commander Field Army (CFA). CFA, Deputy CFA and Chief Of Staff Field Army
Outer Offices (Establishment 11);

Command Plans : Responsible for financial planning/programming, reserve planning, organisational structures, Command Secretariat and legal (Establishment 29);

Support Branch : Responsible for the delivery of medical, personnel, logistic and equipment support (Establishment 68);

Commitments branch : Responsible for the force generation of capability for operations and exercises (Establishment 29);

Training Branch : Responsible for supporting Land Forces force generation through the provision of collective training capability and mission specific training (Establishment 47);

Warfare Branch : Responsible for the development and communication of the Army's doctrine, as well as contributing to the development of NATO and joint doctrine (Establishment 52).

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[62605\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 26 January 2017 to Question 61198, on armed forces, when his Department's policy was changed not to release that information.

Mark Lancaster:

Ministry of Defence policy on the publication of detailed information about operational and manning pinch points changed in 2015. Officials identified that this information had the potential to reveal vulnerabilities in the capabilities of UK Armed Forces.

■ Armed Forces: Uniforms

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[62484\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which contractors are contracted by his Department to manufacture boots for the armed forces.

Harriett Baldwin:

We do not directly contract with manufacturers for combat and safety footwear. Leidos Europe Ltd runs the storage, distribution and commodity procurement functions previously undertaken by Defence Equipment and Support.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[62485\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which prime contractors are contracted by his Department to manufacture Personal Clothing System garments.

Harriett Baldwin:

Personal clothing system garments for the UK Armed Forces are supplied under contract by Cooneen Defence based in Northern Ireland.

■ Army: Uniforms

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[62483\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, for what reasons his Department does not restrict the geographical location of manufacture for Personal Clothing System garments.

Harriett Baldwin:

The Ministry of Defence is currently bound by European Union Public Procurement Directives. These demand fair and open competition for all contracts involving the expenditure of public funds.

The only exceptions that would allow us to restrict procurement to just UK based companies are those that involve equipment and services that are considered to be 'warlike stores' or which have significant associations with matters of national security. The purchase of personal clothing system items does not satisfy the requirements for dispensation under either of these provisions.

■ Boeing: Recruitment

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[62606\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 19 January 2017 to Question 59855, what mechanisms his Department has put in place to monitor how many of the jobs announced by Boeing at the Farnborough Air Show are created.

Harriett Baldwin:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) and Boeing are committed to working together to build prosperity, growth and exports across the country.

MOD Ministers and Boeing senior executives meet regularly to monitor and document progress on these plans. There is also frequent engagement between the company and other officials from the MOD and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

On average, Boeing has hired one new person per day in the UK throughout 2015 and 2016 and that trajectory is set to continue.

■ Burma: Military Aid

Tom Brake:

[\[62252\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 23 January 2017 to Question 60298, what assessment has been made of the utility of introducing a human rights specific programme module to the training provided to the Burmese Army.

Mike Penning:

The Defence Academy of the United Kingdom provides two educational courses delivered in Burma to the Burmese Army; both comprehensively address human rights. The Managing Defence in the Wider Security Context and the Strategic Leadership Programme are educational courses that promote governance, transparency and accountability, ethics and international law. The courses have

specific modules on international humanitarian law, sexual and gender based violence and child soldiers. The courses emphasise the primacy of democratic political oversight and the rule of international law through the majority of subject areas and thus human rights is addressed more thoroughly than in a single module. The forthcoming Managing Defence in the Wider Security Context programme to be delivered in Burma in the early part of this year includes a session specifically dedicated to human rights. UNHCR, UNICEF and UN Women have all contributed to the programmes delivered in Burma.

■ Iraq: Peacekeeping Operations

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[62637\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to support the liberation of East Mosul; and if he will make a statement.

Mike Penning:

The UK has played a significant role in supporting the Iraqi operation which secured a notable victory over Daesh in Eastern Mosul. Since the operation began, over 450 targets in and around Mosul have been struck by the RAF.

RAF aircraft played a valuable role, using their surveillance sensors to identify civilians within the city who might be placed at particular risk and alerting the Iraqi ground forces and other Coalition aircraft to their presence. UK Service personnel have also contributed to the training of over 38,500 Iraqi forces (including more than 7,300 Peshmerga) in infantry, medical skills, C-IED measures and engineering skills, many of whom have participated in the Mosul operation.

■ Ministry of Defence: Security

Jon Trickett:

[\[62604\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which persons not employed by his Department and its agencies hold security passes entitling them to enter his Department's premises.

Mark Lancaster:

Civil servants have the ability to work flexibly across Government sites where there is a business need to do so. The issuing of all passes is controlled by the local departmental security teams. Passes can also be issued to contractors or secondees based within Government premises on a case by case basis in regards to specific business needs. Numbers of passes issued directly to non-civil servants for access to departmental buildings will fluctuate over the course of a year.

Security passes are also issued to Service personnel.

Civil service passes are underpinned by a strong physical security focus, clear processes and assurance.

■ Ministry of Defence: Staff**Will Quince:**[\[62599\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many full-time, non-reservist (a) doctors and (b) nurses are employed by (i) the Army and (ii) his Department.

Mark Lancaster:

As at 1 October 2016, there were the following numbers of personnel:

PROFESSION	ARMY	TOTAL ALL SERVICES
Trained full-time, non-reservist doctors	321	612
Trained full-time, non-reservist nurses (including healthcare assistants)	784	1,380

Also, as at 1 October 2016, there were 243 civilian doctors (medical practitioners and consultants) and 396 civilian nurses (including healthcare assistants).

■ United Nations: Armed Forces**Sir Nicholas Soames:**[\[62468\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which British Officers were attached to the UN by appointments and ranks in the last two years.

Mike Penning:

In the last two years, there were five British Officers who were seconded to the United Nations (UN). These secondments are to posts in the UN HQ in New York and the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia. Given the small number, it is not possible to detail their appointments and ranks without infringing Data Protection principles, whereby individuals should not be identifiable through providing specific details (such as appointments and ranks) which, due to the small number, would mean that the subjects could be identified individually.

■ Unmanned Air Vehicles**Lucy Powell:**[\[62363\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 16 January 2017 to Question 59205, whether he plans that JDP 0-30.2, The UK Approach to Unmanned Aircraft System, will make a distinction between the use of remotely piloted air systems (a) within and (b) outside areas of armed conflict.

Mike Penning:

The current draft of Joint Doctrine Publication 0-30.2, Unmanned Aircraft Systems, discusses current and potential future employment of Unmanned Aircraft Systems both within and outside areas of "armed conflict".

EDUCATION

■ Free School Meals

Rosie Cooper: [62424]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to ensure that children who are eligible for free school meals are registered to receive them.

Edward Timpson:

We are determined to give every child, regardless of their background, the very best start in life. Free school meals (FSM) are key to this and we want all parents whose children are entitled to them, to apply for them. To support this the Department for Education provides an electronic Eligibility Checking System (ECS), which allows local authorities to quickly check data held by DWP, the Home Office and HMRC in order to establish FSM eligibility. The Department has also provided a model registration form and accompanying guidance, which schools can use as part of their enrolment process.

We want to make it as simple as possible for schools and local authorities to determine eligibility for FSM, and the Department is looking at what can be done in the longer term to make the FSM registration processes even more efficient.

■ Social Services: Children

Tim Loughton: [62441]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 30 January 2017 to Question 61767, on social services: children, if she will set out how much funding each organisation or person listed has received from the public purse in each of the last six years.

Edward Timpson:

The Department for Education publishes information for all spending over £25,000 for each of the last six years, which is searchable by organisation and funding amount.

This information is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dfe-department-and-executive-agency-spend-over-25-000>

The department does not hold information on wider public spending.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Food: Charitable Donations and Recycling

Mr Charles Walker: [62465]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she is taking to encourage firms to (a) recycle packaging and (b) make unsold food available to charities for distribution.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations place a legal obligation on UK businesses that make or use packaging to ensure that a proportion of the packaging they place on the market is recovered and recycled. This creates an incentive for companies to use less packaging and to ensure that their packaging can be recycled at end of life as it will reduce their costs in complying with the Regulations.

The Government is working with manufacturers and retailers to increase the redistribution of food that would otherwise be wasted, including the use by food banks and other charities. All major supermarkets now have relationships with redistribution organisations. Leading retailers, manufacturers, and food redistribution organisations have agreed an ambition to double the amount of surplus food they redistribute by 2020. This was announced in January.

EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION**■ European Chemicals Agency****Ian Murray:**[\[61804\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what the Government's policy is on remaining a member of the European Chemicals Agency after the UK leaves the EU; and whether the Government plans to maintain adherence to the standards and rules of that agency after the UK leaves the EU.

Mr Robin Walker:

While the UK remains a member of the EU we will continue to participate fully in the work of the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA). As set out in the recent White Paper (The United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union), the Government will discuss with the EU and Member States our future status and arrangements with regard to EU agencies, including ECHA, as part of exit negotiations. It would not be appropriate to pre-judge the outcome of the negotiations.

The chemicals sector is one of the areas where an ambitious and comprehensive Free Trade Agreement is in the best interests of Europe and the best interests of Britain. Our priority will be to ensure the continued effective and safe management of chemicals, including maintaining standards that underpin trade and deliver on our international commitments

■ European Food Safety Authority**Ian Murray:**[\[61803\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what the Government's policy is on remaining a member of the European Food Safety Authority after the UK leaves the EU; and whether the Government plans to maintain adherence to the standards of that authority after the UK leaves the EU.

Mr Robin Walker:

The UK is known for its world-leading reputation of quality and standards. Exiting the European Union provides us with the opportunity to build on this world-leading reputation.

As the White Paper (The United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union) states, there are a number of EU agencies, such as the European Food Safety Agency, which have been established to support EU Member States and their citizens. These can be responsible for enforcing particular regulatory regimes, or for pooling knowledge and information sharing. As part of exit negotiations, the Government will discuss with the EU and Member States our future status and arrangements with regard to these agencies. It would not be appropriate to pre-judge the outcome of the negotiations.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE**Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Security****Jon Trickett:**[\[62602\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, which persons not employed by his Department and its agencies hold security passes entitling them to enter his Department's premises.

Alok Sharma:

Civil servants have to have the ability to work flexibly across government sites where there is a business need to do so. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office, including its overseas Diplomatic Missions, allow those with the correct security passes to enter its buildings. Passes can also be issued to others, including contractors or secondees based within Government premises, on a case by case basis in regards to specific business needs. Numbers of passes issued directly to non-civil servants for access to departmental buildings will fluctuate over the course of a year.

Yemen: Military Intervention**Dr Alasdair McDonnell:**[\[62626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Written Statement of 21 July 2016, HCWS125, whether his Department has undertaken an assessment of whether the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen has committed any breaches of international humanitarian law.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

As set out in the Written Ministerial Statement of 21 July 2016, HCWS125, the MOD monitors incidents of alleged International Humanitarian Law (IHL) violations using available information which in turn is used to form an overall view on the approach and attitude of Saudi Arabia to IHL. This in turn informs the risk assessment made under the consolidated criteria, i.e. whether there is a clear risk that it might be used in the commission of a serious IHL violation, for the purposes of the arms exports

licensing risk assessment. We are not acting to determine whether a sovereign state has or has not acted in breach of IHL, but instead - as Criterion 2(c) requires – we are acting to make an overall judgement.

HEALTH

■ Action on Smoking and Health

Mr Philip Hollobone:

[\[62473\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many (a) complaints, (b) Freedom of Information requests and (c) Parliamentary Questions concerning the group Action on Smoking and Health his Department has dealt with in each year since 2010.

Nicola Blackwood:

The information is shown in the following table. The Department does not hold records of any complaints concerning Action on Smoking and Health (ASH). Information on the number of written Parliamentary Questions received specifically regarding ASH prior to June 2014 is not held in the format requested and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Statistics on Freedom of Information requests and Parliamentary Questions concerning the group Action on Smoking and Health dealt with by the Department of Health 2010-17

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Freedom of Information Requests	1	1	4	7	2	5	21	1
Parliamentary Questions	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0	16	35	0

■ Cancer: Drugs

Tom Brake:

[\[61825\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether he has instructed (a) officials of his Department and (b) the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence to carry out a financial impact assessment of the cost and benefits of prescribing bisphosphonates for the treatment of cancer.

Nicola Blackwood:

The independent National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is currently updating its guideline on the diagnosis and management of early and locally advanced breast cancer and the use of adjuvant bisphosphonates has been identified

as one of the key areas that will be covered in the update, which is scheduled for publication in July 2018.

The guideline has been scheduled to take into account the latest available evidence on the adjuvant use of bisphosphonates for the treatment of breast cancer.

As part of its guideline development process, NICE considers the available economic evidence and guideline recommendations are normally based on the balance between the estimated costs of the interventions or services and their expected benefits compared with an alternative.

■ Cervical Cancer: Screening

Mr John Baron:

[\[61854\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to make cervical screening available in additional (a) GP surgeries and (b) local healthcare settings.

David Mowat:

The NHS Cervical Screening Programme invites all eligible women aged from 25 to 64 years to make an appointment to be screened at their local general practice surgery. General practices are encouraged to provide convenient screening appointments for all women registered with their practice when they are due to be screened. Cervical screening may also be available at some contraception and sexual health services. These services are commissioned by local authorities (LAs), although they are not mandated to provide cervical screening. Many LAs have put in place local commissioning agreements to ensure cervical screening provision is maintained in these services.

Cervical screening is commissioned by NHS England and is based upon a national service specification developed by Public Health England (PHE). Access to cervical screening is a very important element of the programme, and NHS England and PHE are considering what further steps can be taken to continually improve access.

There is also the human papillomavirus (HPV) adolescent vaccination programme for girls which is well established in the United Kingdom and expected to have a significant impact on reducing cervical cancer. Since the start of the programme in 2008, more than 8.5 million doses of the HPV vaccine have been given in the UK, with close to 90% of eligible teenagers vaccinated.

■ Colorectal Cancer: Screening

Justin Tomlinson:

[\[61812\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will make it his policy to make routine bowel cancer screening available to people between the ages of 50 and 60.

David Mowat:

The risk of bowel cancer increases with age, with over 80% of bowel cancers being diagnosed in people who are aged 60 or over. Based on this evidence and, in order

to support our policy that screening programmes do more good than harm, the NHS Bowel Cancer Screening Programme offers bowel cancer screening every two years to men and women aged 60 to 74. The NHS Bowel Cancer Screening Programme uses the faecal occult blood (FOB) test, a self-sampling kit.

In addition to FOB testing, the NHS Bowel Cancer Screening Programme is currently rolling out Bowel Scope Screening (BSS) - a one off examination which will play a significant role in preventing bowel cancer. Both men and women will be invited for BSS around the time of their 55th birthday. If people are not screened at 55, they can request BSS up to the age of 59. BSS finds and removes any small bowel growths (polyps) that could eventually turn into cancer.

In November 2015 the UK National Screening Committee, which advises Ministers and the National Health Service in all four countries about all aspects of screening policy, recommended that the Faecal Immunochemical Test (FIT) should replace the currently used FOB test in the NHS Bowel Cancer Screening Programme. The FIT self-sampling kit will be offered to men and women aged 60 to 74 every two years. It is expected to increase screening uptake by around 10% and result in around 200,000 more people a year being tested, potentially saving hundreds of lives. FIT will be implemented from April 2018.

We believe the biggest impact we can have on saving lives from bowel cancer in England is implementing FIT in 2018 and the current roll-out of BSS to all men and women aged 55. Anyone over the age of 74 can self-refer themselves into the screening programme every two years.

Justin Tomlinson:

[61834]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he is taking to increase the take-up of bowel cancer screening.

David Mowat:

The UK National Screening Committee recommended moving to the Faecal Immunochemical Test (FIT) at its November 2015 meeting. Research and pilot evidence shows that this is more acceptable than the faecal occult blood testing (FOBT) and will raise uptake. Public Health England (PHE) in partnership with NHS England is leading on the implementation of FIT in England which is due to commence in 2018.

PHE sets standards for uptake and coverage for screening programmes and reports through the Public Health Outcomes Framework.

The National Health Service measures performance of a range of screening and immunisation programmes through the Section 7a agreement. One is Bowel cancer screening programme: FOBT Screening Uptake (all rounds). This is reported nationally and regionally.

■ Health Services

Barry Gardiner:

[\[61864\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he has taken to address the pressure alerts that have been issued by local clinical commissioning groups.

Mr Philip Dunne:

Pressure alerts, which are now issued in line with the recently issued best practice framework, trigger a series of actions locally to enable system leaders quickly to reduce pressures and return to normal working, and seek support where appropriate.

As part of winter operational delivery, alerts in the system are reported via formal channels to NHS England and NHS Improvement which have been established at local, regional and national level to co-ordinate a faster-paced response to managing winter pressures.

The most challenged systems are receiving targeted and bespoke support with a particular focus on primary care streaming, improving patient flow and facilitating faster discharge from hospital.

■ Health Services: Reciprocal Arrangements

Mr Gavin Shuker:

[\[62009\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, for what reason the Government is issuing European Health Insurance cards with expiry dates later than 31 March 2019; and if he will make a statement.

David Mowat:

As the Prime Minister stated on 20 July 2016, as long as we are a member of the European Union we will respect the rights and obligations of EU membership, therefore the current arrangements for European Health Insurance Cards remain in place. Officials in both the Department of Health and the Department for Exiting the European Union are considering the position and options available to us with the aim of achieving the best outcome for the UK health system and for the United Kingdom as a whole.

We are about to begin these negotiations and it would be wrong to set out unilateral positions in advance, including discussions relating to the European Health Insurance Card.

■ Health Services: Weather

Barry Gardiner:

[\[61863\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he has to ensure local health providers are able to meet additional health care demands over winter 2016-17.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The National Health Service has robust plans in place to identify rapidly and address seasonal pressures, and planning for winter takes place throughout the year. All local

health and social care systems develop detailed plans. This winter, the Health Service allocated £400 million to local health systems for winter preparations.

Winter pressures are an issue for the whole local system, which is why NHS Improvement, and NHS England (with targeted support resources such as the Emergency Care Improvement Programme) work together, alongside social care and local authorities to resolve any issues that are contributing to pressures and ensure that patients are kept safe.

Management of day to day pressures is done in line with the new Operational Pressures Escalation Level framework. Pressures are monitored at the local, regional and national level by the winter resilience structure. Where further local support is required the winter resilience reporting structure (local, regional and national) acts as a point of escalation which can coordinate rapid action and support from NHS Improvement and NHS England in the system and oversee measures that can support local recovery.

■ **Healthy Start Scheme**

Luciana Berger:

[\[62622\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 31 January 2017 to Question 61891, how much his Department has spent on the Healthy Start Scheme in each region in England in each year since 2010.

Nicola Blackwood:

Information is not held in the format requested, and such information as is available could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ **Huddersfield Royal Infirmary**

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[61921\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many patients have been admitted to Huddersfield Royal Infirmary in each of the last six months.

Mr Philip Dunne:

NHS England publishes monthly data on the number of elective and non-elective inpatient admissions to National Health Service hospital trusts, most recently for November 2016. Data are not collected for individual hospital sites within NHS trusts. The following table shows how many patients were admitted to general and acute specialties at Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust in each month between June 2016 and November 2016.

Number of patients admitted to general and acute specialties at Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust, June 2016 to November 2016

MONTH IN 2016	ELECTIVE ADMISSIONS	NON-ELECTIVE ADMISSIONS
June	5,291	3,653
July	5,159	3,624
August	5,490	3,332
September	5,395	3,681
October	5,280	4,033
November	5,610	3,711

Source : NHS England, monthly activity return:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/hospital-activity/monthly-hospital-activity/>

■ In Vitro Fertilisation

Toby Perkins:

[61872]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that NICE guidance on the commissioning of IVF treatment is implemented in each clinical commissioning group.

Nicola Blackwood:

The availability of National Health Service funded in-vitro fertilisation (IVF) fertility treatment is a matter for local determination. In making decisions on the level of service provision, clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) take account of the health care needs and priorities of their local population. They are also expected to take account of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's guideline 'Fertility: Assessment and treatment for people with fertility problems'.

To support CCGs to effectively commission IVF services, the Department, NHS England, professional and stakeholder groups are working together to develop a benchmark price for IVF to ensure that CCGs get the best value for their money. Additionally, the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority has developed commissioning guidance to improve the quality of commissioning. NHS England has agreed to disseminate and promote the guidance to all CCGs in England.

■ Lyme Disease

Toby Perkins:

[61873]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what recent steps the Government has taken to improve diagnosis of Lyme disease.

Toby Perkins:

[61874]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many people have been diagnosed with Lyme disease in each clinical commissioning group area in each year since 2009.

Toby Perkins:

[61875]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether the Government has made a recent assessment of the disparity between Lyme disease diagnosis rates in the UK and in Germany.

David Mowat:

Public Health England (PHE) supports the National Health Service by issuing information leaflets for doctors on the recognition of the signs and symptoms of Lyme disease, holding general practitioner training days and worked to raise awareness, including on the distribution of the disease.

Acute Lyme disease with an erythema migrans rash is primarily a clinical diagnosis. Public Health England reports data for reference laboratory confirmed cases. Cases confirmed by reference laboratory testing record only a referring laboratory address, not the originating centre therefore this data is not available by clinical commissioning group. Data on reference laboratory confirmed cases can be found in the PHE annual Zoonoses reports, available at:

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

Lyme disease is considerably more common in central Europe than in the United Kingdom, and the incidence varies by both country and region within each country. According to the World Health Organization, Central Europe and the Baltic States have the highest incidence. Germany is close to many of the high risk areas, so inherently has more cases. The German data also reports all clinically diagnosed cases based on the characteristic rash, and not the laboratory confirmed cases. The UK only reports laboratory confirmed cases and so the numbers in Germany would appear higher even without the higher risk of Lyme in that region.

■ **Mental Health Services: Hospital Beds**

Luciana Berger:

[62621]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many adult inpatient psychiatric beds there were in England in each year since 2010.

Nicola Blackwood:

The number of adult inpatient mental health beds in England for the years requested is available via the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/bed-availability-and-occupancy/>

■ Mental Illness: Police Custody

Luciana Berger: [\[62625\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many (a) children and (b) adults spent time in a police station as a place of safety due to a mental health condition in each year since 2010.

Nicola Blackwood:

The information available is shown in the following table. Data was not collected prior to 2011/12. Data is published annually by [NHS Digital](#) as part of the annual report for Inpatients Formally Detained in Hospitals Under the Mental Health Act 1983 and Patients Subject to Supervised Community Treatment, England.

Places of safety orders made where a Mental Health Act 1983 Section 136 detention was in a police station, England

2011-12 8,667

2012-13 7,791

2013-14 6,028

2014-15 3,996

2015-16 1,764

Note: Total figures include adults and children and young people under 18

Source: Data for 2011/12-2014/15, Inpatients Formally Detained in Hospitals Under the Mental Health Act 1983 and Patients Subject to Supervised Community Treatment, England, NHS Digital. Annual publication. 2016 edition:

<http://www.content.digital.nhs.uk/catalogue/PUB22571/inp-det-m-h-a-1983-sup-com-eng-15-16-rep.pdf>

NHS Digital does not currently disaggregate between children and adults in this data set.

■ NHS: Complaints

Luciana Berger: [\[62623\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 17 January 2017 to Question 59889, on NHS: complaints, for what reasons data for the year 2015-16 was not included in the Answer.

Nicola Blackwood:

These data were included on the second tab of the tables provided with the answer to Question 59889.

■ North Devon Hospital

Peter Heaton-Jones:

[\[61858\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what discussions he has had with NHS England on potential reductions to services at North Devon District Hospital under the emerging Sustainability and Transformation Plan.

Mr Philip Dunne:

Ministers have regular meetings with NHS England and the North, East and West Devon Success Regime to discuss their plans in this area. This work has now been incorporated into the work on the local Sustainability and Transformation Plan.

The Success Regime's consultation commenced on 7 October regarding community services in East Devon. The consultation sets out options which will ensure there is consistency in the way community services are provided across the county. The aim is to provide the right care first time for people closer to home to avoid being admitted to hospital.

The formal consultation concluded on 6 January 2017 and the next phase of the Success Regime will look at how services are provided in acute hospitals.

The redesign and delivery of frontline health services is a matter for the local National Health Service – clinically led by frontline NHS organisations and clinicians who are closest to the needs of communities and therefore best placed to make decisions in the interests of their patients.

All substantial service reconfiguration proposals must be consulted on, and assured by NHS England taking into account the four reconfiguration tests as mandated by the Government in 2010.

■ Nurses: Pay

Barry Gardiner:

[\[61862\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what account is taken of forecasts for the rate of inflation in determining pay increases for nurses.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The Government makes its determinations informed by recommendations from the independent NHS Pay Review Body. In reaching its recommendations, the Review Body is required to have regard to:

- the need to recruit, retain and motivate suitably able and qualified staff;
- regional/local variations in labour markets and their effects on the recruitment and retention of staff;
- the funds available to the Health Departments, as set out in the Government's Departmental Expenditure Limits;
- the Government's inflation target;
- the principle of equal pay for work of equal value in the National Health Service; and

- the overall strategy that the NHS should place patients at the heart of all it does and the mechanisms by which that is to be achieved.

The Review Body is also required to take careful account of the economic and other evidence submitted by the Government, Trades Unions, representatives of NHS employers and others.

■ Parents: Mental Health Services

Tim Loughton:

[\[62440\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many (a) mothers and (b) fathers have been treated for peri-natal mental health conditions in each of the last six years.

Nicola Blackwood:

A core objective of the NHS England Perinatal Mental Health programme is to improve data over the coming years.

In the interim, work has been undertaken to support the production of high quality data. The recent data collection highlighted that approximately 14,000 women accessed specialist perinatal mental health services (inpatient and community services) during 2015/16 (a 12% ¹ increase on admissions for Mother and Baby Units and a 19% ¹ increase for Community teams from 2014/15).

Whilst it is recognised that partners may experience a mental health problem, data is not currently collected for perinatal mental health conditions in fathers.

Note: ¹ This figure is based on individual records and does not take account of complexity of case load; for example, some women may access more than one service.

■ Perinatal Mortality

Tim Loughton:

[\[62438\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many babies have been stillborn in each of the last six years.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The information is shown in the following table.

ENGLAND AND WALES

Year	Number of live births	Number of stillbirths	Stillbirth rate per 1,000 total births
2015	697,852	3,147	4.5
2014	695,233	3,254	4.7
2013	698,512	3,284	4.7

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2012	729,674	3,558	4.9
2011	723,913	3,811	5.2
2010	723,165	3,714	5.1

Source: Office of National Statistics:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/liv ebirths/datasets/birthsummarytables>

Tim Loughton:

[62439]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will publish data on regional variations in stillbirths; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The information is shown in the following table.

YEAR: 2015	LIVE BIRTHS	STILLBIRTHS	STILLBIRTH RATE PER 1,000 TOTAL BIRTHS
England and Wales	697,852	3,147	4.5
North East	28,400	103	3.6
North West	85,838	392	4.5
Yorkshire and Humber	63,858	287	4.5
East Midlands	53,641	252	4.7
West Midlands	69,806	330	4.7
East	72,505	306	4.2
London	129,615	646	5.0
South East	102,703	428	4.2
South West	58,033	208	3.6

Source: Office of National Statistics:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/liv ebirths/datasets/birthsummarytables>

■ Soft Drinks

Mr Laurence Robertson: [62479]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what recent assessment he has made of the comparative effects on health of (a) sugar and (b) artificial sweeteners in drinks.

Nicola Blackwood:

The Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN), an independent committee that advises government, and based on review of the evidence concluded that higher sugar consumption increases energy intake and also the risk of tooth decay. SACN recommended in its report '*Carbohydrates and health*' (July 2015) that the average population intake of sugar should not exceed 5% of daily energy intake and also that sugar sweetened drinks should be minimised, as they lead to weight gain in children. The report can be accessed at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/445503/SACN_Carbohydrates_and_Health.pdf

Evidence considered as part of Public Health England's (PHE) report '*Sugar reduction: The evidence for action*' found that replacing foods and drinks sweetened with sugar with those containing no or low calorie sweeteners could be useful in helping people to manage weight as they reduce the calorie content of foods and drinks whilst maintaining a sweet taste. A copy of this report can be accessed at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/470179/Sugar_reduction_The_evidence_for_action.pdf

PHE endorses the European Food Safety Authority's scientific opinion that low/no-calorie sweeteners are a safe and acceptable alternative to using sugar in food and drinks.

■ Tobacco

Will Quince: [62600]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, when his Department will publish the new Tobacco Control Plan.

Nicola Blackwood:

The Government is developing a new tobacco control plan, which will be published shortly.

HOME OFFICE

■ Asylum

Dr Alasdair McDonnell: [62611]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the training module developed for asylum caseworkers has been fully implemented.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

Asylum Operations recently received funding from the Asylum Migration and Integration Fund to review and redevelop its training prospectus.

The current training for asylum decision making staff involves a dedicated five week course (or 'Foundation Training Programme') which covers Asylum legislation, the Refugee Convention, Human Rights law, UK Immigration Rules and legislation, as well as training on conducting asylum interviews and decisions.

Dr Alasdair McDonnell:[\[62612\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Home Office torture evidence assessments were judicially appealed by asylum seekers in 2016; and how many such appeals overturned a Home Office assessment on whether an asylum seeker had experienced torture.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

I am sorry but the data requested could only be provided at disproportionate cost by examination of individual records.

■ Asylum: Housing**Ian Murray:**[\[62575\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum seekers in (a) the UK and (b) Scotland were housed in initial accommodation for longer than the 17 day target period, in each of the last five years for which figures are available.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

I am sorry but the Home Office does not record this information centrally and it could only be provided at disproportionate cost by examination of individual records.

■ Immigration: EU Nationals**Mrs Theresa Villiers:**[\[61929\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to simplify the process for applications for permanent residence in the UK for EU nationals who live in the UK.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

We continue to make applications quicker and easier. As part of the ongoing Home Office programme to digitise all applications for immigration routes, a service was launched in October 2016 to enable single EEA applicants to apply for permanent residence online.

Customers who apply for documentation certifying permanent residence status online can also have their passport verified and copied at a range of participating Local Authorities and Premium Service Centres which are listed on our website, enabling people to retain their passport whilst their application is considered.

All applications for documentation confirming permanent residency status continue to be processed within published service standard s.

■ **Police: Lancashire**

Graham Jones: [61870]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will take steps to increase the number of police officers in Lancashire to 2009 levels.

Brandon Lewis:

This Government has maintained protection for police spending in a fair provisional funding deal for policing.

Decisions on the size, composition and deployment of a police force's workforce are matters for Chief Constables, in association with Police and Crime Commissioners.

■ **Ravil Mingazov**

Tom Brake: [62358]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 25 January 2017 to Question 60398, for what reasons the Government rejected Ravil Mingazov's request for family reunification in the UK.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

We do not routinely comment on individual immigration cases.

■ **Security Industry Authority**

Rosie Cooper: [62407]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what duty the Security Industry Authority has to provide complainants with the details of any investigations, outcomes or actions relating to the complaints they have made.

Rosie Cooper: [62408]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the Security Industry Authority is required to disclose details of actions taken as a result of an investigation into alleged criminality by licence holders.

Mr Ben Wallace:

The Security Industry Authority (SIA) is not under a legal duty to provide complainants with details of any investigations, outcomes or actions relating to the complaints they have made, nor to disclose details of actions taken as a result of an investigation into alleged criminality by licence holders.

Where prosecutions are completed, the outcomes, which are a matter of public record, are published on the SIA website:

<http://www.sia.homeoffice.gov.uk/Pages/enforcement-prosecutions.aspx>

Rosie Cooper:

[\[62413\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what role her Department and its agencies play in the oversight of the operation by the Security Industry Authority of its complaints procedures; what regulatory role she plays in connection with that authority; and if she will make a statement.

Brandon Lewis:

The Security Industry Authority (SIA) is an Executive Non-Departmental Body (NDPB) of the Home Office. The SIA is operationally independent.

The SIA is accountable for its own complaints procedures and ensuring that these operate effectively. As with other NDPBs, the Home Secretary appoints the Chair and non-executive members of the SIA Board, and the Department ensures the SIA is subject to regular and ongoing oversight in relation to its performance.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

■ Marie Stopes International

Fiona Bruce:

[\[62000\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how much Government funding has been provided to Marie Stopes International for work in which countries outside the UK in each of the last five years.

James Wharton:

DFID provided direct funding to Marie Stopes International (MSI) to the value of £19.64 million in 2012; £19.05 million in 2013; £41.07 million in 2014; £38.80 million in 2015 and £44.45 million in 2016.

This funding was used to support DFID programmes in the following countries: Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Uganda, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Cambodia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, The Philippines, Timor-leste, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Yemen.

DFID support to these programmes enables women and girls to complete their education, take up better economic opportunities and have control over their own lives, therefore transforming lives, and creating more prosperous and stable societies.

Fiona Bruce:

[\[62001\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, in which countries outside the UK Government funding has been provided to Marie Stopes International for work on family planning and abortion provision in each of the last five years.

James Wharton:

Over the past 5 years, UK Government funding has provided central support to MSI's developing country portfolio of 29 countries, and DFID specific programmes in Bangladesh, Kenya, Malawi, Pakistan and Sierra Leone.

Fiona Bruce:[\[62002\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what proportion of the Government funding provided to Marie Stopes International for work outside the UK in each of the last five years has been classified as overseas aid.

James Wharton:

DFID provided direct funding to Marie Stopes International (MSI) to the value of £19.64 million in 2012; £19.05 million in 2013; £41.07 million in 2014; £38.80 million in 2015 and £44.45 million in 2016. This funding is categorised as overseas development assistance.

DFID funding to these programmes enables women and girls to complete their education, take up better economic opportunities and have control over their own lives, therefore transforming lives, and creating more prosperous and stable societies

Fiona Bruce:[\[62003\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how much Government funding has been provided to Marie Stopes International in each of the last five years related to work (a) within and (b) outside the UK.

James Wharton:

DFID provided direct funding to Marie Stopes International (MSI) to the value of £19.64 million in 2012; £19.05 million in 2013; £41.07 million in 2014; £38.80 million in 2015 and £44.45 million in 2016.

MSI also receives funding for UK based work from Clinical Commissioning Groups in England but information is not collected at national level.

DFID support to these programmes enables women and girls to complete their education, take up better economic opportunities and have control over their own lives, therefore transforming lives, and creating more prosperous and stable societies.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE■ **Exports: Iran****Geoffrey Clifton-Brown:**[\[61922\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps UK Export Finance can take to simplify money transactions between the UK and Iran.

Mark Garnier:

The Government supports expanding the UK's trading relationship with Iran where it is beneficial for UK businesses and encourages UK businesses to take advantage of

the commercial opportunities that arise. As soon as sanctions were lifted, UK Export Finance became the first export credit agency to reintroduce cover for Iran. However, Government and UK Export Finance recognise the difficulties that major UK and international banks face in handling transactions connected to Iran. We are working closely with UK-based banking industry bodies such as the British Bankers' Association, the Association of Foreign Banks, and with UK-based banks to explore how it can support them as they consider providing financial services to UK businesses who wish to trade with Iran.

■ Overseas Trade: Iran

Geoffrey Clifton-Brown:

[\[61915\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment he has made of the ability of UK businesses to trade with Iran.

Mark Garnier:

Since the easing of sanctions in January 2016 the Department for International Trade (DIT) has been working out of the Embassy in Tehran to assist and support UK companies entering the Iranian market.

DIT and its network of trade advisors across the UK have been raising awareness of the opportunities in Iran, focussing on areas of UK strength such as: aviation, oil and gas, retail, healthcare, infrastructure and financial services.

■ Tradeshow Access Programme

Geoffrey Clifton-Brown:

[\[61917\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Tradeshow Access Programme.

Mark Garnier:

In the financial year 2015-16 the Department for International Trade assisted 3,288 individual firms with the Tradeshow Access Programme (TAP). The Department's survey showed that individual firms assisted by the programme expected the support to result in estimated mean additional export sales of £243,000.

74% of firms supported by TAP expected to enter new markets as a result of this support, and over half of firms supported (52%) had already entered new markets as a result of the support by the time of our survey.

Geoffrey Clifton-Brown:

[\[61941\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps his Department is taking to improve the maximum period of notice businesses receive of acceptance onto the Tradeshow Access Programme to ensure adequate time to prepare promotions at international tradeshows.

Mark Garnier:

Businesses can make applications from the date the event is published in the TAP programme right up until the cut-off date of 4 weeks prior to the event. The cut-off

date is now 4 weeks and changed from 8 weeks in June 2016, to allow flexibility for those who apply late but would benefit from the grant.

Geoffrey Clifton-Brown: [\[61942\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what the budget is for the Tradeshow Access Programme; and when that budget was approved.

Mark Garnier:

The budget for the Tradeshow Access Programme for 2016/17 was £8 million which was approved in February 2016. The budget for 2017/18 is currently being agreed as part of the DIT Business Forecasting process and will be announced shortly.

■ Whisky: Exports

Mrs Anne-Marie Trevelyan: [\[62487\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the UK leaving the EU on potential increases in the amount of Scotch whisky exported.

Mark Garnier:

I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland on the 1st of January 2017, UIN 61800; copied below:

Whisky is a major export worth £3.9 billion in 2015 and there are opportunities for future growth. We are fully engaged with the Scotch Whisky Association and are working to maintain access to current markets and open new ones through a range of tools to strengthen our trade relationships.

JUSTICE

■ Animal Welfare: Sentencing

Angela Smith: [\[55403\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what discussions Ministers of her Department have had with their counterparts in the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on the maximum sentence available to the courts for offences under the Animal Welfare Act 2006.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The Government keeps maximum penalties under review.

Details of all ministerial meetings are published in the transparency returns on gov.uk.

■ Legal Profession

Kate Hoey: [\[61615\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent discussions she has had with (a) representatives of the paralegal profession, (b) the Professional Paralegal Register and

(c) the Institute of Paralegals on the effectiveness of the registration system for that profession.

Kate Hoey:

[61616]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what discussions she has had with the Professional Paralegal Register on the level of registration on that register since that body was created.

Kate Hoey:

[61617]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will add the Professional Paralegal Register to the statutory list of approved regulators under the Legal Services Act 2007.

Dr Phillip Lee:

The Government values the role paralegals play.

The legal profession in England and Wales is independent of Government, and under the Legal Services Act 2007, only a person authorised by an approved regulator may provide a reserved legal activity.

The 2007 Act provides the powers for the Legal Services Board to make recommendations to government for bodies to be designated as approved regulators, and it has not made a recommendation in respect of the Professional Paralegal Register. The government has no plans to make such a designation without having had a recommendation.

My department has not had any recent discussions with representatives of paralegals about either their approach to sector self-regulation or the possibility of the Professional Paralegal Register being designated as an approved regulator under the Legal Services Act 2007.

■ **Maidstone Prison**

Keith Vaz:

[61933]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the average length of a prisoner's incarceration is at HMP Maidstone; and for what reasons prisoners leave that prison.

Dr Phillip Lee:

The average length of time that prisoners spend at HMP Maidstone is 7 months. Prisoners may leave the prison for a range of reasons including because they are being deported are moving to detention ordered by the Home Office or are being released on licence.

■ **Ministry of Justice: Chief Scientific Advisers**

Stephen Metcalfe:

[R] [61771]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, for how long the post of Chief Scientific Adviser to her Department has been vacant; and what plans she has to advertise for and fill that vacancy.

Dr Phillip Lee:

The Ministry of Justice does not have a vacancy for the post of Chief Scientific Adviser. Osama Rahman, Director of Analysis and Chief Economist, is the Chief Scientific Adviser for the Ministry of Justice.

■ Offenders: Deportation**Mr Peter Bone:****[55830]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what progress the Government has made in returning foreign nationals to their own countries after they have completed a prison term in the UK.

Dr Phillip Lee:

Those who break our laws should be removed from the country at the earliest opportunity. In 2015/16, we removed 5,810 Foreign National Offenders (FNOs) from prisons, immigration removal centres and the community, the highest number ever. Over 33,000 FNOs have been removed since 2010.

■ Prisoners: Albania**Keith Vaz:****[62015]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what agreements the Government has with the Government of Albania relating to the transfer of prisoners; and what effect those agreements have had on the number of prisoners exchanged with that country.

Keith Vaz:**[62031]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of offenders from Albania have been transferred to prisons in Albania from the UK in each year of the last five years.

Dr Phillip Lee:

The United Kingdom and Albania signed a prisoner transfer agreement in 2013. Since it entered into force 17 prisoners have been transferred to prisons in Albania from England and Wales. 2 prisoners were transferred in 2014, 5 in 2015, and 10 in 2016. Information on the prison population can be found on www.gov.uk

We are committed to increasing the number of Foreign National Offenders removed from our prisons, whether they are removed through Prisoner Transfer Agreements or the Early Removal Scheme. In 2015/16 we removed the highest number of Foreign National Offenders since records began with a total of 5,810 offenders removed from prisons, immigration removal centres and the community.

The transfer of prisoners from Scotland and from Northern Ireland is a devolved matter and is the responsibility of the relevant devolved authority.

■ Prisoners: India

Keith Vaz:

[62017]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what agreements the Government has with the Government of India relating to the transfer of prisoners; and what effect those agreements have had on the number of prisoners exchanged with that country.

Keith Vaz:

[62028]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of offenders from India have been transferred to prisons in India from the UK in each year of the last five years.

Dr Phillip Lee:

The United Kingdom and India signed a voluntary prisoner transfer agreement in 2005. 7 prisoner have volunteered to transfer to India in the last 5 years. Of these 1 transferred in 2013, 4 in 2015, and 2 in 2016. A small number of other prisoners have had their transfers approved and await transfer to a prison in India. Information on the prison population can be found at www.gov.uk.

We are committed to increasing the number of Foreign National Offenders removed from our prisons, whether they are removed through Prisoner Transfer Agreements or the Early Removal Scheme. In 2015/16 we removed the highest number of Foreign National Offenders since records began with a total of 5,810 offenders removed from prisons, immigration removal centres and the community.

The transfer of prisoners from Scotland and from Northern Ireland is a devolved matter and is the responsibility of the relevant devolved authority.

■ Prisoners: Iraq

Keith Vaz:

[62021]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what agreements the Government has with the Government of Iraq relating to the transfer of prisoners; and what effect those agreements have had on the number of prisoners exchanged with that country.

Keith Vaz:

[62289]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of offenders from Iraq have been transferred to prisons in Iraq from the UK in each of the last five years.

Dr Phillip Lee:

The United Kingdom and Iraq signed a prisoner transfer agreement on 8 October 2015. It is not yet in force. The Agreement will enter into force once the Iraqi Government has completed its ratification procedures and has notified the British Government of this in accordance with the requirements of the Agreement.

As the Agreement is not yet in force no prisoners have been transferred from the UK to prisons in Iraq. Where possible, the UK will seek to remove Foreign National

Offenders held in custody through the Early Removal Scheme or seek their deportation at the completion of their prison sentences.

We are committed to increasing the number of Foreign National Offenders removed from our prisons, whether they are removed through Prisoner transfer Agreements or the Early Removal Scheme. In 2015/16 we removed the highest number of offenders since records began with a total of 5,810 offenders removed from prisons, immigration removal centres and the community.

■ Prisoners: Literacy

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[\[62301\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment she has made of literacy levels of prisoners in England and Wales in each of the last five years; and if she will make a statement.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The data requested is only available from August 2014 and shows for both the 2014/15 and 2015/16 Academic Years that fewer than half the people entering prisons have basic standards of English and around a third have identified learning difficulties.

Prisons should be places of safety and reform, and it is vital we use the time in prison productively. Having basic English and Maths skills helps people get jobs on release and helps them lead law abiding lives, and I am determined to make sure that we achieve better outcomes for all prisoners.

We will test offenders' English and Maths skills on entry and as they leave prison and hold governors to account for these outcomes. We will use the results from the testing regime to create personalised learning objectives as part of the sentence plan. To support that, we will introduce a core common curriculum and empower Governors to put in place a framework of incentives to encourage participation by those prisoners with poor literacy skills.

■ Prisoners: Pakistan

Keith Vaz:

[\[62018\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what agreements the Government has with the Government of Pakistan relating to the transfer of prisoners; and what effect those agreements have had on the number of prisoners exchanged with that country.

Keith Vaz:

[\[62029\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of offenders from Pakistan have been transferred to prisons in Pakistan from the UK in each year of the last five years.

Dr Phillip Lee:

The United Kingdom and Pakistan signed a bilateral voluntary prisoner transfer agreement on 24 August 2007. It entered into force 19 August 2008. Four prisoners

were transferred to from England and Wales to Pakistan on a voluntary basis in 2010. Transfers to Pakistan have been suspended by the Pakistani Government following the unlawful release there of prisoners transferred from the United Kingdom and other countries. No further transfers have taken place since 2010.

We are committed to increasing the number of Foreign National offenders removed from our prisons, whether they are removed through Prisoner Transfer Agreements or the Early Removal Scheme. In 2015/16 we removed the highest number of Foreign National Offenders since records began with a total of 5,810 offenders removed from prisons, immigration removal centres and the community.

The transfer of prisoners from Scotland and from Northern Ireland is a devolved matter and is the responsibility of the relevant devolved authority.

■ Prisoners: Repatriation

Mr Philip Hollobone:

[55577]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with which countries the UK has compulsory prison transfer agreements; and how many foreign national offenders have been returned to prison in their own country under those agreements.

Dr Phillip Lee:

We are committed to increasing the number of Foreign National Offenders (FNOs) removed from our prisons. Prisoners should serve their sentences in their home countries wherever possible, reducing the burden on the taxpayer. To this end the United Kingdom is a party to over 100 multi-national and bilateral agreements which provide for the transfer of a prisoner either on a voluntary or compulsory basis. Prisoner transfers are one of three mechanisms available for the early removal of FNOs; the others being the Early Removal Scheme (ERS) and the Tariff Expired Removal Scheme (TERS).

In 2015/16, 2,071 FNOs were removed via ERS, 52 via TERS, and 62 via PTAs. The EU PTA came into force in December 2011; Member States implemented the agreement at various dates between 2011 and 2015 (2 Member States have not yet implemented the Agreement). To date we have transferred 154 EU national prisoners to their home countries under this Agreement. Compulsory PTAs are also in place with Albania, Georgia, Libya, Moldova, Montenegro, Nigeria, Norway, Russia, Rwanda, San Marino, Serbia, Somaliland, Switzerland, Turkey, and Ukraine. A total of 18 FNOs have been returned under these arrangements. A further 103 prisoners have been transferred on a voluntary basis to a range of countries across the world over this same period since December 2011.

Mr Philip Hollobone:

[55982]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many foreign national offenders have been returned to prison in their own country under each of the compulsory prisoner transfer agreements the UK has with (a) Jamaica, (b) Libya, (c) Rwanda, (d) Albania, (e) Nigeria and (f) any other country.

Dr Phillip Lee:

We are committed to increasing the number of Foreign National Offenders removed from the United Kingdom. Since 2010, over 33,000 foreign national offenders have been removed; with 5,810 removed from prisons, immigration removal centres and the community in 2015/16.

The Early Removal Scheme is the principal method for removing foreign national offenders early from prison. In 2015/16, 2071 foreign national offenders were removed under this scheme.

The compulsory transfer of prisoners outside the European Union is less straightforward and may be affected by issues such as prison conditions or the prevailing security situation in a country. Turkey has only recently implemented a compulsory transfer arrangements. Eligible Turkish nationals are currently being identified for transfer.

The table below shows the number of prisoners transferred to prisons in their own countries under compulsory prisoner transfer arrangements (other than the EU Prisoner Transfer Framework Decision). The United Kingdom does not have a prisoner transfer agreement with Jamaica.

Transfer of prisoners from England and Wales to countries under compulsory prisoner transfer agreements (not including Member States of the European Union).

COUNTRY	NO TRANSFERRED
Albania	17
Georgia	--
Libya	--
Moldova	--
Montenegro	--
Nigeria	1
Norway	--
Russia	--
Rwanda	--
Serbia	--
San Marino	--
Somaliland	--

COUNTRY	NO TRANSFERRED
Switzerland	--
Turkey*	--
	--
Total	18

*Entered into force September 2016

Mr Philip Hollobone:

[55983]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many foreign national offenders have been returned to prison in their own country under each of the voluntary prisoner transfer agreements the UK has with other countries.

Dr Phillip Lee:

We are committed to increasing the number of Foreign National Offenders (FNOs) removed from the United Kingdom. Since 2010, over 33,000 FNOs have been removed; with 5,810 removed from prisons, immigration removal centres and the community in 2015/16.

The Early Removal Scheme is the principal method for removing foreign national offenders early from prison. In 2015/16, 2071 foreign national offenders were removed under this Scheme. In addition, prisoners may be transferred to a prison in their own country under prisoner transfer arrangements. The table below gives the number of prisoners transferred under voluntary prisoner transfer arrangements and the country to which transfer took place from December 2011 to 31 December 2016. The UK has voluntary transfer arrangements with other countries to which no prisoners have been transferred during this period.

Voluntary transfers from England and Wales

COUNTRY	NO TRANSFERRED
Bulgaria	1
Bolivia	1
Brazil	2
Chile	1
Cyprus	2
Czech Republic	3
France	3

COUNTRY	NO TRANSFERRED
Germany	1
Gibraltar	1
Greece	2
India	7
Ireland	4
Israel	1
Italy	2
Lithuania	7
Montenegro	1
Netherlands	28
Nigeria	1
Norway	1
Poland	6
Portugal	3
Romania	6
Saudi Arabia	1
Spain	4
Sri Lanka	3
St Helena	1
Switzerland	2
Turkey	4
Ukraine	1
Vietnam	3
Total	103

Mr Philip Hollobone:

[55984]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many foreign national offenders have been returned to prison in each EU member state under the EU Compulsory Prisoner Transfer Directive.

Dr Phillip Lee:

We are committed to increasing the number of Foreign National Offenders (FNOs) removed from the United Kingdom. Since 2010, over 33,000 FNOs have been removed; with 5,810 removed from prisons, immigration removal centres and the community in 2015/16.

The Early Removal Scheme (ERS) is the principal method for removing foreign national offenders early from prison. In 2015/16, 2071 foreign national offenders were removed under this scheme. In addition, prisoners may be transferred to a prison in their own country. The principal compulsory prisoner transfer scheme is the EU Prisoner Transfer Framework Directive (Council Framework Decision 2008/909/JHA). All eligible prisoners are identified for transfer and referred to the Home Office for deportation action. Once a deportation order is obtained, a decision is made whether to remove the prisoner under ERS or to seek transfer of the prisoner.

The EU PTA came into force in December 2011, with Member States implementing the Agreement at various dates from then onwards, and 2 Member States have yet to do so. The table below shows the numbers of prisoners who have been transferred from England and Wales to prisons in other Member States of the European Union under the EU Prisoner Transfer Framework Decision as at 31 December 2016. To date no transfers have yet taken place under the EU Prisoner Transfer Agreement to Member States not shown in the table. However, some transfers will have taken place to some of these countries under other transfer arrangements.

Transfers from England and Wales to other Member States of the European Union under Council Framework Decision 2008/909/JHA

COUNTRY	NO TRANSFERRED
Belgium	9
Czech Republic	6
Denmark	1
Italy	4
Latvia	5
Lithuania	11
Malta	1
Netherlands	60

COUNTRY	NO TRANSFERRED
Poland	3
Portugal	1
Romania	33
Slovakia	14
Spain	6
Total	154

Keith Vaz: [\[61912\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what agreements the Government has with the Government of China relating to the transfer of prisoners; and what effect those agreements have had on the number of prisoners exchanged with that country.

Keith Vaz: [\[61919\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what agreements the Government has with the Government of Bangladesh on the transfer of prisoners; and what effect those agreements have had on the number of prisoners exchanged with that country.

Keith Vaz: [\[61944\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what agreements the Government has with the Government of Algeria on the transfer of prisoners; and what effect those agreements have had on the number of prisoners exchanged with that country.

Keith Vaz: [\[61947\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what agreements the Government has with the Government of Zimbabwe on the transfer of prisoners; and what effect those agreements have had on the number of prisoners exchanged with that country.

Keith Vaz: [\[62020\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what agreements the Government has with the Government of Iran relating to the transfer of prisoners; and what effect those agreements have had on the number of prisoners exchanged with that country.

Keith Vaz: [\[62022\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of offenders from Algeria have been transferred to prisons in Algeria from the UK in each year of the last five years.

Keith Vaz:

[\[62025\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of offenders from Zimbabwe have been transferred to prisons in Zimbabwe from the UK in each year of the last five years.

Keith Vaz:

[\[62026\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of offenders from Bangladesh have been transferred to prisons in Bangladesh from the UK in each year of the last five years.

Keith Vaz:

[\[62027\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of offenders from China have been transferred to prisons in China from the UK in each year of the last five years.

Keith Vaz:

[\[62033\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of offenders from Iran have been transferred to prisons in Iran from the UK in each year of the last five years.

Keith Vaz:

[\[62290\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of offenders from Jamaica have been transferred to prisons in Jamaica from the UK in each of the last five years.

Dr Phillip Lee:

The United Kingdom does not have prisoner transfer arrangements with these countries.

The absence of a prisoner transfer agreement does not prevent the removal of an individual from the UK, and for those Foreign National Offenders who have no right to remain here we will look to deport and remove through other mechanisms. Where possible the UK will seek to remove Foreign National Offenders held in custody through the Early Removal Scheme or seek their deportation at the completion of their prison sentence.

We are committed to increasing the number of Foreign National Offenders who are removed from our prisons, whether they are removed through Prisoner Transfer Agreements or the Early Removal Scheme. In 2015/16 we removed the highest number of offenders since records began with a total of 5,810 Foreign National Offenders removed from prisons, immigration removal centres and the community.

Keith Vaz:

[\[61943\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what agreements the Government has with the Government of Ghana on the transfer of prisoners; and what effect those agreements have had on the number of prisoners exchanged with that country.

Keith Vaz:

[\[62024\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of offenders from Ghana have been transferred to prisons in Ghana from the UK in each year of the last five years.

Dr Phillip Lee:

This Government is absolutely committed to removing those who have no right to remain in the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom and Ghana are signatories to a bilateral prisoner transfer agreement which provides for the voluntary transfer of prisoners only. No prisoners have transferred to Ghana under this arrangement to date.

On the 12 November 2015, the UK and Ghana signed a further prisoner transfer agreement which provides for transfer on a compulsory basis. This agreement is subject to ratification and has not yet entered into force.

We are committed to increasing the number of Foreign National Offenders removed from our prisons, whether they are removed through Prisoner Transfer Agreements or the Early Removal Scheme. In 2015/16 we removed the highest number of Foreign National offenders since records began with a total of 5,810 offenders removed for prisons, immigration removal centres and the community.

Keith Vaz:

[\[61945\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what agreements the Government has with the Government of Somalia relating to the transfer of prisoners; and what effect those agreements have had on the number of prisoners exchanged with that country.

Keith Vaz:

[\[62023\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of offenders from Somalia have been transferred to prisons in Somalia from the UK in each year of the last five years.

Dr Phillip Lee:

The United Kingdom has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Republic of Somaliland which provides for the transfer of prisoners between the two jurisdictions. Only Somali nationals from Somaliland may be transferred to prisons there under this arrangement. To date no transfers have taken place.

We are committed to increasing the number of Foreign National Offenders removed from our prisons, whether they removed through Prisoner Transfer Agreements or the Early Removal Scheme. In 2015/16 we removed the highest number of Foreign National Offenders since records began with a total of 5,810 offenders removed from prisons, immigration removal centres and the community.

Keith Vaz:

[\[61946\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of offenders from Nigeria have been transferred to prisons in Nigeria from the UK in each of the last five years.

Keith Vaz:

[61948]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what agreements the Government has with the Government of Nigeria on the transfer of prisoners; and what effect those agreements have had on the number of prisoners exchanged with that country.

Dr Phillip Lee:

This Government is absolutely committed to removing those who have no right to remain in the United Kingdom. Both the UK and Nigeria are participants in the Commonwealth Scheme for the Transfer of Convicted Offenders. In addition, the UK has a bilateral prisoner transfer agreement with Nigeria which provides for the transfer of prisoner without the consent of the individual concerned, though the consent of the Nigerian Government is required.

Two prisoners have been transferred to Nigeria under these arrangements since 2012, one in 2012, and one in 2015. A number of other transfers are currently under consideration by the Nigerian government. Information on the prison population can be found at www.gov.uk.

We are committed to increasing the number of Foreign National Offenders removed from our prisons, whether they are removed through Prisoner Transfer Agreements or the Early Removal Scheme. In 2015/16, we removed the highest number of Foreign National Offenders since records began, with a total of 5,810 offenders removed from prisons, immigration removal centres and the community.

The transfer of prisoners from Scotland and from Northern Ireland is a devolved matter and is the responsibility of the relevant devolved authority.

Keith Vaz:

[62164]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prisoner transfer agreements were negotiated in 2015 and 2016; and with which countries those agreements were made.

Dr Phillip Lee:

In 2015 and 2016 prisoner transfer arrangements were negotiated with Iraq, Ghana, and Taiwan. The Agreements with Iraq and with Ghana are subject to ratification and are not yet in force.

The absence of a prisoner transfer agreement does not prevent the removal of an individual. Those who have no right to remain here will be deported and removed from the UK. Where possible, the UK will seek to remove Foreign National Offenders held in custody through the Early Removal Scheme or seek their deportation at the completion of the prison sentence.

We are committed to increasing the number of Foreign National Offenders removed from our prisons, whether they are removed through Prisoner Transfer Agreement or the Early Removal Scheme. Last year we removed the highest number of offenders since records began with a total of 5,810 offenders removed from prisons, immigration removal centres and the community.

■ Prisoners: Turkey**Keith Vaz:** [\[62016\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what agreements the Government has with the Government of Turkey relating to the transfer of prisoners; and what effect those agreements have had on the number of prisoners exchanged with that country.

Keith Vaz: [\[62032\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of offenders from Turkey have been transferred to prisons in Turkey from the UK in each year of the last five years.

Dr Phillip Lee:

The United Kingdom and Turkey are signatories to the Council of Europe Convention on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons. The agreement provides for the transfer of prisoners on a voluntary basis.

In the last 5 years, 4 prisoners were transferred to Turkey from England and Wales. Two transfers took place in 2012, and a further two prisoners were transferred in 2016. Information on the prison population can be found at www.gov.uk.

In October 2016, Turkey ratified the Additional Protocol to the Council of Europe Convention on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons. This provides for the transfer of an individual without his/her consent where that person is subject to a deportation order. Prisoners potentially eligible for transfer are being identified and referred to the Home Office for deportation action.

We are committed to increasing the number of Foreign National Offenders removed from our prisons, whether they are removed through Prisoner Transfer Agreements or the Early Removal Scheme. In 2015/16, we removed the highest number of Foreign National Offenders since records began with a total of 5,810 offenders removed from prisons, immigration removal centres and the community.

The transfer of prisoners from Scotland and from Northern Ireland is a devolved matter and is the responsibility of the relevant devolved authority.

■ Prisoners: Vietnam**Keith Vaz:** [\[62019\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what agreements the Government has with the Government of Vietnam relating to the transfer of prisoners; and what effect those agreements have had on the number of prisoners exchanged with that country.

Keith Vaz: [\[62030\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of offenders from Vietnam have been transferred to prisons in Vietnam from the UK in each year of the last five years.

Dr Phillip Lee:

The United Kingdom and Vietnam signed a prisoner transfer agreement on 11 September 2008. The agreement provides for the transfer of prisoners on a voluntary basis. Since its entry into force, 3 prisoners have been transferred to Vietnam from England and Wales. The transfers took place in 2013. Information on the prison population can be found at www.gov.uk.

We are committed to increasing the number of Foreign National Offenders removed from our prisons, whether they are removed through Prisoner transfer Agreements or the Early Removal Scheme. In 2015/16 we removed the highest number of offenders since records began with a total of 5,810 offenders removed from prisons, immigration removal centres and the community.

The transfer of prisoners from Scotland and from Northern Ireland is a devolved matter and is the responsibility of the relevant devolved authority.

■ Sports: Young People**Justin Tomlinson:**[\[61619\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will make it her policy to increase public funding for the Streetgames programme.

Dr Phillip Lee:

The Youth Justice Board is currently developing links with StreetGames along with other community based organisations, to develop initiatives to engage young offenders in sports and work programmes upon release from custody, in order to prevent reoffending and support their rehabilitation.

PRIME MINISTER**■ Myron Ebell****Caroline Lucas:**[\[62486\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, who was present at the meeting with Myron Ebell at Number 10 Downing Street on 31 January 2017; what was discussed at that meeting; and if she will make a statement.

Mrs Theresa May:

Officials and advisers have meetings with a wide range of individuals and organisations on a wide range of subjects.

■ USA: Travel Restrictions**Dan Jarvis:**[\[62414\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, whether her Government had advance knowledge of the intention of the US Administration to issue an executive order to restrict immigration on 27 January 2017.

Dan Jarvis:

[\[62415\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, whether, during her recent visit to the US, (a) the issue of the US Administration's intention to issue an executive order to restrict immigration and (b) any potential impact of that order on British citizens were discussed.

Mrs Theresa May:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the right hon. Member for Islington North (Mr Corbyn) on 1 February 2017, Official Report, column 1015.

TRANSPORT

■ Aviation

Liam Byrne:

[\[61823\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to deliver an aviation strategy for the UK.

Mr John Hayes:

We have begun the process of developing a new strategy for UK aviation. This will be an ambitious programme of work, and we will be consulting widely throughout 2017, leading to publication of an Aviation Strategy White Paper in 2018.

Grant Shapps:

[\[62418\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he expects the Aviation Strategy to be published.

Mr John Hayes:

We have begun the process of developing a new strategy for UK aviation. This will be an ambitious programme of work, and we will be consulting widely throughout 2017, leading to publication of an Aviation Strategy White Paper at the end of 2018.

■ Aviation: Unmanned Air Vehicles

Richard Burden:

[\[62466\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with (a) the Civil Aviation Authority and (b) external groups, regarding the Civil Aviation Authority's definition of a safe distance used for regulating drone activity; and how that definition compares with those used by other countries.

Mr John Hayes:

The Department for Transport (DfT) works closely with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and industry to adapt and strengthen regulations and implement mitigations as drone use and the related technology evolves.

The Air Navigation Order 2016 sets out several rules which drone users must abide by. In particular, users must not fly drones with cameras within 50m of any vehicle, structure or person which is not under the control of the person in charge of the

aircraft. They must also not fly drones over or within 150m of any congested area or large crowds of people.

Permitted distances will vary dependent on factors such as the structure or area that the drone is in proximity to and may also vary depending on the category of drone (e.g. for drones of a particular weight, or those with or without cameras). As there is no internationally agreed definition of "safe distance" it is difficult to make comparisons with other countries. However, we are collaborating internationally to share learning and best practice.

The Government is currently consulting on the future safe use of drones in the UK, and the DfT and CAA will consider reviewing these regulatory requirements for drone activity on the basis of the consultation responses. The consultation can be found on gov.uk and closes on 15 March 2017.

Richard Burden:

[\[62613\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress his Department is making through the European Aviation Safety Agency to update common drone regulations; and in what ways he intends his Department's consultation on the safe use of drones in the UK to support that process.

Mr John Hayes:

The Department for Transport has been actively participating in negotiations on the revision of the European Aviation Safety Agency's (EASA) Basic Regulation, which will include EU-wide safety rules for all unmanned aircraft.

EASA is currently in the process of drafting its proposed harmonised European rules for the 'Open' and 'Specific' categories of drones. This proposal is planned to go out to consultation at the end of March 2017. The Civil Aviation Authority participates in the EASA Expert Group of subject matter experts, and is assisting with the development of the proposal.

The Government's consultation on the safe use of drones in the UK closes on 15 March 2017. There are several proposals contained within which may require updated regulation. We will continue to feed relevant UK experience into the EASA process; in particular, to ensure continued support for the development of a proportionate regulatory framework.

■ **Birmingham Airport**

Liam Byrne:

[\[61822\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to support the growth of Birmingham Airport.

Mr John Hayes:

The Government has always made clear its view that airports, including Birmingham Airport, make a vital contribution to the growth and recovery of regional and local economies. The Government welcomes the ambition of UK's airports which are

responding to local demands and investing in their infrastructure to enable services to more destinations, and better facilities and choice for passengers.

Birmingham Airport announced at the end of last year it was investing £100 million on improvements to its facilities and infrastructure to improve the passenger experience.

A dedicated HS2 airport station will also improve surface access to the airport.

The government has also agreed that from this summer Birmingham Airport can become co-ordinated for the purposes of slot allocation, to maintain operational stability for the airport and the airlines that operate there.

■ Bus Services

Daniel Zeichner:

[61940]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the reasons for trends in lost scheduled bus mileage since 2011.

Andrew Jones:

Since 2011/12, bus miles on local bus services in England outside London have fallen by 6 per cent. This decrease has been driven by a 34 per cent fall in local authority supported mileage since 2011/12. In contrast, commercial mileage on local bus services in England outside London is 2 per cent higher than in 2011/12.

Since 2011/12, bus miles on local bus services in London have remained relatively unchanged with a 0.5 per cent increase.

These statistics do not reflect changes in the use of those community transport services which, because of their nature, are not registered as local bus services. Some local authorities have chosen to support these services as an alternative to more traditional bus routes. The Government is supporting community transport by providing over 300 local charities and community groups with new minibuses through the £25m Community Minibus Fund. The Government also pays out over £3.5 million a year through the Bus Service Operators Grant system to help support individual community transport operators.

■ European Aviation Safety Agency

Margaret Greenwood:

[61867]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment the Government has made of the benefit to the UK of membership of the European Aviation Safety Agency.

Mr John Hayes:

The system centred on the European Aviation Safety Agency has delivered significant efficiencies in the safety regulation of civil aviation in the EU while ensuring a high level of safety. The Government is considering carefully all the potential implications arising for our aviation industry from the UK's exit from the EU, including the implications for the continued participation in the European Aviation Safety Agency system.

■ Govia Thameslink Railway

Kelvin Hopkins:

[62409]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what remedies are available to him, in addition to removing the franchise from Govia Thameslink Railway, if that company is in default of its franchise agreement.

Paul Maynard:

My Department sets out how we will enforce measures in rail franchise agreements in its 'enforcement policy: rail franchise agreements and closures', published on the website.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/enforcement-policy-rail-franchise-agreements-and-closures>

Kelvin Hopkins:

[62410]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether Govia Thameslink Railway will be in default of its franchise agreement if its applications for force majeure are not agreed by his Department.

Paul Maynard:

The scale of the industrial action on Southern has caused significant disruption to passengers, which is reflected in the force majeure claim by Govia Thameslink Railway. The Department analyses claims and must be satisfied that force majeure is appropriate. This is a complex claim to analyse and the process is ongoing.

Whether GTR meets performance benchmarks will be affected by the outcome of the force majeure claim. If the force majeure claim is not agreed, or agreed in part only, the Secretary of State will consider appropriate remedial action.

■ Midlands Connect

Liam Byrne:

[61824]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with representatives of Midlands Connect.

Andrew Jones:

Since attending the launch of Midlands Connect's Picking up the Pace report in July 2016, the Secretary of State has welcomed Midlands Connect on to the Smart Ticketing Delivery Board but has had no other specific meetings.

■ Shipping: Pollution Control

Richard Burden:

[62467]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, which internationally registered vessels were detained by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency for infringement of the provisions of Annex VI of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships in (a) 2015 and (b) 2016.

Mr John Hayes:

No internationally registered vessels were detained by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency for infringement of the provisions of Annex VI of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships in either 2015 or 2016.

■ Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern Franchise: Disability**Kelvin Hopkins:**[\[62411\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, which vehicles operated on the Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern Franchise are (a) compliant and (b) not compliant with the Rail Vehicle Accessibility (Non-Interoperable Rail System) Regulations 2010.

Paul Maynard:

The Rail Vehicle Accessibility (Non-Interoperable Rail System) Regulations 2010 standards apply to non-mainline operations (such as trams, light rail and metro systems). Accessibility standards for trains operated on the mainline are either the Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulations 1998 or the Persons of Reduced Mobility Technical Specification for Interoperability (PRM-TSI) (under the Railways (Interoperability) Regulations 2011).

Thameslink is in the process of commissioning and operating 1140 brand new Class 700 vehicles, which are PRM-TSI compliant. The following units are built to the standards mandated in the Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulations 1998:

Class 171 (6 x4 car units plus 10 x 2 car units), Class 377/1 (64 x 4 car units), Class 377/2 (15 x 4 car units), Class 377/3 (28 x 3 car units), 377/4 (75 x 4 car units), class 377/5 (23 x 4 car units).

Kelvin Hopkins:[\[62412\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what exemptions have been given for vehicles operated on the Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern Franchise since that franchise began; and when those exemptions were granted.

Paul Maynard:

No exemptions have been requested for these vehicles in the period 2014 to date.

■ West Coast Railway Line: Rolling Stock**Michael Fabricant:**[\[61930\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 24 January 2017 to Question 60205, when he expects Pendolino trains to (a) reach the end of their serviceable life and (b) be withdrawn from service on the West Coast Mainline.

Paul Maynard:

The Class 390 "Pendolino" trains are owned by Angel Trains Limited and currently leased to West Coast Trains Limited, the operator of the West Coast franchise. It is a matter for the owner to determine the serviceable life of the train and to market them as necessary to meet the fleet strategy of future operators.

WORK AND PENSIONS**■ Access to Work Programme****Margaret Ferrier:**[\[61952\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people in (a) Rutherglen and Hamilton West constituency, (b) Scotland and (c) the UK received support through the Access to Work scheme in each of the last five years.

Penny Mordaunt:

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

■ Children: Maintenance**Marion Fellows:**[\[62417\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when he plans to publish the conclusions of the review carried out under section 141 of the Welfare Reform Act 2012 on the effect of child maintenance charges; and if he will make a statement.

Caroline Nokes:

The Department published the research and statistics that formed the Review in 2016. The Review Report, which will draw together the findings from the published research and statistics, will be published in Spring this year.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Buildings**Margaret Ferrier:**[\[61926\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether his Department has met (a) Citizens Advice Scotland and (b) Money Matters to discuss the current review of his Department's estate.

Damian Hinds:

Over the past few months, we have been negotiating new leases with our landlords and partners. This has been a very complex commercial process and has limited our ability for detailed discussions with local customer representative groups on specific site proposals.

We have committed to a public consultation for offices over three miles and 20 minutes away by public transport and would encourage customer representative groups to submit their views on these proposals via the online consultation.

Nia Griffith:[\[62609\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the cost per square metre is of each office, excluding jobcentres, currently used by his Department.

Caroline Nokes:

The Department is currently completing a major renegotiation of leases, and consider that the publication now of current costs risk securing the best value for money.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Llanelli**Nia Griffith:** [\[62607\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what discussions he has had with other potential users of his Department's building on Llanelli on sharing the use of that space.

Damian Hinds:

The Department does not own any of the buildings within the estate, and after 20 years the leases and contracts covering many of our buildings end in March 2018. The overall requirement in DWP for processing work is reducing and we do not need the same size estate we currently have.

Our strategic review of estate has concluded that there is no requirement for the space currently occupied in Llanelli Crown Buildings and that the work currently undertaken there can be accommodated elsewhere in the network. We have not, therefore, discussed the potential for sharing use of the space.

Nia Griffith: [\[62608\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the potential benefits of moving additional work from elsewhere to his Department's building in Llanelli to make that site more cost effective.

Damian Hinds:

The overall requirement in DWP for processing work is reducing and we do not need the same size estate we currently have. Specifically, the work undertaken at Llanelli Crown Buildings is reducing and due to end within the next 2-3 years.

The overall requirement for that work from March 2018 is deliverable out of fewer buildings which better match our strategic requirements and, therefore, the building in Llanelli will no longer be required.

■ Food Poverty**Dan Jarvis:** [\[62617\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 9 January 2017 to Question 58293, what steps his Department is taking to end food poverty and reliance on food banks.

Damian Hinds:

It is widely acknowledged that the reasons why people use food banks are complex and overlapping. It is misleading to link them to any particular cause.

The Government's approach has been about recognising the value and importance of work, to make work pay and to support people into work whilst protecting the most vulnerable in society.

We are committed to ensuring that those in work are paid a fair wage; have opportunities to progress and achieve their potential. We are getting people into

employment and working to change attitudes, introducing reforms to make sure that work always pays.

■ **Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit**

Stewart Malcolm McDonald:

[\[61831\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what guidance his Department provides to unsuccessful applicants for industrial injuries disablement benefit on the services offered by the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council where mandatory reconsideration is not appropriate.

Penny Mordaunt:

Anyone who is unsuccessful in claiming industrial injuries disablement benefit may seek a mandatory reconsideration of their claim. Where our decision is upheld, we provide information on the option to appeal that decision to Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service.

The Department does not routinely advise claimants to approach the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council, as it is not the Council's role to consider individual appeals. However, if an individual feels that there is a strong case to update the list of prescribed diseases or occupations, they may contact the Council to seek a review of the relevant eligibility rules.

Information on the Council's role and how to contact them is readily available via the Gov.uk website.

■ **Jobcentres: Port Glasgow**

Ronnie Cowan:

[\[62110\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will confirm that no compulsory redundancies will result from the closure of Port Glasgow Jobcentre.

Damian Hinds:

We do not anticipate any compulsory redundancies as a result of merging staff and services from Port Glasgow into Greenock Jobcentre.

Ronnie Cowan:

[\[62111\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what criteria were used to select Port Glasgow Jobcentre for closure.

Damian Hinds:

The Department has sought to merge together multiple sites in close proximity. Merging the staff and services from Port Glasgow into Greenock Jobcentre maximises use of space and offers good value for money. The merge would not be viable in reverse.

■ Jobseeker's Allowance: Rutherglen and Hamilton West**Margaret Ferrier:****[61937]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people have been sanctioned for not attending a jobseeker's allowance appointment within five minutes of the appointed time in Rutherglen and Hamilton West constituency in each of the last five years.

Damian Hinds:

This information is not available

Information on Jobseeker's Allowance sanction decisions by referral reason and constituency is available here: <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk>

Guidance for users is available at: <https://sw.stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

■ Relate**Mr Charles Walker:****[62490]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment the Government has made of the (a) effectiveness of those relationship support services provided by Relate which are funded from the public purse and (b) effect of those services on family stability.

Caroline Nokes:

We are working to improve outcomes for children and believe in the importance of tackling parental conflict to achieve this. We will shortly be publishing a green paper on Social Justice that will set out our strategy for taking this work forward.

The Department funds a range of services nationally that do good work to support families in need. Relate is one of a number of organisations funded by the Department to provide services to help reduce couple conflict and promote family stability.

All of the organisations are subject to a 'payment by results' arrangement where payments are only made once we are satisfied that an agreed service has been delivered. Alongside this we also monitor the effectiveness of the service by assessing improvements in key areas such as improved conflict resolution and relationship quality. While no formal assessment is being made into impact on family stability specifically, the services currently being delivered by Relate and similar services have been shown to have a positive effect on relationship quality, wellbeing and communication.

Mr Charles Walker:**[62491]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent representations he has received on Government funding of services by Relate; and if he will make a statement.

Caroline Nokes:

This Department enjoys a constructive relationship with the Relationship Alliance and we engage with them frequently on a range of topics. I was fortunate to meet with Relate, along with the other members of the Relationship Alliance, on the 23 January this year. We had a productive discussion on a range of topics, including the challenges associated with tackling parental conflict at a national level. The Department has collaborated with Relate as well as a range of stakeholders to develop a new program to tackle parental conflict.

■ Social Security Benefits**Andrew Rosindell:****[62012]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what financial support and advice on benefits his Department provides to help parents, children and carers who are affected by autism and Asperger's syndrome.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Department provides financial assistance for families affected by autism and Asperger's syndrome through Personal Independence Payment, Disability Living Allowance, Carer's Allowance and the disability and carer premiums in the income-related benefits. Information on these benefits is available through www.gov.uk.

In addition, DWP has implemented an autism/hidden impairment action-plan that focuses on three key objectives for improvement: autism and hidden impairment awareness training for Jobcentre Plus staff/managers; promotion of the autism/hidden impairment agenda to DWP Providers (Work Choice and Work Programme) and the promotion of the autism/hidden impairment agenda to employers through Disability Confident.

■ Social Security Benefits: Rutherglen and Hamilton West**Margaret Ferrier:****[61936]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people in Rutherglen and Hamilton West constituency have had their benefit payments reduced after transferring from disability living allowance to personal independence payment in each year for which figures are available.

Penny Mordaunt:

The statistics on the outcomes of Disability Living Allowance claimants who have been invited to and claimed Personal Independence Payment (PIP), including those who have seen a reduced award value, are in the table below:

Table 1 – Award outcomes following reassessment for PIP in Rutherglen and Hamilton West

	AWARD AMOUNT INCREASED	AWARD AMOUNT THE SAME	AWARD AMOUNT DECREASED
Jan-Dec 2014	-	-	-
Jan-Dec 2015	200	-	100
Jan-Oct 2016	300	100	200

Notes:

- '-' indicates fewer than 50 cases in the category.
- Data has been rounded to the nearest 100.
- Data taken from the PIP computer system's management information.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

TREASURY

■ ECOFIN: 27 January 2017

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr Philip Hammond):

[\[HCWS457\]](#)

A meeting of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN) was held in Brussels on 27 January 2017. EU Finance Ministers discussed the following items:

Early morning session

Ministers were briefed on the outcomes of the 26 January meeting of the Eurogroup and the European Commission presented an update on the current economic situation.

VAT: Reverse Charge Mechanism

The Commission gave a presentation on the proposal for a Temporary Derogation to apply a generalised Reverse Charge Mechanism, which was followed by an exchange of views.

Current financial service legislative proposals

The Council Presidency provided an update on current legislative proposals in the field of financial services.

Presentation of the Presidency Work Programme

The Maltese Presidency of the Council of the European Union presented its priorities for ECOFIN over the next six months.

European Semester 2017

Ministers adopted Council Conclusions on the Annual Growth Survey (AGS), Alert Mechanism Report (AMR) and approved the Council Recommendations on the economic policy of the euro area.

Basel Committee's post-crisis banking reform agenda

The Commission gave Ministers an update on the progress made on the finalisation of the post-crisis reforms since the Basel meeting in November 2016, followed by an exchange of views between Ministers.

High Level Group on Own Resources

Mario Monti, Chair of the High Level Group on Own Resources, presented the Group's final report, which was followed by an exchange of views between Ministers.

EIB Economic Resilience Initiative

Werner Hoyer, President of the European Investment Bank, outlined the state of play of the Economic Resilience Initiative and provided preliminary evidence of its initial implementation and the ongoing fundraising process for the grant component of the initiative

DEFENCE**■ Call-Out Order to Support the NATO-Led Kosovo Forces****Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mike Penning):**[\[HCWS456\]](#)

A new order has been made under section 56(1B) of the Reserve Forces Act 1996 to enable Reservists to be called into permanent service in support of the United Kingdom's contribution to the NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR).

The Communiqué issued at the Warsaw summit in July 2016 makes it clear that the future operational posture, capability and disposition of KFOR will be conditions based and not calendar driven. Stability and Security in Kosovo helps to enhance the security of the United Kingdom. Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance capabilities are important contributors to KFOR's situation awareness and its ability to engage with local and international institutions, and of Commander KFOR's ability to assess future posture. The UK has agreed to generate Human Terrain Reconnaissance forces to enhance the situational awareness of Commander KFOR to execute his mandate in Kosovo. This capability will operate in parallel with and within the ISR Battalion Headquarters to provide command and control for UK forces.

Some of the specialist skills needed to meet this requirement are held within the Army Reserve. UK forces will deploy for a period of twelve months, consisting of two rotations of six months each. It is planned for the first unit to deploy in late March 2017. The number of reservists anticipated to deploy as specialists or in support of regular units is estimated at up to 22 per deployment.

The order took effect from the beginning of 23 January 2017 and shall cease to have effect at the end of 22 January 2018.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS**■ DECEMBER ENVIRONMENT COUNCIL****The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Environment and Rural Life Opportunities (Dr Thérèse Coffey):**[\[HCWS455\]](#)

I attended the EU Environment Council in Brussels on 19 December along with my Hon Friend the Minister of State for Climate Change and Industry (Nick Hurd MP).

I wish to update the House on the matters discussed.

EU Emissions Trading System (ETS) - Progress Report.

The Council undertook a full roundtable debate on the EU Emissions Trading System, on the basis of the Presidency's Progress Report. Ministers set out respective policy positions, and called for agreement at the next Environment Council in February. The Presidency regretted that they had not been able to achieve a General Approach, but felt that progress had been made on a range of technical issues. They identified the main issues to be resolved as rules for supporting sectors at risk of 'carbon leakage' (where production relocates outside of the EU as a result of carbon costs); tackling the

oversupply of emission allowances to provide a more meaningful carbon price signal; and management of the Funds which support decarbonisation of the EU's industrial and energy sectors. The Commission drew attention to the recent ENVI Committee vote in the European Parliament, setting out that this showed compromise was possible on ETS, and called on the Council to match the European Parliament's timetable in order to allow trilogues to start in March. They highlighted the importance of reaching agreement on the EU ETS Directive in order to demonstrate progress in implementing the Paris Agreement and in providing business and investor certainty.

The UK thanked the outgoing Presidency for their hard work and called on the Council to maintain ambition and pace under the Maltese Presidency, with a view to finding consensus. The UK's main priorities were addressing the surplus of allowances and strengthening the carbon price signal via an amendment to the Market Stability Reserve; targeting carbon leakage protection to those genuinely at risk; ensuring that the Modernisation Fund was based on clear, collaborative governance; avoiding the infringement of Member States' fiscal sovereignty through provisions to allow Member States to provide compensation for the indirect costs of EU ETS; and alleviating as much administrative burden as possible without undermining environmental integrity.

AOB – Effort Share Regulation and Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) Regulation.

The Presidency gave an update on the state of play of these live legislative negotiations following publication of the Commission proposals in July 2016.

AOB – Communication on Clean Energy for All Europeans.

The Commission outlined the objectives and content of its recently published 'Clean Energy Package' and Communication on Clean Energy for All Europeans.

AOB – Report on recent international meetings: UNFCCC Marrakesh, 7-18 Nov (COP22).

The Presidency outlined the progress made at UNFCCC COP22 in Marrakesh in November. The Commission underscored its commitment to making progress on the 2030 climate and energy framework.

The protection of human health and the environment through sound management of chemicals- Council Conclusions.

The Presidency underlined the importance of the Council adopting conclusions given the ongoing work in this area including at international level. All who spoke endorsed the conclusions but stressed points of importance, including the ongoing Regulatory Fitness Check (REFIT) of REACH, the commitments made under the 7th Environmental Action Plan, the links to the Circular Economy Package, the need to address Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals (EDCs) and more consumer information.

The UK stressed the need to ensure chemical policy continued to be based on a better regulation and a risk based approach.

On this basis the Presidency concluded the conclusions were adopted as drafted.

AOB - REFIT Fitness Check of Habitats and Birds Directives.

The Commission informed delegations of its findings, presented in the recent staff working document on the Nature Directives, which noted that the directives were fit for purpose. The Commission noted that the EU should focus on smarter implementation. The UK welcomed the conclusions of the Commission's Fitness Check (to improve implementation of the Directives and not to re-open them) and called for more effective implementation together with the sharing of experiences on how to do this between Member States. Many other Member States made similar points and asked the Commission to actively focus on better tools and resources in order to achieve better implementation.

AOB - Outcome of International Meetings: Convention on Biodiversity (CBD), 66th Meeting of International Whaling Commission and COP9 UNECE Convention on Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents.

The Presidency and the Commission informed Council on the outcomes of these recent international meetings.

AOB – State of play of the Waste Package.

The Council took note of information from the Presidency and the progress it had made on negotiations of the waste package. The Commission agreed there was good progress and expressed hope a deal could be reached with the European Parliament during the Maltese Presidency. On the substance, the Commission supported a common methodology for calculating recycling targets, separate collection, the use of economic instruments and ambitious recycling targets. Other Member States intervened on topics of interest, including conflicting views on the levels of targets and reuse within the package, the phase-out of landfill and the proposed calculation methodology.

The UK welcomed the progress made under the Slovak Presidency and emphasised the need to agree definitions and calculation methodology before setting targets. The UK also called for greater flexibility in the application of provisions on the circular economy and, while being supportive of the principle of reuse, highlighted the bureaucratic hurdles its inclusion in reporting could entail.

AOB - Maltese Incoming Work Programme.

The Presidency gave a short summary of its achievements over the last six months. Malta, as incoming Presidency, then explained its priorities, including a desire to build on the Marrakech COP22, advance both ETS and non-ETS negotiations and continue work to amend the Waste Directives. Priorities also included a focus on marine issues, including a development of a plastic strategy in the context of the Circular Economy, work on the Nature Directives, amending the Restriction of Hazardous Substances (ROHS) Directive and preparations for Conferences of the Parties on the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade.

Further Environment AOBs.

Council took note of an AOB from Austrian, French, Finnish and German delegations, supported by Czech Republic and Italy, which encouraged Member States participation in next year's European Sustainable Development Week. Council also took note of an AOB from Hungary on the Outcome of the Budapest Water Summit and an AOB Information from the Commission on the Communication on next steps for a sustainable European future. Poland presented an AOB on odour nuisance. The Czech Republic presented its AOB on the REFIT evaluation of the EU Ecolabel.

On 23 June, the EU referendum took place and the people of the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union. Until exit negotiations are concluded, the UK remains a full member of the European Union and all the rights and obligations of EU membership remain in force. During this period the Government will continue to negotiate, implement and apply EU legislation. The outcome of these negotiations will determine what arrangements apply in relation to EU legislation in future once the UK has left the EU.