



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 15 September 2016 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:33 P.M., 15 September 2016). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Astrophysics

Mr Mark Hendrick:

[\[43490\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the outcome of the EU referendum does not have an adverse effect on funding for collaboration by and recruitment of astrophysicists.

Joseph Johnson:

[Holding answer 5 September 2016]: The UK will maintain its status as a global centre for research and innovation. In last year's Spending Review the Government committed to protecting science resource funding in real terms from its 2015-16 level of £4.7 billion a year for the rest of the parliament, as well as committing to invest in new scientific infrastructure on a record scale – £6.9 billion over the period 2015-2021.

While the UK remains a member of the EU, funding and collaboration arrangements continue unchanged. Researchers can continue to bid for competitive EU research funding such as Horizon 2020 while we remain a member of the EU. The Government will work with the Commission to ensure payment when funds are awarded. The Treasury will underwrite the payment of such awards, even when specific projects continue beyond the UK's departure from the EU. This commitment will provide reassurance and stability to the research community, and recruitment should continue as normal.

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Costs

Greg Mulholland:

[\[45581\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will publish a breakdown of the costs incurred in the creation of his Department.

Joseph Johnson:

[Holding answer 14 September 2016]: The costs of setting up the new Department are ongoing and the processes will take some time to complete. The Department will provide a breakdown of costs once the transition period is complete.

■ Erasmus+ Programme

Mr Steve Reed:

[\[45787\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many British students have studied at universities in other European countries as part of the Erasmus programme in each of the last six years; and how many of those students were from Croydon.

Joseph Johnson:

[Holding answer 14 September 2016]:

The number of Erasmus placements from British Higher Education institutions is published on the Erasmus+ National Agency's website at <https://www.erasmusplus.org.uk/erasmus-projects>.

The figures for each of the last six academic years for which figures are available are as follows:

2008/09	10,827
2009/10	11,723
2010/11	12,832
2011/12	13,660
2012/13	14,571
2013/14	15,566

It is not possible to say how many of these students were from Croydon.

■ Solar Power: Feed-in Tariffs

Julie Elliott:

[45178]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he plans to take to improve the performance of the Feed-in Tariff scheme for solar power.

Jesse Norman:

Solar continues to be deployed under the Feed-in Tariff scheme, with over 140 MW of applications since the scheme reopened in February.

Changes to the scheme were introduced in 2016 to manage costs and ensure value for money.

While it is appropriate to allow for a period of stability following these changes, my rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State continues to keep the performance of the scheme under review.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Cabinet Office: Freedom of Information

Tom Watson:

[46034]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to Answers given on 21 July 2016 to Questions 43013 and 43014, what information his Department holds on legal advice expenditure by the (a) Economic and Domestic Affairs secretariat and (b) Propriety Ethics Unit on Freedom of Information cases in the last 12 months.

Ben Gummer:

I would refer the Right Honourable gentleman to the answer to his previous question of 21 August 2016 (43013 and 43014).

■ **Cabinet Office: Staff**

Tom Watson: [46016]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what targets he has set for the senior talent team in his Department since taking up office.

Ben Gummer:

The Civil Service Workforce Plan 2016-2020 was published in July this year. This sets out how the Civil Service will deliver five key priorities that will have the greatest impact on readying the workforce to respond to the challenges the UK will face. The Workforce Plan is available here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/536961/civil_service_workforce_strategy_final.pdf

The senior talent team is expected, alongside colleagues across Civil Service HR, to deliver the commitments in this Plan.

■ **Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster**

Tom Watson: [45759]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster has access to the Government Car Services.

Tom Watson: [45760]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many civil servants are employed for the purposes of working in the Office of the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

Tom Watson: [45882]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 5 September 2016 to Question 43473, when he plans to publish Ministerial responsibilities held by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

Tom Watson: [46070]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many ministerial visits the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster has made since 14 July 2016.

Ben Gummer:

[Holding answer 13 September 2016]: Further to the question asked by the Hon Member of 7 September 2016, Official Report, Column 321, I would add that my Rt Hon Friend, the Member for Derbyshire Dales, is a Minister of the Crown and a member of the Cabinet. He will attend a number of Cabinet Committees, which will be published in due course, and has duties directly related to the Duchy of Lancaster. The List of Ministerial Responsibilities will also be published in due course. He does not receive a Ministerial salary from public funds. Details of Private Office staff will be accounted for

as part of the regular transparency data on gov.uk. The Government publishes on a quarterly basis details of Ministerial visits overseas. All Ministers have access to the Government Car Service for official travel.

My Rt Hon Friend also serves as the Party Chairman of the Conservative Party. Such arrangements are no different from the likes of Charles Clarke, Ian McCartney and Hazel Blears, all of whom held the posts of Minister Without Portfolio and Labour Party Chair under the last Labour Government.

I would also observe that under the Thatcher and Major Governments, senior figures such as Norman Tebbit, Kenneth Baker and Chris Patten served as both Chairman of the Conservative Party and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

■ Extended Ministerial Offices

Tom Watson: [\[45740\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether any ministerial extended offices have been set up since 13 July 2016.

Ben Gummer:

No new Extended Ministerial Offices have been established since 13 July. We will report in due course in an appropriate Civil Service update on the experience of their operation to date.

■ Government Digital Service

Tom Watson: [\[45969\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what his plans are for the future of the Government Digital Service; and if he will make a statement.

Ben Gummer:

The Government Digital Service is responsible for the digital transformation of government and this will remain the case. GDS continue to run [GOV.UK](#) and are responsible for the Technology Code of Practice which seeks to make government data easier to use.

GDS also lead the delivery of three programmes funded at Spending Review 2015. These programmes: Government as a Platform, [GOV.UK](#) Verify and Common Technology Services, make it possible to accelerate the digital transformation of government. GDS now have over 500 staff supporting the delivery of this work and it continues to grow at pace.

I have no plans to make a statement.

■ Honours: Disclosure of Information

Tom Watson: [\[46066\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what progress has been made by the Cabinet Secretary on his inquiry into the recent leak of information concerning honours and peerages.

Ben Gummer:

The investigation into the leak of the Prime Minister's Resignation Honours List is ongoing.

■ **Ministerial Policy Advisers: Pay**

Tom Watson: [\[45706\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, who the members of the committee that oversees special advisers' pay are.

Ben Gummer:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Sheffield, Heeley on 2 November 2015 to UIN: 13720.

■ **Ministerial Red Boxes**

Tom Watson: [\[46069\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how much his Department has spent on ministerial red boxes in the last 12 months.

Ben Gummer:

The Cabinet Office has not spent any money on ministerial red boxes in the last 12 months.

■ **Policy Lab**

Tom Watson: [\[45736\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, which Minister oversees the Policy Innovation Lab.

Ben Gummer:

I have responsibility for Policy Innovation Lab. The Policy Lab sits in the Cabinet Office but works for all departments and reports to the Policy Profession Board.

TREASURY

■ **Child Tax Credit**

Gavin Robinson: [\[46079\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has conducted research on the effect of a suspension of child tax credit payments when a change in circumstance has been assumed.

Gavin Robinson: [\[46080\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of introducing survival payments in cases when the regular payment of child tax credits has been suspended.

Jane Ellison:

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) regularly carries out checks on tax credits awards, including Child Tax Credit, to reduce error and fraud. These checks identify potential risks with ongoing tax credits claims.

Depending on the level of risk found, HMRC may ask customers for more information about their claim and circumstances, or a compliance team might undertake a full examination.

In most cases, HMRC does not suspend the payment of tax credits payments during the check. It only does this where information held indicates that this is a reasonable step to prevent payments being made in error. In these cases, if a customer demonstrates that the claim is correct, HMRC reinstates payments immediately.

In these circumstances, making further payments would therefore result in increased overpayments of tax credits overall which the customer would have to repay.

HMRC has not carried out research into the specific aspect of the tax credits system related to suspension of Child Tax Credits.

Gavin Robinson:[\[46081\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many recipients of child tax credit have had their payments restored following investigation in each of the last three years.

Jane Ellison:

The information could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ Child Tax Credit: Appeals**Gavin Robinson:**[\[46032\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to reduce any hardship associated with the target of 42 days to resolve appeals on child tax credit claims.

Jane Ellison:

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) has a 42-day target to resolve Mandatory Reconsiderations, where customers challenge their tax credits award calculation. The average time taken to work Mandatory Reconsiderations can vary depending upon the complexity of the request, individual circumstances and the level of supporting evidence provided.

When a customer requests a Mandatory Reconsideration HMRC suspends the recovery of any previous overpayment that is being collected from their current award, to minimise customer hardship during the reconsideration.

■ Concentrix: Standards**Ms Tasmina Ahmed-Sheikh:**[\[45998\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 2 September 2016 to Question 44771, how he has evaluated the performance of Concentrix against each target

as set out in the variation to contract form entitled BAK-2013-Error and Fraud Adding Capacity, published on 20 April 2015.

Jane Ellison:

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) evaluates Concentrix performance as outlined in the contract, which can be found at:

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/85d1b730-5e4e-4be8-ae4c-3ac1f359afc7>

HMRC evaluates and monitors Concentrix performance against the contractual performance indicators on a daily, weekly and monthly basis.

■ Financial Institutions: Incentives

Steve McCabe: [45589]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make it his policy to discourage the financial sector from using performance bonuses in his Autumn Statement.

Simon Kirby:

The UK is at the forefront of global efforts to tackle unacceptable pay practices in the banking sector and has the toughest regime on pay of any major financial centre.

Firms are now required to have policies in place to defer, reduce, cancel or clawback bonuses in the event that poor performance or misconduct comes to light and the Government expects firms to be proactive in their application of these policies. Used in this way bonuses can be an effective incentive for staff to act in the long term interests of a business.

The Government's efforts have resulted in a restructuring of pay including a significant reduction in cash bonuses, and a better alignment of risk and reward in the financial sector.

■ Local Partnerships: Expenditure

Mr Christopher Chope: [45730]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much (a) capital and (b) revenue expenditure his Department has given to local partnerships to date; and what estimate he has made of the value of his Department's share in its joint ownership.

Mr David Gauke:

As of March 2015, HM Treasury had made £800,000 of equity investments and provided £1,175,000 of loan stock to Local Partnerships. Local Partnerships has so far made £675,000 of repayments of loan stock to HM Treasury.

■ National Infrastructure Commission

Lilian Greenwood: [45968]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he intends to publish legislation to create the National Infrastructure Commission as a statutory body.

Mr David Gauke:

The National Infrastructure Commission has a crucial role to play in setting out the country's infrastructure priorities and it has already made an important contribution through its first three reports.

The Commission is an important part of the government's overall approach on infrastructure, and we remain fully committed to it. We are considering how it can best support the government's new industrial strategy.

■ Welfare Tax Credits

Mrs Madeleine Moon:

[\[45981\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many letters his Department has sent to recipients of tax credits cancelling payments because of claims by HM Revenue and Customs that an unreported adult is living at the claimant's property in the last year; and if he will make a statement.

Jane Ellison:

Between 1 September 2015 and 31 August 2016 HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) stopped 57,961 tax credit awards following a decision that the claimant was living with an undeclared partner. Where HMRC identifies an undeclared partner, the single tax credits claim is ended. The customer is able to reclaim in the correct joint capacity if entitlement exists.

■ Welfare Tax Credits: Arrears

Calum Kerr:

[\[46028\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will take steps to change HM Revenue and Customs practice of not repaying incorrectly withheld arrears or underpaid tax credits to claimants as a lump sum.

Jane Ellison:

To tackle the problems associated with families overestimating falls in income, since 2007, when claimants report a fall in income during the year, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) adjusts their tax credit payments for the rest of the year to reflect their new income level, but will not include a one-off payment for the earlier part of the year. At the end of the year, their award is finalised when their actual income is known. If they have been underpaid, a further payment will then be made. However, provisions are in place to make arrears payments to claimants suffering financial hardship.

The purpose of withholding the payment is to reduce the number and size of any overpayments and prevent customers incurring debt.

HMRC has provisions in place to support those customers who are suffering financial hardship and in those circumstances any withheld payments can be released and paid to the customer without having to wait for the claim to be finalised. There are no plans to alter the current practice.

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**■ Communities and Local Government: Consultants**

Margaret Hodge: [\[44345\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how many times his Department has used the services of (a) PwC, (b) Deloitte, (c) Ernst and Young, (d) KPMG and (e) other consulting firms in the last three financial years; and what (i) work was undertaken and (ii) the cost to the public purse was on each such occasion.

Mr Marcus Jones:

Consultancy spend for the Department over the past three years is listed in the attached spreadsheet.

Attachments:

1. consultancy firm details and costs [Attachment to Question 44345.xlsx]

■ European Union Solidarity Fund: Floods

Tim Farron: [\[46031\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what progress his Department has made on finalising the Government's application to the EU Solidarity Fund for flood relief funding after the storms of the 2015-16 winter.

Andrew Percy:

The Government has been working with a wide range of partners, including the devolved administrations, local authorities and government departments. We have made considerable progress towards securing a full and reliable estimate of the cost of flood damage to the UK and will update Parliament in due course.

■ Homelessness: Children

Jim Fitzpatrick: [\[45358\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, with reference to the concluding observations of the recent UN Committee on the Rights of the Child fifth Period Report, what steps he plans to take to address the recommendation that the Government should strictly implement the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2003 prohibiting the placement of homeless families with children in bed and breakfast accommodation for longer than six weeks.

Mr Marcus Jones:

I welcome the observations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child fifth Period Report. The law is clear that bed and breakfast accommodation should be used to house homeless families only in an emergency, and then for no longer than six weeks.

The Government has been clear that the long term use of bed and breakfast accommodation for families with children is both unacceptable and unlawful and we are determined to stop this damaging practice. We have also changed the law so that councils can place families in decent and affordable private rented homes. This now

means homeless households do not have to wait as long for settled accommodation, spending less time in temporary accommodation.

We have taken further action to tackle temporary accommodation. In December 2015, we launched a new £5 million fund to help the 25 councils facing the most significant homelessness pressures, to ensure people are moved from temporary accommodation and into suitable homes as soon as possible.

We are also devolving the Temporary Accommodation Management Fee, with more than equivalent funding, to local authorities from April 2017. This will provide more freedom and flexibility to help authorities tackle homelessness more effectively, and improve outcomes for homeless families.

■ Mayors: Elections

Caroline Lucas:

[45650]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, when he plans to lay draft regulations on the conduct of the regional mayoral elections planned for May 2017.

Andrew Percy:

An Order for the conduct of combined authority mayoral elections will be laid before Parliament after the Conference Recess.

■ Planning Permission: Costs

Grant Shapps:

[45495]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what estimate his Department has made of the cost to the economy of the time taken to process planning applications.

Gavin Barwell:

The Department published a study in 2009, *Benchmarking the costs to applicants of submitting a planning application*

(<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120919132719/http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/benchmarkingcostsapplication.pdf>), which sought to identify the typical financial costs to applicants associated with the submission of a planning application. Local planning authority expenditure on development control, which includes the costs of advice, the processing of applications, enforcement and regulations of other special topics, including minerals and waste control, is recorded by the Department in a statistical dataset published annually *Local authority revenue expenditure and financing England: 2014 to 2015 individual local authority data – outturn - RO5* (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/local-authority-revenue-expenditure-and-financing-england-2014-to-2015-individual-local-authority-data-outturn>).

It is important that planning applications are determined in a timely and efficient manner. Local planning authorities can be designated as underperforming where they persistently fail to determine applications for major development on time, which has seen the proportion of major applications determined on time rising to an all-time high

of 82 per cent, in the quarter ending 31 March 2016, since the regime was introduced in summer 2012. We plan to extend this regime to include non-major development.

■ Planning: Rural Areas

Mr Geoffrey Cox: [\[45439\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if he will make an assessment of the (a) social and (b) other effects on rural areas of paragraph 49 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Gavin Barwell:

Local councils are best placed to understand and plan for the housing needs of their area. Where the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies, for example in the absence of a five year supply of deliverable housing sites, decisions will still need to be made in the light of all the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework, including policies that indicate development should be restricted. However, an up-to-date Local Plan, which includes a five year supply of development housing sites, is the best way to manage development in an area.

■ Solar Power: Non-domestic Rates

Helen Goodman: [\[45852\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of planned business rates rises on existing commercial solar rooftop projects where the majority of power is consumed onsite.

Mr Marcus Jones:

[Holding answer 14 September 2016]: Business rates are based on valuations from the Valuation Office Agency and we do not intervene in their independent assessments. We will look closely at the impacts of the forthcoming revaluation and consult on how to make sure the right support is in place for ratepayers to adjust to any changes.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Arts: EU Grants and Loans

Thangam Debbonaire: [\[45946\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, whether UK citizens remain eligible to apply for grants from the Creative Europe scheme for grants that potentially last beyond the time when the UK plans to leave the EU; and how the Government plans to replace that scheme when the UK leaves the EU.

Matt Hancock:

Leaving the EU means we will want to take our own decisions about how to deliver the policy objectives previously targeted by EU funding. Over the coming months, we will consult closely with stakeholders to review all EU funding schemes in the round, to

ensure that any ongoing funding commitments best serve the UK's national interest, while ensuring appropriate investor certainty.

DEFENCE

■ Antiaircraft Missiles

Douglas Chapman: [\[46001\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the expected lifespan is of the Sea Ceptor Anti-Air Missile System.

Harriett Baldwin:

The Sea Ceptor system is currently being fitted to the Royal Navy's Type 23 Frigates as the principal anti-air missile system and will also be fitted to the Royal Navy's future Type 26 Frigates as they enter service. The capability will remain in service for over 40 years to align with the out of service date for the Type 26 Frigate.

■ Armed Forces: Housing

Grant Shapps: [\[45414\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many applications his Department has received for modifications and adapted housing in each year from 2010 to date.

Grant Shapps: [\[45461\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much his Department has spent on modifications and adapted housing in each year from 2010 to date.

Mark Lancaster:

Details of the number of successful applications and the amount spent by the Ministry of Defence by financial year (FY) on modifications and adapted housing is shown in the following table

ADAPTATIONS

	FY 2011-12	FY 2012-13	FY 2013-14	FY 2014-15	FY 2015-16	FY 2016-17
Private Dwellings						
	£ million	£ million	£ million	£ million	£ million	£ million
Cost	2.129	3.489	3.566	5.443	3.349	1.544
No. of applications for funding	69	115	102	122	101	40

ADAPTATIONS**Service Family
Accommodation**

	£ million	£ million	£ million	£ million	£ million	£ million
Cost	0.023	0.157	0.531	0.483	0.211	0.468

The number of applications for adaptations to Service Family Accommodation or Information prior to FY 2011-12 is not held.

Information on the number of unsuccessful applications made for adaptations is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

■ **Armed Forces: Saudi Arabia**

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[46071\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many military personnel are based in Saudi Arabia; and if he will make a statement.

Mike Penning:

There are around 100 military personnel based in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, including at the Defence section within the British Embassy Riyadh; providing mentoring and advice to the Saudi Arabian National Guard, as part of the British Military Mission to the Saudi Arabian National Guard; personnel working on the Saudi Arabia National Guard Communications Project to acquire and support, modern communications capabilities for the Saudi Arabian National Guard and personnel working on the Ministry of Defence Saudi Armed Forces Projects, supporting the United Kingdom's commitment to the defence of Saudi Arabia through the supply of modern military aircraft, naval vessels, weapons and associated support services to the Saudi Armed Forces. We also have a small number of liaison personnel who work at the Saudi MOD and Operational Centres. We do not discuss specific numbers for reasons of safeguarding operational security.

EDUCATION■ **Academies**

Jess Phillips: [\[45512\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 5 September 2016 to Question 43735, how many decisions to approve or decline applications from maintained schools to convert to academy status were made by Ministers of her Department in 2015.

Edward Timpson:

The Department's centralised records do not hold data on who approved or declined the converter academy application as Regional Schools Commissioners (RSCs) act on behalf

of the Secretary of State for Education. Therefore only the decision made is recorded in centralised records.

Stephen Timms: [\[45534\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 25 July 2016 to Question 43274, what estimate she has made of how many people will attend an Executive Educators programme for multi-academy trust leaders in 2016-17.

Edward Timpson:

[Holding answer 12 September 2016]: The Government does not hold this information. It is not possible to predict the exact level of participation in the programme in 2016-17. However, in 2015-16 there were 104 participants in the Executive Educators programme run by Future Leaders Trust.

This is only one example of this type of course and there are others. For example, UCL Institute of Education and Alliance Manchester Business School (University of Manchester) both run courses for existing and aspiring multi-academy trust CEOs and senior leaders.

■ Academies: Closures

Jess Phillips: [\[45570\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many multi-academy trusts her Department has closed in each year since 2010.

Edward Timpson:

The Department has a role in monitoring the performance of Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) and the academies within them. This includes transferring an academy from one MAT to another where there are significant concerns about performance and the MAT does not have the necessary capacity to make improvements.

MATs are charitable trusts and companies limited by guarantee. It is for its board to decide whether or not to dissolve the trust; the Department has no role.

■ Apprentices

Ian Austin: [\[44761\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions she has had with the Skills Funding Agency on that body's proposal to reduce 16-18 apprenticeship funding.

Robert Halfon:

The department and the Skills Funding Agency have worked closely together on the development of the apprenticeships funding policy and plans for implementation, including on the digital apprenticeship service.

We have engaged thousands of employers and training providers throughout the development of the apprenticeship funding reforms and continue to do so. This engagement helped to shape the funding policy proposals for England from May 2017, published on 12 August.

A survey seeking detailed views from employers and providers closed on 5 September, and the feedback will inform the final policy, which we aim to publish in October.

Ben Howlett: [\[44836\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that apprenticeships are undertaken by people in less affluent households.

Robert Halfon:

Apprenticeships can transform lives. They are a great way for people of all ages and backgrounds to progress in work and life and a great way for employers to improve the skills base of their businesses.

Apprentices acquire skills much valued in the labour market, and the apprentice does not have to contribute to the costs of their learning. Apprenticeships are paid jobs with training and so, as with any other form of employment, selection decisions are made by individual employers, who choose the most appropriate candidates for their jobs.

We are encouraging a wider range of young people into apprenticeships. Traineeships are available to help 16-23 year olds become 'work ready'. They include work preparation training, English, maths and work experience, which all help the trainee to enter the world of work, including apprenticeships. They are flexible so providers can adapt them to the needs of the trainee by including additional support such as mentoring.

We are giving employers more control of the funding for apprenticeships training in return for them investing more in apprenticeships; this includes simplifying the funding system to encourage employers to recruit more apprentices of all ages and from all backgrounds.

Stephen Timms: [\[45974\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that every apprenticeship includes formal training.

Robert Halfon:

Apprenticeships are paid jobs which should always involve substantial and sustained training including off-the-job training inspected by Ofsted, have a minimum 12 months' duration and develop transferable skills including in English and maths. As an employee, apprentices earn as they learn and gain practical skills in the workplace leading to full competency in an occupation to enable them to progress their career. Our reforms are improving the quality of all apprenticeships.

The programme is underpinned by statutory standards to ensure that all apprenticeships offer substantial on- and off-the-job guided learning leading to the achievement of recognised qualifications where appropriate to the apprenticeship undertaken.

■ Department for Education: Staff

Diana Johnson: [\[45846\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, (a) how much funding and (b) how many full-time equivalent staff will be transferred to her Department from the former Department for Business, Innovation and Skills as a result of her Department's policy responsibility for universities.

Caroline Dinenage:

Discussions and negotiations are still ongoing. We are currently unable to provide information on how much funding and how many full-time equivalent staff will transfer as a result of the Department for Education receiving policy responsibility for universities.

■ Education Funding Agency: Buildings

Stephen Timms: [\[45976\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans the Education Funding Agency has in place for the use of the former East Ham police station.

Edward Timpson:

The Department acquired the former East Ham Police Station for a free school and has every intention to use this site for a school. We are considering the best use for the site, taking into account both that it is listed and the accommodation needs of whichever school occupies it.

■ Extracurricular Activities: Offenders

Helen Goodman: [\[44157\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she has taken to prevent self-employed adults with violent convictions providing extracurricular classes or sessions to children for sports or activities which have no governing body.

Helen Goodman: [\[45910\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what child protection steps have been taken to prevent self-employed adults with violent or sexual convictions providing extracurricular activities for children when no governing body exists for that sport or activity.

Helen Goodman: [\[45985\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions she has had with her Cabinet colleagues on preventing self-employed adults with violent or sexual convictions providing extracurricular classes or sessions to children where there is no governing body for that sport or activity.

Edward Timpson:

Schools are aware of their responsibilities in ensuring that any self-employed individual who is providing extra-curricular classes or sessions on their behalf has been subject to the necessary and appropriate checks, which could include checking individual status with the relevant sports or activity governing body.

If those checks reveal convictions for violence the school will then determine the appropriateness or otherwise of allowing that individual to continue to provide classes or sessions.

■ Grammar Schools

Kevin Brennan: [45920]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the differences are in the requirements for proposed new grammar schools and existing grammar schools for fairer access.

Nick Gibb:

On 12 September, the department launched the consultation 'Schools that work for everyone', which sets out proposed requirements that could be placed on new and existing selective schools to ensure fair access. This can be found at <https://consult.education.gov.uk/school-frameworks/schools-that-work-for-everyone>.

■ Nurseries: Finance

Richard Burden: [45835]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that nurseries have sufficient funding to afford access to early years teachers.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Government is investing over £1 billion more per year by 2019-20 to fund our commitments on the early years entitlements – this includes £300 million per year from 2017-18 for a significant increase to the hourly rate paid for the two, three and four year old entitlements. We are currently consulting on proposals for an early years national funding formula to ensure this funding is fairly allocated, and I would encourage the Honourable Member and his constituents to submit their views.

The Early Years Foundation Stage sets staffing and qualification requirements for early years providers and allows settings to operate without an Early Years Teacher. However, the Government wants to see more trained graduates in the workforce, and we are supporting this by providing funding for course fees and bursaries to eligible trainees, and also funding for employers to support trainees.

■ Schools: Repairs and Maintenance

Mr David Winnick: [45244]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the procedures are for people involved in assessing applications for the Condition Improvement Fund to contact applicants seeking further information when required.

Edward Timpson:

[Holding answer 12 September 2016]: The Education Funding Agency (EFA) provides detailed guidance for Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) applicants when the application round is launched. The EFA's enquiry service is on hand to answer applicants' queries throughout the process.

CIF assessors do not make contact with applicants during the assessment window. This is to ensure that all bids are assessed consistently on the basis of the evidence which applicants have submitted. Unsuccessful CIF applicants can request a review of their outcome through the CIF appeals round.

Local authorities, voluntary-aided partnerships and larger Multi Academy Trusts receive a direct School Condition Allocation to address condition needs for their schools.

■ Universities: Admissions

Mr Pat McFadden: [\[45584\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what percentage of children from each local authority area in England go to university in the most recent year for which figures are available.

Joseph Johnson:

Information on the percentage of pupils from state-funded schools aged 15 in 2009/10 who entered higher education in 2012/13 at age 18, or in 2013/14 at age 19, by local authority, is available in Table 2 of the Statistical First Release 'Widening Participation in Higher Education, England, 2013/14 age cohort'. The publication is available at the following weblink:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/543126/SFR37-2016_-_WPHE2016_01.08.2016.pdf

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Agriculture: Subsidies

Caroline Lucas: [\[45399\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans she has to recruit additional staff to meet the additional workload arising from preparations to leave the EU and the development of new arrangements for a system of post-Common Agricultural Policy farm support.

George Eustice:

Defra is undertaking detailed planning on our capacity and capability to develop and deliver as a result of the referendum decision. So far this has focused on assessing the immediate needs of our policy and strategy functions and we have launched targeted recruitment across the Civil Service.

■ Air Pollution

Rushanara Ali: [\[45800\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether her Department plans to bring forward legislative proposals to replace existing clean air EU directives with equivalent UK legislation.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for Edinburgh North and Leith on 8 September 2016 to Question 44855.

■ **Bovine Tuberculosis: Northern Ireland**

Lady Hermon:

[45489]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment her Department has made of the lessons to be learned from the policies undertaken by the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland in relation to the control of the spread of Bovine TB in cattle; and if she will make a statement.

George Eustice:

Animal health is a devolved policy matter. My department liaises closely with all three devolved administrations, including Northern Ireland, on matters of common interest. It is important that all four administrations can learn from our collective experiences and we have effective arrangements in place to make sure that happens.

In June 2015, the European Commission's Food and Veterinary Office carried out an audit of the bovine tuberculosis eradication programme in Northern Ireland, a report of which is available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/food/audits-analysis/audit_reports/details.cfm?rep_id=3560.

■ **European Landscape Convention**

Helen Goodman:

[45926]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she is taking to implement provisions in the European Landscape Convention.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The United Kingdom ratified the European Landscape Convention in 2006. Its principles are reflected in Government and local policies, for example, that local communities are engaged in the setting of priorities and objectives for their local landscapes and that opportunities are sought to align conservation and landscape objectives for designated areas.

National Park and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plans are an example of delivering on the convention's principle of stronger alignment of conservation and landscape objectives for designated sites.

The right of communities to shape development in their areas through the production of Neighbourhood Development Plans, introduced through the Localism Act 2011, delivers on the convention's principle that local communities should be engaged in the setting of priorities and objectives for their local landscapes.

The National Planning Policy Framework outlines strong protection of designated landscapes and the duty on decision-makers to consider landscape impacts in plan making and planning decisions. We consider it compliant with the convention.

■ Farms: Broadband

Sir Nicholas Soames:

[\[45980\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate her Department has made of the proportion of registered farm businesses which have access to superfast broadband.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The Government is investing £780 million in superfast broadband. This will enable 95% of homes and businesses, including those based on farms, to have access to superfast broadband by the end of 2017. Clawback from contracts could extend this further. Standard broadband of at least 2Mbps was made available to everyone by the end of 2015, enabling digital access to all public services, and superfast broadband is now available to over 90% of UK premises – up from 45% in 2010. We are looking at superfast solutions for the last 5%. Farmers will also benefit from the broadband Universal Service Obligation which we are working to introduce by 2020, with an ambition that this will be set at 10 megabits per second.

■ Local Air Quality Management: Staff

Rushanara Ali:

[\[45815\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many staff of her Department work on Local Air Quality Management support matters.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

As of 13 September this year there were five staff working on local air quality management in Defra. The Environment Agency also has a team of two people in its Local Authority Unit who provide technical advice to local authority environmental regulators and an environmental permitting Helpdesk service for local authorities.

■ Marine Protected Areas

Stephen Gethins:

[\[45931\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when she plans to announce her decision on the Scottish Government's consultation on the five remaining cross-border or offshore marine special protection areas.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

I wrote to the Scottish Government on 2 September giving agreement to public consultation starting on four proposed marine Special Protection Areas that are partly in offshore waters. I also informed the Scottish Government that Defra was not yet in a position to start consultation on the English part of the proposed Solway Firth Special Protection Area, but that we would keep them updated on our position.

EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION■ **Department for Exiting the European Union: EU Nationals**

Mr Chuka Umunna: [\[45899\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, how many citizens of other EU countries work in his Department.

Mr Robin Walker:

The Department for Exiting the EU now has over 200 staff in London, plus the expertise of over 120 officials in Brussels, and we are still growing rapidly. The overall size and scope of the new department, including staffing and budget, are regularly reviewed. We will ensure we are appropriately staffed to deal with the task at hand.

As a new Department we do not yet hold diversity data for all of its staff but will be collecting this in line with standard Civil Service practice.

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

Hilary Benn: [\[45941\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what meetings he has had to date with HM Government of Gibraltar on exiting the EU.

Mr Robin Walker:

The Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union met with the Chief Minister of Gibraltar this week and is committed to continued close working with the Government of Gibraltar.

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

Hilary Benn: [\[45944\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, how many (a) consultants and (b) seconded staff (i) are working or (ii) have been recruited to work at his Department; and from which (A) companies, (B) departments and (C) other organisations such staff were recruited or seconded.

Mr Robin Walker:

Consultants

The Department has drawn upon a number of offers of pro bono support from consultancy firms.

Secondments

There are currently five secondees to the Department from external bodies outside of the civil service. Due to the small numbers of secondments from individual organisations, it is not possible to give a breakdown of all the organisations from which they were seconded, without risking identification of individuals in breach of data protection rules.

Other Departments

The Department will be made up of staff and officials from various departments across Government. The Department has already started drawing together expertise with staff from around 20 Departments and organisations from across Government.

■ Department for Exiting the European Union: Trade Unions

Hilary Benn:

[\[45942\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what meetings he has (a) had to date and (b) scheduled for a future date with trades unions.

Mr Robin Walker:

We have already started a wide-ranging programme of engagement in order to build a national consensus, listening to organisations, institutions and companies in as many sectors as possible to establish their priorities and understand their concerns, and also to hear what they think the solutions could be.

One of the Secretary of State's first meetings was with the General Secretary of the Trades Union Congress. I and my Ministerial colleagues have also met with a wide range of representatives from business groups, the universities, the charity sector and farming and fisheries organisations.

In the weeks ahead, we will continue to engage with as many other firms, organisations and bodies as possible, including with trade unions. We will also be holding roundtables with stakeholders in a series of sectors, to ensure that all views are reflected in our analysis of the options for the UK.

■ Immigration Controls

Natalie McGarry:

[\[45324\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what recent steps he has taken to decide the immigration system to be implemented upon the UK leaving the EU.

Mr Robin Walker:

My Department is working closely with the Home Office and other Government Departments to identify and develop options to shape our future immigration system, including considering how best to control the number of people coming to the UK from the following Brexit. We are already fully engaged with the Governments of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to ensure a UK-wide approach to our negotiations. My ministerial colleagues and I have also discussed the next steps with a range of organisations, including the General Secretary of the Trades Union Congress and key business groups.

■ Treaties

Deidre Brock:

[\[44034\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, which treaties the UK is a signatory to as a member of the EU which will require renegotiation as a result of the UK leaving the EU.

Mr Robin Walker:

We are examining all treaties which relate to our membership of the EU with a view to delivering the best outcomes for the EU.

■ **UK Withdrawal from EU**

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[45218\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, when he plans for the UK to initiate Article 50; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Robin Walker:

The Prime Minister has made it clear that we will not be triggering Article 50 before the end of 2016. She has said that we won't be triggering Article 50 until we have a UK approach and clear objectives for negotiations. It is in everyone's interest that we establish this before we trigger Article 50.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

■ **Iran: Human Rights**

Mr Nigel Evans: [\[45780\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether his Department plans to expand the list of Iranians responsible for human rights violations.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

[Holding answer 14 September 2016]: At present we have no plans to expand the list.

■ **Yemen: Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

Keith Vaz: [\[45831\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will estimate his Department's spending related to the crisis in Yemen.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The UK remains fully committed to helping bring peace and stability to Yemen. In terms of programme spend, through the cross-departmental Conflict Stability and Security Fund, we are spending £2.95m on Yemen in the 2016/17 financial year. This is focussed on the UK priorities in Yemen of de-escalation, support for the UN-led peace process and political transition. It includes: the provision of extra capacity for the UN Special Envoy to Yemen's office to enable them to lead and broaden the scope of peace talks; support demining and clearance of explosive remnants of war; and efforts to increase the inclusivity of a future political settlement. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office also provides funding through the Magna Carta Fund to help improve the human rights situation in Yemen.

■ Yemen: Islamic State

Keith Vaz:

[\[45829\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what reports the Government has received on the operations of Daesh in Yemen.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

We assess that there is a risk that terrorist groups such as Daesh-Yemen, as well as Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) may take advantage of the continued instability in Yemen. Countering such terrorist threats remains a priority for Her Majesty's Government. We continue to work with regional and international partners to understand, assess and counter the terrorist threat from Yemen.

■ Yemen: Peace Negotiations

Keith Vaz:

[\[45830\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to support an end to the conflict in Yemen.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

Peace talks remain the top priority. The UK continues to strongly support the work of UN Special Envoy, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, and his tireless efforts in working with all parties to bring about peace in Yemen. We deeply regret the failure of the parties to reach an agreement in Kuwait and urge them to find the compromises that will end the current conflict. The secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my right hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Mr Johnson) hosted the Foreign Ministers of the US, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in London on 19 July to discuss the situation in Yemen, including the deteriorating humanitarian and economic situation and to encourage commitment from the Yemeni parties to the political process. I represented the UK at a subsequent meeting in Jeddah on 25 August. It is critical that all parties to the conflict renew their commitment to the Cessation of Hostilities for the sake of the people of Yemen.

HEALTH

■ Analgesics: Prescriptions

Mr Virendra Sharma:

[\[45843\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the cost to the NHS was of prescribing (a) paracetamol, (b) ibuprofen and (c) aspirin in (i) England, (ii) each English region and (iii) in each clinical commissioning group in each year since 2012.

David Mowat:

Details of the net ingredient cost for each of these drugs dispensed in primary care in England for each English region and clinical commissioning group are given in the attached tables.

In April 2013, the structure of the National Health Service changed and data is provided at clinical commissioning group level for the years 2013/14 to 2015/16 only.

Attachments:

1. PQ45843 NHS drugs cost table [PQ45843 NHS drugs cost table.xlsx]

■ **Breast Cancer**

Julian Knight: [\[45396\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to increase the number of NHS trusts that submit the mandatory required data on secondary breast cancer.

Julian Knight: [\[45397\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many NHS trusts have met the mandatory requirement for the collection and submission of data on secondary breast cancer in the latest period for which figures are available.

Julian Knight: [\[45398\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, when the deadline will be for publishing data on secondary breast cancer diagnoses and treatment.

David Mowat:

The National Cancer Registration and Analysis Service (NCRAS) is part of Public Health England. NCRAS is supporting the direct reporting of recurrence data by all hospital trusts, as part of the Cancer Outcomes and Services Dataset (COSD). Since 2013 there has been the ability to report breast cancer recurrences including secondary breast cancer in COSD, but these data are not yet being fully collected and submitted by all trusts. Recurrence data collection is also mandated as part of the Cancer Waiting Times (CWT) Standards.

NCRAS is helping trusts improve their reporting by visiting, providing reporting guidance, and by giving rapid feedback on the number of recurrences they have submitted to NCRAS. To further support this work NCRAS shared provider-level data on the completeness of recurrence reporting with individual NHS trusts. There was no deadline for publication of this data, however the data was sent to all interested stakeholders in July 2016.

Of the 148 trusts that could be expected to be collecting data on breast cancer recurrence, all 148 submitted data for 2014 diagnoses through the COSD or CWT data collection mechanisms. The sharing of data with trusts has highlighted that the completeness of the data is variable and significantly below the estimated number of secondary breast cancers.

NCRAS is working closely with cancer charities to improve data collection in this area, looking at how they can help improve completion rates and thus gain a better picture of the burden of recurrence and metastatic disease across the health service.

Thangam Debbonaire:

[46247]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the number of women dying as a result of breast cancer.

David Mowat:

The independent Cancer Taskforce published its report, *Achieving World-Class Cancer Outcomes: A Strategy for England 2015-2020*, in July 2015, recommending improvements across the cancer patient pathway, including for breast cancer. An implementation plan, *Achieving World-Class Cancer Outcomes: Taking the strategy forward*, was published on 12 May 2016 and we hope to see great progress as it is delivered.

Earlier diagnosis makes it more likely that patients will receive effective treatments. We have committed to implementing recommendation 24 of the report that by 2020, everyone referred with a suspicion of cancer will receive either a definitive diagnosis or the all-clear within four weeks. This standard will be underpinned by investment of up to £300 million more in diagnostics each year by 2020.

On breast cancer specifically, the cancer strategy recommended that we:

- ensure that chemo-prevention is being used appropriately to reduce the risk of developing breast cancers, particularly in younger women at high risk of developing cancer;
- commission the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence to develop updated guidelines for adjuvant treatment for breast cancer, including the use of bisphosphonates and aromatase inhibitors to prevent secondary cancers in women previously treated for early stage breast cancer;
- ensure that all patients treated for cancer are given advice on how best to manage their risk level and ensure that the risk of developing secondary cancers is reduced, as well as ensuring that there is a fast and efficient route back into treatment for patients who suffer recurrence; and
- ensure that, by 2020, the 280,000 people diagnosed with cancer every year will benefit from a tailored recovery package. The packages will be individually designed to help each person, live well beyond cancer, including psychological and social support for those whose cancer recurs, or who live for a long time with cancer or its consequences, as is often the case in women with secondary breast cancer.

We have also run two national Be Clear on Cancer campaigns in 2014 and 2015 to raise awareness of the symptoms of breast cancer in women aged over 70. The campaigns targeted women over 70 because the disease is often diagnosed at a later stage in this age group. Breast screening for asymptomatic cancer saves an estimated 1,300 lives a year in the United Kingdom. A major randomised controlled trial is testing whether extending breast screening to women aged 47-49 and 71-73 will save more lives. Over 2 million women have been randomised into the trial, and results are expected in the early 2020s.

■ Cancer: Children

Richard Arkless:

[45983]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to encourage a greater awareness of the (a) symptoms, (b) diagnosis, (c) research, (d) treatment and (e) support for the families of children affected by cancer.

David Mowat:

Improving awareness and early diagnosis of cancer is a priority for this Government, and was clearly highlighted in the report *Achieving World-Class Cancer Outcomes* (2015) by the Independent Cancer Taskforce. Earlier diagnosis makes it more likely that patients will receive effective treatments. We have committed to implementing recommendation 24 of the report that by 2020, everyone referred with a suspicion of cancer will receive either a definitive diagnosis or the all-clear within four weeks. This standard will be underpinned by investment of up to £300 million more in diagnostics each year by 2020.

In order to continue to support general practitioners (GPs) to identify patients whose symptoms may indicate cancer and urgently refer them as appropriate, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) published an updated suspected cancer referral guideline in June 2015. The guideline, 'Suspected cancer: recognition and referral' includes new recommendations for childhood cancers. NICE also addressed generally, non-site specific symptoms of concern in children and young people, recommending that GPs should take into account the insight and knowledge of parents and carers when considering making a referral for suspected cancer.

The Department's National Institute for Health Research operates the UK Clinical Trials Gateway: www.ukctg.nihr.ac.uk. This publicly available website pulls through information about clinical trials and other research from several different United Kingdom registers, including research on childhood cancers.

Over the last four decades there have been major advances in the development of successful treatment strategies for childhood cancers, and much of this has been due to the use of standardised protocols in clinical trials and centralisation of care. NICE *Improving Outcomes Guidance for Children and Young People* serves to assist National Health Service trusts in planning, commissioning and organising services for children and young people with cancer. It recommends, among other things, that all care must be provided in age-appropriate facilities. The treatment children receive will depend on the type of cancer they have, and the most common treatments include surgery to remove the tumour, chemotherapy and radiotherapy to destroy cancer cells, and stem cell and bone marrow transplants. In 2012, the Government provided £250 million to build two proton beam therapy centres in England (at University College London Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and The Christie NHS Foundation Trust in Manchester), the first of which will be fully operational in 2018.

The Government is working closely with cancer charities to ensure children get the support they need during and after their treatment. Last year we announced everyone diagnosed with cancer in England will benefit from an individually tailored recovery

package by 2020, a key recommendation by the independent Cancer Taskforce. The recovery package, developed by Macmillan Cancer Support, will signpost people to rehabilitation and financial support services to help with the costs of cancer.

■ **Chronic Illnesses: Prescriptions**

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[45865\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what representations he has received from clinical experts and health economists on prescription charges for people with long-term medical conditions.

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[45866\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he is taking to ensure that prescriptions are affordable for people with long-term medical conditions.

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[45877\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what impact assessment his Department has conducted on the potential cost of eliminating or reducing prescription charges for people with long-term medical conditions.

David Mowat:

The Department receives numerous representations on prescription charges for people in England with long-term medical conditions. It is not possible to say how many of these were from clinical experts or health economists, though the independent Commission on the Future of Health and Social Care in England's report, A new settlement for health and social care, published in 2014, did have health economist input. There have also been representations from the Prescription Charges Coalition, but it is not certain to what extent these were informed by clinical experts or health economists.

Arrangements are in place to ensure that prescriptions are affordable for everyone, including those with a long-term condition. There are exemptions from the prescription charge for people with low income, including through receipt of specific benefits and through application to the NHS Low Income Scheme. For those who do not qualify for exemption, prescription prepayment certificates are also available, which allow people to claim as many prescriptions as they need for a set cost. To support those with high levels of need, the cost of the 12-month and 3-month certificates have been frozen since 2009 and 2011, respectively.

The Department has not undertaken a formal impact assessment on the potential cost of eliminating or reducing prescription charges for people with long-term medical conditions. However, the Prescription Charges Review undertaken by Professor Sir Ian Gilmore, and published in 2010, estimated that extending exemption to all those with a long-term condition would lead to a loss in revenue of between £360 and £430 million.

■ Death Certificates: Fees and Charges

Anna Turley: [\[45977\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate his Department has made of the fees paid to medical professionals for death certifications in (a) the North East and (b) England in each of the past five years.

Anna Turley: [\[45978\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the effect of fees charged by medical professionals for death certification on those liable for such fees who are on low incomes.

David Mowat:

There is no fee payable for completing the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD).

When a patient dies it is the statutory duty of the doctor who has attended the patient in the last illness to issue an MCCD.

■ Department of Health: EU Nationals

Mr Chuka Umunna: [\[45509\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many citizens of other EU countries work in his Department, its agencies and non-departmental public bodies.

David Mowat:

As far as possible, the information requested, about how many citizens of other European Union countries work in the Department, its agencies and non-departmental public bodies is set out in the table below.

NAME OF ORGANISATION	NUMBER OF CITIZENS OF OTHER EU COUNTRIES WORKING IN EACH ORGANISATION	COMMENTS
'CENTRAL' DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH	31 STAFF ARE IDENTIFIED AS CITIZENS OF ANOTHER EU COUNTRY (IRELAND) BUT 226 PEOPLE HAVE NOT DECLARED NATIONALITY.	NATIONALITY IS NOT A MANDATORY FIELD IN THE DEPARTMENT'S BUSINESS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM.
Care Quality Commission	92	
NHS England	88	
NHS Digital	Of 2,753 employees, 1,462 have confirmed their nationality. Of that 1,462, 40 have confirmed that their nationality is one of the other EU countries.	

NAME OF ORGANISATION	NUMBER OF CITIZENS OF OTHER EU COUNTRIES WORKING IN EACH ORGANISATION	COMMENTS
'CENTRAL' DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH	31 STAFF ARE IDENTIFIED AS CITIZENS OF ANOTHER EU COUNTRY (IRELAND) BUT 226 PEOPLE HAVE NOT DECLARED NATIONALITY.	NATIONALITY IS NOT A MANDATORY FIELD IN THE DEPARTMENT'S BUSINESS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM.
Health Education England	Of 2,598 staff records, 871 record nationality. Of those, 44 staff are 'other EU Nationals'.	
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Authority	5 or fewer	
Health Research Authority	5 or fewer	
Human Tissue Authority	5 or fewer	
Monitor*	53	Five or fewer employee records do not record nationality.
National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)	This information is not collected by NICE.	As other EU citizens have the same working rights as United Kingdom citizens, including not requiring visas, we have not needed to collect and retain this information about employees.
Public Health England	345	This is based on data from ESR (Electronic Staff Record) on the nationality field.
Medicines & Healthcare products Regulatory Agency	106	

*Monitor is now part of NHS Improvement, however it is still a legal entity in its own right.

■ Diabetes: Drugs

Keith Vaz:

[\[45824\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how much the NHS spent on drugs related to diabetes in the most recent year for which figures are available.

David Mowat:

In the 2015/16 financial year, the total net ingredient cost of prescription items prescribed in England and dispensed in the community in the United Kingdom for drugs listed within the British National Formulary section 6.1 "Drugs used in diabetes" (using the classification system prior to edition 70), was £956.7 million¹.

¹ Source: Prescriptions for Diabetes, England 2005/06 to 2015/16, NHS Digital
<http://digital.nhs.uk/catalogue/PUB21158/pres-diab-eng-200506-201516.pdf>

■ Drugs: Israel**Sir Eric Pickles:**[\[45475\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will make an estimate of the annual (a) volume and (b) value of medicines supplied by Israeli-owned or Israeli-based companies to the NHS.

Nicola Blackwood:

This information is not collected centrally.

■ European Medicines Agency**Andrew Gwynne:**[\[46075\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether his Department expects the European Medicines Agency London headquarters to be relocated.

David Mowat:

The future arrangements which apply in relation to European Union (EU) institutions based in the United Kingdom should be determined once the United Kingdom has left the EU. It is too early to speculate on the future location of the European Medicines Agency.

■ Gender Recognition: Medical Treatments**Richard Burden:**[\[45469\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to localise provision of treatment for transgender people in order to minimise the distance patients have to travel to access treatment.

David Mowat:

Gender identity services are specialised services, and as such are commissioned by NHS England rather than local commissioners. Specialised services are those provided in relatively few hospitals, accessed by comparatively small numbers of patients. In the interests of safety and ensuring good, quality outcomes for patients it is appropriate that they are only located in specialist hospitals that have teams of clinical staff with the appropriate expertise and skills. However, NHS England is aware that issues of access and flexibility are important to patients, and for this reason our approach to commissioning specialised services includes a consideration of what elements of care can be safely provided close to the patient's home where possible, either in local hospitals or in primary care and usually in collaboration with the specialised clinic.

For example, transgender people who need ongoing hormone treatment are able to go to their general practitioners (GPs) for their regular prescription, and GPs are also expected to provide basic physical examinations and blood tests for transgender people as recommended by specialist gender identity clinics. This approach to delivering local care to transgender people was recently endorsed by the General Medical Council in its Guidance for Doctors Treating Transgender People (March 2016) which can be found at:

<http://www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/28851.asp>

■ General Practitioners: Broadband

Tim Farron: [\[46076\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many GP surgeries do not have access to a high-speed broadband internet connection in each region.

Nicola Blackwood:

NHS Digital does not keep records on the availability of high-speed broadband at all general practice (GP) sites. However NHS Digital does have records for broadband services provided by the Department to GP sites through the BT N3 arrangements.

Across England, some 6,021 GP sites receive broadband services through the National Health Service N3 connection arrangements; of these 6,010 GP sites are defined as high speed (i.e. 512 kilobits per second or greater).

■ General Practitioners: Homelessness

Ruth Smeeth: [\[45514\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the effect on accident and emergency services waiting times of homeless people being unable to access GP services.

Ruth Smeeth: [\[45515\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what measures are in place to monitor the ability of homeless people to access GP services.

Ruth Smeeth: [\[45516\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what guidance has been issued to GP practices to ensure that they are aware of their responsibilities and obligations towards homeless people.

Nicola Blackwood:

NHS England has published guidance for general practitioners reminding them of their responsibilities towards homeless people and, in particular, reminding them that documentary evidence of identity or an address is not a requirement of registration (*Patient registration – standard operating principles for primary medical care (general practice)* (2015).

Promoting better access to health care services for homeless and other vulnerable people is part of our commitment to tackle health inequalities and improve the health of the poorest fastest, including through the Department's inclusion health programme.

This programme published jointly with the Royal College of General Practitioners an evidence-based commissioning guide for clinical commissioning groups and health and wellbeing boards *Improving access to health care for Gypsies and Travellers, homeless people and sex workers* (2013). This guide also reminded commissioners of the importance of patient monitoring as part of the aim of providing equality throughout the health system.

The Department's Office of the Chief Analyst report found that accident and emergency attendances amongst single homeless people are five times greater than the general public and 3.2 times more likely to result in hospital admissions (*Healthcare for Single Homeless People*, 2010).

■ General Practitioners: Insurance

Mrs Sheryll Murray: [\[45400\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment his Department has made of the effect on general practitioners of the affordability of personal medical indemnity.

Mrs Sheryll Murray: [\[45401\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether his Department holds data on the number of general practitioners who have ceased practising in the last five years as a result of the costs of personal medical indemnity in (a) England and (b) each English region.

Mrs Sheryll Murray: [\[45402\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what representations he has received from general practitioners on the affordability of personal medical indemnity in England.

David Mowat:

The Department and NHS England committed in the recently published General Practice Forward View to review the current arrangements for indemnity cover for general practitioners (GPs).

To take this review forward, a General Practice Indemnity Steering Group was established by the Department with NHS England to look at the rising cost of indemnity, which resulted in an announcement that NHS England would provide a financial support package this year and next to assist GPs with rises they may be facing in their indemnity premia. NHS England also committed to run a winter indemnity scheme in 2016-17, and to provide support to GPs experiencing indemnity inflation as a result of their out-of-hours activity. A number of other measures to address the root causes of rising indemnity costs were also announced.

This review gathered evidence about the impact of the rising cost of indemnity on GPs, and specifically sought representations from GPs via a survey which asked about their personal experiences of indemnity costs and how this had affected them. The survey received over 4,500 responses from individual GPs. The review also held several discussions with GP representative groups.

The survey of GPs suggested that indemnity costs rose, on average, by around 7% per annum in the last five years. Data published by the medical defence organisations, who

provide indemnity cover to GPs, suggested that this inflation was closer to 10% per year. The review judged the latter figure to be more accurate. The review also considered funding for expenses as part of the GP contract, which in 2016-17 was topped up by £33 million specifically for increased indemnity costs. The review concluded that overall, in the last five years, GP indemnity costs have risen as a proportion of GP income.

The Department holds no data on the number of GPs who have ceased practising in the last five years as a result of the costs of personal medical indemnity in England and each English region.

The survey of GPs indicated that the rising cost of indemnity may sometimes deter GPs for taking on additional sessions, and some GPs told the review that the cost of indemnity may also influence their willingness to join the profession, to remain in the profession, or to increase their workload.

■ Haematological Cancer

Steve McCabe:

[\[45592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the sample size from which NHS England concluded that second stem cell transplants for patients with blood cancer will be one of the lowest cost benefit priorities for treatment.

David Mowat:

NHS England has advised the Department that specialised services policy proposals are built on the findings of independent reviews of published evidence. In the case of the proposal for second stem cell transplants for relapsed disease, the evidence review identified relevant peer-reviewed international studies – including data from the British Society for Blood and Bone Marrow Transplantation - from 2005 relating to around 5,000 patients. As with all policy propositions, the draft policy and evidence review which supported it was subject to public consultation.

■ Health Services: Mid Sussex

Sir Nicholas Soames:

[\[45095\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what progress has been made on delivering the integration of primary and community services with seven-day access in Mid Sussex constituency since 2015-16.

David Mowat:

NHS England advises that it is working closely with NHS Horsham and Mid Sussex CCG and local general practitioner (GP) practices to implement seven-day access to primary care. All practices within the Mid Sussex constituency are already operating some level of extended access to patients, including appointments before 8am, evening appointments, and Saturday appointments.

Plans to further integrate local primary and community services are well advanced. Community teams are coming together with groups of GP practices to create a more co-ordinated service. This will improve patient experience and outcomes, ensuring that

people see the right healthcare practitioner first time in the right setting, rather than having multiple assessments and appointments.

This work will inform the development of the Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) for Sussex and East Surrey, which will determine how the local health and care system will evolve over the coming years. The development of the STP is being led locally by clinical commissioning groups, health providers, local authorities and other local partners, and the Department would encourage local hon. Members to contribute to the process.

■ Health Visitors

Luciana Berger: [\[46005\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many health visitors were employed in (a) Liverpool and (b) England in each year since 2010.

Mr Philip Dunne:

NHS Digital provides information on the number of nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff employed in the National Health Service in England.

The following table shows the number of full time equivalent health visitors directly employed in NHS organisations in Liverpool and England between May 2010 and May 2016.

The table does not include data for health visitors employed by organisations such as local authorities that do not use the Electronic Staff Record but do provide NHS-funded services.

Attachments:

1. PQ46005 health visitors table [PQ46005 health visitors table.xlsx]

■ Katrina Percy

Sir Nicholas Soames: [\[45979\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what discussions he has had with NHS Improvement on Katrina Percy since 7 June 2016.

Mr Jeremy Hunt:

NHS Improvement (NHSI) regularly updates me on the performance of both the organisations for which it has responsibility and those which it regulates using agreed frameworks. I meet regularly with the Chief Executive of NHSI as well as with a number of the organisation's other senior leaders. Our discussions cover a number of issues falling under NHSI's remit, including, where appropriate, the senior personnel in organisations for which it is responsible.

■ Lyme Disease: Diagnosis

Tim Farron: [\[46078\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to improve GP training for the diagnosis of Lyme disease.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The content and standard of medical training is the responsibility of the General Medical Council (GMC), which is an independent statutory body. The GMC has the general function of promoting high standards of education and co-ordinating all stages of education to ensure that medical students and newly qualified doctors are equipped with the knowledge, skills and attitudes essential for professional practice. This includes recognising and treating Lyme disease.

The training curriculum for general practitioners (GPs) is written by the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP), and has to meet the standards set by the GMC. Whilst the RCGP curriculum does not highlight specific conditions for GPs to be aware of, it instead emphasises the skills and approaches that a GP must develop in order to ensure accurate and timely diagnoses and treatment plans for their patients.

GPs have responsibility for maintaining their continuing professional development, ensuring that they can provide high quality care to all patients.

■ Lyme Disease: Screening**Tim Farron:**[\[46077\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether his Department has plans to improve the quality of Lyme disease tests.

Nicola Blackwood:

The National Health Service and Public Health England (PHE) use well established validated diagnostic tests for Lyme disease that are highly reproducible between laboratories. International External Quality Assurance schemes are in place to ensure consistency between different tests centres.

However, Lyme disease is a complex infection; we recognise that there are real challenges in diagnosis and we are further strengthening the evidence base. Commercial manufacturers and international academic groups have research programmes into improved tests. PHE continuously reviews new Lyme serology tests and will validate and implement new tests if appropriate.

■ Malnutrition**Margaret Ferrier:**[\[45529\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many people were admitted to hospital with malnutrition in England in 2015-16.

Nicola Blackwood:

Published data on finished admission episodes with a primary diagnosis of malnutrition for 2015-16 are not yet available. We do not hold data on the number of people admitted to hospital with malnutrition. Hospital Episode Statistics record admissions to hospital rather the number of patients, as a person may have more than one admission within a certain period.

■ NHS: Staff

Ms Diane Abbott: [\[45501\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of current (a) healthcare professional staffing levels and (b) resources to achieve a seven-day NHS.

David Mowat:

We have provided the National Health Service in England with £10 billion in real terms additional funding by 2020-21. This fully funds the NHS's Five Year Forward View, including delivery of seven day services in hospitals. These are urgent and emergency care, non-elective hospital services which are of the same high quality at the weekend as during the week.

It will be for local commissioners and providers to decide how to organise their services to meet the standards for seven day services in hospitals. The Government is not imposing a "one size fits all" model. At a national level, the Department is working with NHS England, NHS Improvement and Health Education England to produce a summary of the workforce implications of implementing the four priority clinical standards for urgent and emergency care services in hospitals, which it will publish by the end of the calendar year.

The Government has committed to increasing the primary and community care workforce by 10,000 by 2020, including an additional 5,000 doctors in general practice. NHS England will provide over £500 million of recurrent funding by 2020-21, on top of current primary medical care allocations, to enable clinical commissioning groups to commission and fund extra capacity across England. This is to ensure that by 2020 everyone has access to general practitioner services, including sufficient routine appointments at evenings and weekends to meet locally determined demand, alongside effective access to out of hours and urgent care services.

■ NHS: Sustainable Development

Diana Johnson: [\[45274\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will publish the NHS Sustainability and Transformation Plan for Coast, Humber and Vale.

David Mowat:

Local areas will submit their plans to the national health and care bodies for consideration in October, with further public engagement and consultation taking place from this point. It is expected that the plans will be published between late October and the end of the year.

Diana Johnson: [\[45275\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many full-time equivalent staff from (a) his Department, (b) NHS England, (c) NHS commissioners, (d) NHS providers and (e) local authorities are working on the NHS Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) for Coast,

Humber and Vale; and how much has been spent to date on the Coast, Humber and Vale STP.

David Mowat:

The information is not held centrally. The number of staff working on and resources allocated to local Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs) will vary at different stages of the process. These are locally led health and care transformation programmes and resources relating to each STP will be determined at a local level.

Diana Johnson:

[\[45277\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 28 June 2016 to Question 40553, whether (a) local Health and Wellbeing Boards, (b) Clinical Commissioning Groups, (c) NHS Trusts, (d) hon. Members and (e) members of the public will be consulted ahead of the implementation of Sustainability and Transformation Plans.

David Mowat:

Clinical commissioning groups and National Health Service trusts have come together with local authorities to decide how to improve health and care services in their local area. This is a unique exercise in collaboration, with local doctors, hospitals and councils working together to decide the way forward in consultation with local communities.

We expect all local leaders to be regularly talking to members of the public and stakeholders, including hon. Members. It is vital that people are able to shape the future of their local services. No changes to the services people currently receive will be made without local engagement and, where required, consultation. There are longstanding assurance processes in place to make sure this happens. The national health and care bodies are about to publish engagement guidance for local areas developing Sustainability and Transformation Plans.

■ Obesity: Children

Ms Diane Abbott:

[\[45502\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what discussions he has had with his Cabinet colleagues on including measures to tackle price promotions in the childhood obesity strategy prior to publication of that strategy.

Ms Diane Abbott:

[\[45503\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what discussions he has had with his Cabinet colleagues on measures to protect children from junk food marketing.

Mr Philip Dunne:

We have worked closely with other Government Departments in developing *Childhood Obesity: A Plan for Action*. Its policies are informed by the latest research and evidence, including from the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition report *Carbohydrates and Health*, Public Health England's evidence package *Sugar reduction: the evidence for action*, debates in this House and various reports from key stakeholders including the Health Select Committee.

Copies of *Carbohydrates and Health* and *Sugar reduction: the evidence for action* are attached and are available at:

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

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

Attachments:

1. PHE Sugar reduction [PHE Sugar reduction The evidence for action.pdf]
2. SACN Carbohydrates and Health [SACN Carbohydrates and Health.pdf]

■ **Paracetamol**

James Cartlidge: [\[45859\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the total cost to the NHS was of paracetamol prescribed by GPs in each of the last five years.

David Mowat:

The cost of paracetamol prescription items dispensed in primary care is provided in the following table. This includes prescriptions written by general practitioners (GPs), nurses, pharmacists. Separate figures are provided for the cost of primary care dispensed prescriptions that were written by GPs and GP locums.

NET INGREDIENT COST (NIC) FOR PARACETAMOL PRESCRIBED IN PRIMARY CARE, IN ENGLAND, AND DISPENSED IN THE UNITED KINGDOM, AS DEFINED BY BRITISH NATIONAL FORMULARY SECTION 4.7.1 *NON-OPIOID ANALGESICS AND COMPOUND ANALGESIC PREPARATIONS* ¹

Year	NIC (£)	
	Total primary care ²	GPs and GP locums only
2015/16	84,693,667	83,205,986
2014/15	86,703,829	85,481,148
2013/14	82,949,620	81,968,381
2012/13	73,607,735	72,788,032

Source: The Prescribing Analysis and CosT tool (ePACT) system provided by the NHS Business Services Authority.

Notes:

¹ The data available is a rolling 60 month dataset. Therefore, information is available for only the last four complete financial years 2012/13 to 2015/16.

² Excluding prescriptions written in hospitals/clinics that are dispensed in the community, prescriptions dispensed in hospitals, dental prescribing and private prescriptions.

■ Prescriptions: Fees and Charges

Tom Blenkinsop: [\[45927\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether he has had any meetings with representatives of the Prescription Charges Coalition.

David Mowat:

My noble Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Lord Prior) met with representatives of the Prescription Charges Coalition on 25 May 2016.

■ Prisoners: Health Services

Luciana Berger: [\[46006\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many prisoners in (a) Merseyside and (b) London spent more than six weeks in prison in-patient units for (i) mental and (ii) physical health conditions in each year since 2010.

Nicola Blackwood:

This information is not held centrally.

■ Slaughterhouses: Licensing

Tom Blenkinsop: [\[45945\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will ask the Foods Standards Agency to review the licence granted for BHM Food Group Ltd to operate an abattoir in Boosbeck.

Nicola Blackwood:

BHM Food Group Ltd are no longer approved to operate as a slaughterhouse. They remain conditionally approved as a cutting plant and minced meat establishment. A third and final approval assessment will be conducted by 11 November 2016 to check their compliance against all relevant requirements of food law. If they have not met all these requirements their application for full approval will be refused.

The Food Standards Agency is aware of concerns raised by local residents regarding the environmental impact of a slaughterhouse sited within the village of Boosbeck.

However, the Agency is not the competent authority for environmental hygiene matters which inform planning consent. Both of these roles (Environmental Health and Planning) are fulfilled by the local authority.

■ Suicide

Grant Shapps: [\[45547\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what progress the Government has made on reducing the time taken to publish UK suicide statistics.

Nicola Blackwood:

The Office for National Statistics holds mortality data for England and Wales and is responsible for publishing information related to suicides. It works with coroners to improve the timeliness of collating and publishing registered deaths by suicide. For

example, the Office for National Statistics published the deaths by suicide registered in 2015 for England and Wales earlier than usual on 7 September. The statistics are published on the Office for National Statistics' website:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/causesofdeath/adhocs/006086suicideinenglandandwales2015registrations>

To improve the timeliness of statistical evidence the Office for National Statistics has recently began publishing provisional quarterly data on deaths by suicide for England and Wales and plans to do this in each and every quarter.

Suicide statistics for Scotland are produced by National Records of Scotland and in Northern Ireland by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. When all data is available, the Office for National Statistics collates this information to produce United Kingdom suicide statistics.

Luciana Berger: [46007]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many deaths by suicide have been recorded in England among people within (a) seven days, (b) 14 days and (c) one month of being released from prison for each year since 2010.

Luciana Berger: [46008]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many deaths by suicide have been recorded in England among children aged under 18 within one month of being released from youth custody in each year since 2010.

Nicola Blackwood:

This information is not held centrally.

■ Surgery

Mrs Anne Main: [45270]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the potential benefits of mobile surgical health theatres; and whether such centres are included in the Sustainability and Transformation Plans.

David Mowat:

Under the Directed Enhanced Services directions to NHS England, there is a Minor Surgery Scheme, the underlying purpose of which is to ensure that a wide range of minor surgical procedures are made available as part of the primary medical services provided throughout England. Minor surgery is also one of the additional services which are set out in the General Medical Services Contract Regulations. It is for local areas to decide whether they include the development of these centres in their Sustainability and Transformation Plan.

HOME OFFICE■ **Asylum****Mr Barry Sheerman:**[\[44718\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of refugees the UK will accept in each of the next five years.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The migration crisis has seen a significant increase in the number of people claiming asylum across Europe, including in the UK. In the year ending June 2016, the Home Office granted protection to 11,700 people at initial decision, excluding appeals decisions. Whilst we cannot predict the number of future asylum claims made spontaneously, our approach will continue to be to intervene at every point in the migrant journey to address push factors, tackle organised crime, and provide humanitarian aid to the regions most affected.

At the same time, we are committed to resettling vulnerable refugees who cannot effectively be supported in their region of origin via one of our four schemes. Under the Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement scheme, the UK will resettle 20,000 individuals by the end of this Parliament. We have already resettled 2,646 since the scheme was expanded in October 2015. In addition, we will resettle up to 3,000 individuals by the end of this Parliament under the new Vulnerable Children Resettlement Scheme from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, with several hundred arriving in the first year. Children will be resettled with their family or carers where appropriate. Under the Gateway resettlement scheme, we aim to resettle around 750 refugees per year who are in protracted situations where there is little prospect of being able to return home. The Mandate resettlement scheme is open to refugees who have a close family member in the UK who is willing to sponsor them. No overall quota is set for the Mandate scheme.

■ **Asylum: Children****Yvette Cooper:**[\[40666\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate her Department has made of the number of asylum-seeking minors in France with family members in the UK.

James Brokenshire:

[Holding answer 27 June 2016]: Please refer to the answer given for PQ 40665 which was answered on the 27th June 2016.

Catherine West:[\[45935\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many (a) men, (b) women and (c) children have entered the UK under the refugee family reunion rules in each of the last three years.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The family reunion policy allows those granted refugee status or humanitarian protection in the UK to sponsor their pre-flight family members, i.e. spouse or partner and children under the age of 18, who formed part of the family unit before the sponsor fled their country, to reunite with them in the UK.

Information on how many men, women and children have entered the UK under refugee family reunion provisions in the Immigration Rules is not captured in our published data and would require a manual review. This information cannot therefore be provided without exceeding proportionate costs.

■ **Asylum: Europe**

Richard Burden: [\[45836\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with (a) Germany, (b) Sweden and (c) other European countries on best practice for the management of the system for relocating refugees.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The UK has not opted in to any of the EU relocation proposals. The Government remains of the view that relocation of asylum seekers between Member States risks creating unintended consequences or perverse incentives for people to put their lives into the hands of traffickers in order to get to an EU Member State.

However, we continue to work closely with EU partners on addressing all aspects of the migration crisis. We are supporting the implementation of the EU-Turkey agreement and border hotspots, including through the deployment of UK officials to support Frontex and European Asylum Support Office missions in Greece and Italy. We also continue to work with other EU Member States to improve the operation of the Dublin Regulation, in particular the provisions on family reunification.

■ **Asylum: Families**

Richard Burden: [\[45841\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what work her Department is doing with other countries to support refugees with family members in the UK with their asylum claims.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

Those granted refugee status or humanitarian protection in the UK, are able to sponsor their pre-flight family members to join them under the family reunion policy. This includes those granted humanitarian protection in the UK under one of our resettlement schemes. Those applying under these provisions can use one of UK Visas and Immigration's global network of over 200 Visa Application Centres. Information on how to apply is available on GOV.UK at: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-uk-visa>

Family members applying to join relatives under family reunion provisions do not have an asylum claim in the UK. There is no provision in the Immigration Rules for someone to be given a visa to travel to the UK to seek asylum or humanitarian protection.

We are providing support to other European countries to reunite family members in the UK under the Dublin Regulations. For example we support the French, Greek and Italian authorities and others to speed up existing family reunification processes or implement new processes where necessary for unaccompanied children. We have seconded a UK official to Greece; we have a long-standing secondee working in Italy and will shortly be seconding another official to the French Interior Ministry to support these efforts.

■ **Asylum: Housing**

Stuart C. McDonald:

[\[45986\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has conducted surveys with asylum seekers accommodated under her Compass contracts on what they felt about their (a) housing and (b) treatment by staff.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The overarching purpose of the COMPASS Inspection Regime is to ensure that the accommodation provided is safe, habitable, fit for purpose; that the overall service described in the COMPASS contracts is being delivered and to ensure that Service Users feel safe, secure and know how to raise concerns should they occur.

Following on from the audit into asylum seeker accommodation in Middlesbrough, UKVI have trialled various methods of gathering, recording and responding to service users' feedback relating to service delivery as part of improving their inspection regime.

Following analysis from the trials conducted UKVI intends to agree a formal process which is to be rolled out across all provider Regions.

Chris Stephens:

[\[46027\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 20 July 2016 to Question 42791, if she will publish the list her Department holds of the registered social landlords being used as at 30 August 2016 for the provision of compass accommodation to asylum seekers.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

Since 2012 UKVI has discharged their statutory duty to provide destitute asylum seekers with accommodation and transportation via a suite of contracts known as COMPASS Contracts.

There are six COMPASS Contracts delivered by three providers: G4S deliver services in the North East, Yorkshire & Humberside Region and the Midlands and East of England Region; Serco deliver services in the North West Region and Scotland and Northern Ireland. Clearsprings Ready Homes (formerly known as Clearel Ltd) deliver services in London and the South of England Region and Wales.

Whilst none of the COMPASS accommodation providers are registered social landlords, all are contractually required to provide safe, habitable, fit for purpose and correctly equipped accommodation to comply with the standards outlined within Housing legislation (regardless of whether the provider is registered as a social landlord).

■ Asylum: Religious Freedom

Mr Nigel Dodds: [\[46188\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have been granted asylum in the UK on the grounds of a well-founded fear of persecution on account of religion in each year since 2010.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

When an individual makes an asylum claim on religious grounds it is recorded in the interview records and any written representations they provide. Data on asylum claims on religious grounds is not systematically recorded on the Casework Information Database (CID) and therefore it is not possible to provide a breakdown of information in this way without individual analysis of thousands of casework files at disproportionate cost.

■ Children: Protection

Helen Goodman: [\[45914\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what public protection orders or other legal instruments are available to prevent adults without violent or sexual convictions working with children in non-governed extracurricular sports or activities.

Sarah Newton:

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) is able to bar individuals who pose a risk from working in certain roles with children, regardless of whether they have committed an offence. In addition, individuals working with children are eligible for Enhanced DBS certificates which, alongside criminal records information, disclose any non-conviction information that a chief officer believes to be relevant, for example Sexual Risk Orders.

The Government introduced Sexual Risk Orders (SRO) to protect the public from those who pose a risk of sexual harm but have not been convicted. The key elements of a SRO are that it may be made by the magistrates' court on application by the police or National Crime Agency where an individual has done an act of a sexual nature and, as a result, is considered to pose a risk of harm to the public in the UK.

An SRO can be applied to any individual who poses a risk of sexual harm in the UK or abroad, even if they have never been convicted. An SRO may prohibit the person from doing anything described in it and any prohibition must be necessary for protecting the public in the UK from sexual harm. The Home Secretary has issued statutory guidance in relation to the orders to the police and the National Crime Agency.

■ Hanif Qureshi

Siobhain McDonagh: [\[44144\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department took to assess the grounds for granting a visa to Mufti Hanif Qureshi.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

All visa applications are considered on their individual merits and in line with the Immigration Rules.

In order to safeguard an individual's personal information and comply with the Data Protection Act 1998 the Home Office is limited in what information it can provide when the request is made by someone who is not the applicant. The Home Office is therefore unable to provide the information requested.

■ Immigrants: Detainees

Kate Osamor:

[\[46155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many detainees who have medical evidence that they are vulnerable persons have suffered (a) state and (b) non-state violence.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

Information on the reasons for a claim for asylum is not readily accessible from central statistical records and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost through a manual search of individual case files.

■ Immigration

Alison Thewliss:

[\[46196\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the service standard is for cases handled by the Complex Casework Directorate.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The Complex Casework Directorate has a published service standard for in country Administrative Reviews. The target is to decide 95% of all applications within 28 days.

■ Immigration Controls: Ireland

Jim Shannon:

[\[46172\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department plans to take to support the management of the Northern Ireland-Republic of Ireland border when the UK leaves the EU.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The Common Travel Area (CTA) arrangement pre-dates the EU and we remain committed to it. The Government has been clear that there will be no immediate changes to our practices surrounding the CTA. During her last visit to Northern Ireland the Prime Minister was clear that a practical solution in the interests of all parts of the UK should be found to manage the border between Northern Ireland and Ireland once the UK has left the EU. The Prime Minister and the Taoiseach have reiterated their intention for both countries to work together to maintain the CTA.

■ Immigration: Detainees

Kate Osamor: [\[46191\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the finding of the Review into the Welfare in Detention of Vulnerable Persons, A report to the Home Office by Stephen Shaw, published in January 2016, paragraph 12, that rule 35 of the Detention Centre Rules does not protect vulnerable people who find themselves in detention.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The Government has carefully considered the recommendations made by Stephen Shaw in his review report, and has taken these into account in introducing revised guidance and its new policy on adults at risk in immigration detention. Revised guidance on Rule 35 of the Detention Centre Rules 2001 was published on 12 September 2016. It will support improved reporting quality by doctors working in immigration removal centres and improved consideration by Home Office caseworkers of those reports. The adults at risk policy, which also came into force on 12 September, strikes the right balance between protecting vulnerable individuals and maintaining effective and proportionate immigration control.

Kate Osamor: [\[46213\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effect of applying the narrower Article 1 definition of torture in the draft guidance on adults at risk on the task of medical practitioners in immigration removal centres and UK Visa and Immigration caseworkers in determining where the threshold between torture and ill-treatment lies in any particular case.

Kate Osamor: [\[46214\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of whether there are contradictions in applying the Article 1 definition of torture alongside implementing Shaw Recommendation 9, the presumption against the detention for victims of rape and other sexual or gender based violence, including female genital mutilation, for which the identity of the perpetrator is irrelevant.

Kate Osamor: [\[46215\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effect of narrowing the definition of torture in the draft guidance on adults at risk on people who have been subjected to (a) discriminatory treatment in their community as a result of their sexual orientation, transgender identity, mental or other disability, (b) ethnic, racial, religious inter-communal violence including genocide, (c) political violence at the hand of non-state actors, (d) male rape and sexual violence and (e) human trafficking.

Kate Osamor: [\[46216\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what consideration she has given to the UNHCR Guidelines on the Applicable Criteria and Standards relating to the Detention of

Asylum-Seekers and Alternatives to Detention when deciding to narrow the definition of torture in the draft guidance on adults at risk.

Kate Osamor:

[\[46217\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effect of narrowing the definition of torture in the draft guidance on adults at risk on the ability of her Department to meet Stephen Shaw's recommendation to adopt a wider definition of those at risk.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

For the purposes of the Government's "adults at risk in immigration detention" policy, which was implemented on 12 September, the Government has adopted a definition of torture in line with that set out in the United Nations Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT). This covers acts of torture carried out by, or on behalf of state authorities and, in guidance issued to Home Office staff, to doctors working in immigration removal centres, and to other staff, it has been made clear that the definition also covers acts of torture or ill-treatment carried out by groups exploiting instability and civil war to hold territory. It does not, however, cover acts of violence carried out in the course of, for example, neighbourhood disputes. The definition employed most accurately reflects the need to protect those who are most likely to be deleteriously affected by detention – that is, those who have been harmed by the state (or by an organisation exercising similar control) and for whom detention is most likely to be redolent of the harm they have suffered. In addition, individuals will fall within the scope of the adults at risk policy if the harm to which they have been subjected causes them to suffer from a condition which also falls within the "indicators of risk" set out in the policy, regardless of whether it falls within the strict definition of "torture" and regardless of the perpetrator of the violence. The policy recognises a broad range of groups of individuals as those likely to be particularly vulnerable to harm in detention without necessarily having to define them as victims of torture.

In making the decision to employ the UNCAT definition of torture, the Government took into account a range of considerations, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees guidelines, but concluded that the UNCAT definition provided the appropriate level of protection. The Government believes that this approach is fully in line with Stephen Shaw's recommendations in respect of vulnerable people. The adults at risk policy as a whole represents a broadening of the scope of individuals considered vulnerable, by virtue of the inclusion within the list of indicators of risk set out in the policy of, for example, victims of sexual or gender based violence (including female genital mutilation), transsexual individuals, and those suffering from post traumatic stress disorder. Overall, the impact of the adoption of the UNCAT definition on different groups of vulnerable individuals will depend on the circumstances of the particular case. The Government does not anticipate that it will have a disproportionate impact on any specific group. In particular, the Government does not see that there are contradictions in applying the new definition of torture alongside the inclusion in the policy, as an indicator of risk, being a victim of sexual or gender based violence. Although the

perpetrator of the violence is, by necessity, a key part of the definition of torture, the adults at risk policy focuses as a whole on the impact on the individual and on whether detention is appropriate in their particular case. Home Office caseworkers have been provided with training and communications on the new adults at risk policy, including in respect of the definition of torture. Guidance on the adults at risk policy has been issued, including to the commissioners of healthcare in Immigration Removal Centres.

■ Passports

Michael Fabricant: [\[45361\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has made an assessment of the lead time required for the introduction of a redesigned British passport; and if she will make a statement.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The UK passport is changed every five years for security reasons. The lead time for a redesigned passport is dependent on the level of changes to be made.

■ Radicalism

Martyn Day: [\[43829\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will take steps to (a) ensure effective consultation with the Muslim community on the provision of the proposed Counter-Extremism and Safeguarding Bill and (b) respond to any concerns of that community on those provisions during proceedings on that Bill.

Sarah Newton:

[Holding answer 5 September 2016]: As announced in the Queen's Speech debates we will consult widely on all the provisions of the Counter Extremism and Safeguarding Bill announced in the Queen's Speech before legislation is introduced.

We want to hear the views of a wide range of groups, including the Muslim community, and will make sure they have sufficient time to properly consider the proposals and that full consideration is given to all views expressed.

■ Refugees: Children

Dr Lisa Cameron: [\[R\] \[45795\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what psychological support the Government is providing to lone children in Europe.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The responsibility for unaccompanied children in Europe lies with the Member State in which they are present. The UK can only contribute in ways agreed with the authorities in the relevant Member State and in compliance with EU law.

The UK has established a £10 million Refugee Children Fund for Europe to support the needs of vulnerable refugee and migrant children arriving in Europe. The fund includes targeted support to meet the specific needs of un-accompanied and separated children.

Support will include identifying children in need, providing safe places for at risk children and services such as counselling and legal advice.

■ **Refugees: Yazidis**

Diana Johnson:

[\[45964\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Yazidi refugees have been supported into the UK from (a) Syria and (b) Iraq through the (i) Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme, (ii) Gateway Protection Programme and (iii) Mandate Refugee Scheme.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

We continue to work closely with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to identify appropriate cases that they deem in need of resettlement for the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme, the Gateway Protection Programme and the Mandate Refugee Scheme.

Statistics on arrivals under each of these schemes are published in the regular quarterly Immigration Statistics in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. The next set of statistics will be in the quarterly release on 1 December 2016 and will cover the period July – September 2016. We do not publish a breakdown of these statistics by religion or ethnicity.

■ **UK Border Force: Staff**

David Mackintosh:

[\[45679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that Border Force has adequate staffing levels at major ports and airports to ensure (a) high levels of security and (b) efficient processing of visitors into the UK.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The United Kingdom's border controls are among the most stringent in the world. Border Force employs a rigorous and effective control regime at the UK's borders, predicated on a policy of carrying out full checks of all arriving passengers and an intelligence-led approach to searching for contraband goods that ensures resources are used as effectively as possible. We have pursued an ambitious programme of reform at the border to keep this country safe, with Border Force transforming its working practices, command and control and leadership. Many regions have flexible mobile teams who stand ready to respond and support local ports in the event of such pressures. Currently, Border Force's performance for clearing passengers exceeds the national service level agreement for wait times for both EEA and non-EEA passengers.

We have also invested in new technology UK to enhance security and improve the service delivered to legitimate passengers and deliver efficiencies. 176 ePassport Gates are operational at 18 UK airport terminals with the opening of the ePassport Gates in Heathrow T3 on 21 July. A total of 27.2 million passengers used the ePassport gates in the past year (to end of July 2016), which represents 50% of eligible passengers. This is up from 18.7 million for the same period ending July 2015.

■ Visas

Tom Elliott: [\[44575\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure that there is not a backlog of visa applications after the UK leaves the EU.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

There have been no changes in the requirements for European nationals entering or currently residing in the UK, nor of British citizens elsewhere in the EU. The precise way in which these requirements may change following the UK's exit from the EU is yet to be determined.

The UK's visa operation is resourced to meet demand, and we will ensure that any operational implications of the UK's exit from the EU are fully factored into business planning.

■ Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre

Kate Osamor: [\[46192\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many detainees currently in Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre who claim to have suffered persecution in their home country claim to have suffered (a) state and (b) non-state violence.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

Information on the reasons for a claim for asylum is not readily accessible from central statistical records and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost through a manual search of individual case files.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

■ Bangladesh: Cancer

Jim Fitzpatrick: [\[45642\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what estimate her Department has made of the proportion of the Government's aid to Bangladesh which is allocated to tackle child cancer in that country; and what assessment her Department has made of the effect of that aid.

Rory Stewart:

In 2015/16, 11.5% of DFID's programme spent in Bangladesh was spent on the Government of Bangladesh's five year Health Sector Development programme. This includes support to cancer patients.

It is not possible to identify the exact amount of the UK government's support for child cancer as this is part of many other diseases managed by the Health sector development programme. However, overall deaths in children less than 5 years of age are decreasing fast in Bangladesh. In 2007, the under-five death rate was 65 per 1000 live births. In 2014 it reduced to 46 deaths per 1000 live births. Bangladesh achieved the national

target (48/ 1000 live births) for the millennium development goal (MDG-4) for child deaths, ahead of time.

■ **Department for International Development: Secondment**

Stephen Doughty: [\[45925\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how many full-time equivalent officials in her Department have been seconded to the Department for Exiting the European Union; and what the grades are of those officials.

Rory Stewart:

One member of DFID staff has taken up a Grade 6 role within the Department for Exiting the European Union on a loan basis. We expect that several DFID staff will be strong candidates for other roles in the new Department currently being advertised.

■ **Department for International Development: UK Withdrawal from EU**

Stephen Doughty: [\[45922\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment she has made of which policy areas in her Department will be affected by the UK vote to leave the EU.

Rory Stewart:

The vast majority of DFID's work is not done via the EU. We remain committed to spending 0.7% of our national income on development assistance, and to achieving the UN's Global Goals and ending extreme poverty by 2030. We will continue to help countries in the developing world leave aid dependency behind to become our trading partners of the future.

■ **Developing Countries: Renewable Energy**

Daniel Zeichner: [\[46228\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, if she will increase investment in decentralised renewable energy to benefit the world's poorest people.

James Wharton:

The UK Government is playing a leading role in improving energy access in developing countries, including through our Energy Africa campaign which is working with solar firms to help them access the finance they need to expand their businesses, create jobs and help reach millions of people in Africa without electricity access.

■ **Kurds: Internally Displaced People**

Jim Shannon: [\[45875\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what funding her Department provides for medical support for internally displaced people in Kurdistan.

Rory Stewart:

Since June 2014, the UK has committed £129.5 million in humanitarian assistance to the crisis in Iraq. This includes the UK's contribution to the UN Iraq Humanitarian Pooled

Fund. The Pooled Fund, and other DFID funded projects, have provided access to emergency life-saving health services, emergency vaccines for vulnerable children, and expansion of maternity and child health care – including to internally displaced people in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Our cash programming, focussed in the north of the country, helps the most vulnerable people in Iraq to buy medicines and access the medical treatment that they urgently need.

■ Overseas Aid

Stephen Doughty: [\[45921\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what discussions she has had with officials in her Department on the potential effect of the outcome of the EU referendum on recipients of overseas development assistance currently given to (a) the European Development Fund, (b) the European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department and (c) the European Investment Bank.

Rory Stewart:

DFID will make an assessment of how we will work with the European Union Institutions as part of the exit negotiations and we look forward to working with all of our international partners in future to achieve the best results possible.

Stephen Doughty: [\[45923\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what plans her Department has made to reallocate UK aid funding from cross-EU funds and programmes.

Rory Stewart:

We remain committed to spending 0.7% of our national income on development assistance, and to achieving the UN's Global Goals and ending extreme poverty by 2030. Outside of the EU we will have better control over where we are spending our money. We will continue to uphold our manifesto commitments on UK international development.

Stephen Doughty: [\[45924\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what proportion of overseas development assistance she estimates will be spent by departments other than her Department for each year until 2019-20.

Rory Stewart:

Table 1 below provides the estimated proportion of Official Development Assistance (ODA) to be spent by other government departments and cross-government funds based on the Spending Review 2015 settlement. Funding is dispersed across a wide range of departments and cross-government funds. Expected proportions are based on ODA budget allocations announced at Spending Review 2015 in order to meet the government's commitment to spend 0.7 per cent of Gross National Income (GNI) on ODA in each calendar year. Adjustments will be made to the ODA budget to reflect the latest economic forecasts throughout the spending review period.

Table 1: Expected proportion of ODA to be spent by other government departments based on Spending Review 2015 settlement, 2016/17-2019/20

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Non-DFID departmental spend (incl cross-gov funds)	18%	21%	24%	26%

■ Yemen: Armed Conflict

Keith Vaz: [\[45834\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, if she will estimate the number of (a) refugees, (b) internally displaced persons and (c) persons of concern resulting from conflict in Yemen.

Rory Stewart:

Since March 2015, the United Nations (UN) estimates that:

1. 179,654 people have arrived in Djibouti, Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan, Saudi Arabia and Oman from Yemen, including Yemeni refugees and asylum-seekers;
2. 2,205,102 people are internally displaced within Yemen; and
3. 21.2 million people are in need of some form of humanitarian assistance.

■ Yemen: Department for International Development

Keith Vaz: [\[45832\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, if she will estimate her Department's spending related to the crisis in Yemen.

Rory Stewart:

Since March 2015, the UK has provided £90 million to the Yemen crisis, helping over a million Yemenis with food, medical supplies, water, and emergency shelter. We have so far committed £72 million to Yemen for this year.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Arms Trade: Saudi Arabia

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[46072\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if his Department will conduct a review into the export of UK arms to Saudi Arabia; and if he will make a statement.

Mark Garnier:

Her Majesty's Government is satisfied that we are not in breach of our international obligations. A licence will not be issued, to Saudi Arabia or any other destination, if to do so would be inconsistent with any provision of the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria. The position is kept under constant review as each licence application is considered carefully on a case-by-case basis but there are no plans to commission a further review of the export of UK arms to Saudi Arabia.

Mr Jim Cunningham:[\[46073\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what his policy is on the export of UK arms to Saudi Arabia; and if he will make a statement.

Mark Garnier:

The Government's policy has always been to rigorously assess all licence applications on a case by case basis against the Consolidated EU and National Export Licensing Criteria. A licence would not be granted if to do so would be a breach of the Criteria, including if there was a clear risk that the items might be used in the commission of a serious violation of International Humanitarian Law.

The framework for arms export licensing remains as set out in the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria, known as the Consolidated Criteria.

■ **Exports****Philip Davies:**[\[45721\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what the value was of exports to non-EU destinations from (a) the Port of Felixstowe, (b) the Port of Southampton, (c) Gatwick Airport and (d) Heathrow Airport in 2015.

Greg Hands:

The value of the exports to non –EU destinations from the requested ports are provided in the table below [source: HMRC ports data].

EXPORTS OF GOODS TO THE NON-EU BY PORT	VALUE (£)
Felixstowe	10,291,216,996
Southampton	23,740,381,743
London Gatwick	307,063,268
London Heathrow	67,303,983,493
[2015 calendar year]	

To note, data collection will be affected by the definitions used at the time of data collection. Please see the annex for more detail.

■ Trade Agreements: Human Rights

Thangam Debbonaire:

[\[45697\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if he will make it his Department's policy to ensure that trade negotiations are linked to the UK's human rights obligations.

Mark Garnier:

The UK will in due course consider all options in the design of future bilateral trade negotiations. Until the UK leaves the EU, we will remain subject to EU trade agreements and trade policy, of which human rights is a fundamental principle.

JUSTICE

■ Bail

Philip Davies:

[\[45433\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many crimes have been committed by people on post-conviction bail, by each category of offence, in each of the last three years.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The data requested is not held centrally and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ Law Reporting

Mr David Hanson:

[\[45911\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the proposed budget is for court reporting and transcribing services after the completion of the current tender process.

Sir Oliver Heald:

Her Majesty's Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) has issued an Invitation to Tender for the future provision of court transcription services. The successful bidders will provide transcription services under a four year framework agreement, the value of which is estimated at between £20m and £28m over the term of the agreement.

We are not in a position to disclose the proposed budget in any greater detail than outlined above for court reporting and transcription services whilst the competition is still running as this may undermine the Authority's commercial position.

■ Law Reporting: Expenditure

Mr David Hanson:

[\[45912\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much has been spent on court reporting and transcribing services in (a) civil and (b) Crown courts in England and Wales in each financial year since 2010.

Sir Oliver Heald:

The table below shows the amount spent on court reporting and transcription services in civil and Crown courts in England & Wales for each financial year from 2011 to 2015.

FINANCIAL YEAR	CIVIL & FAMILY	CROWN COURTS
2010-2011	Not Available	Not Available
2011-2012	£4,101,318.83	£4,101,339.00
2012-2013	£4,371,822.48	£1,953,877.00
2013-2014	£4,458,233.95	£2,042,664.00
2014-2015	£4,673,564.18	£2,447,053.75
2015-2016	Not Yet Available	Not Yet Available

The Civil and Family figures refer to the value of court reporting & transcription services received by all users of the services where the case was heard:

- in County Courts;
- in High Court (including district registries); and
- in the Court of Appeal (Criminal and Divisions)

The Crown Courts figures refer to the value of court reporting & transcription services received by all users of the services where the case was heard in a Crown Court in England and Wales.

■ Law Reporting: Procurement

Mr David Hanson: [\[45913\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the cost to date has been of the current tender process for civil and crown court reporting and transcribing services.

Sir Oliver Heald:

Court Reporting & Transcription Project Costs are currently estimated at £687k.

This relates to MOJ staff costs, the use of external advice in the preparation of contracts and conducting due diligence tests of bidders.

■ Magistrates' Courts

Philip Davies: [\[45432\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the average length of time is from first appearance to trial in magistrates' courts in (a) all cases and (b) cases that proceed at the first trial hearing; and what proportion of all trial cases fall into each such category.

Sir Oliver Heald:

In 2015, of defendants whose cases were completed in the magistrates' courts, 14% had a date of trial recorded in centrally held data. Of those cases with a trial date recorded, the mean duration from date of first listing to date of trial was 67 days and the median duration was 61 days.

HMCTS does not separately collate timeliness of trials which are effective at their first trial hearing and is unable to provide that information.

■ **Ministry of Justice: Females**

Mr Mark Hendrick:

[\[44237\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps her Department is taking to implement the actions identified for it in the Government's Ending Violence against Women and Girls Strategy 2016-2020, published in March 2016; and when a member of staff from her Department last attended a Violence against Women and Girls Stakeholder Meeting chaired by the Home Office.

Dr Phillip Lee:

Actions in the VAWG Action Plan are monitored through the VAWG Delivery Board, the VAWG Inter Ministerial Group and bilateral meetings between Home Office and OGD officials.

The VAWG Stakeholder Meeting is a meeting between Home Office officials and attendees from the voluntary and community sector working in the violence against women and girls policy area. It is not routinely attended by officials from other government departments. The most recent meeting took place on July 11. While OGDs do not routinely attend, as this meeting is primarily between the Home Office and the sector, an action point raised by the sector at this meeting was their desire for other Government departments to be represented at future meetings. This will be taken forward by the Home Office by inviting OGD officials to future meetings.

■ **National Probation Service for England and Wales: Recruitment**

Jo Stevens:

[\[45565\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will review entry to employment in the National Probation Service to (a) enable more public sector staff to access the vacancies in that service and (b) ensure that the previous public sector experience of new applicants is recognised with regard to their terms and conditions.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

Public sector civil servants and those public servants working for accredited Non Departmental Public Bodies (NDPB) have access to vacancies in the National Probation Service (NPS) after they have been advertised to surplus civil servants. Vacancies are open to all employees from across the Civil Service regardless of grade or department.

Arrangements are in place to recognise existing terms and conditions if someone in the wider Civil Service is successful in obtaining a job in the NPS.

■ **Prison Service: Recruitment**

Jo Stevens:

[\[45564\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the total cost to the public purse of prison officer recruitment was in each quarter since June 2013.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The recruitment of prison officers involves a number of internal and external parties that all contribute towards the overall process.

The cost to the public purse of prison officer recruitment is not held centrally by The National Offender Management Service, and it can only be obtained at a disproportionate cost.

Prisoners Release

Jo Stevens: [\[45567\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps she is taking to prevent people being released from prison without support because they could not be transferred to a resettlement prison.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

As a result of the government's Transforming Rehabilitation reforms, for the first time all adult offenders are entitled to receive a resettlement service before being released from custody. The contracts with Community Rehabilitation Companies provide for such services even where a prisoner has not been transferred to a designated resettlement prison prior to release.

Prisoners' Release

David Mackintosh: [\[45643\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps her Department is taking to educate prisoners nearing release so that they are able better to reintegrate into society.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

Prisons should be places of safety and reform. I am determined to make sure that we achieve better outcomes for prisoners in employment, education and health. Fewer than half the people entering prisons have basic standards of literacy and numeracy. This is a huge problem because we know that low levels of education can prevent people from securing jobs on release and leading law abiding lives. I want to see much clearer accountability for prison governors for the education delivered whilst prisoners are in prison and the results they achieve, to get significant improvement.

Prisoners: Suicide

Jo Stevens: [\[45568\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps she is taking to address increases in deaths by suicide among women in prison.

Dr Phillip Lee:

The figures for deaths in custody across the prison estate, including the increase in self-inflicted deaths among female prisoners, are extremely concerning

Our hard-working prison staff provide support to prisoners at risk of self-harm and suicide every day. All deaths in custody are fully investigated by the independent Prisons

and Probation Ombudsman and subject to a Coroner's inquest, and we work hard to learn the lessons from these investigations

Safety in our prisons is fundamental to the proper functioning of our justice system and a vital part of our reform plans. We are determined to make sure our prisons are safe and are places of rehabilitation. The National Offender Management Service recently reviewed the operation of Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork processes, including in women's prisons, and is implementing the recommendations as part of its suicide and self-harm reduction project.

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ Business: Northern Ireland

Jim Shannon:

[\[45097\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what steps his Department has taken to encourage the growth of and strength of local business associations and trade partnerships in Northern Ireland.

James Brokenshire:

Many aspects of local economic development are the responsibility of Northern Ireland Executive Ministers but promoting the commercial, business, trade and investment interests of Northern Ireland is also part of my Department's core business. I recognise the importance of dialogue with business associations and trade partnerships. I have already met a number of business associations in Northern Ireland. I and my NIO Ministerial colleagues will be trying to meet as many local associations over the coming months as I continue my engagements with the business community across Northern Ireland.

■ Coastal Areas: Northern Ireland

Jim Shannon:

[\[45096\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, whether he has taken steps to support the Northern Ireland Executive in the regeneration of coastal areas in Northern Ireland.

James Brokenshire:

I have visited some of the coastal communities in Northern Ireland and aside from their general beauty I have seen how vital they are to local economy. Since its launch in 2012 the UK Government's Coastal Communities Fund has helped coastal towns across the UK to strengthen their appeal as places to live, work and visit. In Northern Ireland 11 awards have been made, worth £2.5m.

■ Electricity Interconnectors: Ireland

Lady Hermon: [\[45462\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what assessment he has made of progress in negotiations with the Irish Government towards the construction of the North South Electricity Interconnector; and if he will make a statement.

James Brokenshire:

Non-nuclear energy is devolved and the delivery of a new interconnector is a matter for the Northern Ireland Executive and the Government of Ireland.

I have had discussions with Northern Ireland Executive Ministers and the sector on increasing security of supply, lowering energy costs and meeting the UK's renewables commitments.

I hope proposals for a new interconnector move forward quickly to deliver a stronger, more secure and more competitive network in Northern Ireland.

PRIME MINISTER**■ World Expo: Greater Manchester**

Andrew Gwynne: [\[45585\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, whether she has held discussions with Ministerial colleagues on Manchester's bid to host the 2025 World Expo.

Mrs Theresa May:

The Government is committed to supporting the Greater Manchester events industry, including through VisitBritain, the Government's Events Industry Board and our £1 million Events Support Programme. I regularly hold discussions with Ministerial colleagues on how we can best support growth in regions across the UK.

SCOTLAND**■ Scotland Office: EU Nationals**

Mr Chuka Umunna: [\[45954\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, how many citizens of EU countries other than the UK work in (a) his Department and (b) agencies and other bodies for which his Department is responsible.

David Mundell:

The Scotland Office does not employ staff directly. All staff that join, do so on assignment, loan or secondment, principally from the Ministry of Justice and the Scottish Government; who remain the employers. Details of staff nationality and ethnicity is retained by the parent department.

TRANSPORT**■ A14: Kettering****Mr Philip Hollobone:**[\[45939\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress is being made on designing and planning the new junction 10A on the A14 near Kettering; and when that junction is expected to be built.

Mr John Hayes:

The scheme is currently in the options stage and the next stage is to hold a public consultation on those options. Any developments of local roads would be the responsibility of either the local authority or any developer that is involved in the development of the area.

The current timescales for construction of the scheme are in line with the Governments Roads Investment Strategy 2015 -2020 statement with start of works proposed by March 2020.

■ Bypasses: Wellingborough**Mr Peter Bone:**[\[45987\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans to announce when construction of the Isham bypass in Wellingborough constituency will (a) commence and (b) be finished.

Andrew Jones:

Funding for the proposed Isham Bypass (also known as the A509 Wellingborough Development Link) was provisionally approved by the Government in 2014 as part of the Northamptonshire Growth Deal. This approval is subject to the scheme promoters, Northamptonshire County Council, obtaining any necessary statutory permissions and submitting to the Department a Final Business Case for approval.

The Council expects to submit a Final Business Case in March 2017. Ministers will then make a final funding decision, as quickly as possible thereafter, on whether to support the scheme. The Council's current programme is to start construction in September 2017 and to open the completed road in April 2019.

■ Driverless Vehicles: Testing**Daniel Zeichner:**[\[45693\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when his Department plans to publish its response to the call for evidence on driverless vehicle testing facilities which closed in July 2016.

Mr John Hayes:

The Department will publish a response to UK Testing Ecosystem for Connected and Autonomous Vehicles: Call for Evidence in the next few months.

■ Driving: Licensing

Michelle Thomson: [906372]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department plans to introduce a graduated driving licensing system for young drivers.

Andrew Jones:

It is important that we strike the right balance between the safety and the freedom of young drivers. Many rely on their cars to get to work and education; so licensing restrictions could affect their ability to access these opportunities.

Instead, we're focussing our efforts on encouraging learner drivers to be better prepared for the wonderful freedoms a driving licence offers, but without compromising on safety, which is at the heart of what we do.

■ Govia Thameslink Railway

Sir Nicholas Soames: [45883]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much was paid in compensation for train delays by Network Rail to Govia Thameslink Railway related to Southern railway in each of the last four years.

Paul Maynard:

The latest information is published on Network Rail's website - <http://www.networkrail.co.uk/transparency/datasets/> - covering the years 2012-13 to 2014-15.

Crispin Blunt: [46063]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what payments his Department has made or is projected to make to Network Rail in respect of the rail network used by Govia Thameslink Railway for each financial year of the franchise period.

Paul Maynard:

The Department for Transport does not make payments to Network Rail on a route by route basis.

■ Govia Thameslink Railway: Finance

Crispin Blunt: [46064]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what (a) has been and (b) is the projected balance between the fee paid to Govia Thameslink Railway for delivering the current franchise and the income from fares for each financial year of the franchise period.

Paul Maynard:

As was stated when the franchise was awarded to Govia Thameslink Railway, the Thameslink Southern and Great Northern franchise is let as a management contract, where ticket revenues are passed directly to the Government rather than retained by Govia. This means that this franchise does not have premium/ subsidy payments.

In respect of part (a) Prior year figures are published by the ORR:

<http://orr.gov.uk/statistics/published-stats/gb-rail-industry-financial-information>

In relation to part (b), in February 2015 a Franchise Payment Profile was deposited in the Library of the house; this contained the following information with regard to Govia Thameslink Railway:

Franchises - current as at 25 Feb 2015

Franchise Payment profile to 2023 (in NOMINAL £)

Caveats

All figures are based on current franchise agreements including the current estimates for Control Period 5 and fares policy adjustments. The figures do not include revenue support, revenue share, profit share, or adjustments for GDP.

All figures are subject to change in the future as a result of negotiated contractual changes and changes to inflation indices above or below that assumed.

2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
275,405,206	403,760,328	424,690,456	404,131,348	497,212,369	587,111,514	303,608,193

These figures represent the net balance between payments made under the Management Contract and revenue received, and indicate a payment from the Train Operating Company to the department.

The moneys paid to the Department by the Train Operator contribute to the overall budget for the provision of passenger rail services.

This Government is committed to continuing to invest in passenger rail and, for example, we are investing more than £1.6billion of taxpayers' money in new, longer, and more spacious Thameslink trains. We have also recently announced a targeted £20m fund, to be spent by Network Rail under project board authority, to help get Southern rail services back running as they should.

■ **London-Brighton Railway Line: Capital Investment**

Maria Caulfield:

[\[906370\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what long-term investment plans the Government has to improve the Brighton Main Line.

Paul Maynard:

Network Rail is currently developing proposals for potential upgrades of the Brighton Main Line, following the conclusions of the Sussex Route Study, and the London South Coast Rail Corridor Study, both of which highlighted significant capacity and performance constraints. Government will fund Network Rail to develop proposals as necessary.

■ Public Transport: Disability

Rob Marris: [\[45938\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to improve access to public transport for disabled people.

Andrew Jones:

The Government recognises how important improving access to public transport is for disabled people and is committed to making transport more inclusive.

Since its launch in 2006, the £390m Access for All rail programme (which was further extended with £160m in 2014) has delivered accessible routes at over 150 stations. There are also 68 further projects at various stages of construction or development.

We also recognise that positive interactions with bus drivers can make a big difference to disabled people's experience of taking the bus. We are working with the bus industry and disabled people to design best practice guidance in delivering disability awareness training which, we hope, will help to give bus drivers the skills and knowledge to assist every disabled passenger.

In addition, the Bus Services Bill will specifically allow enhanced partnership schemes to require all buses within a local area to provide audible and visual next stop information. Authorities using the new franchising powers will be able to place similar requirements on affected operators. The Government has also agreed to consider amendments on this issue which were tabled during the Bill's committee stage in the House of Lords.

The Government intends to publish an Accessibility Action Plan for consultation by the end of the year which will present its ambition for further progress on this important agenda.

■ Railway Stations: Repairs and Maintenance

Lilian Greenwood: [\[45967\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 12 September 2016 to Question 45155, at which stations will planned Control Period 5 Access for all improvements be deferred into Control Period 6 in connection with his decision to accept the Hendy Review.

Paul Maynard:

We are currently working with Network Rail to ensure that the majority of Access for All stations will have at least a design completed in this rail Control Period. This will ensure that stations that have construction deferred will be ready to start on site as early as possible once funding is available again in 2019/20. We expect to announce which stations will be affected shortly.

■ Railways: Overcrowding

Liz McInnes:

[\[906374\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to reduce overcrowding on passenger rail services.

Paul Maynard:

This Government is making the biggest investment in our railways since the Victorian era, enabling more trains and longer trains to operate on many of our busiest routes. Since 2010, more than 563 new carriages have been brought into service in England and Wales, and a further 5032 are planned to enter service by the end of 2020.

■ Speed Limits: Cameras

Lilian Greenwood:

[\[45966\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 12 September 2016 to Question 45389, and with reference to his Department's press release, End of the road for grey speed cameras, published on 14 November 2015, how many camera sites that are on the motorway network currently contain working grey speed cameras; and what recent assessment he has made of Highways England's progress in meeting the target of painting all working speed cameras yellow by October 2016.

Mr John Hayes:

The current number of grey speed cameras on our network is 27. The Highways England programme of work is currently on target to ensure all grey speed cameras on the network are yellow by October 2016.

■ Submarines: Irish Sea

Ms Margaret Ritchie:

[\[45928\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he expects the Marine Accident Investigation Branch's report on the collision between the stern trawler MV Karen and a dived Royal Navy submarine in the Irish Sea on 15 April 2015 to be published.

Mr John Hayes:

The Marine Accident Investigation Branch's report of its investigation into this accident is due to be published in mid-October.

■ Taxis: Disability

Rob Marris:

[\[45915\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to increase the number of accessible taxis.

Andrew Jones:

Government is committed to giving disabled people the same access to transport services as other members of society. It also recognises the particularly significant role played by taxis and private hire vehicle (PHV) operators for many disabled people, in helping them to remain active and independent.

It is for local authorities to specify a number of accessible vehicles to be within their licensed taxi and private hire vehicle fleet, and to take account of their public sector equality duties when doing so.

■ Transport: Infrastructure

Karl McCartney: [906361]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the role of transport infrastructure in delivering economic growth.

Mr John Hayes:

As the CBI have said "world-class infrastructure provides a strong foundation for businesses to deliver jobs, growth and prosperity for all."

An assessment of the impact on the economy is a routine part of transport investment decisions. The Department uses an internationally respected analytical framework for assessing schemes which includes the impact on jobs, growth and regeneration ^[1].

Good transport infrastructure will continue to be important after the UK leaves the EU.

^[1]https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/253484/transport-appraisal-in-investment-decisions.pdf

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/253860/understanding-valuing-impacts-transport-investment.pdf

■ Transport: Skilled Workers

Daniel Zeichner: [45691]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when the Transport Systems Catapult plans to publish its report on current and future skills for the intelligent mobility sector.

Mr John Hayes:

The Transport Systems Catapult will publish the report within the next month.

■ Vauxhall Motors: Safety

Stewart Malcolm McDonald: [906376]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with representatives of Vauxhall on safety standards of the Zafira model; and if he will make a statement.

Andrew Jones:

I have not had any recent discussions with representatives from Vauxhall about the Zafira. However, the DVSA is leading on this and has met, corresponded with and continues to work with Vauxhall on the Zafira issue. The DVSA has overseen two safety recalls and corresponding actions to protect consumers.

WALES■ **Wales Office: EU Nationals****Mr Chuka Umunna:**[\[45955\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, how many citizens of other EU countries work in (a) his Department and (b) agencies and other bodies for which his Department is responsible.

Guto Bebb:

No citizens of EU countries other than the UK work in the Wales Office, and the department is not responsible for any other agencies or bodies.

WORK AND PENSIONS■ **Department for Work and Pensions: Consultants****Margaret Hodge:**[\[44361\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many times his Department has used the services of (a) PwC, (b) Deloitte, (c) Ernst and Young, (d) KPMG and (e) other consulting firms in the last three financial years; and what (i) work was undertaken and (ii) the cost to the public purse was on each such occasion.

Caroline Nokes:

We are unable to provide the requested information on the number of times the Department for Work and Pensions has used the services of consulting firms, including details of the work undertaken and cost to the public purse for each occasion. To do so would incur a disproportional cost to the Department because of how the data is held on our systems, and the time and resource required for extracting and analysing it.

■ **Local Housing Allowance****Richard Arkless:**[\[46067\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if his Department will exempt crisis, refuge and homeless accommodation from any extension to the Local Housing Allowance cap.

Caroline Nokes:

I refer the Honourable Member to the Written Statement made today by the Secretary of State:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2016-09-15/HCWS154/>

Richard Arkless:[\[46068\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when his Department plans to publish its review into supported accommodation; and whether it has carried out an impact assessment on the extension of the Local Housing Allowance cap.

Caroline Nokes:

I refer the Honourable Member to the Written Statement made today by the Secretary of State:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2016-09-15/HCWS154/>

Full impact and equality impact assessments will be undertaken in due course.

■ **Pension Credit**

Stewart Malcolm McDonald: [45972]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make it his policy to amend the eligibility criteria for pension credit so that all men and women aged 60 and above can access that credit.

Richard Harrington:

Pension Credit is an income-related benefit paid out of general taxation which targets help at the poorest pensioners. It is a condition of entitlement for Pension Credit that a person has attained the "qualifying age", which is linked to the women's State Pension age. This is the same age at which entitlement to Universal Credit ceases.

Changing the eligibility criteria would mean displacing Universal Credit with Pension Credit. Universal Credit has much better work incentives than Pension Credit, and ensures that work always pays. Universal Credit also disregards pension pots in the means test, encouraging further saving, whereas Pension Credit takes pension pots into account and therefore provides no incentive to increase their size.

For those with disability and care needs, the welfare system already makes provision through benefits and services based on needs assessment. This includes provision for those whose health condition means that it is difficult for them to remain in employment. The Government will be publishing a Green Paper on Work and Health later this year which will consider this issue.

■ **Sahaviriya Steel Industries UK: Redcar**

Debbie Abrahams: [45970]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people affected by the closure of SSI Redcar have been supported back into employment through the Rapid Response Service.

Damian Hinds:

Around 9 in 10 (1,990) of the 2,150 SSI and other workers who made an initial claim for benefits have since ended that claim.

Debbie Abrahams: [45971]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much funding has been provided to the Rapid Response Service to support those affected by the closure of SSI Redcar in 2015.

Damian Hinds:

The Department's Rapid Response Service formed part of the SSI Task force set up to provide support to former SSI and supply chain workers.

The Rapid Response Service spend of £2.1M formed part of the overall package of £46m Government funding made available to help people back to work through a range of support measures.

■ Social Security Benefits: Fraud**Charlotte Leslie:**[\[45857\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 18 April 2016 to Question 32920, what processes his Department uses to collect information on allegations of fraudulent benefit claims; and what assessment has been made of the effectiveness of those processes.

Caroline Nokes:

There are a variety of ways that allegations of Benefit Fraud are collected and received by the DWP including telephone calls to the National Benefit Fraud Hotline, online and Letter and Data matching. Once an allegation has been received and, if it meets the required criteria containing enough information, a Fraud Referral Form is completed which is then entered into the internal Fraud Referral and Information Management System.

The effectiveness of these processes is measured by statistics produced and published in May each year and made available in the public domain. These statistics are used to evaluate, develop and support fraud and error policy, strategy and operational decisions.

■ Television: Licensing**Grahame Morris:**[\[46011\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the cost to the Exchequer was of providing free television licences to people over 75 years of age in (a) 2014-15 and (b) 2015-16 for qualifying residents in (i) the North East, (ii) Country Durham and (iii) Easington constituency.

Richard Harrington:

In 2014/15 the cost of providing free TV licences to those 75 and over in the North East was £26.5m and it is estimated the cost for qualifying residents in Durham County local authority and Easington constituency was £5.3m and £0.8m respectively.

The cost of the free TV licences to those aged 75 and over in the North East for 2015/16 will be published on 21 September on the Gov.uk website. Breakdowns by County and Parliamentary Constituency use that North East expenditure estimate.

■ Universal Credit

Stephen Timms: [45973]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, by what date he expects the full roll-out of universal credit to be completed.

Damian Hinds:

The next stages of the delivery of Universal Credit were set out by the Work and Pensions Secretary in a Written Statement to Parliament on 20 July which can be found at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2016-07-20/HLWS98/>

■ Universal Credit: Overpayments

Stephen Timms: [45975]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much universal credit has been overpaid in each year since roll-out began; and how much of that overpayment has been recoverable.

Damian Hinds:

The preliminary statistics for 2015-16 estimate the levels of fraud and error overpayments in Universal Credit at £36 million. These statistics are available in the public domain:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fraud-and-error-in-the-benefit-system-financial-year-201516-preliminary-estimates>

Final 2015-16 statistics will be published in November 2016.

Due to the nature of the Universal Credit caseload over 2015-16 we do not expect these preliminary statistics to be representative of the eventual Universal Credit steady-state. This was the first time that levels of fraud and error have been measured for Universal Credit as it is a new benefit; we will learn lessons and consider additional strategies as appropriate.

When Universal Credit is fully rolled out, the government expects to save about £1bn each year through reduced fraud and error and increased ability to monitor changes in income.

All Universal Credit overpayments are recoverable.

■ Welfare Tax Credits: Fraud

Mrs Madeleine Moon: [45982]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many staff are employed by his Department to investigate claims from HM Revenue and Customs that an unreported adult is living in the home of a tax credit claimant; and if he will make a statement.

Caroline Nokes:

Investigations of HM Revenue and Customs Tax Credit, Living Together fraud allegations are investigated by Local Service Investigation Team (LSI) and the Central Criminal Intelligence Investigations team (CCIIIS) as appropriate within the Fraud and Error Service (FES).

There are currently 1430 employed by the Department. FES investigators are employed to look at all types of welfare fraud from all sources of referral. None are employed specifically to look at individual types of welfare fraud referred from specific sources.

Mrs Madeleine Moon:[\[46029\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what investigations his Department carries out to confirm the accuracy of information provided by HM Revenue and Customs that an unreported adult is living at the property of a tax credit claimant prior to ceasing to pay the benefit; what evidence his Department accepts from such claimant to show that no unreported adult living at that property; and if he will make a statement.

Caroline Nokes:

Tax Credit fraud referrals are routed from HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) to the Fraud and Error Service (FES) within the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) if it is believed there is a DWP benefit interest.

Investigations of HMRC Tax Credit, Living Together fraud allegations are conducted by Local Service Investigation Team (LSI) within FES. LSI staff are employed to look at all types of welfare fraud from all sources of referral.

FES investigations are thorough to accurately establish the facts to prove or disprove the allegation made. Investigators use a range of information to confirm the accuracy of Tax Credit, Living Together allegations including local enquiries with bodies like the Police or schools to establish any links between customer and alleged partner. However, lines of enquiry can vary based on the differences in individual cases.

Please see further the full list of information that can be obtained by FES during investigations in the redacted guidance link below from page 480 onwards.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/523527/fraud-guide-feb-2016.pdf

On completion of the investigation if evidence is gathered to necessitate an Interview Under Caution the claimant will be notified to attend. Any evidence can be brought voluntarily by the customer to the interview which will then be assessed by DWP.

However, following the interview, statements from third parties may be obtained to substantiate the evidence/answers given.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

TREASURY

■ Delivering the new childcare offer: trial of the joint childcare service

The Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Mr David Gauke): [\[HCWS160\]](#)

Ahead of the introduction of Tax-Free Childcare in early 2017 and the 30 hours extended entitlement for three and four year olds in September 2017, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) will trial a new, digital, joint childcare service later this year. The trial will involve around 1500 parents, including some who are eligible for both schemes. It will enable HMRC to extensively test the system and ensure it provides a smooth experience and quality service for parents.

Tax-Free Childcare and the extended free entitlement are a key part of the Government's overall childcare offer which will provide over £6 billion per annum to working families and those on low incomes by the end of this Parliament.

The Government announced in November 2015 that parents will be able to apply online for both Tax-Free Childcare and the extended free entitlement through a new joint childcare service being developed by HMRC, with their delivery partner National Savings & Investments (NS&I).

The joint childcare service will provide a simple and straightforward way for working parents to access both schemes, avoiding the need to provide the same information twice, and saving them valuable time.

In March 2016, the Government announced that Tax-Free Childcare will be introduced and gradually rolled out during 2017. The service will be made available to all eligible families by the end of that year.

■ Notification of contingent liability

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr Philip Hammond): [\[HCWS164\]](#)

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Bank of England decided at its meeting ending on 3 August to raise the limit on purchases that may be undertaken by the Asset Purchase Facility (APF). This will encompass further purchases of gilts, along with a new scheme to purchase private sector assets and a new funding scheme that will lend central bank reserves to banks and building societies for an extended period at a rate close to Bank Rate (the Term Funding Scheme).

As set out in the MPC's remit, active monetary policy has a critical role to play in supporting the economy. It is the MPC's view that in the absence of monetary policy stimulus there would be undesirable volatility in output and employment, and it would be less likely to achieve a sustainable return of inflation to the target in the medium term.

The MPC has judged that it would be appropriate to impart further stimulus through additional asset purchases. The MPC expects that purchases of corporate bonds will improve

the availability of credit to UK companies and that further purchases of gilts will reduce borrowing costs, raise asset prices, affect expectations and confidence, and thereby support demand in the economy. The Term Funding Scheme should ensure that the very low level of Bank Rate is passed through to lending rates to households and businesses.

In line with the requirements in the MPC remit, the amendments to the APF that could affect the allocation of credit and pose risks to the Exchequer have been discussed with Treasury officials. The risk control framework previously agreed with the Treasury will remain in place, updated to reflect the changes to the APF.

Oversight arrangements for the expanded APF will be strengthened. These will include enhanced information sharing between the Bank and Treasury to monitor the operation and performance of the facility, and regular risk oversight meetings of Treasury and Bank senior officials. There will also be an opportunity for the Treasury to provide views to the MPC on the design of the schemes within the APF, as they affect the government's broader economic objectives and may pose risks to the Exchequer.

I have therefore authorised an increase of £70 billion in the amount of assets that the APF is able to purchase financed through the issuance of central bank reserves, of which £10 billion can be eligible private sector assets, bringing the total amount for purchases to £445 billion. I have also authorised an extension of the definition of assets eligible to be held in the APF to include secured lending of central bank reserves. The MPC expects that the value of this lending would increase in line with the amount outstanding in the TFS, which will in turn be determined by usage of the scheme, and could reach around £100 billion. I have therefore authorised an increase in the total size of the APF of £170 billion. This will bring the maximum total size of the APF to £545 billion.

The Government will continue to indemnify the Bank and the APF from any losses arising out of, or in connection with, the Facility. If the liability is called, provision for any payment will be sought through the normal Supply procedure.

On 4 August I wrote to the Chairs of Public Accounts Committee and Treasury Select Committee and invited them to raise any objections to my decision. A full departmental Minute has been laid providing more detail on this contingent liability.

■ Tax: draft legislation

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Jane Ellison):

[\[HCWS165\]](#)

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has announced that the date of the Autumn Statement will be 23 November 2016.

The Government remains committed to improving the tax policy making process through high levels of consultation and legislative scrutiny. Following the Autumn Statement, draft clauses to be included in Finance Bill 2017 will be published on Monday 5 December 2016. This consultation on draft legislation will be open until Monday 30 January 2017.

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Local Government Finance

Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (Sajid Javid):
[\[HCWS162\]](#)

Today, I am publishing a technical consultation paper on the approach to the 2017/18 local government finance settlement. This will confirm the approach for 2017/18 already set out alongside the 2016/17 settlement, offering local authorities in England that are committed to reform, a 4-year settlement offer, which will give funding certainty for the remainder of the Parliament.

The consultation reconfirms the Government's commitment to the 4-year settlement offer and seeks views on expanding this offer. It also outlines:

the proposed approach to distributing funding through the improved Better Care Fund to support adult social care, in line with the approach taken in the 2016/17 settlement

the approach to council tax referendum principles for 2017/18, including once again a core principle of 2% (with additional flexibilities for shire district councils and lower-quartile police and crime commissioners), and a continuation of the Adult Social Care precept of an additional 2%

a proposal for a referendum principle of 2% for the larger, higher-spending town and parish councils, with consideration being given to extending the principle to all local precepting authorities

the proposed approach for adjusting business rates retention tariffs and top ups to cancel out, as far as is practicable, the impact of the 2017 business rates revaluation on local authorities' income.

In line with the Government's work to devolve power and budgets to local authorities, the consultation also proposes measures to enable certain local authorities to pilot 100% business rates retention, designed to ensure that other authorities are not adversely affected by these pilots, together with measures covering the allocation of funding streams within devolution deal areas, if all affected councils agree.

The consultation paper can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/local-government-finance-settlement-2017-to-2018-technical-consultation>

This statement has also been made in the House of Lords: [HLWS165](#)

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Historic Royal Palaces (Borrowing Facility)

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Culture, Media and Sport (Tracey Crouch): [\[HCWS155\]](#)

The Departmental Minute laid today is in respect of an extension to the period whereby Government act as a guarantor on behalf of Historic Royal Palaces (HRP) for a borrowing facility of up to £4 million to meet short-term cash flow requirements.

The renewed guarantee will be available until 30 September 2021 and HRP will only enter into borrowing facilities at such times and within such monetary limits as the Department shall agree.

The guarantee provides a safeguard protecting HRP's business from a sudden and serious decline in economic conditions affecting HRP's admissions income until the savings from their planned rationalisation measures, if such an event should occur, could come through. It would only be used in extreme circumstances. The guarantee has been in place since 2002 and it has never yet been called upon.

Historic Royal Palaces is a charity established by Royal Charter. By virtue of a contract entered into on 1 April 1998, it carries out the functions of the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport under Section 21 of the Crown Lands Act 1851 of managing the unoccupied Royal Palaces.

I am arranging for the Minute to be deposited in the Libraries of both Houses.

Attachments:

1. Historic Royal Palaces Departmental Minute [HRP Departmental Minute - 15.09.2016.docx]

EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION

■ General Affairs Council September 2016

The Minister of State, The Department for Exiting the European Union (Mr David Jones): [\[HCWS159\]](#)

On 23 June 2016 the UK voted to leave the European Union. Until we leave however, the UK continues to play a constructive role in EU business. The General Affairs Council (GAC) on Tuesday 20 September is expected to focus on the following: follow up to the June European Council; preparation of the October European Council; the European Commission's 2017 Work Programme; and the Mid Term Review of the Multiannual Financial Framework.

Follow up to the June European Council

The Presidency will present an update on the progress towards implementation of the June 2016 European Council Conclusions on migration, jobs, growth and investment and external relations. GAC Ministers will then hold an exchange of views; this will not be a detailed discussion.

Preparation of the October European Council

Ministers will discuss the upcoming October European Council draft annotated agenda. The agenda currently covers migration, trade and external relations, and EU policy toward Russia. This is an opportunity for the UK to influence and shape the agenda of the October European Council.

European Commission's Work Programme 2017

On 14 September the European Commission sent a 'Letter of Intent' outlining the broad content of the Commission Work Programme for 2017 (CWP 2017) to the Council and European Parliament. GAC Ministers will have an exchange of views on the contents of the Commission's letter of intent.

The CWP is adopted annually by the European Commission. It contains a list of the legislative and non-legislative priorities that the Commission intends to bring forward in the course of the following calendar year.

Multiannual Financial Framework

The GAC will discuss the Commission's proposal on the Mid Term Review of the Multiannual Financial Framework which was published on 14 September.

HEALTH**■ NHS Blood and Transplant Triennial Review**

Minister of State (Mr Philip Dunne):

[\[HCWS161\]](#)

My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Lord Prior) has made the following written statement:

The Department of Health has completed its Triennial Review of NHS Blood and Transplant, and is today publishing the associated review report. A copy of the review report is attached.

The review, which commenced on 25 June 2015, consulted with a wide range of stakeholders. The review concludes that NHS Blood and Transplant is an efficient and high performing organisation, and in the future will seek to increase its contribution to the life sciences industry. The report contains a total of 18 recommendations; five are about the function and form of NHS Blood and Transplant, with the remaining 13 intended to support NHS Blood and Transplant's future performance, efficiency, and governance.

Attachments:

1. NHSBT Review Report [NHSBT_TR_Report_Final.pdf]

PRIME MINISTER**■ Committee on Standards in Public Life Report****Prime Minister (Mrs Theresa May):**[\[HCWS156\]](#)

Striking the Balance: Upholding the Seven Principles of Public Life in Regulation, the 16th report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life, has been published by the Committee today. I have laid the report before both Houses.

■ Intelligence Services Commissioner's Report**Prime Minister (Mrs Theresa May):**[\[HCWS157\]](#)

I have today laid before both Houses of Parliament, the Intelligence Services Commissioner's supplementary report on concerns raised by the Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament (ISC) about the Government's responsibilities in relation to partner counter-terrorism units overseas. The statutory responsibilities of the Intelligence Services Commissioner, the Right Honourable Sir Mark Waller, include oversight of compliance with the Consolidated Guidance to Intelligence Officers and Service Personnel on the Detention and Interviewing of Detainees Overseas, and on the Passing and Receipt of Intelligence Relating to Detainees ('the Consolidated Guidance'). I am grateful to Sir Mark for his detailed examination of the allegations regarding the detention of Michael Adebolajo in Kenya in 2010, which were raised in the ISC's November 2014 report about the intelligence relating to the murder of Fusilier Lee Rigby. I welcome the fact that he has firmly rejected any suggestion of a conspiracy by the security and intelligence agencies in Mr Adebolajo's detention and that he has found no evidence to support the allegation that he was subject to mistreatment at the hands of the Kenyan authorities. The Government will look carefully at Sir Mark's detailed analysis of the handling of this case and will take steps to address the issues where he has identified shortcomings in the response at the time, drawing upon the report's recommendations. In particular, Sir Mark has noted that the Consolidated Guidance, though still fit for purpose and carefully followed by intelligence officers and service personnel, could benefit from further clarification in certain aspects. The Government will consider further what changes could be made to the Consolidated Guidance to address the points Sir Mark raises.

■ Machinery of Government Change: Offender Learning**Prime Minister (Mrs Theresa May):**[\[HCWS158\]](#)

Policy responsibility for education and training provision for those subject to adult detention in England will transfer from the Department for Education to the Ministry of Justice from 1 October 2016.

WORK AND PENSIONS■ **Housing Benefit**

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Damian Green): [\[HCWS154\]](#)

Supported accommodation plays a vital role in the lives of many vulnerable people. A safe and stable and supportive place to live can be the key to unlocking better outcomes for people and for many it is a stepping stone to independent living in the longer term. The Government values the role supported housing plays and is committed to encouraging further development to meet future demand.

Over the past number of months, we have spoken to providers, local authorities, charities, representative bodies and the Devolved Administrations about the future funding arrangements for the sector. We are also grateful for the extensive input from these groups into our evidence review of supported accommodation in Great Britain, jointly commissioned by my Department and the Department for Communities and Local Government at the end of 2014. The review has provided a helpful insight in to the scale, scope and cost of the sector and we will publish it shortly alongside a consultation document.

We have heard the concerns regarding the application of the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates to social rents from 2018. So I can announce today that we will be deferring the application of this policy for supported housing until 2019/20. At this point we will bring in a new funding model which will ensure that the sector continues to be funded at current levels, taking into account the effect of Government policy on social sector rents. I can also confirm that the deferral until 2019/20 will extend to fully mutuals/co-operatives, almshouses and community land trusts while we consider whether any additional arrangements will be necessary for this group in the longer term.

It is our intention that from 2019/20 core rent and service charges will be funded through Housing Benefit or Universal Credit up to the level of the applicable LHA rate. This will apply to all those living in supported accommodation from this date. I can also confirm that the Shared Accommodation Rate will not apply to people living in the supported housing sector, in recognition of the particular challenges this would have placed upon them.

For costs above the level of the LHA rate, Government will devolve in England an amount of funding for disbursement locally. In Wales and Scotland, an equivalent amount will be provided and it will be for those administrations to decide how best to allocate the funding.

In England, we will devolve funding to local authorities to provide additional 'top up' funding to providers where necessary, reflecting the higher average costs of offering supported accommodation, compared to general needs. This will give local authorities an enhanced role in commissioning supported housing in their area. This will also allow local authorities to ensure a more coherent approach to commissioning for needs across housing, health and social care, using local knowledge to drive transparency, quality and value for money from providers in their area.

Different types of supported housing provision and services are commissioned by different bodies locally, such as Clinical Commissioning Groups. It will be important to ensure that these bodies can access funding to deliver their commissioning objectives. We will work with

relevant agencies and Departments across Government to design this fund to make sure that we maximise the opportunities for local agencies to collaborate.

In recognition of the need to manage the transition to a new funding regime carefully, we will ring-fence the top-up fund to ensure it continues to support vulnerable people. The amount of top-up funding will be set on the basis of current projections of future need. This will also help to provide certainty for providers that reductions in funding via the benefits system can be met elsewhere as well as to give greater assurance to developers of new supported housing supply. We will also consult on appropriate safeguards to ensure that this funding continues to support vulnerable people and promotes supply of supported housing. We will also consider what level of new burdens funding would be appropriate to enable local authorities to fulfill their new role.

As the Prime Minister made clear, we are working to ensure that vulnerable people in refuges are not adversely affected as a result of the LHA rates. While we are confident that this model will meet the needs of the majority of the sector, we recognise some particular challenges may remain for very short term accommodation, including hostels and refuges. We will work with the sector to develop further options to ensure that providers of shorter term accommodation continue to receive appropriate funding for their important work. Whilst the mechanism may be different, funding for this type of accommodation will benefit from the same protection as supported housing in general.

We recognise the vital importance of ensuring that providers are able to develop new, much needed, supported housing and we want the long-term funding model to support this. We will seek views through the consultation on how this objective might best be achieved through the design of the model.

In March 2016, we introduced a one year deferral for supported housing, fully mutuals/co-operatives, almshouses and Community Land Trusts from the reduction of social rents in England of 1% a year for 4 years from 2016. It is important that providers can continue to provide high-quality and cost-effective supported housing to meet the needs of their tenants. However, it is also important that supported housing should make efficiency savings in the same way as the rest of the social sector.

Therefore, I can confirm that, as planned, we will apply the rent reduction to supported housing, with rents in these properties decreasing by 1% a year for 3 years, up to and including 2019/20.

The existing exemption for specialised supported housing will remain in place and will be extended over the remaining 3 years of the policy for fully mutuals/co-operatives, alms houses and Community Land Trusts and refuges.

For those affected by the social sector rent reduction policy, the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 includes provision that allows a social landlord to be exempted from the requirement to reduce rents by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government or the social housing regulator (in the case of private registered providers) if complying would result in serious financial difficulty or jeopardise their financial viability. This provision provides a safety net for those providers who do not have the capacity to offset the decrease through efficiencies or from elsewhere in their business.

Supported housing is of vital importance to vulnerable people and we want to continue to work with providers to ensure that services are as good as they can be. We want to build on the work of excellent providers to drive all quality and value for money up to the level of the best. These reforms, giving local areas greater control and strategic oversight, represent the first step towards that goal, whilst giving the sector the necessary certainty over the total amount of funding available nationally. We also want quality and a focus on individual outcomes to play a greater role in how we fund the sector.

We will continue to work with the sector to develop the detail that underpins the new funding model and to ensure that any accompanying regulatory reform is effective and proportionate. It is important that we get the detail right and we want to continue the extensive conversation we have begun with the sector to do this. A formal consultation document will be published shortly.

■ The Pension Protection Fund and the Financial Assistance Scheme: Long Service Caps

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Pensions (Richard Harrington):

[\[HCWS163\]](#)

I am pleased to announce that today I will launch a consultation on the draft regulations needed to ensure the long service cap in the Pension Protection Fund – the PPF – will operate as intended in all circumstances. The consultation will last for eight weeks and, after I have considered the responses, it is my intention to put before Parliament amending regulations, with the expectation that the PPF long service cap will be in place from April 2017.

I am also pleased to announce that it is the Government's intention to introduce an equivalent cap for the Financial Assistance Scheme – the FAS – from April 2018.

The PPF provides compensation based on 90 per cent of the person's accrued pension if they are below the scheme's normal pension age when the company becomes insolvent. This 90 per cent is subject to a maximum, which would, currently, mean a maximum amount of compensation of £33,678 pa at age 65.

The Pensions Act 2014 contains provisions to increase this cap in the PPF at three per cent for every year of pensionable service in the scheme above 20 years, subject to a new maximum of twice the standard cap. This legislation has not yet been brought into force, as some changes were needed to secondary legislation. It is these changes on which I am now consulting.

The FAS provides financial support for those who lost significant amounts of pension because their defined benefit occupational pension scheme collapsed underfunded. Generally the FAS helps those schemes which were affected before the introduction of the PPF and ensures a person gets at least 90 per cent of the pension due at the point the scheme collapsed. This calculation is subject to a maximum cap. It is our intention to amend this cap so that it will, like the PPF cap, increase by three per cent for each full year of pensionable service, over 20 years subject to a new maximum of twice the standard cap.

I will, in due course, be putting before Parliament regulations to implement this new cap. So that the FAS scheme manager has sufficient time to plan for these changes, it is our current intention that the FAS changes will apply from April 2018. Those already being paid

assistance will get the uplift applied to their cap amount from the implementation date although, as in the PPF, this increase will not be backdated.

A copy of the consultation document will be placed in the Library.