



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 12 October 2016 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:55 P.M., 12 October 2016). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

### CONTENTS

<b>ANSWERS</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>TREASURY</b>	<b>11</b>
ATTORNEY GENERAL	5	■ Banks: Incentives	11
■ Volkswagen	5	■ Child Tax Credit	12
BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY	5	■ Concentrix	12
■ Biofuels	5	■ Credit Reference Agencies	14
■ Carbon Sequestration	5	■ Debts	15
■ Climate Change Convention	6	■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Tax Avoidance	15
■ Coal	6	■ Tax Incentives: Exercise	15
■ Energy: Meters	6	■ Valuation Office Agency: Preston	16
■ ERASMUS: UK Withdrawal from EU	7	■ Welfare Tax Credits: Preston	16
■ EURATOM	7	<b>COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT</b>	<b>16</b>
■ Fuel Poverty	8	■ Asbestos	16
■ Hinkley Point C Power Station	8	■ Energy: Conservation	17
■ Mineworkers' Pension Scheme	8	■ Fracking: Carbon Emissions	17
■ Nuclear Installations: Emergencies	8	■ Local Government: Pension Funds	17
■ Renewable Energy: Feed-in Tariffs	9	■ Planning Permission	18
■ Timber	9	■ Planning Permission: Fines	18
CABINET OFFICE	10	■ Public Houses: Rural Areas	18
■ EU Nationals: Croydon	10	■ Social Rented Housing: Construction	19
■ Living Wage: Croydon	10	■ Supported Housing: Finance	19
■ Public Sector: Procurement	11		

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT	20	■ Syria: Humanitarian Aid	34
■ BBC: Royal Charters	20	■ Unmanned Air Vehicles	35
■ Broadband	20	■ Veterans: Military Decorations	35
■ Broadband: Rural Areas	22	■ Warships: Repairs and Maintenance	35
■ Television: Licensing	22	■ Yemen: Armed Conflict	35
DEFENCE	22	EDUCATION	36
■ AAC Wattisham	22	■ Apprentices: East Midlands	36
■ Armed Forces: Dyslexia	23	■ Education	36
■ Armed Forces: Officers	23	■ First Aid: Education	37
■ Army	23	■ Further Education: GCSE	37
■ Army: Private Education	26	■ GCSE: Standards	38
■ Ethiopia: Security	27	■ Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education	38
■ European Defence Agency	27	ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS	38
■ European Fighter Aircraft	28	■ Agriculture	38
■ France: Unmanned Air Vehicles	28	■ Animal Welfare: Trapping	39
■ Gibraltar	28	■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Meetings	39
■ HMS Warrior	29	■ Livestock: MRSA	39
■ Intelligence and Security Committee: Disclosure of Information	30	■ Nature Conservation: EU Law	40
■ Islamic State: Military Intervention	30	■ Pesticides: Regulation	40
■ Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft	31	■ Pigs: MRSA	40
■ Middle East: Guided Weapons	31	■ River Ribble	41
■ Military Bases: Northwood	32	■ Sahaviriya Steel Industries UK: Redcar	41
■ Military Intervention: Libya	32	■ Trapping	42
■ Ministry of Defence: Golf	32	EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION	42
■ Navy: Labour Turnover	33	■ Department for Exiting the European Union: European Commission	42
■ Puma Helicopters: Accidents	33	■ Foreign Companies: Japan	43
■ RAF Henlow	33	■ Insolvency: EU Law	43
■ RAF Leuchars	34		
■ South Korea: Ballistic Missile Defence	34		
■ Syria: Guided Weapons	34		

■ UK Withdrawal from EU	43	■ Musculoskeletal Disorders: Greenwich	55
FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE	44	■ NHS: Overtime	56
■ British Nationals Abroad: Capital Punishment	44	■ Persistent Vegetative State	57
■ Diego Garcia: Military Bases	44	■ Pharmacy: Warrington	57
■ Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Resignations	45	■ Pregnancy: Sodium Valproate	57
■ Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Staff	46	■ UN High-level Panel on Access to Medicines	58
■ Foreign Relations	46	HOME OFFICE	58
■ Gibraltar: Territorial Waters	46	■ Asylum: Appeals	58
■ Ilois: Resettlement	46	■ Asylum: Greece	58
■ Japan: Foreign Relations	47	■ EU Nationals: Visas	59
■ Sudan: Foreign Relations	47	■ Hate Crime: Disability	59
■ Sudan: Peace Negotiations	48	■ Ivory: Smuggling	60
■ Sudan: Politics and Government	48	■ Knives: Crime	60
■ Syria: Armed Conflict	48	■ Marriage of Convenience	60
■ USA: Politics and Government	49	■ New Businesses: Visas	61
HEALTH	49	■ Overseas Students: Visas	62
■ Autism	49	■ Places of Worship Security Funding Scheme	62
■ Breast Cancer	49	■ Refugees: Children	64
■ Breast Cancer: Drugs	50	■ Refugees: Syria	65
■ Cancer: Drugs	51	■ Undocumented Workers	65
■ Circle Holdings	51	INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	65
■ Doctors: Career Breaks	51	■ Department for International Development: Contracts	65
■ General Practitioners	52	■ Developing Countries: Drugs	66
■ General Practitioners: Recruitment	53	■ Developing Countries: HIV Infection	66
■ Health Professions: Recruitment	53	■ Developing Countries: Security	67
■ Health: Children	54	■ Iraq: Overseas Aid	67
■ Hinchingsbrooke Hospital: Circle Holdings	54	■ Overseas Aid: Infectious Diseases	68
■ Medical Treatments	55	■ Palestinian Authority	68
■ Members: Correspondence	55		

INTERNATIONAL TRADE	68	■ River Thames: Bridges	77
■ Department for International Trade: Public Expenditure	68	■ Roads: Safety	77
■ Exports	69	■ Southern: Standards	77
■ Foreign Companies: Japan	69	■ Taxis: Licensing	78
JUSTICE	69	WALES	78
■ Administration of Justice	69	■ Attendance Allowance	78
■ Birmingham Prison and Oakwood Prison	70	WORK AND PENSIONS	78
■ Prisoners' Release	70	■ Attendance Allowance	78
■ Prisoners: Employment	71	■ British Steel: Pensions	79
■ Prisons: Unmanned Air Vehicles	71	■ Jobcentres: Training	79
NORTHERN IRELAND	71	■ National Offender Management Service: European Social Fund	79
■ Army: Northern Ireland	71	■ Public Buildings: Asbestos	80
SCOTLAND	72	■ Social Security Benefits: Disqualification	80
■ Business: Scotland	72	■ Social Security Benefits: Fuel Poverty	80
■ Scotland Office: European Commission	72	<b>WRITTEN STATEMENTS</b>	<b>82</b>
TRANSPORT	72	TREASURY	82
■ Biofuels: Public Consultation	72	■ National Infrastructure Commission	82
■ Govia Thameslink Railway	73	FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE	82
■ High Speed 2 Railway Line	73	■ Hong Kong (Sino/British Joint Declaration)	82
■ London-Brighton Railway Line	73	HOME OFFICE	83
■ Mersey Tunnels: Tolls	74	■ Justice and Home Affairs pre-Council statement	83
■ Network Rail: Thales	74	■ Modern Slavery: Inter-Departmental Ministerial Group Report 2016	84
■ Northern Rail: Rolling Stock	74		
■ Railways: Electrification	74		
■ Railways: Franchises	75		
■ Railways: Safety	75		
■ Railways: WiFi	76		

**Notes:**

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

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

## ANSWERS

### ATTORNEY GENERAL

#### ■ Volkswagen

Stewart Malcolm McDonald:

[46940]

To ask the Attorney General, what recent discussions he has had with the CPS on potential prosecution of Volkswagen in connection with diesel emissions data; and if he will make a statement.

**Robert Buckland:**

The Attorney General has regular discussions with the Director of Public Prosecutions about a variety of issues. As was the case with previous Attorneys General, it is not our policy to provide details of all such discussions.

I can however confirm that the Serious Fraud Office (SFO) is working with UK and European bodies to assess whether there is any potential criminal offence, involving serious or complex fraud, which falls within its remit.

### BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

#### ■ Biofuels

Alan Brown:

[46969]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 12 September 2016 to Question 45332, what assessment he has made of the use of biomass for electricity production and its contribution to supporting the decarbonisation of the UK economy.

**Jesse Norman:**

In 2015, bioenergy generated 29.3 TWh of electricity from 5.2 GW of capacity, up from 22.6TWh and 4.5GW in 2014<sup>[1]</sup>.

The contribution of sustainable biomass to decarbonisation formed part of the Impact Assessment for the Fifth Carbon Budget level, which determined that to the extent that feedstock is available, biomass could play a role not only in electricity generation but in industry, heating and transport.

**[1]**[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/547977/Chapter\\_6\\_web.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/547977/Chapter_6_web.pdf)

#### ■ Carbon Sequestration

Barry Gardiner:

[46706]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the recommendations of the report,

Lowest Cost Decarbonisation for the UK: the critical role of carbon capture and storage, published in September 2016.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government is considering closely the findings and recommendations made in the report 'Lowest Cost Decarbonisation for the UK: the critical role of carbon capture and storage', published by the Lord Oxburgh- led Parliamentary Advisory Group on CCS.

Government will be setting out its future approach to CCS in due course.

## ■ Climate Change Convention

**Barry Gardiner:** [\[43577\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to lay an explanatory memorandum before Parliament on the ratification of the Paris Agreement on climate change.

**Mr Nick Hurd:**

The UK's commitment to the Paris Agreement and to climate action is firm. An explanatory memorandum initiating the UK's domestic approval of the Agreement was laid on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2016 with a view to completing domestic procedures before the end of the year.

## ■ Coal

**Philip Davies:** [\[47919\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 12 September 2016 to Question 45332, whether his Department still plans to hold a review into the use of coal in the UK energy market; and if he will make a statement.

**Jesse Norman:**

Most of the UK's existing coal fired power stations are old, relatively inefficient and require investment to reduce the level of damaging pollutants they emit. I expect to consult shortly on unabated coal stations.

## ■ Energy: Meters

**Adam Afriyie:** [\[47180\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that smart meter software is secure by design.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Department has worked with industry and security experts, including GCHQ, to design a smart metering system that has robust security controls in place. System security is based on international standards. It includes encryption of sensitive data, protection from viruses and malware, access control, two-party authorisation of important messages to the meters and system monitoring.

Further information on smart metering security and GCHQ's role in it can be found on GCHQ's website: <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/articles/smart-security-behind-gb-smart-metering-system>

**Adam Afriyie:** [47374]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment he has made of whether his Department is on course to complete the roll-out of smart meters by 2020.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government is committed to every home and small business being offered smart meters by the end of 2020. The Programme is making good progress. More than 4.2 million meters have been installed in homes and businesses across Great Britain.

Data on the number of smart electricity and gas meters installed in Great Britain is set out in the Government's 'Smart Meters, Great Britain, Quarterly report to end June 2016', published on 29 September 2016:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statistical-release-and-data-smart-meters-great-britain-quarter-2-2016>

#### ■ ERASMUS: UK Withdrawal from EU

**Thangam Debbonaire:** [47487]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government plans to take to enable young people from the UK to take part in the Erasmus scheme after the UK has exited the EU.

**Joseph Johnson:**

The referendum result has no immediate effect on students abroad under the Erasmus scheme or applying for 2016/17. Payments will be made in the usual way. Access to the programme after we leave the EU is a matter for the forthcoming negotiations. The Department offers the same support for study abroad under other schemes as for Erasmus.

#### ■ EURATOM

**Catherine West:** [47517]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what his policy is on the UK's status as a signatory to the Euratom Treaty after the UK leaves the EU.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government is assessing the legal and policy implications of the public's vote to leave the EU including the UK's membership of EURATOM.

## ■ Fuel Poverty

**Martyn Day:** [\[46985\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect of changes in Government investment in home energy efficiency on levels of fuel poverty.

**Jesse Norman:**

The proposals to reform the Energy Company Obligation scheme would increase support for low income and vulnerable households from £310 million to £450 million in 2017, with an intention to increase this to £640m each year from 2018 to 2022. Warm Home Discount provides further support to over 2 million low income and vulnerable households each year through a £140 energy bill rebate.

## ■ Hinkley Point C Power Station

**Barry Gardiner:** [\[46691\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to his oral statement of 15 September 2016 on Hinkley Point C, how the measures proposed in that statement will affect the Contract for Difference for that project.

**Jesse Norman:**

*[Holding answer 10 October 2016]:* As announced on 15 September, following the comprehensive review of the Hinkley Point C project, my rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State announced new safeguards for future foreign investment in critical infrastructure.

In respect of Hinkley Point C, the relevant Contract for Difference has not changed.

## ■ Mineworkers' Pension Scheme

**Grahame Morris:** [\[46740\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will reform the Mineworkers' Pension Scheme to ensure that the surplus is used to benefit former mineworkers.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Department cannot unilaterally amend the terms of the scheme, though we would be willing to consider proposals put forward by the Scheme Trustees. Scheme members have already benefitted from surpluses through increases in benefits.

## ■ Nuclear Installations: Emergencies

**Caroline Lucas:** [\[46883\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what (a) national and (b) local arrangements are in place for issuing iodine tablets in the event of a radiation emergency involving an operational civil nuclear reactor or reprocessing facility; which localities have had a pre-distribution of iodine tablets to households and what the radii of those localities are; to which nuclear reactors those (a) national and (b) local arrangements are linked; and if he will make a statement.



**Jesse Norman:**

Civil nuclear emergency preparedness is a devolved issue, with the Scottish Government taking responsibility for planning in Scotland. England and Wales have arrangements in place to ensure stable iodine is available to potentially affected populations around civil nuclear reactor sites.

Locally, stable iodine is pre-distributed around civil nuclear reactor sites to a distance that has been assessed by the Office for Nuclear Regulation to be sufficient for all reasonably foreseeable emergencies.

## ■ Renewable Energy: Feed-in Tariffs

**Zac Goldsmith:**

[\[47469\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make it his Department's policy to implement the Department of Energy and Climate Change's commitment to feed-in tariff deployment cap top-ups, set out in its review of the feed-in tariffs scheme, published in December 2015.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government response to the 2015 review of the scheme set out that a budget reconciliation process could be biannual, or more or less frequent, depending on deployment. As well as our current consultation on support for anaerobic digestion and micro-combined heat and power under the scheme, we are reviewing the deployment that has taken place since the revised scheme was re-launched in February of this year and will make a statement in due course.

**Zac Goldsmith:**

[\[47470\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for what reason his Department has not implemented the Department of Energy and Climate Change's commitment to a biannual budget reconciliation process for the new feed-in tariff scheme, set out in its review of that scheme in December 2015.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government response to the 2015 review of the scheme set out that a budget reconciliation process could be biannual, or more or less frequent, depending on deployment. As well as our current consultation on support for anaerobic digestion and micro-combined heat and power under the scheme, we are reviewing the deployment that has taken place since the revised scheme was re-launched in February of this year and will make a statement in due course.

## ■ Timber

**Alan Brown:**

[\[46971\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 12 September 2016 to Question 45332, for what reasons the use of wood which has not reached the end of its useful life attracts subsidies and not penalties for emissions of carbon dioxide; and if he will make a statement.

**Jesse Norman:**

In order to receive government support for heat and power generation from biomass, all biomass must now comply with the UK's sustainability criteria. This includes a minimum 60% lifecycle greenhouse gas saving and for the biomass to be from a sustainable source.

Forestry Commission research found that optimal GHG emission savings can be achieved when harvested wood is used primarily for timber where possible, with energy produced alongside it as a co-product. This is summarised at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bioenergy-strategy-supplementary-note-carbon-impacts-of-forest-biomass-november-2012>

**CABINET OFFICE****■ EU Nationals: Croydon**

**Mr Steve Reed:** [47427]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many EU nationals were living in the Borough of Croydon in September 2016.

**Chris Skidmore:**

The information requested falls within the responsibility of the UK Statistics Authority. I have asked the Authority to reply.

**Attachments:**

1. UKSA Letter to Member - EU Nationals [Steve Reed (47427) v0 2 (2).pdf]

**■ Living Wage: Croydon**

**Mr Steve Reed:** [47491]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many people in (a) Croydon North constituency and (b) the London Borough of Croydon are paid less than the Living Wage as defined by the Living Wage Foundation.

**Chris Skidmore:**

The information requested falls within the responsibility of the UK Statistics Authority. I have asked the Authority to reply.

I would add that the Government's National Living Wage was introduced in April 2016 for all working people aged 25 and over, and is set at £7.20 per hour. We have asked the Low Pay Commission to recommend the National Living Wage rate that should apply from April 2017, towards a target 60% of median earnings by 2020. By then, around 2.9 million people are expected to have had a pay rise, thanks directly to the National Living Wage. The Government recognises the important work undertaken by the Living Wage Foundation and we encourage employers to pay above the National Minimum Wage or National Living Wage where it is affordable to do so.

**Attachments:**

1. UKSA Letter to Member - National Living Wage [PQ 47491 v 02 (002).pdf]

**Public Sector: Procurement****Steve McCabe:**[\[47382\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 13 September 2016 to Question 45594, on public sector: procurement, where the Crown Commercial Service analysis can be found that is referred to in that Answer.

**Ben Gummer:**

The Crown Commercial Service analysis referred to was undertaken internally to facilitate answering the Hon Member's previous question. The key data is reproduced below.

**UK Tenders on Tenders Electronic Daily (Official journal of the EU) and Contracts Finder**

MONTH	TED	CONTRACTS FINDER
January 2016	812	2,577
February 2016	760	3,080
March 2016	987	3,256
April 2016	958	2,865
May 2016	881	2,960
June 2016	907	931
July 2016	1,033	2,853
August 2016	1,027	3,570

This clearly illustrates both the deferment in "Contract Finder" tenders during the EU referendum purdah period, and the lack of any significant change in the number of "Tenders Electronic Daily" opportunities.

**TREASURY****Banks: Incentives****Tim Farron:**[\[47334\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the Government will maintain the cap on bankers' bonuses after the UK leaves the EU.

**Simon Kirby:**

Until negotiations on Britain's future relationship with Europe are concluded, we remain a full member of the EU and must meet our obligations as a member of the EU.

All government departments are currently reviewing the EU laws that apply in their policy areas and how our withdrawal from the EU will affect the operation of those laws.

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.

#### ■ Child Tax Credit

**Alison Thewliss:** [47311]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what protections his Department plans to put in place for rape victims who have more than two children and will be subject to the Government's proposal to limit child tax credits to two children per family.

**Jane Ellison:**

The Government has been clear since the Summer Budget that certain groups would be exempt from the Government's plan to limit Child Tax Credit and Universal Credit to two children from April 2017, including women who have a third or subsequent child as a result of rape. The Government recognises this is a complex and sensitive issue and that we need to establish a way of developing the exemption in a sympathetic and responsive manner to ensure the additional support goes to those for whom it is intended.

#### ■ Concentrix

**Mr Mark Hendrick:** [46382]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what targets the Government set for Concentrix on reviewing tax credit claims for each month in 2016 and 2017; and what targets the Government set in relation to tax credit claims being suspended.

**Jane Ellison:**

Concentrix performance targets are outlined in the contract, which can be found at: <https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/85d1b730-5e4e-4be8-ae4c-3ac1f359afc7>. HM Revenue and Customs monitors Concentrix performance against the contractual performance indicators on a daily, weekly and monthly basis.

**Mr Mark Hendrick:** [46383]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what processes his Department has in place to review decisions made by Concentrix which resulted in the suspension of tax credits.

**Jane Ellison:**

Information about the assurance review process can be found within the Concentrix contract at: <https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/85d1b730-5e4e-4be8-ae4c-3ac1f359afc7>

HM Revenue and Customs monitors the financial accuracy of Concentrix decisions using the Quality Assurance Framework as part of the contract. This assures the delegation of Commissioner's Powers is discharged correctly by Concentrix to provide customers with the correct tax credit awards. This involves HMRC reviewing a monthly sample of 500 cases where a decision has been made by Concentrix to amend a tax credit award and assuring the accuracy level of those decisions. The assurance approach is set out within sections A38 and A39 of the contract.

**Louise Haigh:**

[46444]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many amendments to tax credit awards Concentrix have made due to error on behalf of (a) Concentrix and (b) since the beginning of the contract between Concentrix and HM Revenue and Customs.

**Jane Ellison:**

This information is not held in the form requested. An amended award could be due to a number of reasons and without retrospectively looking at each award individually, HM Revenue and Customs would not be able to identify how many amendments were made in error. Undertaking an assurance exercise of this size could only be done at disproportionate cost.

**Mr Mark Hendrick:**

[46545]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, for what reason HM Revenue and Customs Corporate Communications did not provide adequate notice to hon. Members of the drop-in session on constituent queries regarding Concentrix on 15 September 2016 between the time of 9.30 and 11.00am.

**Jane Ellison:**

The drop-in was organised and announced in the House during the Urgent Question debate, to allow Members to raise urgent constituent issues before Recess. Details of the drop-in were sent out by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) as soon as final arrangements had been confirmed. The drop-in aimed to supplement existing channels that HMRC has to help MPs resolve constituency issues, such as the MP-dedicated tax credits helpline. The hours of this helpline have also been extended to provide additional support.

**Louise Haigh:**

[46975]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the HM Revenue and Customs Benefits and Credits, Errors and Fraud Adding Capacity 444 contract between SYNnex-Concentrix UK Limited and HM Revenue and Customs, if he will publish the quality criteria for assessing tax credit decisions.

**Jane Ellison:**

Information around the criteria and process for assessing tax credit decisions is set out in sections A12-A14 of the Concentrix contract and can be found at:

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

**Ms Angela Eagle:** [46999]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many outstanding applications for mandatory reconsideration of a tax credit decision by Concentrix there are in (a) Wallasey constituency, (b) Wirral and (c) Merseyside.

**Ms Angela Eagle:** [47000]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people in (a) Wallasey constituency, (b) Wirral and (c) Merseyside have had tax credits claims (i) amended and (ii) cancelled by Concentrix.

**Ms Angela Eagle:** [47001]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many tax credits claims have been reinstated by HM Revenue and Customs as a result of (a) adjustments and (b) cancellations by Concentrix in (i) Wallasey constituency, (ii) Wirral and (iii) Merseyside.

**Ms Angela Eagle:** [47002]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many complaints HM Revenue and Customs have received about Concentrix from residents in (a) Wallasey constituency, (b) Wirral and (c) Merseyside since that company has been under contract with his Department.

**Jane Ellison:**

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) does not hold data broken down specifically by constituency areas.

HMRC is currently focussed on resolving the outstanding cases but will be preparing regional analysis, which will be available in due course.

## ■ Credit Reference Agencies

**Gareth Thomas:** [46958]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many complaints have been made about credit rating agencies; how many investigations the Financial Conduct Authority has launched into the performance of credit rating agencies; how many investigations the Information Commissioner's Office has launched into the performance of credit rating agencies; and if he will make a statement.

**Simon Kirby:**

This question has been passed on to the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). The FCA and ICO will reply directly to the Honourable member by letter. A copy of the letters will be placed in the Library of the House.

## ■ Debts

**Frank Field:** [\[47155\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, by when his Department plans to report its funding on a proposed breathing space mechanism for problem debt.

**Simon Kirby:**

The Government is exploring whether some form of “breathing space” would be a useful and viable addition to the range of formal and informal debt solutions available to consumers and creditors. Officials in HM Treasury and the Insolvency Service have been asked to discuss this issue with stakeholders and the Government will report back this autumn.

## ■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Tax Avoidance

**Robert Flello:** [\[47327\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what representations he has received from the Road Haulage Association on lorry drivers setting up personal service companies for tax purposes; and what steps his Department is taking to promote tax compliance among road hauliers.

**Jane Ellison:**

The Road Haulage Association wrote to the Government on the 18th March 2016 to raise their concerns about this issue. HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) has worked with the Road Haulage Association and others to highlight the managed service company and employment intermediaries rules which are designed to ensure that people who provide their services through their own limited companies pay the appropriate employment taxes. HMRC robustly enforces compliance with these rules, including in the road haulage sector.

## ■ Tax Incentives: Exercise

**Mr Laurence Robertson:** [\[46955\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will introduce tax incentives for people who engage in regulated and supervised exercise to off-set the likelihood of diabetes; and if he will make a statement.

**Jane Ellison:**

The Government published the 'Sporting Future' strategy last December to support and fund sport and physical activity and the Sport England's strategy 'Towards an Active Nation', published in May, committed to spend at least 25% of their funding on those that are classed as inactive. The Government's "Cycle to Work" scheme includes an annual tax exemption allowing employers to loan cycles and cyclists' safety equipment to employees as a tax-free benefit.

The Government keeps all tax policy under review.

**■ Valuation Office Agency: Preston****Mr Mark Hendrick:**[\[46380\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 13 September 2016 to Question 45282, where staff who work at the Valuation Office Agency in Preston are planned to be deployed after the planned closure of that office; and how many staff at what cost at that office he plans to make redundant after that closure.

**Jane Ellison:**

The Valuation Office Agency will consult with staff affected by the closure of the Preston office. Options will include working from an alternative location or working from home.

The Agency is not looking to make redundancies and is committed to take every practical step to avoid job losses as a result of location changes.

The Agency's transformation programme is changing the way the Agency works, focusing on a core network of offices and greater use of technology.

**■ Welfare Tax Credits: Preston****Mr Mark Hendrick:**[\[46381\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people in Preston constituency have their tax credits suspended.

**Jane Ellison:**

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) does not hold data broken down specifically by constituency areas.

HMRC is currently focussed on resolving the outstanding cases but will be preparing regional analysis, which will be available in due course.

**COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT****■ Asbestos****Sue Hayman:**[\[47330\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what his Department's policy is on the requirements for property owners to check for asbestos before selling their property.

**Gavin Barwell:**

The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012, which are enforced by the Health and Safety Executive, require the owner, or person responsible for maintenance, of a non-domestic building to record the location and condition of any asbestos-containing materials and to put in place a plan to manage the risk they present. This information should therefore be available should the owner decide to sell the building.

There is no requirement for homeowners to check for asbestos before selling their property. However the indoor air concentrations of asbestos in most dwellings, including those where asbestos is present but in good condition, present minimal risk to health.



Where a building is surveyed under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System, this would include an assessment of the risk of asbestos to occupants of dwellings but there is no requirement for the rating system to be used when selling a dwelling.

Tradespeople, such as plumbers and electricians, are aware of the risks of asbestos and take care in handling it to minimise risks.

#### ■ Energy: Conservation

**Mr Roger Godsiff:**

[\[47329\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, whether the Government plans to raise standards for energy efficiency in (a) new-build housing and (b) other new buildings.

**Gavin Barwell:**

The Government has a duty under section 165 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 to carry out a review of the minimum energy performance requirements for new homes in the Building Regulations. The Department has started work on this review and we are considering whether to expand the scope of it to include non-domestic buildings. The outcome of the review will be used to help determine whether any further strengthening of energy performance standards is required.

#### ■ Fracking: Carbon Emissions

**Mr Roger Godsiff:**

[\[47338\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if the Government will take into account that atmospheric carbon dioxide levels have passed 400ppm when deciding on whether to overturn a decision by a local authority not to allow fracking.

**Gavin Barwell:**

Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework including, where relevant, national planning policy relating to climate change, is a material consideration in planning decisions. In deciding called-in applications or recovered appeals, the Secretary of State will take into account all material considerations which are before him at the time of the decision.

#### ■ Local Government: Pension Funds

**Grahame Morris:**

[\[46997\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if he will make available to the hon. Member for Easington, in electronic form, (a) all Local Government Pension Scheme pooling bids and (b) the investment cost data provided by CEM Benchmarking which have been used to calculate investment costs under each fund and that underpin each bid in each of the last three years.

**Mr Marcus Jones:**

I will place copies of the final proposals on local government pension scheme pooling in the Library of the House.

Investment cost data was provided by CEM Benchmarking to the individual administering authorities and is not held by my Department.

■ **Planning Permission**

**Mr Hugo Swire:** [\[47324\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, whether his Department has made an assessment of whether retrospective planning permission is more likely to be granted if the development in question is occupied.

**Gavin Barwell:**

The Department has not made such an assessment.

■ **Planning Permission: Fines**

**Mr Hugo Swire:** [\[47152\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if he will assess the merits of increasing the penalty charged to developers who regularly build without planning permission.

**Gavin Barwell:**

Legislative changes which came into effect in March 2015 mean that both the magistrates' and the crown court can already impose an unlimited fine on conviction for the most serious enforcement related offences – non compliance with enforcement notices, temporary stop notices and stop notices and for giving false or misleading response to a planning contravention notice. In determining the amount of the fine, the courts are required to "have regard to any financial benefit which has accrued or appears likely to accrue to him in consequence of the offence".

In addition, where a local planning authority achieves a successful conviction for failure to comply with an enforcement notice, they can apply for a Confiscation Order, under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002, to recover the financial benefit obtained through unauthorised development.

We believe these penalties remain appropriate and have no plans to amend them at this time.

■ **Public Houses: Rural Areas**

**Dr Poulter:** [\[47339\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to provide financial assistance to support rural community pubs.

**Andrew Percy:**

We are providing £1.85 million towards the £3.62 million 'More Than a Pub' Community Pub Business Support Programme which will, over 2016/17 and 2017/18,

help local communities to acquire their local pubs. The programme offers wrap-round support including specialist advice, grants and loans.

From 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2016 we provided Pub is The Hub with £270,000 to deliver 80 diversification projects and 100 new community-focussed services and facilities for rural pubs, and from 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2015 provided Plunkett Foundation with £80,000 to support communities to own their local pubs.

This is in addition to wider Government measures supporting pubs including the freeze in beer duty at Budget 2016, which followed cuts in the previous three Budgets, and the scrapping of the beer duty escalator.

## ■ Social Rented Housing: Construction

Rachael Maskell:

[47144]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how much social housing for rent was built in (a) York, (b) North Yorkshire and (c) England in each year since 2010; and how much social housing in each such area he expects to be built in each future year for which projections have been made.

Gavin Barwell:

The number of social housing for rent supplied in England, since 1991-92, are published in Table 1006 of the Affordable Housing Supply 2014-15 statistical release, available at this link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-affordable-housing-supply>

The department does not produce projections for future affordable housing supply. Local affordable housing needs should be assessed as part of the local plan making process.

Government has committed £8 billion to deliver a range of affordable housing tenures including homes to rent; homes for shared ownership, rent to buy and discounted Starter Homes to buy outright.

## ■ Supported Housing: Finance

Helen Hayes:

[46937]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what his policy is on maintaining the ring-fence on devolved funding for supported housing; and what steps he plans to take to ensure such funding changes in line with future demand for such services.

Gavin Barwell:

We announced on 15 September that from 2019/20 there will be a new funding model for supported housing where core rent and services charges will be funded through Housing Benefit or Universal Credit up to the level of the applicable Local Housing Allowance rate.

In acknowledgement of the higher than average costs of offering supported housing accommodation we will devolve an amount of funding for disbursement locally. As we also recognise the need to manage the transition to a new funding regime carefully, this

top-up funding will be ring fenced to ensure it continues to support vulnerable people and the amount of top-up funding will be set on the basis of current projections of future need.

We will continue to work with the sector to develop the detail that underpins the new funding model.

Budgets for future years will be determined in the usual way at future Spending Reviews.

## CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

### ■ BBC: Royal Charters

**Robert Flello:** [\[47326\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, if she will make representations to the BBC as part of the Charter renewal process on the level of coverage of (a) World Youth Day 2016 and (b) the canonisation of Mother Teresa of Calcutta.

**Matt Hancock:**

Under the terms of the BBC's Charter and Agreement, the BBC is operationally and editorially independent of Government and there is no provision for the Government to intervene in the Corporation's day-to-day operations

### ■ Broadband

**Drew Hendry:** [\[46963\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, if her Department will take steps to match the commitment made by the EU to equip every town and village with free wireless internet by 2020.

**Matt Hancock:**

The Government will consider the European Commission's detailed plans for implementing their proposal when they are available.

In the meantime we are working to extend digital connectivity further and maintain its position as a world-leading digital economy. The partnership between central Government and local authorities has resulted in £1.7bn of public investment in superfast broadband across the UK and has enabled commercial suppliers to extend coverage of superfast broadband to over 90% of UK homes and businesses. The BDUK programme will see coverage rise to 95% of UK homes and businesses by the end of 2017.

Additionally, Telefonica (O2) has a licence obligation to deliver indoor 4G coverage to 98 per cent of premises in the UK by end 2017 that will further boost local connectivity across the UK.

Drew Hendry:

[46964]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, if her Department will take steps to match the commitment made by the EU to fully deploy 5G by 2025.

**Matt Hancock:**

Government has committed to ensuring that the UK seizes the chance to be a world leader in the development of 5G. We have actively participated in the global process for setting 5G standards., and we will continue to engage with international partners, including in the EU, to ensure that the UK is able to maximise the opportunities from 5G leading to widespread deployment as soon as it is commercially viable.

Jack Dromey:

[47344]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, whether the Government plans to publish detailed plans for achieving a minimum 10Mbps broadband connection as a universal service obligation by 2020.

**Matt Hancock:**

Ofcom has been commissioned to undertake detailed technical analysis which will help inform decisions on the design parameters for the USO. We will publish plans for a broadband USO once we have considered Ofcom's report which is due to be completed by the end of the year.

Jack Dromey:

[47345]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, how the Government plans to use regulatory powers to ensure that an adequate broadband service is provided.

**Matt Hancock:**

The Government is creating a regulatory environment that supports the market in delivering world-class broadband services and has taken a number of steps to support this aim. As part of the Digital Economy Bill, we are introducing a broadband Universal Service Obligation to be implemented by 2020. This will give everyone the legal right to broadband at a minimum speed of 10 Mbps.

We are reforming the Electronic Communications Code to cut costs and simplify the process of building mobile and broadband infrastructure on private land. We are making permanent the relaxations in the rules for deploying fixed broadband infrastructure in all areas except Sites of Special Scientific Interest that we introduced in 2013. This will also cut deployment costs for communications providers and speed up broadband roll-out. Similar planning relaxations are being made in relation to the deployment of mobile infrastructure.

As of 31 July this year, the Communications (Access to Infrastructure) Regulations 2016 gave rights to Communications Providers to share passive infrastructure across utility, transport and communications sectors which is designed to reduce the cost of broadband deployment.

In addition, building regulations have also been amended to introduce a requirement from January 2017 for all new buildings, and major renovations, to include in-building

physical infrastructure to support superfast broadband connectivity. The Government has also put in place industry agreements with developers for fibre connections to be made available to all new build housing.

The Government continues to review the regulatory landscape to identify further opportunities for reform.

#### ■ Broadband: Rural Areas

**Stephen Timms:** [\[47312\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate she has made of the amount of its own capital that BT has invested in the rural broadband rollout programme to date.

**Matt Hancock:**

BDUK does not hold data on BT's total capital investment to date in the Superfast Broadband Programme. As each project completes, BT is required to confirm that either its contracted capital commitment is fully drawn down, or that any unused capital contribution is committed to an investment fund which is managed by the Local Body to support further delivery. BT's total capital commitment for Phase 1 of the programme is £348 million.

#### ■ Television: Licensing

**Andrew Bridgen:** [\[46995\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, whether non-payment of the television licence for solely accessing the BBC iPlayer will be treated as a criminal or civil offence.

**Matt Hancock:**

Section 363 of the Communications Act 2003 provides that a person who installs or uses a television receiver without being authorised by a licence is guilty of a criminal offence. As of 1 September 2016, this includes watching BBC on-demand services such as the iPlayer.

## DEFENCE

#### ■ AAC Wattisham

**Danny Kinahan:** [\[47195\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what his Department's plans are for the future of RAF Aldergrove.

**Dr Poulter:** [\[47493\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans his Department has for the future military capacity of Wattisham Airbase.

**Dr Poulter:**

[\[47494\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans his Department has for the future of Wattisham Airbase.

**Harriett Baldwin:**

The estate optimisation strategy aims to provide a more efficient and better quality Defence estate to support our Armed Forces, which will be fit for purpose for future generations.

This long-term, detailed work seeks to identify a rationalised Defence estate which more appropriately meets the needs of our Armed Forces by being of better quality, more cost effective and more efficient, as well as 30% smaller overall, by 2040.

No decision about the future of individual sites has been made at this point, other than those that have been previously announced

#### ■ **Armed Forces: Dyslexia**

**Kevin Foster:**

[\[47440\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the Government plans to give people with dyslexia in the armed forces protection under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

**Mark Lancaster:**

There are no plans to extend the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 to cover Service personnel who have dyslexia. The Defence Direction for Specific Learning Difficulties (contained within Joint Service Publication 898 'Defence Direction and Guidance on Training, Education and Skills') provides direction to all Service personnel who have dyslexia, and line managers, trainers and commanders who are required to manage Service personnel with dyslexia. It provides a learning support framework for those identified with dyslexia, ensuring that the Ministry of Defence meets its obligations as a responsible employer.

#### ■ **Armed Forces: Officers**

**Richard Burden:**

[\[46987\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many military service complaints on the reversion of rank have been (a) made and (b) upheld in each of the last three years.

**Harriett Baldwin:**

This information is not available in the format requested. The number of individuals who have raised service complaints regarding the reversion of rank is fewer than five in any year, which is deemed low enough to risk identification of the individuals in question.

#### ■ **Army**

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[46584\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many trained regular army soldiers there were in each of the Army's regiments and corps in each year since 2010.

**Mike Penning:**

The number of trained Regular Soldiers as at the 1 April, each year from 2010 to present, broken down by corps, is shown in the table below. These figures do not include Gurkhas or Full Time Reserve Service who are part of the Full Time Trained Strength but are not counted as Regular Soldiers.

	<b>APRIL 2010</b>	<b>APRIL 2011</b>	<b>APRIL 2012</b>	<b>APRIL 2013</b>	<b>APRIL 2014</b>	<b>APRIL 2015</b>	<b>APRIL 2016</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>98,040</b>	<b>97,280</b>	<b>94,800</b>	<b>90,530</b>	<b>84,250</b>	<b>79,540</b>	<b>77,100</b>
<b>General Staff</b>	840	810	760	740	730	720	690
<b>Household Cavalry &amp; Royal Armoured Corps</b>	5,990	5,840	5,520	5,230	4,770	4,600	4,520
<b>Royal Artillery</b>	7,720	7,550	7,350	7,050	6,560	6,220	6,080
<b>Royal Engineers</b>	9,520	9,630	9,450	8,970	8,120	7,810	7,460
<b>Royal Signals</b>	7,570	7,670	7,540	7,180	6,680	6,320	5,910
<b>Infantry</b>	24,940	24,210	24,080	23,280	21,710	20,130	19,630
<b>Army Air Corps</b>	2,140	2,120	2,020	1,900	1,760	1,690	1,640
<b>Royal Army Chaplin's Department</b>	140	130	140	140	140	140	130
<b>Royal Logistic Corps</b>	15,300	15,020	14,080	12,980	12,100	11,130	10,660
<b>Royal Army Medical Corps</b>	3,060	3,010	2,990	3,100	3,110	3,030	2,940
<b>Royal Electrical Mechanical Engineers</b>	9,830	10,030	9,700	9,010	8,060	7,770	7,570



	APRIL 2010	APRIL 2011	APRIL 2012	APRIL 2013	APRIL 2014	APRIL 2015	APRIL 2016
<b>Adjutant Generals Corps</b>	6,000	6,050	6,030	5,760	5,470	5,210	5,200
<b>Royal Army Veterinary Corps</b>	350	340	370	400	410	380	360
<b>Small Arms School Corps</b>	160	160	160	150	150	150	150
<b>Royal Army Dental Corps</b>	370	370	350	360	310	250	220
<b>Intelligence Corps</b>	1,500	1,580	1,650	1,750	1,750	1,720	1,700
<b>Royal Army Physical Training Corps</b>	490	480	470	440	420	410	430
<b>Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps</b>	900	900	890	910	890	870	860
<b>Corps of Army Music</b>	800	770	740	720	740	710	690
<b>Other (including SSCP)</b>	410	620	540	460	370	280	260

The figures are for Trained Regulars only and so exclude Ghurkhas, Reserve services and Untrained Regulars.

"Other" includes those with unknown Cap badges and those in Senior Soldier Continuity Posts (SSCP).

Figures have been rounded to "10". Figures ending in "5" have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 20 to prevent systematic bias.

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[46586\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many trained soldiers were assigned to the 3rd Division (UK) in each year since 2010.

Mike Penning:

The Full Time Trained Strength of 3 Div as at the 1 April, from 2010 to present, is shown in the table below.

	TOTAL	OFFICERS	OTHER RANKS
<b>1 April 2010</b>	<b>26,180</b>	2,030	24,150
<b>1 April 2011</b>	<b>25,100</b>	1,880	23,220
<b>1 April 2012</b>	<b>23,990</b>	1,840	22,140
<b>1 April 2013</b>	<b>21,790</b>	1,760	20,030
<b>1 April 2014</b>	<b>19,030</b>	1,520	17,510
<b>1 April 2015</b>	<b>17,960</b>	1,500	16,460
<b>1 April 2016</b>	<b>14,540</b>	1,200	13,340

The figures are for Full Time Trained Strength comprising Trained Regular, Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS) and Gurkhas.

Figures have been rounded to "10". Figures ending in "5" have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 20 to prevent systematic bias.

The reduction in the number of personnel assigned 3rd (United Kingdom) Division (3 Div) follows the creation of Force Troops Command under Army 2020. This saw the transfer of many personnel previously assigned directly to 3 Div being transferred to this new formation.

## ■ Army: Private Education

Tim Farron:

[\[47308\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the cost to the army has been of teaching children in private schools in the UK and abroad in each year since 2010.

Harriett Baldwin:

The total spend by the Department on Continuity of Education Allowance in the UK for Army personnel in each financial year since 2009-10 is shown below.

The Department also funds a range of education provisions overseas for Army personnel. However these are not all defined as 'private schools'. The cost of this is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

FINANCIAL YEAR	SPEND BY ARMY (£MILLION)
2009-10	62.745
2010-11	67.021
2011-12	67.669
2012-13	62.134
2013-14	57.595
2014-15	55.960
2015-16	54.887

### ■ Ethiopia: Security

**Steve McCabe:**

[\[47139\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how the current executive MSc in security sector management programme, run in Ethiopia with oversight from his Department, differs from the Department for International Development's similar MSc programme which was closed in June 2015.

**Mike Penning:**

The MSc programme was restarted in 2015-16 under the Conflict Security and Stability Fund, reflecting the security focus of the syllabus. It differs from the DFID-funded programme as it draws students from across the region, thereby contributing to the National Security Council (NSC) objective of enhancing regional peace and security in East Africa, whereas the previous MSc was primarily for Ethiopians. There are ongoing efforts to improve the diversity profile of the student intake, in terms of age, gender and military/civilian balance; and to identify more students from African Union countries, in support of the NSC objective to build the African Union's capacity to reduce, manage and resolve conflict and crises in Africa.

### ■ European Defence Agency

**Catherine West:**

[\[47160\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the Government plans to continue to participate in the European Defence Agency after the UK leaves the EU.

**Mike Penning:**

The Government is considering options for our future relationship with the EU and European Defence Agency. No final decisions have been taken.

**■ European Fighter Aircraft**

**Sir Nicholas Soames:** [\[46438\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans his Department has for developing for a crewed successor to Typhoon.

**Harriett Baldwin:**

The Strategic Defence and Security Review of 2015 announced the out of service date for the Typhoon fleet would be extended to 2040. The Ministry of Defence will consider options to replace the capability closer to that date but so far no decision has been made.

**■ France: Unmanned Air Vehicles**

**Sir Nicholas Soames:** [\[46550\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what progress his Department has made with the government of France on developing the scale and scope of the unmanned combat aerial vehicle programme agreed in January 2014.

**Harriett Baldwin:**

The two year £120 million UK/France Unmanned Combat Air System (UCAS) Feasibility Phase commenced in October 2014 and is due to be completed in January 2017. In Amiens in March 2016, we agreed with the French Government to extend the Feasibility Phase through 2017. As well as developing jointly our understanding of the required technologies for future combat air systems, this will further define the scope of the next phase of the UCAS programme which is due to begin in late 2017 and will develop two full-scale UCAS demonstrators by 2025.

**■ Gibraltar**

**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[46688\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent assessment he has made of the strategic military importance of Gibraltar to the UK and her allies.

**Mike Penning:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 12 September 2016 to Question 45163.

Our assessment of Gibraltar's strategic importance is shared by our allies and partners, a number of whom make regular use of the military facilities there.

**Attachments:**

1. 45163 - QnA extract on Defence:Gibraltar  
[20160912\_45163\_Defence\_Gibraltar.docx]

**■ HMS Warrior**

**Clive Lewis:** [\[46980\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate his Department has made of the value of artefacts illegally salvaged from the site of HMS Warrior since the discovery of the wreck in September 2016.

**Clive Lewis:** [\[46981\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many reports of illegal salvage activity on the site of HMS Warrior have been received by the Ministry of Defence Police since the discovery of the wreck in September 2016.

**Clive Lewis:** [\[46982\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what specific steps he is taking to protect the site of HMS Warrior from illegal salvage activity.

**Clive Lewis:** [\[47377\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many reports of disturbances to military wrecks designated as protected sites under the Protection of Military Remains Act 1986 were received by the Ministry of Defence Police in each of the last six years.

**Clive Lewis:** [\[47378\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many investigations were carried out by the Ministry of Defence Police into alleged offences under the Protection of Military Remains Act 1986 in each of the last six years.

**Harriett Baldwin:**

The Ministry of Defence Police (MDP) has carried out the following investigations (taking "disturbances" to mean thefts or alleged thefts and not limited to shipwrecks) under the Protection of Military Remains Act 1986:

YEAR	
2010	1
2011	6
2012	1
2013	0
2014	0
2015	1

The MDP has not received any information related to the illegal salvage of material from HMS Warrior.

By invoking the principle of Sovereign Immunity, and by designating specific vessels under the Protection of Wrecks Act 1973 and the Protection of Military Remains Act 1986, we endeavour to protect these important sites where we are able. Where we have definitive evidence of desecration of these sites, we will take appropriate action. However, it should be appreciated that, given the large number of Royal Navy wrecks around the world and the vast area they cover, there are limitations on what can be achieved with regard to protection.

■ **Intelligence and Security Committee: Disclosure of Information**

**Mr Alistair Carmichael:** [\[46855\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, on how many occasions Ministers in his Department have delayed providing information to the Intelligence and Security Committee in order to make a determination as to whether to share that information as set out in Schedule 1 to the Justice and Security Act 2013.

**Mr Alistair Carmichael:** [\[46858\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, on how many occasions Ministers in his Department have declined to disclose information to the Intelligence and Security Committee under Schedule 1 of the Justice and Security Act 2013; and if he will make a statement.

**Michael Fallon:**  
None.

■ **Islamic State: Military Intervention**

**Tom Brake:** [\[46448\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the UK plans to provide any assistance or reconnaissance intelligence for airstrikes against Daesh conducted as part of the Syrian Counter Terror agreement made by the US and Russia on 9 September 2016.

**Tom Brake:** [\[46449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the UK plans to provide any assistance or reconnaissance intelligence for airstrikes against Jabhat al-Nusra conducted as part of the Syrian Counter Terror agreement made by the US and Russia on 9 September 2016.

**Tom Brake:** [\[46450\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the UK is a party to the Syrian Counter Terror Agreement made by the US and Russia on 9 September 2016; whether the UK plans to provide any assistance or reconnaissance intelligence for actions taken under that agreement; and whether British forces' operations in Iraq and Syria will be affected by that agreement.

**Mike Penning:**  
The UK supported US efforts to reach agreement with Russia to reinstate a cessation of hostilities in Syria and will continue to work for the restoration of a credible cessation of

Hostilities. The UK was not, however, a party to the US-Russia arrangement which was a purely bilateral one. While the UK would have considered seriously any requests received, we were not asked for either assistance or reconnaissance intelligence for its implementation.

## ■ Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft

**Grant Shapps:** [\[46506\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent estimate he has made of the total revenue expected to have been accrued upon the completion of the F35 Joint Strike Fighter programme.

**Grant Shapps:** [\[46507\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment his Department has made of the future sales projections for the F35 Joint Strike Fighter in the last two years.

**Grant Shapps:** [\[46513\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when the first F35 Joint Strike Fighters are planned to be operational.

**Harriett Baldwin:**

Initial Operating Capability for the UK's F-35B Lightning aircraft is scheduled for December 2018.

The most recent US Selected Acquisition Report (SAR 2015) estimates that the production, sustainment and support revenue generated by the global F-35 fleet through the life of the programme will be over one trillion US dollars. The UK manufactures approximately 15% of each F-35 aircraft, however as the F-35 programme is still determining its Global Support Solution footprint, we are not yet in a position to determine the potential revenue for UK industry.

The programme is expecting to procure over 3,000 aircraft across the F-35 Partner Nations. This will be further supplemented by Foreign Military Sales (FMS) customers. FMS engagement and future sales projections are managed by, and are a matter for, the US Government.

## ■ Middle East: Guided Weapons

**Alison Thewliss:** [\[46644\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Brimstone missiles have been used in Syria and Iraq to date as part of Operation SHADER; and what the cost of the use of those weapons has been to the public purse.

**Mike Penning:**

Between November 2014 and 16 September 2016 there have been 230 Brimstone missiles used in Iraq and Syria as part of Operation SHADER. The estimated cost of the use of these missiles is £18.7million.

**■ Military Bases: Northwood**

**Steven Paterson:** [\[47457\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he plans to require that EU staff employed at Northwood relocate to another country after the UK leaves the EU.

**Steven Paterson:** [\[47458\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he plans that the Multi National Headquarters for the command of EU military operations will remain at Northwood.

**Mike Penning:**

The European Union (EU) Staff employed at Northwood within the EU Operational Headquarters (OHQ) and the NATO Maritime Commander (MARCOM)'s Headquarters provide vital support to Operation ATALANTA (a Counter-Piracy mission off the Horn of Africa) and broader NATO Maritime Operations.

The requirement for the OHQ, its location, and its EU Staff depend on a continuing mandate (expected to be extended until December 2018) and decisions of the EU; and the UK supports continued NATO - EU cooperation including that through MARCOM.

There are no current plans to relocate the OHQ or EU staff from Northwood.

**■ Military Intervention: Libya**

**Kirsten Oswald:** [\[46804\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 8 September 2016, to Question 44003, whether the battle damage assessment regarding airstrikes in Libya carried out by US forces operating from RAF Lakenheath on 19 February 2016 was shared with the UK.

**Mike Penning:**

The US has, in confidence, shared the results of that strike with the UK. Clearly it would be inappropriate for us to release that detail or to comment on another State's operations.

**■ Ministry of Defence: Golf**

**Grant Shapps:** [\[46512\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the annual cost is of retaining each of his Department's 15 golf courses.

**Mark Lancaster:**

This information is not held.

The money spent on running golf courses is not separately identifiable from the operating costs of the site as a whole.



## ■ Navy: Labour Turnover

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[46580\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to increase the level of retention in the Royal Navy.

**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[46687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to address shortfalls in (a) recruitment and (b) retention in the Royal Navy.

**Mike Penning:**

The Naval Service utilises a wide range of mechanisms to aid the recruitment and retention of personnel. For recruitment these include targeted marketing, specific recruitment events and staged remunerative awards to attract recruits in specialist areas. A number of initiatives have also been developed in order to retain experienced personnel, such as the use of targeted retention incentives and career extensions. Further developments under the Defence People Programme, such as flexible engagements, will help ensure that this process continues.

## ■ Puma Helicopters: Accidents

**Douglas Chapman:** [\[46486\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether an Airborne Collision Avoidance System and a Digital Advanced Flight Control System (Low Visibility Landing) were fitted to Puma helicopter XW229 at the time of its crash on 12 October 2015.

**Harriett Baldwin:**

Puma helicopter XW229 was fitted with a dual-duplex Digital Automatic Flight Control System but not an Airborne Collision Avoidance System. The Service Inquiry into the incident involving XW229 is on-going, and the report will be published in due course.

## ■ RAF Henlow

**Grant Shapps:** [\[46514\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on armed forces and civilian staff of the planned sale of RAF Henlow.

**Mark Lancaster:**

Military personnel currently based at RAF Henlow will be relocated with their unit, the details of this relocation will be made clear later this year.

Civilian staff will be expected to honour the mobility obligations if their post is being relocated. Where an individual's post is being relocated outside the scope of their personal mobility obligation they will be managed in accordance with normal Departmental policy and processes.

Trade Unions have been consulted and detailed discussions regarding civilian staff will take place well in advance of any closure.

**■ RAF Leuchars**

**Stephen Gethins:** [\[46453\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he plans to publish details of the £8 million investment at the RAF base in Leuchars.

**Mark Lancaster:**

On 5 March 2013 (Official Report, column 845) my right hon. Friend the then Defence Secretary, (Philip Hammond), set out the Department's Army Basing Plans. As part of this larger package of investment the plan contains a commitment to invest around £8million in the infrastructure and facilities at Leuchars. The investment is being spent on improvements to existing facilities including the upgrade of buildings, existing single living accommodation and sports facilities.

**■ South Korea: Ballistic Missile Defence**

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[46585\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what discussions he has had with his US counterpart on the US's decision to deploy the US Terminal High Altitude Area Defence system in South Korea.

**Mike Penning:**

The Secretary of State for Defence has not discussed this issue with his US counterpart.

**■ Syria: Guided Weapons**

**Brendan O'Hara:** [\[46434\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many civilian casualties have resulted from the 26 brimstone missiles dropped by UK aircraft in Syria in 2016 to date.

**Mike Penning:**

The Ministry of Defence is not aware of any credible evidence to date of civilian casualties as a result of UK airstrikes over Syria and Iraq.

**■ Syria: Humanitarian Aid**

**Tom Brake:** [\[46488\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 13 June 2016 to Question 40083, what assessment his Department has made of the feasibility of the British military conducting and supporting air drops of humanitarian aid in Syria.

**Mike Penning:**

The Ministry of Defence shares the view of the Department for International Development that aid delivered by road, by trusted humanitarian partners who can ensure it gets to those who need it most, remains the best way of getting help to affected populations. The UK has been clear that the use of air drops to deliver aid is high risk and should only be considered as a last resort when all other means have failed, and if it is an effective way of getting humanitarian supplies to people. Air drops require certain conditions to be met for successful delivery that are unlikely to be present

on the ground in most of Syria including clear drop zones, safe access for the intended recipients, and co-ordination with authorities on the ground to oversee distribution.

#### ■ Unmanned Air Vehicles

**Tom Brake:** [\[46487\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 11 April 2016 to Question 32492, to which countries RAF Reaper or Watchkeeper drones have been deployed on intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance sorties since 4 April 2016.

**Mike Penning:**

From 4 April until 20 September 2016, UK Reapers have continued to be deployed on intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance sorties in Iraq and Syria. Watchkeeper has not been deployed during the period in question.

#### ■ Veterans: Military Decorations

**Kevin Foster:** [\[46977\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Legion d'Honneur applications are outstanding in his Department.

**Harriett Baldwin:**

The Ministry of Defence has received approximately 5,300 applications from veterans for the French award of the Legion d'Honneur. We have passed the majority of these to the French in accordance with the maximum permitted rate of 100 per week. We now only have 85 remaining applications to pass to the French, which will be submitted next week, and 130 applications with missing information which, therefore, cannot be processed - the Department is working to resolve these.

#### ■ Warships: Repairs and Maintenance

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[46582\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps the Royal Navy is taking to maintain its warship repair capability after the sale of RFA Diligence.

**Harriett Baldwin:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 13 September 2016 to Question 45203 to the hon. Member for Portsmouth South (Flick Drummond).

#### **Attachments:**

1. 45203-QnA extract on Warships:Repair & Maintenance  
[20160913\_45203\_Warships\_Repair\_and\_Maintenance.docx]

#### ■ Yemen: Armed Conflict

**Tom Brake:** [\[46337\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the location and timing was of each known use of UK-supplied weapons in Yemen since January 2015.

**Michael Fallon:**

The location and timing of weapons used in Yemen is a matter for the Saudi-led Coalition to comment on.

## EDUCATION

### ■ Apprentices: East Midlands

**Gloria De Piero:**

[47135]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many apprenticeships have been taken up in (a) Ashfield constituency and (b) the East Midlands in each of the last three years.

**Robert Halfon:**

This data is published as part of the Further Education Data Library: Apprenticeships[1] and can be found at:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/558301/201516\\_OCT\\_Apps\\_Starts\\_by\\_Region\\_PCON\\_LEA\\_LA\\_E\\_D\\_Final\\_V1.3.xlsx](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/558301/201516_OCT_Apps_Starts_by_Region_PCON_LEA_LA_E_D_Final_V1.3.xlsx)

This covers apprenticeship starts for all regions and all parliamentary constituencies from the 2005/06 to 2014/15 finalised academic year data, and includes provisional data for the 2015/16 academic year. Final full-year data for 2015/16 academic year will be published on 17 November 2016.

[1] <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-apprenticeships>

### ■ Education

**Nic Dakin:**

[47340]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Skills Plan, what her policy is on enabling students to continue to study a mixture of both (a) academic and (b) vocational subjects.

**Nic Dakin:**

[47341]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Skills Plan, what her policy is on the future provision of BTECs.

**Robert Halfon:**

As set out in our Post 16 Skills Plan, we will take forward the recommendations of the Sainsbury Review to put in place a world-class technical option that provides preparation for highly skilled employment. The technical option will be a prestigious and high-quality option for 16 year olds as an alternative to academic study. Applied general qualifications such as BTECs are not designed to be part of the technical education option. We plan to review the contribution of these qualifications to preparing students for higher education and the impact any reform would have on widening participation. We will announce our decisions later in the year.

It is important that individuals are able to switch between the academic and technical options so that students' options are not closed down. Flexible learning will be

important to learners of all ages, given the changing labour market. We accepted the Sainsbury panel's recommendation that there should be appropriate bridging courses to make movement between the two options easily accessible and will be looking at options for putting these courses in place.

#### ■ First Aid: Education

**Dr Alasdair McDonnell:**

[\[46990\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the report by the British Red Cross, entitled Are pre-hospital deaths from trauma and accidental injury preventable?, published in September 2016, what steps she is taking to ensure that young people have the opportunity to learn basic first aid at school.

**Edward Timpson:**

Schools are free to teach first aid, and may choose to do this as part of personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, which is a non-statutory curriculum subject. This is reflected in the PSHE Association's non-statutory programme of study, which includes first aid.

When teaching first aid, many schools draw on the expertise of reputable organisations, such as the British Red Cross, the British Heart Foundation and St John Ambulance.

#### ■ Further Education: GCSE

**Dr Tania Mathias:**

[\[46939\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what additional resources are being provided for post-16 students who are required to resit English and mathematics GCSEs.

**Robert Halfon:**

Funding for the study of English and maths, including GCSE resits, is provided through the 16-19 national funding formula. The formula incorporates disadvantage funding for providers including a funding uplift of up to £960 per full time student per year to provide for the additional costs incurred for teaching students who have low prior attainment, as indicated by not achieving English and/or maths GCSEs at grade C or above by the end of year 11 (typically age 16). This additional funding is not intended to solely fund maths and English qualifications, but to fund support for students to achieve their learning goals, including maths and English.

For the past three years the Government has also invested in programmes to support improvements in the teaching of maths and English in Further Education (FE) settings. This year, funding will provide up to 13,000 training opportunities for FE practitioners to improve their subject knowledge and confidence in their teaching of maths or English, fund bursaries for 300 graduates to train to become maths or English teachers in FE settings and further build evidence on evidence of what constitutes effective delivery and teaching of English and maths for students aged 16 to 18 that have not yet achieved level 2 English and maths.

## ■ GCSE: Standards

**Dr Tania Mathias:**

[\[46941\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether students who have not achieved at least a C grade in English and mathematics GCSE will be required to resit those exams as many times as it takes them to achieve that grade.

**Robert Halfon:**

Departmental funding rules require full time students with prior attainment of a D to work towards achieving a C grade or higher in GCSE English and maths. Students who achieve lower than a D grade at 16 may study other qualifications such as Functional Skills as a 'stepping stone' towards GCSE.

For those opting to retake their GCSE(s) or being required to do so due to having previously attained a grade D, there is no requirement for them to repeatedly re-sit the GCSE exam. Schools and colleges have the freedom to determine when a student is ready to re-sit their GCSE. This is because our 16-19 English and maths requirements relates to enrolments rather than exam entries. This provides a school or college the flexibility to determine when best for a student to be entered for and sit an exam. For some students that might be the following November, while other students may require a year, or two years study and tuition before they are ready to re-sit the exam.

If students resit their GCSE part way through their programme and fail to gain a grade C then they are expected to continue studying for the GCSE.

## ■ Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education

**Mr Steve Reed:**

[\[47426\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, for what reason gender issues are not a compulsory part of the PSHE curriculum; and whether she has any plans to so introduce such issues into that curriculum.

**Edward Timpson:**

It is for schools to decide how best to deliver the curriculum. They can teach about gender issues through personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, which is a non-statutory curriculum subject. The non-statutory PSHE programme of study, issued by the PSHE Association, includes teaching pupils about gender issues.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

## ■ Agriculture

**Helen Goodman:**

[\[46447\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when she plans to publish the 25 year plan for food and farming.

**George Eustice:**

Our 25 Year Food and Farming Plan will set out a new vision for British food and farming outside of the EU. We are committed to working with the industry to get this right, and will soon begin the process by publishing a consultation that will inform the Plan's development. This will start the discussion around a set of key strategic themes such as productivity and consumer trust.

**Animal Welfare: Trapping****Bridget Phillipson:**[\[47342\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will bring forward legislative proposals to ban the manufacture, sale, possession and use of animal snares.

**Dr Thérèse Coffey:**

The Government has no plans to ban the use of all animal snares. The Government has sought to improve the welfare of snared animals through research to improve snare deployment and design and by working with users who are producing new guidance on best practice.

The Animal Welfare Act 2006 contains protection for animals under the control of man to help prevent unnecessary suffering and covers any animal held in a snare. Any suspected cases of illegal use should be reported to the Police.

**Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Meetings****Mr Roger Godsiff:**[\[47328\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many meetings (a) Ministers and (b) officials in her Department have had with representatives of (i) Bayer CropScience and (ii) Syngenta in each of the last five years.

**George Eustice:**

Ministers and officials meet with Bayer CropScience, Syngenta and other parties on a range of issues.

Information on Ministerial meetings with organisations is available on GOV.UK and is published on a quarterly basis.

**Livestock: MRSA****Kerry McCarthy:**[\[47150\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment her Department has made of the prevalence of livestock-associated MRSA in live breeder pigs and meat products imported from (a) Denmark and (b) other European countries; what proportion of such imports are voluntarily tested for livestock-associated MRSA; and what analysis her Department has undertaken of the costs and benefits of making it mandatory to test such imports for MRSA.

**George Eustice:**

Livestock associated meticillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (LA-MRSA) is not a notifiable organism. There is no mandatory requirement to test imports of live breeding pigs or pig meat for the presence of LA-MRSA.

The National Pig Association recommends in its Import Protocol that imported pigs be screened for the presence of MRSA. Such testing is done on a voluntary and private basis.

Any controls or testing introduced for an organism must be proportionate to the risk posed by it. Current advice from the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and Public Health England (PHE) is that LA-MRSA poses a low risk to human health.

**■ Nature Conservation: EU Law**

**Helen Goodman:** [\[46566\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with (a) Cabinet colleagues and (b) stakeholders on repealing the birds and habitats directives.

**Dr Thérèse Coffey:**

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has not discussed repealing the birds and habitats directives with either Cabinet colleagues or stakeholders.

**■ Pesticides: Regulation**

**Helen Goodman:** [\[46567\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions she has had with (a) Cabinet colleagues and (b) stakeholders on reforming pesticide regulations from a precautionary principle to a risk-based principle.

**George Eustice:**

As part of the preparation for EU exit, the Government is considering future arrangements for pesticide regulation. The Government remains of the view that decisions on the use of pesticides should be based on a careful scientific assessment of the risks, with the aim of achieving a high level of protection for people and the environment. An evidence-based approach to assessing risk is entirely consistent with the precautionary principle.

**■ Pigs: MRSA**

**Kerry McCarthy:** [\[47151\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when the Government plans to undertake a national monitoring survey of the pig population for the presence of MRSA.



**George Eustice:**

A UK-wide baseline survey to look for the presence of livestock associated meticillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (LA-MRSA) in UK pigs was performed in 2008 in line with European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) protocols. At that point, none of the farms tested were found to be positive for MRSA. Since then, the organism has been detected in livestock in the UK. *Current advice from the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and Public Health England (PHE) is that LA-MRSA poses a low risk to human health.*

The people that are most likely to become colonised by LA-MRSA are those who work with livestock. Defra is therefore undertaking a study with Public Health England (PHE) to investigate the occurrence of LA-MRSA in veterinarians and livestock workers. The results of this study will be used to inform the need for future surveillance.

**River Ribble****Mr Mark Hendrick:**[\[46983\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans her Department has to improve flood defences on the River Ribble from the Ribble Estuary to junction 31 of the M6 at Preston; what proposals have been prepared for flood defences along that section of the River Ribble; and what funding is in place to finance such proposals.

**Dr Thérèse Coffey:**

The Environment Agency is developing a flood defence scheme for Preston and South Ribble. A full business case is being progressed with detailed modelling and outputs expected during January 2017.

Subject to funding and business case approval, the project is expected to improve defences for around 3000 properties and the area from Preston Docks to the M6 at junction 31.

**Sahaviriya Steel Industries UK: Redcar****Anna Turley:**[\[47133\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether there are any remaining staff on the former SSI site responsible for environmental management; what estimate she has made of the number of staff responsible for environmental management who are no longer employed; and what assessment she has made of the minimum level of environmental staffing required.

**Dr Thérèse Coffey:**

The Environment Agency has been working closely with the Official Receiver in order to ensure that the site is being safely overseen by staff under his direction. Whilst staffing matters are for the Official Receiver to decide, the Environment Agency are in regular contact with staff overseeing the former SSI site and do not have any concerns with regards to their environment management.

## ■ Trapping

**Kerry McCarthy:**

[\[47332\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 12 September 2016 to Question 44687, on trapping, which animal welfare experts were consulted on trap designs and the decision to delay implementation; and for what reason the DOC trap does not meet the Agreement on International Humane Trapping standards.

**Dr Thérèse Coffey:**

The Government uses the Animal and Plant Health Agency's National Wildlife Management Centre for advice on trap humaneness.

Of the species currently covered by the Agreement on International Humane Trapping standards (AIHTS), the stoat is the only species regularly and widely trapped in the UK using spring-traps.

When we implement the AIHTS for stoat, the most widely used spring-trap (Fenn type) will no longer be approved for use against stoats. To address this issue, Defra aims to implement the AIHTS as soon as is practically possible, but to use a permitted transition provision to allow delayed implementation of the agreement for stoats whilst a suitable compliant design is identified.

The Fenn type trap is a run-through trap designed to trap animals as they travel through their usual pathways across the landscape.

The DOC trap meets the required standards but it is only permitted for use as a blind end baited trap. A significant disadvantage of baited traps, such as the DOC, is that stoats will avoid entering baited traps when there is an abundance of preferred food available. These conditions coincide with peak trapping effort to protect game birds and other ground nesting species.

This has led the Government to conclude that the DOC is not a suitable alternative to the Fenn type trap.

## EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION

### ■ Department for Exiting the European Union: European Commission

**Stephen Gethins:**

[\[47331\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, which EU Commissioners he has met with since taking office; and when and where such meetings took place.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The Prime Minister has been clear we will not give a running commentary on Brexit negotiations. We will ensure that we engage closely with all relevant interlocutors.

## ■ Foreign Companies: Japan

**Bridget Phillipson:**

[[47489](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, whether he has had discussions with representatives of Japanese businesses operating in the UK pursuant to the memorandum presented by the Japanese government to the Prime Minister at the recent G20 Summit.

**Mr David Jones:**

Ministers and officials from across the Government are working closely with Japanese companies operating in the UK to reinforce the continued importance of a close business relationship between our countries. The Department for Exiting the EU will continue to support this work.

## ■ Insolvency: EU Law

**Richard Arkless:**

[[46991](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what the Government's policy is on maintaining the provisions of European Commission Directive 2008/94/EC on the protection of employees in the event of the insolvency of their employer; and what assessment the Government has made of the effect the UK leaving the EU will have on the operation of the Pension Protection Fund.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The Government has clearly stated that the UK does not need to be part of the EU to have strong protections for workers' rights. At every step of these negotiations we will work to ensure the best possible outcome for the British people, seizing opportunities to make Britain a country that truly works not just for a privileged few, but for everybody.

## ■ UK Withdrawal from EU

**Catherine West:**

[[47314](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what assessment he has made of the implications for his Department's policies of the recommendations in the fourth report of the House of Lords Committee on the Constitution Session 2016-17, HL44.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The Secretary of State welcomes the report HL44 by the Constitution Committee, issued on 12 September, and will respond in due course in the usual way.

**Louise Haigh:**

[[47495](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, how many meetings his Department has had with representatives of each sector of the economy on exiting the EU since he took office.

Louise Haigh:

[\[47496\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, whether he plans to implement a formal process for engaging with sectors of the economy affected by the UK leaving the EU.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

DExEU officials, supported by officials across Government, are engaging with business to identify the key factors that will affect our negotiations with the EU. We have a formal strategy and are engaging with companies big and small in every sector of the economy and are drawing on local and regional networks and key organisations in the voluntary sector.

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

### ■ British Nationals Abroad: Capital Punishment

Andy Slaughter:

[\[47154\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what the Government's policy is on preventing the execution of UK nationals sentenced to death abroad.

**Mr Tobias Ellwood:**

The UK Government is opposed to the death penalty in all circumstances. Whenever there is a case of a British national on death row, provided that individual wants assistance from the UK Government, we make political representations at many levels to the government of the country in question. There is no one-size-fits-all approach; we will tailor our interventions on a case-by-case basis in a way that we judge to be most effective to prevent executions being carried out. Beyond political representations by Her Majesty's Government, other interventions might include: engaging local and UK-based Non-Governmental Organisations to provide support to British nationals facing the death penalty; liaising closely with the British national's legal team to ensure any lobbying actions we take complement their ongoing legal activity; and working closely with international partners to encourage wider lobbying.

### ■ Diego Garcia: Military Bases

Henry Smith:

[\[46439\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what the outcome has been of recent discussions with the US administration on renewal of the military base in the British Indian Ocean Territory; and if he will make a statement.

**Sir Alan Duncan:**

The Government welcomes the US presence on Diego Garcia and as such, we continue to discuss with the US Government their continued use of Diego Garcia. US presence on the island of Diego Garcia is governed by a series of agreements, called Exchanges of Notes, of which the overarching agreement sets out that the whole Territory should be

made available for UK and US defence purposes for an initial 50 year period of 1966 to 2016. If neither side object during a two year window of December 2014 to December 2016, the agreement will continue as it stands until end December 2036. An announcement on the outcome of discussions will be made to Parliament and the public in due course.

#### ■ Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Resignations

Tim Farron:

[\[47368\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many staff of his Department's resigned in each half of each year since 2010.

Sir Alan Duncan:

The following table contains the numbers of UK-based staff that have resigned from the Foreign & Commonwealth Office in each six month period since 2010:

FY	SIX MONTH PERIOD	RESIGNATIONS	FY TOTAL
2010/11	April - September 2010	22	61
	October 2010 - March 2011	39	
2011/12	April - September 2011	43	70
	October 2011 - March 2012	27	
2012/13	April - September 2012	35	53
	October 2012 - March 2013	18	
2013/14	April - September 2013	29	46
	October 2013 - March 2014	17	
2014/15	April - September 2014	17	48
	October 2014 - March 2015	31	
2015/16	April - September 2015	23	47
	October 2015 - March 2016	24	
2016	April - September 2016	34	34

Details are not held centrally for local staff.

**■ Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Staff**

**Catherine West:** [\[46472\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many country specialists for (a) Russia, (b) China, (c) North Korea, (d) the US, (e) Syria and (f) India are employed by his Department.

**Sir Alan Duncan:**

It is not possible to identify the exact number of country specialists working on these countries within the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Career Diplomats develop longer-term expertise on countries, linked to their language skills and pattern of relevant work in London or in post. We also have expertise within our local staff colleagues across the network. In London, we have at any one time approximately 10 specialist Research Analysts focussed on these countries and additional Research Analysts working on relevant regional issues and countries.

**■ Foreign Relations**

**Ms Tasmina Ahmed-Sheikh:** [\[47484\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what research has been (a) commissioned and (b) carried out by his Department in the last three years on the reputation of the UK abroad; and if he will make a statement.

**Alok Sharma:**

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has not commissioned any research on the UK's global reputation.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has a network of 268 Posts in 168 countries and territories, including 9 multilateral organisations, who regularly report on the relationship with the UK in their host countries and organisations.

**■ Gibraltar: Territorial Waters**

**Andrew Gwynne:** [R] [\[46548\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if his Department will make an assessment of the implications for Spain's capacity to affect commercial activity of the three mile limit of Gibraltar's territorial waters; and if he will make a statement.

**Sir Alan Duncan:**

Her Majesty's Government will continue to challenge and protest against all incursions in British Gibraltar Territorial Waters, including any attempt by Spanish authorities to assert jurisdiction. We would respond robustly to any attempts by Spain to prevent commercial firms or private individuals from using Gibraltar port facilities.

**■ Ilois: Resettlement**

**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[46641\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether his Department plans to make extension of the 1966 UK-US Agreement on the British Indian

Ocean Territory conditional on a commitment by both parties to support and facilitate resettlement of the Chagossians.

**Sir Alan Duncan:**

The US presence on the island of Diego Garcia is governed by a series of agreements, called Exchanges of Notes, of which the overarching agreement sets out the whole Territory should be made available for UK and US defence purposes for an initial 50 year period of 1966 to 2016. If neither side object during a two year window of December 2014 to December 2016, the agreement will continue as it stands until end December 2036. The Government welcomes the US presence on Diego Garcia and we continue to discuss with the US Government their continued presence beyond 2016. We have consulted a range of stakeholders, including the US, as we work towards a decision on resettlement of BIOT. The Government is examining its policy closely and will announce developments to Parliament and the public in due course.

## ■ Japan: Foreign Relations

**Bridget Phillipson:**

[\[47490\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he has had discussions with representatives of Japanese businesses operating in the UK on the memorandum presented by the Japanese government to the Prime Minister at the recent G20 Summit.

**Alok Sharma:**

Ministers and senior Government officials have held regular discussions with Japanese investors operating in the UK since the referendum in June. This continued after the Japanese Government published their memorandum on 2 September. I met representatives of Japanese business on 8 September at Asia House and I spoke to individual investors in Tokyo and Osaka during my visit to Japan from 26 to 29 September. Japanese investment in the UK has been a huge success story and as we plan our exit from the European Union we will continue to listen to the voices of Japanese business.

## ■ Sudan: Foreign Relations

**Patrick Grady:**

[\[47318\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what outcomes the Government expects from the recent and planned strategic dialogue with the government of Sudan.

**Mr Tobias Ellwood:**

In order to maximise our ability to persuade all parties to the conflicts in Sudan to end the fighting and allow the Sudanese people the security and development they deserve, we need to have a greater level of direct engagement with the Government of Sudan. The Strategic Dialogue process provides a necessary platform for us to do this, exploring possibilities for cooperation on a wide range of UK interests where our aims align, as well as an avenue to raise concerns.

## ■ Sudan: Peace Negotiations

**Patrick Grady:** [\[47316\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of recent events in Sudan on the success of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur.

**Mr Tobias Ellwood:**

The UK remains supportive of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD). Through our membership of the Implementation Follow-Up Commission (IFC), we consider regularly what progress has been made on implementation of the DDPD and what further steps need to be taken. The former UK Special Representative for Sudan and South Sudan attended the last meeting of the IFC in May.

In parallel with this, we continue to urge all parties to the conflict to engage with the African Union-led peace process and reach agreement on the cessation of hostilities and humanitarian access, building on the decisions of both the Government of Sudan and the Opposition to sign the Roadmap peace agreement.

## ■ Sudan: Politics and Government

**Patrick Grady:** [\[47317\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with the government of Sudan on the use of funds earmarked under the Khartoum Process by Sudan's Rapid Support Forces.

**Mr Tobias Ellwood:**

The EU has made absolutely clear that no funding will be provided to the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). We have raised our concerns about the use of the RSF to manage migration directly with the Government of Sudan, most recently during the visit of the UK Special Representative for Sudan and South Sudan to Khartoum in September.

## ■ Syria: Armed Conflict

**Kerry McCarthy:** [\[47343\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his international counterparts on a potential establishment of a no-fly zone over parts of Syria.

**Mr Tobias Ellwood:**

As he made clear during the House of Commons Emergency debate on the situation in Aleppo on 11 October, the Foreign Secretary has every sympathy with the idea of no-fly zones and the motives behind them. The situation in Syria is appalling and we are working with international partners on ways to help alleviate the suffering of the people there, particularly those in besieged areas such as Aleppo. We continue work to identify what more the international community can do. The practicalities of any form of no-fly zone, or safe zone need to be considered very carefully and in close consultation with our partners. History shows these are not simple tasks, especially in intense conflict. In



fact, there is a risk that safe zones can themselves become targets. Any party seeking to establish a safe area would need to ensure that it could be kept safe. We would need to understand fully the consequences, including the fact that we should not commit to maintain such a zone unless we were prepared to shoot down planes or helicopters that violated the zone.

Our priority continues to be the protection of civilians in Syria. We continue to use our voice in the UN and elsewhere to keep the focus on what is happening, to call for the Cessation of Hostilities to be restored, full humanitarian access, to allow the resumption of a political process. Political transition away from Asad is the only long-term solution.

## ■ USA: Politics and Government

**Tom Brake:** [\[46696\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what planning his Department is carrying out to prepare for the change of US President; and what assessment his Department has made of the implications for the UK-US relationship of the (a) Republican and (b) Democratic Presidential candidates being elected.

**Sir Alan Duncan:**

Successive British Governments have worked with Republican and Democratic Presidents to advance our mutual interests and tackle shared challenges. We expect that the UK and the US will continue to be the closest of partners after the US elections on 8 November.

## HEALTH

### ■ Autism

**Mr Laurence Robertson:** [\[46957\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of the range of therapy available on the NHS to people with autism.

**David Mowat:**

Local authorities and their partners including the National Health Service are currently completing a self-assessment exercise on the progress they are making in implementing the Adult Autism Strategy. The assessment includes answering questions on the type of support being provided to people with autism. Public Health England expects to publish the results of that exercise in March 2017.

### ■ Breast Cancer

**Marie Rimmer:** [\[46993\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, with reference to the report of the Independent Cancer Taskforce, *Achieving world-class cancer outcomes: A strategy for England 2015-2020*, published in July 2015, what progress has been made on implementation of

recommendation 47 on NHS England commissioning NICE to develop updated guidelines for adjuvant treatment for breast cancer.

**Nicola Blackwood:**

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's (NICE) guideline on early and locally advanced breast cancer: diagnosis and management (CG80) recommends the use of adjuvant bisphosphonates for the management of breast cancer treatment-induced bone loss in specified clinical circumstances. This guideline is currently being updated and the use of adjuvant bisphosphonates has been identified as one of the key areas that will be covered in this update. NICE expects to publish its updated guideline in July 2018.

■ **Breast Cancer: Drugs**

**Julie Elliott:**

[\[47140\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he plans to take to ensure that oncologists are able to routinely prescribe bisphosphonates for the indication of preventing secondary breast cancer before NICE guidelines on those drugs is published; and if he will make a statement.

**Craig Tracey:**

[\[47436\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, with reference to the article in The Lancet, Adjuvant bisphosphonate treatment in early breast cancer: meta-analyses of individual patient data from randomised trials, published in July 2015, what steps he has taken to ensure that bisphosphonates for the indication of preventing secondary breast cancer are routinely available to the patients who need them.

**Nick Thomas-Symonds:**

[\[47612\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment his Department has made of recently published research from Breast Cancer Now on the availability of bisphosphonates.

**Nicola Blackwood:**

The Independent Cancer Taskforce report included a specific recommendation on the use of adjuvant bisphosphonates for treating people with breast cancer. We understand that NHS England is working to realise the ambitions set out in the report and will publish an update on progress made soon.

National prescribing arrangements already allow for bisphosphonates to be prescribed for the prevention of secondary breast cancer.

Updated guidance from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence on the use of adjuvant bisphosphonates for the management of breast cancer treatment-induced bone loss, taking into account the latest available evidence, is expected in July 2018.

## ■ Cancer: Drugs

**Nic Dakin:**

[47600]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what plans NHS England has to undertake a formal evaluation of the new Cancer Drugs Fund.

**Nicola Blackwood:**

NHS England's standard operating procedures for the appraisal and funding of cancer drugs from July 2016 (including the new Cancer Drugs Fund) state that NHS England will keep the operational mechanisms of the new arrangements under continuous review. In addition, NHS England will look to undertake a more formal evaluation of the overall operation of the scheme, no later than autumn 2017.

The standard operating procedures are available at:

[www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/cdf-sop.pdf](http://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/cdf-sop.pdf)

## ■ Circle Holdings

**Clive Efford:**

[47513]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of (a) the performance of Circle Holdings Plc in the delivery of musculoskeletal services in Bedford and (b) whether Circle Holdings Plc is meeting its national access targets; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr Philip Dunne:**

The assessment of the performance of musculoskeletal (MSK) services in Bedfordshire is a matter for the local National Health Service.

Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) advises that it monitors Circle's performance closely through monthly contract meetings and Service Quality and Performance Reports.

The CCG advises that Circle Clinical Services Limited is the Prime Contract provider for MSK services for over 18s in the Bedfordshire area, and is responsible for managing the whole patient pathway. Circle itself does not provide clinical services to patients as part of this contract, but refers patients on to local hospital and community based providers subject to patient choice. Circle therefore does not submit data on national Referral to Treatment waiting time standards in relation to MSK services in Bedfordshire. Waiting times data is included in the data return from the patient's hospital or community provider.

## ■ Doctors: Career Breaks

**Dr Tania Mathias:**

[47315]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what training and support the NHS provides to doctors who have returned from long-term career breaks.

**Mr Philip Dunne:**

The Induction and Refresher Scheme for general practitioners (GPs), launched in 2015, is designed for doctors who have been out of practice in the United Kingdom for more than two years and have therefore dropped off the national performers list.

NHS England also funds the Retained Doctor Scheme. This scheme provides doctors, who are on the performers list but who want to remain in or return to practice (for example after a career break) and work a maximum of four clinical sessions, with protected time for continuing professional development (CPD) and educational support. The scheme is designed to allow doctors to remain in practice when standard part time working is unavailable or does not suit the doctor's working patterns.

The GP easy return to practice forms part of the GP Forward View, published in April 2016 by NHS England.

**■ General Practitioners****Steve McCabe:**[\[47425\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 13 September 2016 to Question 45660, what estimate he has made of the number of general practices that require assistance from the new practice resilience programme.

**David Mowat:**

Following the launch of the General Practice Resilience Programme in July 2016, NHS England's local teams have been working to finalise a range of offers that can be put in place to support practice sustainability and resilience. This includes selecting which practices will receive this support, by using nationally published criteria.

NHS England was initially due to set out which practices would be included in the first cohort to receive support through this programme, on 30 September 2016. The deadline for this assessment and report has been revised to 18 October 2016, to allow greater opportunity for practices to self-refer for assessment. The Department cannot provide an estimate of the number of general practices requiring assistance from the new practice resilience programme until this date, when NHS England will have completed its assessment and report.

Identifying practices in need of support is challenging, as there are elements which are subjective and it can be hard to measure the nature, severity and weight of issues facing individual practices. The national criteria seek to chart a middle route between those aspects that are measurable and those less tangible issues. The nature of the issues facing a practice can be generally grouped as follows; demand, capacity and internal issues. The national criteria acknowledges the importance of local input from clinical commissioning groups and local medical committees, as well as how self-referral of general practices is legitimate as a self-declaration of their support needs.

An earlier NHS England programme, the Vulnerable Practice Programme, launched in December 2015, identified around 900 practices as potentially vulnerable and in need of support.

## ■ General Practitioners: Recruitment

**Tom Blenkinsop:**

[\[47147\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he is taking to target the recruitment of new GPs to practices with high levels of clinical need and deprivation.

**Mr Philip Dunne:**

NHS England, Health Education England (HEE), the British Medical Association and the Royal College of General Practitioners (GPs) have been working together to support recruitment in areas to which it has traditionally been hard to recruit to.

NHS England is offering £20,000 bursaries to attract over 100 GP trainees to work in areas of the country where GP training places have been unfilled for a number of years. The offer is open to GP trainees committed to working for three years in one of the locations. The initiative is designed to relieve pressure on some of the GP practices in England currently facing the most severe recruitment challenge.

The GP Forward View complements the 10 point plan that was introduced in January 2015. A £10 million investment was announced by NHS England from the infrastructure fund to kick start a new plan to expand the general practice workforce. The money is being used to recruit new GPs, retain those that are thinking of leaving the profession, encourage doctors to return to general practice and to develop a multi-professional workforce. HEE is responsible for five areas of the 10 Point Plan:

- Promoting General Practice;
- Improve Breadth of Training;
- Training Hubs;
- New Ways of Working (which includes the Primary Care Workforce Commission); and
- Easy Return to Practice.

## ■ Health Professions: Recruitment

**Mr Hugo Swire:**

[\[46984\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he is taking to increase the number of (a) doctors and (b) nurses recruited by the NHS.

**Mr Philip Dunne:**

The responsibility for recruitment and staffing rests with National Health Service organisations as they are best placed to ensure they have the right staff, in the right place, at the right time to provide safe and effective care for their patients.

On 4 October 2016 the Secretary of State for Health announced that from September 2018, the Government will fund up to 1,500 additional undergraduate medical places through university medical schools each year.

In November 2015 reforms to nursing, midwifery and allied health pre-registration training was announced, the reforms aim to increase the number of training places by up to 10,000 by the end of the Parliament.

As outlined in its Workforce Plan for 2016-17, Health Education England has increased the overall volume of education and training with, in excess of, 38,000 new training places in 2016-17 for nurses, scientists, and therapists, and there are now over 50,000 doctors and dentists currently in training.

The latest workforce statistics published by NHS Digital for June 2016 show that since May 2010, there are now almost 22,700 more professionally qualified clinical staff working in NHS trusts and clinical commissioning groups, including over 8,500 more doctors and 4,600 more nurses and midwives.

## ■ Health: Children

**Mr Mark Hendrick:**

[\[46403\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of the implementation of the Healthy Child Programme; and what recent meetings (a) Ministers and (b) officials of his Department have had to discuss that Programme.

**Nicola Blackwood:**

The responsibility for leadership of the Healthy Child Programme is with Public Health England (PHE).

The Healthy Child Programme is the Government's framework that underpins PHE's priority to give every child the best start in life. The Best Start in Life Board meets bimonthly, jointly chaired by PHE and a local authority Chief Executive. The Board has cross-government representation from the Department of Health, Department for Education, Department for Work and Pensions, and Department for Communities and Local Government.

The Department has commissioned PHE to undertake a review of the delivery of the universal elements of 0-5 services, mandated to local authorities, and will report later this year.

## ■ Hinchingsbrooke Hospital: Circle Holdings

**Clive Efford:**

[\[47512\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, with reference to the 46th Report of the Public Accounts Committee, Session 2014-15, HC971, An update on Hinchingsbrooke Health Care NHS Trust, what the cost is to the public purse of Circle Holdings Plc's withdrawal from delivery of its contract to run Hinchingsbrooke Hospital; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr Philip Dunne:**

The Trust paid no management fee to Circle under the contract. Costs incurred by the Trust as a result of the termination of the franchise were agreed as £130,000 and billed directly to Circle. Costs included recruiting to new Board positions and those filled by Circle partners; an expected increase in the scope of External Audit due to termination of the contract; time of the Department's Legal and NHS England Estates teams; and removing the Circle branding from the hospital.

During the operation of the franchise agreement, the Trust received £5 million from Circle between 2012 and 2014 - the maximum deficit support payment required under the contract.

## ■ Medical Treatments

**Nic Dakin:** [\[47601\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether there are plans for NICE to review the process of patient involvement in technology appraisals.

**Nicola Blackwood:**

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has advised that it is currently reviewing its overall approach to patient and public involvement, including involvement in its technology appraisal process.

Initial proposals, based on the findings of a literature review, a stakeholder survey and meeting, and internal interviews, were presented to NICE's public board meeting on 20 July 2016. Once approved by the Board, these proposals will go out for public consultation later this year.

## ■ Members: Correspondence

**Gloria De Piero:** [\[47138\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, when he plans to reply to the letter of 18 July 2016 from the hon. Member for Ashfield on the proposed closure of the children's heart surgery unit at Glenfield Hospital.

**Mr Philip Dunne:**

I responded to the hon. Member's letter on 11 October.

## ■ Musculoskeletal Disorders: Greenwich

**Clive Efford:** [\[47488\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, with reference to the 46th Report of the Public Accounts Committee, Session 2014-15, HC971, what steps he has taken to ensure that the public purse is not exposed to any losses in circumstances in which Circle Holding plc fails to fulfil its contractual obligations in the delivery of musculoskeletal services in Greenwich; and if he will make a statement.

**Clive Efford:** [\[47514\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the readiness of Circle Holdings Plc to deliver musculoskeletal services in Greenwich from 1 December 2016; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr Philip Dunne:**

The procurement of local health services by means of competitive tendering is a matter for the local National Health Service.

We are advised by NHS England that NHS Greenwich Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) has taken all reasonable steps to protect the public purse with regard to the contract for the provision of an integrated Musculoskeletal (MSK) service in Greenwich, which it awarded to Circle Health.

The contract is governed by the General Conditions of the NHS national Standard Contract, which require the service provider and commissioner to indemnify each other in respect of any losses.

With regard to contract expiry or termination, the conditions also provide for the protection of commissioners from excess costs (and their administration) incurred in procuring the services from another party, for a period of six months from termination.

We are also advised by NHS England that as part of the procurement process undertaken by Greenwich CCG, parties bidding to provide an integrated MSK service in Greenwich were required to provide a mobilisation plan within identified timescales, in line with the scope of service.

We understand that the CCG and Circle Health hold weekly mobilisation meetings to track Circle's progress and to monitor the implementation and transition of the service up to the go-live date and the post go-live transition.

#### ■ NHS: Overtime

**Imran Hussain:**

[\[46976\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how much overtime was paid to NHS staff in (a) 2015-16, (b) 2014-15 and (c) 2013-14.

**Mr Philip Dunne:**

The total overtime payments to National Health Service staff are estimated to have been:

- £380 million in 2015-16;
- £362 million in 2014-15; and
- £330 million in 2013-14

These estimates are based on pay information from the NHS Electronic Staff Record (ESR), which is the Human Resources and Payroll system for almost all trusts in England. These estimates do not include overtime payments to general practitioners or their staff.

ESR includes hundreds of payment type codes and payment figures are aggregated to high-level groupings using a mapping system. One of the high-level groupings is Overtime/Additional Duty Hours. The estimates provided in the answer above are based on this.

Overtime/Additional Duty Hours is just one way of buying extra staffing resource in the NHS. Shifts, absence and vacancies are also filled using additional activity payments (e.g. additional programmed activities and additional hours at plain time rates for part-time staff), bank contracts, and agency staffing.



## ■ Persistent Vegetative State

**Sir Nicholas Soames:**

[\[47148\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what information his Department holds in the number of people in a permanent vegetative state in the UK; and how many such people are cared for by the Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust.

**David Mowat:**

Information on the number of people in a permanent vegetative state is not collected centrally.

Brighton and Sussex University Hospital are currently not caring for any patients in a permanent vegetative state.

## ■ Pharmacy: Warrington

**Helen Jones:**

[\[46943\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what representations he has received on behalf of local independent pharmacies in Warrington on their future funding.

**Helen Jones:**

[\[46944\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what representations he has received from the National Pharmacy Association on the potential effect of planned changes to Government funding of local independent pharmacies.

**David Mowat:**

We have received representations from individuals, including the hon. Member and from a number of organisations representing pharmacies, pharmacists and patients in Cheshire, on our proposals for community pharmacy in 2016/17 and beyond.

We have also received representations from the National Pharmacy Association and Pharmacy Voice, of which the Association is a member. These include written communications and official meetings.

## ■ Pregnancy: Sodium Valproate

**Norman Lamb:**

[\[47333\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 11 May 2016 to Question 36655, if he will direct NHS England to issue a directive through the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) bulletin that requires CCGs to communicate the risks of valproate medicines in female patients and to ensure that the Valproate Toolkit is used by pharmacists and GPs.

**Nicola Blackwood:**

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulation Agency (MHRA) is responsible for regulating all medicines and medical devices in the United Kingdom by ensuring they are acceptably safe. As such they have been asking general practitioners, pharmacists, neurologists, psychiatrists, and other relevant healthcare and mental health professionals

to use the valproate toolkit to help facilitate discussion of the risks with their patients. More information on this can be found at the following address:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-toolkit-supports-better-understanding-of-the-risks-of-valproate-and-pregnancy>

The clinical commissioning group (CCG) bulletin is NHS England's corporate communications channel to 209 CCGs. To date, they have not received a request from MHRA to include information about the Valproate Toolkit in their bulletins.

## ■ UN High-level Panel on Access to Medicines

**Gareth Thomas:** [47337]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the recommendations in the UN High Level Panel on Access to Medicines report, published in September 2016, on stimulating research and development in underfunded areas and improving access to medicines; whether he has plans to take those recommendations forward; and if he will make a statement.

**David Mowat:**

The Department for International Development leads on this area and the Department of Health has not made an assessment.

## HOME OFFICE

### ■ Asylum: Appeals

**Mr Mark Hendrick:** [46960]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many cases each presenting office referred to HM Revenue and Customs in 2015.

**Mr Robert Goodwill:**

Information on how many cases each presenting office referred to HM Revenue and Customs in 2015 is not held centrally.

### ■ Asylum: Greece

**Thangam Debbonaire:** [46402]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 7 September 2016 to Question 43711, if she will take steps to increase the number of transfers to the UK of refugees in camps in Greece with family connections in the UK.

**Mr Robert Goodwill:**

The Government is fully committed to the efficient and timely operation of the Dublin Regulation and we are working closely with EU partners, including the Greek authorities, to identify, assess and transfer those with family connections to the UK under the Dublin family reunion process.

We have seconded an expert to Greece to coordinate efforts on transferring unaccompanied children to the UK. We are following due process to ensure that any transfer is in their best interests and is lawful under EU legislation.

More broadly, the UK has offered 75 expert personnel to help with the processing and administration of migrants in reception centres, act as interpreters, provide medical support and bolster our existing team assisting the Commission to ensure effective and efficient coordination.

## ■ EU Nationals: Visas

**Stephen Gethins:**

[47507]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the Government plans to require EU nationals to gain visas before entering the UK in the event of the UK leaving the EU.

**Mr Robert Goodwill:**

The UK continues to be a member of the European Union and therefore EU nationals do not require a visa to come to the UK, nor do British citizens require a visa to visit the rest of the EU.

The Prime Minister has underlined that it would not be right for the Government to give a running commentary on negotiations. It is about developing our own British model so we will not make decisions until we are ready.

## ■ Hate Crime: Disability

**Tulip Siddiq:**

[47598]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many hate crimes were committed against disabled people in each of the last five years.

**Sarah Newton:**

*[Holding answer 12 October 2016]:* The Home Office has collected disability hate crime data from the police since 2011/12.

In 2011/12, the police recorded 1,748 disability hate crime offences, 1,911 in 2012/13, 2,006 in 2013/14 and 2,508 in 2014/15.

Further information on hate crime can be found in Hate Crimes, England and Wales, 2014/15, available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2014-to-2015>

Data for 2015/16 are due to be published on 13 October 2016 and will be available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2015-to-2016>

As stated by the Office for National Statistics, action taken by police forces to improve their compliance with the National Crime Recording Standard has led to improved recording of crime, especially for violence against the person offences. Together with a greater awareness of disability hate crime, and improved willingness of victims to come

forward, this is likely to be a factor in the increase in disability hate crimes recorded by the police.

This Government is committed to tackling hate crime. The UK has one of the strongest legislative frameworks in the world to tackle hate crime. We are working across Government with police, (including National Community Tensions Team), the Crown Prosecution Service and community partners to send out a clear message that hate crime will not be tolerated and we will vigorously pursue and prosecute those who commit these crimes.

### ■ Ivory: Smuggling

**John Mann:** [\[47201\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what guidance she has issued to police forces on initiatives to stop the illegal trading of ivory.

**Brandon Lewis:**

We have not issued specific guidance to the police on tackling the illegal trading of ivory. With the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, we fund the National Wildlife Crime Unit which provides intelligence and specialist assistance to assist all police forces in the United Kingdom to deal effectively with wildlife crime investigation, including cases that involve the illegal trading of ivory.

### ■ Knives: Crime

**Neil Coyle:** [\[46988\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what role her Department plays in Government plans to ensure a higher rate of prosecution for knife crimes.

**Sarah Newton:**

*[Holding answer 12 October 2016]:* The decision whether or not to bring a prosecution is a matter for the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS).

The Home Office works closely with the CPS, other Government departments, and the police to tackle knife crime and ensure that offenders are dealt with effectively.

### ■ Marriage of Convenience

**Charlotte Leslie:** [\[47023\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to address the issue of non-British citizens tricking British citizens into marriage to obtain a UK visa or citizenship.

**Mr Robert Goodwill:**

We take abuse of the spouse immigration route very seriously. In July 2012 the minimum probationary period before a non-European Economic Area (non-EEA) national spouse of a British citizen can apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain in the UK was increased from two years to five years. This is a better test of the genuineness of the

relationship before it can be relied upon as a basis for seeking to settle permanently in the UK.

In March 2015, a new scheme to tackle sham marriages was introduced under the Immigration Act 2014. All proposed marriages where one or both parties could gain an immigration advantage from it are now referred by registration officials to the Home Office. This gives us a much stronger platform to identify, disrupt and deter sham marriages.

If the marriage breaks down permanently before or once the non-EEA national spouse has obtained Indefinite Leave to Remain, the British citizen spouse can provide the Home Office with any relevant information and we may cancel or revoke their former spouse's leave if it can be established that this was obtained by deception.

#### ■ New Businesses: Visas

**Roger Mullin:** [\[47271\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the main reasons for rejection of applications for Tier 1 entrepreneur visas have been in each of the last four quarters.

**Mr Robert Goodwill:**

The Home Office does not hold the specific information in the format requested. To obtain the information would involve examining individual case records and would incur disproportionate cost.

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

**Roger Mullin:** [\[47272\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of applications for Tier 1 entrepreneur visas have been unsuccessful in each of the last four quarters.

**Mr Robert Goodwill:**

The latest available information is published in table vi\_01\_q (visa data tables volume 1) in 'Immigration Statistics, April - June 2016', available from the Home Office website at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-april-to-june-2016/list-of-tables#visas>

**Roger Mullin:** [\[47273\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications her Department received for Tier 1 entrepreneur visas in each of the last four quarters.

**Mr Robert Goodwill:**

The latest available information is published in table vi\_01\_q (visa data tables volume 1) in 'Immigration Statistics, April - June 2016', available from the Home Office website at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-april-to-june-2016/list-of-tables#visas>

## ■ Overseas Students: Visas

**Mr Dominic Raab:**

[\[46946\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, on what date her Department began to record details of sponsorship of non-EU nationals entering the UK on student visas.

**Mr Robert Goodwill:**

The sponsorship of non-EU students was introduced in three stages:

Educational Institutions were able to make an application for a licence to sponsor non-EU students under Tier 4 of the Points Based System from July 2008.

Non-EU student applications under Tier 4 of the Points-Based System were introduced on 31 March 2009, and from this date onwards institutions had students linked to their sponsor licence.

From 22 February 2010 all non-EU Tier 4 student applications had to be supported by a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies, an electronic document assigned by a Tier 4 sponsor, which institutions are required to monitor and report against, and this activity was recorded by the Home Office.

## ■ Places of Worship Security Funding Scheme

**Mr Mark Hendrick:**

[\[46961\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many churches from each denomination in each region have applied for funding under the Places of Worship Security Funding Scheme up to close of applications on 20 September 2016.

**Sarah Newton:**

*[Holding answer 12 October 2016]:* The deadline for the Places of Worship Security Funding Scheme was extended from 20 September to 4 October. The responses received are as follows:

105 applications were received up to 20 September.

REGION	DENOMINATION AND NUMBER
East Midlands (2)	Church of England – 1 Miscellaneous – 1
East of England (3)	Church of England – 1 Roman Catholic – 2
London (17)	Baptist – 3 Church of England – 4 Greek Orthodox – 2 Methodist – 1 Miscellaneous – 6 Roman Catholic – 1
North East (2)	Church of England – 1 Methodist – 1
North West (16)	Baptist – 1 Church of England – 6 Methodist – 1 Miscellaneous – 4 Roman Catholic – 4
South East (15)	Church of England – 5 Greek Orthodox – 2

REGION	DENOMINATION AND NUMBER
	Miscellaneous – 4 Roman Catholic – 4
South West (14)	Baptist – 2 Church of England – 2 Miscellaneous – 1 Roman Catholic – 9
Wales (6)	Church in Wales – 3 Roman Catholic – 3
West Midlands (18)	Church of England – 8 Greek Orthodox – 1 Methodist – 1 Miscellaneous – 6 Roman Catholic – 2
Yorkshire and Lincolnshire (12)	Church of England – 8 Miscellaneous – 2 Roman Catholic – 2

Following the deadline extension, between 21 September and 4 October there were a further 118 applications, which are broken down below.

REGION	DENOMINATION AND NUMBER
East Midlands (2)	Baptist – 1 Miscellaneous – 1
East of England (6)	Church of England – 2 Miscellaneous - 3 Roman Catholic - 1
London (41)	Baptist – 2 Church of England – 12 Greek Orthodox - 2 Methodist – 2 Miscellaneous – 19 Roman Catholic - 4
North East (4)	Church of England – 3 Methodist – 1
North West (11)	Baptist – 1 Church of England – 1 Methodist – 2 Miscellaneous – 4 Roman Catholic – 3
South East (11)	Church of England – 5 Methodist – 1 Miscellaneous – 5
South West (11)	Church of England – 4 Miscellaneous – 3 Roman Catholic – 4
Wales (6)	Church in Wales – 3 Roman Catholic – 3
West Midlands (12)	Church of England – 4 Miscellaneous – 5 Roman Catholic – 3
Yorkshire and Lincolnshire (14)	Church of England – 4 Methodist – 1 Miscellaneous – 5 Roman Catholic – 4

Please note, where we have attributed a miscellaneous result this captures Evangelical, Pentecostal, Church Centres and Reform Christian Churches.

In total 223 applications were received from churches by close of play 4 October.

■ **Refugees: Children**

**Amanda Solloway:** [\[47124\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to locate missing refugee children in the UK.

**Mr Robert Goodwill:**

The government takes the issue of missing children extremely seriously and has published a cross government strategy on missing children and vulnerable adults.

Migrant children over the age of 5, including asylum seeking children have their biometrics captured by the Home Office. If a child goes missing, the local police and UK Missing Persons Bureau will be notified and the child's details will be circulated on the Police National Computer.

Home Office guidance requires staff to maintain contact with the local authority and the police until the child is found.

**Tim Farron:** [\[47320\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to (a) monitor the welfare of unaccompanied refugee children who arrive in the UK and are in the care of the relevant authorities and (b) locate those refugee children who have gone missing in the UK in the last five years.

**Mr Robert Goodwill:**

All local authorities have statutory duties to safeguard children as part of their local responsibilities regardless of nationality or immigration status. Once an unaccompanied asylum seeking child (UASC) becomes a looked after child the main responsibility for that child's welfare lies with the respective local authority.

Home Office staff dealing with UASC receive specialist training and are required to follow published guidance on processing asylum claims from children, which requires the child's welfare to be taken into account throughout the asylum claim.

The government takes the issue of missing children extremely seriously and has published a cross government strategy on missing children and vulnerable adults.

Migrant children over the age of 5, including asylum seeking children will have their biometrics captured by the Home Office. If a child goes missing, the local police and UK Missing Persons Bureau will be notified and the child's details will be circulated on the Police National Computer. Home Office guidance requires staff to maintain contact with the local authority and the police until the child is found.



## ■ Refugees: Syria

**Imran Hussain:**

[\[46888\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department is taking steps to promote cooperation on the resettlement of Syrian refugees between local authorities with experience of resettlement programmes and local authorities without such experience.

**Mr Robert Goodwill:**

Local authorities are already working together to provide support, ensure best value in the services they provide and to deliver efficiencies.

The Government will continue to provide local authorities with support and guidance including sharing resettlement best practice and case studies, detailed information on the cohort from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and advice about the cultural, ethnic and religious groupings from Syria.

**Imran Hussain:**

[\[46889\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what guidance her Department plans to issue to local authorities on their responsibilities to resettle Syrian refugees in the second to fifth year of resettlement.

**Mr Robert Goodwill:**

The Department for Communities and Local Government and the Home Office work with councils to resettle refugees in the UK.

It is for each local authority to decide what type of support is required for each resettlement case. A funding instruction covering Years 2- 5 of the scheme is to be issued to local authorities shortly, which includes examples of how funding can be spent. It also explains how councils can claim funding from the exceptional cases fund.

## ■ Undocumented Workers

**Mr Mark Hendrick:**

[\[46962\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many cases the Civil Penalty Compliance Team referred to HM Revenue and Customs in 2015.

**Mr Robert Goodwill:**

In the calendar year 2015 the Civil Penalty Compliance Team shared data from 9,426 cases where an employer had been found liable for a civil penalty and had exhausted all their appeal rights.

## INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### ■ Department for International Development: Contracts

**Margaret Hodge:**

[\[47275\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how many companies her Department has excluded from public procurement for (a) a conviction for wrongdoing

defined by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or (b) grave professional misconduct since January 2015.

**Rory Stewart:**

Since January 2015 there have been no instances where DFID Procurement and Commercial Department (PCD) have excluded a company from a Public Procurement for the circumstances cited.

## ■ Developing Countries: Drugs

**Gareth Thomas:**

[\[47336\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the recommendations in the UN High Level Panel on Access to Medicines report, published in September 2016, on stimulating research and development in underfunded areas and improving access to medicines; whether she has plans to take those recommendations forward; and if she will make a statement.

**James Wharton:**

The UK government is committed to ensuring access to low cost, effective medicines in the developing world. We support the provision of essential medicines and other health products through global partnerships such as the Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM), UNITAID, Gavi the Vaccine Alliance, and the Medicines Patent Pool (MPP). We place a great emphasis on research and development of new vaccines, medicines and diagnostics for conditions that affect millions of poor people. For example, the UK is a leading investor in public-private Product Development Partnerships (PDPs), an innovative financing mechanism to stimulate research and development (R&D) where market incentives are insufficient.

We support the aims of the UN High Level Panel on Access to Medicines and welcome efforts to shed light on this important issue. However, we note that this panel of experts could not reach agreement on the best approach, given the evidence presented. Our view is that the World Health Organisation (WHO) has already undertaken a large amount of work to consider the full range of barriers that limit access to medicines, and is well placed to consider which recommendations add the most value.

## ■ Developing Countries: HIV Infection

**Gareth Thomas:**

[\[47335\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how many of her Department's country offices have direct bilateral expenditure that is coded under HIV prevention, treatment and care; and what the value of that expenditure is.

**James Wharton:**

DFID's expenditure on HIV and AIDS is now overwhelmingly directed through our multilateral support: our £1.1 billion investment in the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria for the period 2017-19 and our work with UNITAID and UNAIDS.

Strategic investments in DFID country programmes support this. Direct bilateral budget expenditure specifically coded under HIV prevention, treatment and care amounts to £18.3million for 2016/17 according to the UK AID Development Tracker; which can be found on our website at

<https://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/sector/2/categories/130/projects/13040>.

This supports regional programmes and projects in 8 DFID countries. This coding itself captures only part of our bilateral work: a range of investments not coded under HIV will also support the AIDS response, especially in the highest prevalence countries.

## ■ Developing Countries: Security

**Imran Hussain:**

[47243]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether her Department has made an assessment of the effect of changing levels of funding for non-conflicting affected states on the level of stability in those countries.

**Rory Stewart:**

DFID uses a range of criteria to determine allocations to countries, including the need of those countries for development assistance, how effective our assistance is likely to be in those countries, and the strategic fit with UK government priorities.

The 50% commitment is not only the right thing to do but also the smart thing to do for Britain's national interest. The commitment ensures that we improve the lives of the poorest and most vulnerable people in the world. Poverty is increasingly concentrated in fragile states and regions, and conflict is one of the major challenges to development. Over half of the world's poor live in fragile states.

Our work in fragile states and regions will help to build stability, prevent conflict and support economic growth in the world's poorest countries and regions. Without stability, our gains on poverty reduction risk being reversed.

## ■ Iraq: Overseas Aid

**Mr Roger Godsiff:**

[47028]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether the Government has made plans to assist with additional funding or aid subsequent to the changes in refugee numbers entering into Mosul.

**Rory Stewart:**

On 21 September, the UK announced an extra £40 million of humanitarian funding to Iraq, on top of £50 million committed earlier this year. This brings our total commitment in Iraq to £169.5 million since June 2014. This support will provide emergency life-saving assistance – such as food, shelter, medical and protection services – to support the Government of Iraq-led Mosul humanitarian response as well as continuing to provide assistance for displaced and vulnerable people across the country.

## ■ Overseas Aid: Infectious Diseases

**Bridget Phillipson:** [\[47346\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what funding the Government has committed to the Global Fund Investment Case, Fifth Replenishment 2017-19 for fighting infections.

**James Wharton:**

The Fifth Replenishment Conference for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria took place on 15 and 16 September in Montreal, Canada.

At the conference, the Secretary of State announced an investment of £1.1 billion in the Global Fund, including a commitment to double private sector contributions for tackling malaria, up to a maximum of £200 million, and £90 million linked to successful delivery against a performance agreement.

The UK's investment will help to fund 40 million bednets to tackle malaria; provide enough lifesaving anti-retroviral therapy for 1.3 million people with HIV; and support the treatment of 800,000 people with tuberculosis. Overall, our investment will help the Global Fund to save 8 million lives, avert 300 million infections and help build resilient and sustainable systems for health.

## ■ Palestinian Authority

**Ian Austin:** [\[46979\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 19 September 2016 to Question 45930, on the Palestinian Authority, if she will place a copy of her Department's formal assessment of the Palestinian Authority's commitment to the Partnership Principles in the Library.

**Rory Stewart:**

DFID does not routinely publish Partnership Principles assessments. These assessments are used to inform the annual dialogue between DFID and the Palestinian Authority (PA). Our assessment is that the PA continues to deliver on the Partnership Principles.

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

## ■ Department for International Trade: Public Expenditure

**Ms Tasmina Ahmed-Sheikh:** [\[47482\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if he will publish his Department's budget for the next four years.

**Greg Hands:**

The newly created Department for International Trade (DIT) has been forged out of the forerunner (non-ministerial) Departments UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) and the Trade Policy Unit responsibilities previously held by the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS). My Rt. Hon Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade also has

responsibility for UK Export Finance (the Export Credits Guarantee Department), which has its own budget.

The estimated annual budgeted operating costs of the department for the next four years are currently being established and will be submitted to parliament later this financial year.

## ■ Exports

**Ms Tasmina Ahmed-Sheikh:**

[\[47483\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what targets the Government has set for the growth of UK exports by 2020.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government's priorities remain to increase the number of businesses exporting, and the value of UK exports. The manifesto set the target for UK export value to be at £1 trillion in 2020 and to have 100k more exporters in 2020 than in 2010. The scale of these targets demonstrate the ambition this Government has for making the UK an exporting nation again.

## ■ Foreign Companies: Japan

**Bridget Phillipson:**

[\[47347\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what discussions he has had with representatives of Japanese businesses operating in the UK on the memorandum presented by the Japanese government to the Prime Minister at the recent G20 summit.

**Greg Hands:**

Ministers and senior Government officials have held regular discussions with Japanese investors operating in the UK since the referendum in June. This continued after the Japanese Government published their memorandum on 2 September. My Rt. Hon Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade and my Noble Friend the Minister of State for Trade Policy have met with the Ambassador of Japan to the United Kingdom Mr Koji Tsuruoka. On 4 October my Noble Friend the Minister of State for Trade Policy met Japanese investors to hear their views and my Hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for International Trade also met Japanese investors while in Japan on 5-6 October.

## JUSTICE

## ■ Administration of Justice

**Thangam Debbonaire:**

[\[46401\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 7 September 2016 to Question 44521, what information her Department holds on how many (a) petitioners and (b) respondents who were ineligible for legal aid were unable to afford legal representation in applications to the family court for child contact or residence applications in 2015; how

many such petitioners and respondents alleged that they were victims of domestic violence from the other party; and whether her Department has undertaken monitoring of the effect of a lack of legal representation on those victims and their children.

**Sir Oliver Heald:**

The representation status of unsuccessful applicants for legal aid is not centrally recorded. The Government is absolutely clear that victims of domestic violence must have access to the help they need, including access to legal aid. The operation of, and expenditure on, the legal aid scheme is continually monitored by the Ministry of Justice and the Legal Aid Agency. Since the reforms were introduced thousands of people have applied for legal aid where domestic violence is involved and the majority have been granted it. Since the LASPO Act was introduced we have twice made changes so it is easier for people to get the evidence they need to claim legal aid.

#### ■ Birmingham Prison and Oakwood Prison

**Louise Haigh:**

[\[47319\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the contractual agreement between her Department and G4S Care and Justice Services (UK) Limited at HM Prison (a) Birmingham and (b) Oakwood for what reason financial remedies have been levied in (i) failure to comply with procedures, (ii) incidents and (iii) failure to comply with prison regime in each year from 2012-13 to date.

**Mr Sam Gyimah:**

Privately Managed prison contracts contain provisions which allow financial remedies to be applied for non-performance.

Performance points are awarded according to the severity of failure. If the total number of points exceeds the agreed baseline for the performance quarter or year, financial remedies are applied against the Contractor in accordance with the Contract.

As financial remedies are only applied if baseline targets are exceeded it is not possible to link individual incidents to the value of remedies that have been applied due to this cumulative effect.

#### ■ Prisoners' Release

**Frank Field:**

[\[46986\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, (a) how many and (b) what proportion of people released from each prison in England and Wales (i) reoffended and (ii) went into employment within six months of their release in each of the last five years.

**Mr Sam Gyimah:**

Information on the employment status of prisoners beyond the point of release is not available centrally and can only be obtained at a disproportionate cost.

All other information requested can be found on GOV.UK.

## ■ Prisoners: Employment

**Jo Stevens:**

[\[46967\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether all European funding for schemes to improve the employability of prisoners has been protected for the duration of their funding period.

**Mr Sam Gyimah:**

As the Chancellor set out on 13 August, all structural and investment fund projects signed before the Autumn Statement will be fully funded, even when these projects continue beyond the UK's departure from the EU.

## ■ Prisons: Unmanned Air Vehicles

**Jo Stevens:**

[\[46968\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many drones have been intercepted operating over prisons in England and Wales (a) in 2015 and (b) from January 2016 to date.

**Mr Sam Gyimah:**

There were 33 incidents relating to drones reported by prisons in 2015. This includes finds, interceptions and sightings of drones in and around prisons in England and Wales. The Ministry of Justice intends to routinely publish information on prison drone incidents in the future and 2016 data will be provided in due course as part of the publication schedule.

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

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

## NORTHERN IRELAND

## ■ Army: Northern Ireland

**Ms Margaret Ritchie:**

[\[46959\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what discussions he has had with the Northern Ireland Executive on funding for inquests into the killings allegedly carried out by the British Army's Military Reaction Force.

**James Brokenshire:**

The Government committed, in our manifesto, to work to reform the system of legacy inquests in a way that enables the UK Government to fulfil its international obligations. The current system was not designed to cope with a large number of highly complex cases that involve sensitive information. Since taking up office I have been meeting regularly with the Executive parties and a large number of other stakeholders as part of work to progress reforms around legacy issues. I will continue to engage with the Northern Ireland Executive and others and consider any proposals that the Executive puts forward that would lead to effective reform of the inquest system.

**SCOTLAND**■ **Business: Scotland****Craig Tracey:**[\[906403\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what steps the Government is taking to support businesses in Scotland.

**Jesse Norman:**

The British Business Bank currently facilitates around £300m of finance in Scotland. Around £10m of Start-Up Loans have been provided to over 2,000 Scottish businesses, and £290m is helping a further 2,000 businesses to grow through other Bank programmes. In 2015/16, Innovate UK committed to invest £58.3m in 291 innovation projects in Scotland.

■ **Scotland Office: European Commission****Stephen Gethins:**[\[47143\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, which EU Commissioners he has met since 23 June 2016; and when and where such meetings took place.

**David Mundell:**

I spoke to Sir Julian King in August to discuss his nomination to the post of UK Commissioner to the European Commission (EC). Sir Julian was at the time the nominee for that post. He has since been confirmed as both the UK Commissioner to the EC and as the Commissioner for the Security Union.

**TRANSPORT**■ **Biofuels: Public Consultation****Anna Turley:**[\[46965\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when his Department plans to launch its consultation on biofuels; and whether that consultation will address the issues of indirect land use and level of the crop cap.



**Anna Turley:**

[\[47492\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, on what date his Department plans to open a consultation on biofuels; and if he will take steps to ensure that that consultation addresses indirect land use change and the level of the crop cap.

**Mr John Hayes:**

We plan to consult later this year on changes to the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation including steps to provide more long term confidence for producers and to address indirect land use change with options to limit the contribution from crop based biofuels.

■ **Govia Thameslink Railway**

**Andy McDonald:**

[\[46952\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department received applications from Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) to activate the force majeure clause in the franchise agreement for Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern passenger rail services since July 2015.

**Paul Maynard:**

I can confirm we have received such applications, and we are currently considering them.

■ **High Speed 2 Railway Line**

**Luciana Berger:**

[\[46942\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department plans that the Northern Chord at the Manchester junction will be retained in the route of HS2.

**Andrew Jones:**

The Secretary of State intends to make an announcement about the remainder of the HS2 route, including the Manchester junction, later this autumn.

■ **London-Brighton Railway Line**

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[46898\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 15 September 2016 to Question 906370, if he will publish the London and South Coast Rail Corridor Study; whether he plans to fund proposals for a Brighton Mainline 2 in order to remedy the significant capacity and performance constraints identified; and if he will make a statement.

**Paul Maynard:**

The Government will publish the London and South Coast Rail Corridor Study, and its response to the recommendations, in due course.

**■ Mersey Tunnels: Tolls**

**Ms Angela Eagle:** [\[46998\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to comments made by the former Chancellor of the Exchequer at a meeting in Birkenhead on 4 May 2015 and pursuant to the Answer of 14 September 2016 to Question 45786, whether he plans to directly intervene in the review of the Mersey tunnel tolls to reduce the cost of those tolls.

**Andrew Jones:**

Under the Mersey Tunnels Act 2004, the power to set tolls for the Mersey Tunnels is vested in the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, who own and operate the Tunnels. The Combined Authority has already reduced the cost of tolls to fast tag users and will consider its strategic approach further, to inform the forthcoming report on its Review of tolls. This Review will inform the decision on future toll levels, which will be taken locally by the Combined Authority, as required by the Mersey Tunnels Act.

**■ Network Rail: Thales**

**Andy McDonald:** [\[46728\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the cost of the contract between Network Rail and Thales has been by heading for the supply of two first deployment traffic management systems for rail operating centres at (a) Cardiff and (b) Romford since the award of that contract.

**Paul Maynard:**

The Department for Transport does not hold this level of detail on Network Rail's costs.

**■ Northern Rail: Rolling Stock**

**Luciana Berger:** [\[46948\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if the Northern Powerhouse Rail rolling stock will be permitted to operate on HS2 infrastructure.

**Andrew Jones:**

Transport for the North are leading the development of a number of potential options for Northern Powerhouse Rail, including options that make use of sections of the HS2 network.

Should Northern Powerhouse Rail be integrated directly with sections of the HS2 network, the rolling stock will be specified to operate on HS2 infrastructure.

**■ Railways: Electrification**

**Andy McDonald:** [\[46947\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with Network Rail on the rail electrification programme in the North West; and if he will publish a revised timetable for that work.

**Paul Maynard:**

The Secretary of State regularly meets Network Rail to discuss a wide range of topics. Network Rail have recently published an update of the Enhancement Delivery Programme on 30 September 2016. The North of England Programme (which includes the electrification timetable) is on page 11 on the following link:

<https://www.networkrail.co.uk/Enhancements-Delivery-Plan-Sept-2016.pdf>.

## ■ Railways: Franchises

**Andy McDonald:** [46949]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the operator of last resort provisions are for each franchise agreement for passenger rail services currently in operation.

**Paul Maynard:**

There are a number of provisions throughout each franchise agreement that relate to the continuity and preservation of rail services by a Successor Operator which could include the Operator of Last Resort under the provisions of Section 30 of the Railways Act 1993. Schedules 1.6, 10, 14 and 15 of the National Rail Franchise Terms and Conditions are of particular relevance in this regard.

**Andy McDonald:** [46951]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department plans to put in place for an operator of last resort for the Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern passenger rail franchise since September 2013.

**Paul Maynard:**

The Secretary of State has a duty under Section 30 of the Railways Act 1993, to maintain the continuity of passenger rail services in the event that a passenger rail franchise terminates and is not immediately replaced. In order to ensure the effective discharge of this duty the Department maintains a standby capability which would enable it to step into a rail franchise and operate it in the public sector should the need arise. There are currently no plans in place to step into the Thameslink Southern and Great Northern franchise.

## ■ Railways: Safety

**Andy McDonald:** [46950]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much revenue the Office for Road and Rail and its predecessor raised through the Railway Safety Levy in each financial year between 2006-07 and 2015-16.

**Paul Maynard:**

The revenue raised between the years 2006-07 and 2015-16 through the Railway Safety Levy is set out below.

YEAR	TOTAL (£000)
2006-2007	16,562
2008-2009	17,969
2009-2010	19,733
2010-2011	18,461
2011-2012	17,497
2012-2013	17,417
2013-2014	15,939
2014-2015	15,371
2015-2016	15,907
<b>Total</b>	<b>154,856</b>

#### ■ Railways: WiFi

**Mr Hugo Swire:**

[\[47325\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with (a) Great Western Railway and (b) South West Trains on the provision of wifi services on those trains.

**Paul Maynard:**

The Secretary of State has not met with Great Western Railway or South West Trains on the provision of Wi-Fi services.

On all Department for Transport-controlled rail franchises, in England and Wales, free Wi-Fi is being introduced. All train operators bidding for new franchises and direct award agreements will have to present a phased implementation plan for free Wi-Fi.

As of July 2016, 25% of passenger journeys operating within the DfT controlled franchises have Wi-Fi available. We forecast 90% of passenger journeys will benefit from free Wi-Fi by the end of 2018.

## ■ River Thames: Bridges

**Neil Coyle:**

[\[46996\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the cycling and walking investment strategy will include investment for the proposed cycling and pedestrian bridge linking Rotherhithe to Canary Wharf.

**Andrew Jones:**

The draft Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy sets out the Government's plans for increasing cycling and walking in England. It is a high level document, with a long term ambition up to 2040, supported by a target and a number of objectives.

The Strategy outlines how Government will work with local bodies and business to develop expertise and support, the tools and policies Government will deliver to support them in increasing walking and cycling in local communities, and how this work will enable progress towards our national objectives and target. It does not set out details of individual schemes as that is a matter for local bodies.

## ■ Roads: Safety

**Dr Alasdair McDonnell:**

[\[46989\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the report by the British Red Cross, entitled Are pre-hospital deaths from trauma and accidental injury preventable?, published in September 2016, what steps he is taking to ensure that first aid education is included in the Government's road safety strategy.

**Andrew Jones:**

Advice on "First aid on the road" is contained in Annex 7 of The Highway Code. Driver's knowledge of first aid is tested as part of the driver theory test and many professional drivers take first aid training. The Department is providing support for a not-for-profit training programme for drivers in administering first aid.

## ■ Southern: Standards

**Chris Philp:**

[\[46974\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent steps his Department has taken to improve the service on Southern Rail.

**Paul Maynard:**

On 1 September the Secretary of State announced a Network Rail £20m fund, to help improve resilience of the Southern network. Chris Gibb will head a new project board, working with the train operator, the Department for Transport and Network Rail, to explore how to achieve a rapid improvement to services for the public. The board will oversee the fund and create closer working between Govia Thameslink Railway and Network Rail to improve performance.

**■ Taxis: Licensing**

**Paul Blomfield:** [46806]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many taxi licences have been issued in each local authority area in each of the past three years.

**Andrew Jones:**

The Department for Transport does not hold statistics related to taxi licences in the format requested. The Department does produce statistics every 2 years on the number of taxi licences issued. The latest statistics show the position as at 31 March 2015 in England and Wales and can be found in table TAXI0104 at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/taxi-and-private-hire-vehicles-statistics-england-2015>

The total number of licensed taxis increased by 4.2% to 81,200 since 2013.

There was a slight drop in the number of taxi only driver licences from 63,200 in 2013 to 62,700 in 2015.

**WALES****■ Attendance Allowance**

**Mrs Madeleine Moon:** [47503]

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on Wales of the proposal to transfer responsibility for attendance allowance to local authorities; and if he will make a statement.

**Alun Cairns:**

The Government is committed to working closely with the Welsh Government to ensure the implications of any reforms for devolved administration services or budgets are properly understood.

**WORK AND PENSIONS****■ Attendance Allowance**

**Mrs Madeleine Moon:** [47504]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what discussions he has had with the Welsh Assembly Government on the transfer of attendance allowance to local authorities; and if he will make a statement.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

The Government is committed to working closely with the Welsh Government to ensure the implications of any reforms for devolved administration services or budgets are properly understood.

## ■ British Steel: Pensions

**Tom Blenkinsop:** [\[47146\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what meetings he has had with Ministers of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on the British Steel Pension Scheme.

**Richard Harrington:**

Officials from both departments maintain regular contact on this issue.

So far, the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions has had one meeting with Ministers of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to discuss the British Steel Pensions Scheme, and future meetings are planned.

## ■ Jobcentres: Training

**Neil Coyle:** [\[47309\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when his Department plans to make training materials for work coaches available.

**Damian Hinds:**

An overview of the new Work Coach externally accredited learning routeway will be made available early in 2017. There are no plans to publish existing training materials.

## ■ National Offender Management Service: European Social Fund

**Jo Stevens:** [\[46966\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to his announcement of 13 August 2016 on guaranteeing EU funding beyond the date the UK leaves the EU, whether funding for the National Offender Management European Social Fund Co-financing Programme is guaranteed.

**Jo Stevens:** [\[46972\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether employment and skills funding, announced by the Department for Work and Pensions on 26 January 2016, and allocated to the National Offender Management Service, will be guaranteed after the UK leaves the EU.

**Jo Stevens:** [\[46973\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether his Department plans to fund employment schemes that were launched on 26 January 2016 after the UK leaves the EU.

**Damian Hinds:**

In his announcement on 13 August the Chancellor guaranteed that structural and investment funds projects, including ESF, signed before the Autumn Statement, would be fully funded. The agreement with the National Offender Management Service is covered by this guarantee. The Chancellor extended the guarantee in his announcement on 3 October. The Chancellor confirmed that the government will guarantee EU funding for structural and investment fund projects, including agri-environment schemes, signed

after the Autumn Statement and which continue after we have left the EU provided that these deliver good value for money and are in line with domestic strategic priorities.

The administration of the European Social Fund in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland is the responsibility of the devolved administrations. Where the devolved administrations sign up to structural and investment fund projects under their current EU budget allocation prior to leaving the EU, the government has confirmed that it will ensure they are funded to meet the announced commitments.

■ **Public Buildings: Asbestos**

**Sue Hayman:** [\[47310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what his policy is on the removal of asbestos from public buildings.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

Under the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012, responsibility for managing the risk from asbestos in non-domestic (including public) buildings rests with the individual duty holder. This is the owner or person with responsibility for maintaining the building. The duty holder must assess for the presence of asbestos and put in place a plan to manage any resulting risk. This includes: monitoring the condition of asbestos-containing materials; arranging for repair or enclosure/encapsulation if required; or, in those cases where the assessment shows this to be necessary, arranging for their safe removal.

■ **Social Security Benefits: Disqualification**

**Mr Mark Hendrick:** [\[47322\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many pregnant women in each constituency in Lancashire have been sanctioned for failing to attend back to work interviews for (a) universal credit and (b) employment and support allowance, in each of the last two years.

**Damian Hinds:**

The information requested is not available.

■ **Social Security Benefits: Fuel Poverty**

**Andrew Gwynne:** [\[46362\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if his Department will make an assessment of the effect of the Government's welfare reforms on low-income households who are in fuel poverty since 2010.

**Caroline Nokes:**

The Government's reforms simplify the system for claimants, helping move more people into work, and reduce the cost for taxpayers. Throughout these reforms the Government is ensuring that the vulnerable are protected. In every year to 2020 spending on disability will be higher than in 2010.



The Warm Home Discount scheme provides eligible households with a £140 energy bill rebate. This winter, almost a million low income working age households will be helped under the scheme.

We are also reforming the Energy Company Obligation to have a greater focus on vulnerable and low income households. It will have a value of £640m a year from 2017 until 2022 and could reduce the energy bills of those who receive energy efficiency improvements by up to £300 per year.

DWP provides help with the additional costs of heating during periods of severely cold weather to eligible claimants on certain income related benefits. In 2015-16, DWP made nearly 155,000 awards worth £3.9 million. For winter 2016/17 the cold weather payment rate will continue to be £25 for each seven day period of very cold weather.

## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

### TREASURY

#### ■ National Infrastructure Commission

**The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (Simon Kirby):** [\[HCWS181\]](#)

I wish to update the House on the establishment of the National Infrastructure Commission as an Executive Agency, and an associated Contingencies Fund advance.

The purpose of the National Infrastructure Commission is to provide expert, impartial analysis of the long-term infrastructure needs of the country. The Commission reports on high-priority issues and produces an in-depth, independent assessment of the UK's major infrastructure needs on a 30-year time horizon.

The government consulted earlier this year on establishing the Commission using primary legislation. The government considers that the Commission can achieve the same objectives without legislation.

The Government will therefore proceed to establish the Commission on a permanent basis as an Executive Agency of HM Treasury. It will operate independently, at arm's length from Government, and will come into force in January 2017.

The resources for the operating costs of the Commission will form part of HM Treasury's Supplementary Estimate 2016-17, which is not expected to receive Royal Assent in the associated Supply and Appropriations Bill until mid to late March 2017. HM Treasury will therefore be utilising the Contingencies Fund to finance the Commission's operating costs that become payable prior to Royal Assent.

Parliamentary approval for additional resources of £5,000,000 for this new spending will be sought in a Supplementary Estimate for HM Treasury. Pending that approval, urgent expenditure estimated at £5,000,000 will be met by repayable cash advances from the Contingencies Fund.

A copy of the Charter for the National Infrastructure Commission has been deposited in the Libraries of the House.

### FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

#### ■ Hong Kong (Sino/British Joint Declaration)

**The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Boris Johnson):**  
[\[HCWS178\]](#)

The latest six-monthly report on the implementation of the Sino-British Joint Declaration on Hong Kong was published today, and is attached. It covers the period from 1 January to 30 June 2016. The report has been placed in the Library of the House. A copy is also available on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website (

[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/foreign-commonwealth-office](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/foreign-commonwealth-office) ). I commend the report to the House.

**Attachments:**

1. Six- Monthly report on Hong Kong January-June 2016 [Six-Monthly Report on Hong Kong - 1 January - 30 June 2016.pdf]

## HOME OFFICE

### ■ Justice and Home Affairs pre-Council statement

**The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Amber Rudd):** [\[HCWS180\]](#)

The first formal Justice and Home Affairs Council of the Slovak Presidency will take place on 13 and 14 October in Luxembourg. The Policing Minister, my rt hon Friend Brandon Lewis MP, will attend the Justice Day and I will attend the Interior Day.

The Interior Day (Thursday 13 October) will begin with a progress report on the implementation of the European Border and Coast Guard, which came into force on 6 October. As a Schengen measure, the UK does not participate. However, the Government supports action by Schengen states to improve management of the external border and will support the European Border and Coast Guard's operations by mutual consent.

The Presidency will then provide a progress report on information technology measures related to border management, including the proposal to introduce systematic checks at the external border and the revised Smart Borders policy proposal for an Entry-Exit System (EES). The Presidency will also ask the Commission to update on plans for the evolution of the Second Generation Schengen Information System (SIS II) and the forthcoming proposal for an EU Travel Information and Authorisation Scheme (ETIAS). We will intervene to support those Member States arguing that systematic checks should be the default at all external borders and to argue that future amendments to SIS II should support more effective police cooperation within the EU. As Schengen measures, the UK does not participate in the systematic checks at external borders and EES measures, and will not participate in the ETIAS proposal.

Next on the agenda will be a discussion on migration. This is likely to focus on implementation of the EU-Turkey deal, with updates on the wider migration situation. We will reaffirm that the UK is continuing to play its part to address the migration crisis through our support for practical work to strengthen the EU's external borders, including hotspots.

Over lunch, the Presidency will hold a discussion on progress towards establishing new migration Partnership Frameworks with five priority countries – Ethiopia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal. We will welcome the emphasis on addressing migration issues as a major element of the European Union's relations with third countries, but caution against limiting that approach to the current priority countries. We should look strategically at which regions and countries offer the most opportunity for impact, including in the Horn of Africa, Middle East and Asia.

After lunch, the Presidency will provide a progress report on the six proposals relating to reform of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). This is likely to focus on law enforcement access to Eurodac and the extent of the mechanism for monitoring and assessing the asylum and reception systems of Member States in the EU Asylum Agency proposal. The UK has not opted into the EU Asylum Agency proposal and is considering whether to opt in the other five proposals. We will encourage the Council to support easier law enforcement access to Eurodac.

Following this, there will be a debate on a proposal for a common EU Resettlement Framework. The Government has previously stated that resettlement schemes are best operated at the national level.

Under any other business, the Presidency will update Ministers on the Third Ministerial Conference of the Prague Process, in which the UK does not participate, and on the progress of current legislative proposals.

The Justice Day (14 October) will begin with a progress report and policy debate on the proposal for a Directive on the fight against fraud to the Union's financial interests by means of criminal law (PIF Directive), with a view to endorsing the development of a compromise that would bring serious VAT fraud within the scope of the Directive. The UK has not opted in to this proposal on the grounds that it would infringe on Member States' competence to control their own taxes.

The Presidency will seek Member States' support for a partial general approach on the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO). The UK will not participate in an EPPO.

Under any other business, the Commission will provide information on combating hate crime in the EU, specifically on the Framework Decision on Racism and Xenophobia, in which the UK does not take part as our law provides similar levels of protection, and the Presidency will update the Council on current legislative proposals.

Over lunch, the Presidency intends to discuss the role of Eurojust in relation to counter terrorism. We will make the point that the UK values the work of Eurojust in helping to coordinate investigations and prosecutions, including counter terrorism cases, but clearly any activity should be within its remits.

## ■ Modern Slavery: Inter-Departmental Ministerial Group Report 2016

**The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Amber Rudd):** [\[HCWS179\]](#)

Today, I am publishing the 2016 report of the Inter-Departmental Ministerial Group on Modern Slavery. This group acts as a national rapporteur for the purposes of the Article 19 of the European Directive on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims. The report sets out an assessment of the scale of modern slavery in the UK and outlines the actions being taken to combat it. The report covers the whole of the UK and has been drafted in collaboration with the Northern Ireland Executive, the Scottish Government and the Welsh Government.

A copy of the report will be placed in the House Library and also made available on the GOV.UK website.