



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 6 March 2017 and the information is correct at the time of publication (07:14 P.M., 06 March 2017). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

CONTENTS

ANSWERS	7	■ Debts: Families	13
ATTORNEY GENERAL	7	■ Inheritance Tax	13
■ Attorney General: Procurement	7	■ Landfill Communities Fund	14
BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY	8	■ Local Growth Deals: Swansea Bay City Region	14
■ Company Accounts: Scotland	8	■ Personal Injury: Compensation	15
■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Brexit	8	■ Rented Housing	15
■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Procurement	8	■ Sugar: Taxation	16
■ Fracking: North West	9	■ Taxation: Multinational Companies	16
■ Nuclear Industry Council	9	■ Taxis: VAT Exemptions	17
■ Nuclear Reactors	10	■ VAT: Golf	17
■ Shipbuilding	10	COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT	17
CABINET OFFICE	10	■ Communities and Local Government: Procurement	17
■ Cabinet Office: Procurement	10	■ Communities and Local Government: Senior Civil Servants	17
■ Cabinet Office: Senior Civil Servants	11	■ Council Tax: Dorset	18
■ Capita	11	■ European Union Solidarity Fund	18
■ Government Departments: Secondment	11	■ Floods: European Union Solidarity Fund	19
TREASURY	12	■ Housing Revenue Accounts	20
■ Beer: Excise Duties	12	■ Local Government: Dorset	20
■ Children: Poverty	12		

■ Private Rented Housing: Evictions	21	■ Department for Education: Brexit	34
■ Social Networking: Fines	22	■ Department for Education: ICT	35
■ Tenancy Deposit Schemes	22	■ Department for Education: Senior Civil Servants	35
■ Tenancy Deposit Schemes: Greater London	23	■ Digital Technology: Curriculum	36
■ Veolia Environment	25	■ Health Education: Young People	36
CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT	25	■ Primary Education	37
■ British Nationals Abroad: Musicians	25	■ Schools: Admissions	37
■ Broadband	25	■ Schools: Finance	38
■ Digital Technology: Libraries	26	■ Schools: Internet	38
■ Digital Technology: Training	26	■ Schools: North East	39
■ Government Departments: Reprography	27	■ Schools: Staff	40
■ Writers	27	■ Schools: Vocational Guidance	40
DEFENCE	28	■ Teachers: Greater London	42
■ Armoured Fighting Vehicles	28	■ Teachers: Haringey	42
■ Defence Discount Service	28	■ Teachers: Recruitment	43
■ Defence Equipment: Procurement	29	■ Young Enterprise: Females	44
■ Defence Fire and Rescue Service	29	ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS	44
■ Defence: Expenditure	30	■ Agriculture: Subsidies	44
■ Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft	30	■ Air Pollution	44
■ Ministry of Defence: Brexit	31	■ Bovine Tuberculosis: Disease Control	44
■ Ministry of Defence: ICT	31	■ Cats: Conservation	45
■ Ministry of Defence: Procurement	32	■ Circuses: Animal Welfare	45
■ Nuclear Weapons Safety Committee	33	■ Common Agricultural Policy and Common Fisheries Policy	46
■ Type 26 Frigates	33	■ Crop Spraying	46
EDUCATION	33	■ Crops: EU Action	46
■ Business: Females	33	■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Brexit	47
■ Civil Partnerships	34	■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Senior Civil Servants	47

■ Flood Control	48	■ Israeli Settlements: UN Resolutions	59
■ Genetically Modified Organisms: USA	48	■ Sri Lanka: Human Rights	59
■ Horticulture: Employment Schemes	48	■ Sudan: Prisoners	59
■ International Whaling Commission	49	■ Violette Uwamahoro	60
■ Marine Environment: Microplastics	49	HEALTH	60
■ Natural England: Maps	50	■ Atrial Fibrillation: Strokes	60
■ Sheep Meat: New Zealand	50	■ Brain: Tumours	60
■ Turtles: Conservation	50	■ Cancer	62
■ UN Environment Programme	51	■ Cannabis	62
■ Waste Management	52	■ Dementia	63
■ Water Supply: National Policy Statements	52	■ Depressive Illnesses	63
EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION	53	■ Drugs: Misuse	64
■ Department for Culture, Media and Sport: Brexit	53	■ Eating Disorders: Children and Young People	64
■ Department for Exiting the European Union: Brexit	54	■ General Practitioners: Fees and Charges	64
■ Department for Exiting the European Union: Procurement	56	■ General Practitioners: Newham	65
■ Department for Exiting the European Union: Senior Civil Servants	56	■ Health Professions: Training	65
■ European Arrest Warrants	56	■ Health Services: Reciprocal Arrangements	65
FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE	57	■ Health Services: Research	66
■ Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Government Contracts	57	■ HIV Infection	66
■ Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Senior Civil Servants	57	■ Hospitals: Cameras	66
■ India: Religious Buildings	58	■ Knee Replacements	67
■ Intelligence Services: Detainees	58	■ Medicine: Chelmsford	68
		■ Mental Health Services: Hertfordshire	68
		■ Mental Health Services: Prisons	69
		■ NHS: Finance	69
		■ NHS: Migrant Workers	70
		■ NHS: Procurement	70
		■ NHS: West Midlands	71

■ Orthopaedics	72	■ Agriculture: Subsidies	83
■ Paramedical Staff: Migrant Workers	73	■ Business: Females	83
■ Personal Injury: Compensation	73	■ Department for International Trade: Senior Civil Servants	83
■ Physician Associates	74	■ Developing Countries: Trade Agreements	84
■ Private Patients	74	■ Motor Vehicles: Manufacturing Industries	84
■ Psychiatry: EU Nationals	75	■ South Africa: Trade Promotion	85
■ Sugar: Obesity	75	■ Trade Agreements: Agriculture	85
HOME OFFICE	76	JUSTICE	85
■ Asylum: Children	76	■ Administration of Justice: Mental Health	85
■ Counter-terrorism	76	■ Child Rearing	86
■ Fire and Rescue Services: Floods	77	■ Coroners: Greater London	86
■ Health Services: Foreign Nationals	77	■ Crime: Victims	87
■ Home Office: Senior Civil Servants	77	■ Human Rights	87
■ Housing: Fire Prevention	77	■ Immigration: Appeals	87
■ Immigration: EEA Nationals	78	■ Judiciary: EU Nationals	88
■ Immigration: EU Nationals	78	■ Legal Aid Scheme: Domestic Violence	88
■ Visas	79	■ Ministry of Justice: Brexit	88
HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION	80	■ Open Prisons	89
■ Palace of Westminster: Gun Sports	80	■ Police: Hoaxes and False Alarms	89
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	81	■ Prisoners: Death	89
■ Cape Verde: Overseas Aid	81	■ Prisoners: Self-harm	90
■ Department for International Development: Brexit	81	■ Prisons: Drugs	90
■ Developing Countries: Abortion	81	■ Prisons: Facilities	90
■ HIV Infection	82	SCOTLAND	91
■ Humanitarian Aid	82	■ Scotland Office: Brexit	91
INTERNATIONAL TRADE	82	■ Scotland Office: Procurement	91
■ Agriculture	82	TRANSPORT	91
		■ A417	91
		■ Abellio Greater Anglia	91

■ Cross country railway line: Gloucester	92	■ Department for Work and Pensions: Senior Civil Servants	102
■ Cross Country Trains: Standards	93	■ Employment and Support Allowance	103
■ Department for Transport: Senior Civil Servants	93	■ Funerals: Low Incomes	104
■ Parliament Square	93	■ Housing Benefit: Young People	105
■ Railways: Bradford	94	■ Jobcentres: Liverpool	105
■ Railways: Compensation	94	■ Jobcentres: Whitley Bay	107
■ Railways: Tickets	95	■ Local Housing Allowance	108
■ Roads: Repairs and Maintenance	95	■ Local Housing Allowance: Greater London	109
■ ScotRail: Compensation	97	■ Personal Independence Payment: Mental Illness	110
■ Taxis: Licensing	98	■ Personal Independence Payment: Multiple Sclerosis	110
WALES	99	■ Rodents: Pest Control	111
■ Wales Office: Brexit	99	■ Social Security Benefits: Disqualification	112
WOMEN AND EQUALITIES	99	■ Social Security Benefits: EU Nationals	112
■ Business: Females	99	■ Social Security Benefits: Yorkshire and the Humber	113
■ Equality and Human Rights Commission: Expenditure	99	■ State Retirement Pensions: EU Nationals	113
■ Government Equalities Office: Brexit	100	■ Working Conditions: Temperature	113
■ Government Equalities Office: Procurement	100	MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS	115
■ Government Equalities Office: Senior Civil Servants	100	COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT	115
■ Small Businesses: Females	100	■ Local Government: Dorset	115
■ Women's Business Council	101	DEFENCE	115
WORK AND PENSIONS	101	■ Armed Forces: Body Armour	115
■ Bereavement Benefits: Parents	101		
■ Children: Maintenance	102		
■ Department for Work and Pensions: Brexit	102		

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE	116	WRITTEN STATEMENTS	120
■ British Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies: LGBT People	116	BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY	120
WORK AND PENSIONS	116	■ Departmental Contingent Liability Notification - Postal Services Holding Company Limited	120
■ Department for Work and Pensions: Staff	116	CABINET OFFICE	121
		■ Anonymous electoral registration	121
		HEALTH	121
		■ Health Redress	121

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

■ Attorney General: Procurement

Jon Trickett:

[\[64992\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, how many civil servants of the Law Officers' Departments oversee contracts which have been awarded to external providers.

Robert Buckland:

It is not possible to be precise about the exact number of civil servants employed by the Law Officers' Departments who oversee contracts that have been awarded to external providers.

Jon Trickett:

[\[65676\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what the procurement spend of the Law Officers' Departments was in each year since 2010.

Robert Buckland:

The following figures, based on published accounts for 2010 to 2016, show the procurement spend (all expenditure on goods, assets or services, not including expenditure relating to the remuneration of employees, non cash costs such as depreciation and local/national taxes such as rates and excluding any case settlement costs) for the Law Officers' Departments.

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
GLD*	52,300	49,533	52,426	47,070	60,167	70,649	68,804
AGO	1,800	1,589	1,520	1,457	1,348	1,470	1,354
HMCPSI	821	893	1,032	417	409	388	419
CPS	315,581	274,816	269,612	244,121	284,482	347,658	325,560
SFO	21,696m	18,968m	17,884m	31,689m	26,887m	22,358m	21,904m

*The Treasury Solicitor's Department until 31 March 2015.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY**■ Company Accounts: Scotland**

Roger Mullin: [\[65841\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what criteria are used to determine whether Scottish limited partnerships are required to submit annual accounts to Companies House.

Margot James:

Scottish Limited Partnerships are not required to submit annual accounts with Companies House.

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Brexit

Maria Eagle: [\[65635\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what (a) EU agencies and other organisations within his Department's remit the Government plans to withdraw from when the UK leaves the EU, (b) staff time was spent on engagement with those bodies and (c) financial resources were spent on engagement with those bodies in 2015-16.

Mr Nick Hurd:

As set out in the recent White Paper (The United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union), the Government will discuss with the EU and Member States our future status and arrangements with regard to EU agencies. It would not be appropriate to prejudge the outcome of the negotiations.

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Procurement

Jon Trickett: [\[65675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the procurement spend of his Department was in each year since 2010.

Margot James:

The Department is currently in transition following the announcement of its formation in July last year and the bringing together of the functions of the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) along with the business, industrial strategy and innovation functions of the former Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS).

BEIS constituent departments published details of procurement spend within their Annual Reports (this included spend attributed to higher and further education policy, apprenticeships and skills which have transferred to Department for Education and trade policy and export control, as well as the functions previously performed by UK Trade and Investment which have transferred to the new Department for International Trade). This spend is summarised in the table below:

£'000							
	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
DECC	3,384,658	3,454,641	3,454,317	3,576,766	3,749,658	3,787,307	N/A
BIS	2,003,877	1,548,275	1,306,695	1,690,665	1,499,267	1,413,371	N/A
Total	5,388,535	5,002,916	4,761,012	5,267,431	5,248,925	5,200,678	N/A

Sources:

DECC [2010-11](#) and [2011 onwards](#) (Core tables).

BIS [2010-11](#) and [2011 onwards](#) (Annex A).

■ Fracking: North West

Grant Shapps:

[\[65797\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the potential benefits to the North West economy of the shale gas extraction industry.

Jesse Norman:

The economic impact of shale both locally and nationally will depend on how far shale development is technically and commercially viable, and on the level of production reached. A thriving shale industry could involve a wide range of local jobs, in construction supply, transport, facilities support and consultancy. Shale gas development would in turn support jobs in sectors such as the chemical industry, much of which relies on natural gas as a feedstock.

The Government believe it is important that communities which host shale development see a share of the economic benefits. To ensure that this happens, a community benefits package has been brought forward by industry. The Government has also announced that it will create a Shale Wealth Fund to ensure that communities which host shale sites can also share in the wider benefits of shale development.

■ Nuclear Industry Council

Kelvin Hopkins:

[\[66112\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when the Nuclear Industry Council last met; what was discussed at that meeting and what decisions were made; and what changes have been made to the composition of the council since its previous meeting.

Jesse Norman:

The Nuclear Industry Council last met on 22 February. The meeting included a broad-ranging discussion to help inform the proposed nuclear Sector Deal as part of the Industrial Strategy.

The Council – which is co-chaired by Lord Hutton and myself – has a smaller membership than previously, comprised of executive-level representatives from across the nuclear industry and relevant parts of government, to facilitate a more strategic approach and broader focus. The full membership list is available on the NIA's website: <https://www.niauk.org/>

■ Nuclear Reactors

Michelle Donelan: [65932]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the Government has researched the use of stable salt reactor technology as part of the UK's energy mix.

Jesse Norman:

The Government has considered the potential for molten salt reactor technology to contribute to the UK's energy mix. In 2014 Innovate UK funded a study examining the feasibility of developing a pilot scale reactor for six molten salt reactor designs. In 2015 the Government commissioned the Techno-Economic Assessment of Small Modular Reactors (SMRs), to which a molten salt reactor developer contributed evidence. There are currently a number of molten salt reactor vendors participating in the UK SMR Competition and Government officials have met with them to discuss their proposals.

■ Shipbuilding

Oliver Colvile: [65448]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the effect on the luxury yacht building industry in the UK since the EU referendum.

Mr Nick Hurd:

The Department works closely with the marine engineering and manufacturing sector, which includes the yacht building industry. The Ministerial Working Group for Maritime Growth continues to engage with the industry on the issues and opportunities for the maritime sector resulting from the UK leaving the EU.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Cabinet Office: Procurement

Jon Trickett: [65677]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the procurement spend of his Department was in each year since 2010.

Jon Trickett: [65693]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the procurement spend of 10 Downing Street was in each year since 2010.

Ben Gummer:

The Prime Minister's Office is an integral part of the Cabinet Office and is included in this reply.

Spend for the department can be found in the Cabinet Office annual report and accounts. The annual report and accounts for financial year 2010-11 to 2015-16 are accessible from the Gov.uk website and the link is below:

www.gov.uk/government/publications.

■ Cabinet Office: Senior Civil Servants**Jon Trickett:****[65550]**

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what proportion of senior civil servants of his Department are (a) men, (b) women, (c) disabled, (d) from working-class backgrounds and (e) from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds.

Ben Gummer:

Information about the socio-economic background of staff in my department is not currently held centrally and is therefore not available.

Diversity statistics covering all staff in the Cabinet Office are published annually on the CO Website at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/cabinet-office/about/equality-and-diversity>.

■ Capita**Christian Matheson:****[66054]**

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what contracts are undertaken for the Government by Capita; and what the total value is of those contracts.

Ben Gummer:

Since January 2011, details of central government contracts above the value of £10,000 are published on Contracts Finder. Contracts published prior to 26 February 2015 can be viewed at:

<https://data.gov.uk/data/contracts-finder-archive>.

Those published after 26 February 2015 can be viewed at:

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

■ Government Departments: Secondment**Jon Trickett:****[63901]**

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 6 February 2017 to Question 62723, on government secondments, (a) what positions the staff from PWC were seconded to, (b) what the purpose of those secondments were, (c) what the equivalent payscales were of the positions to which those staff were seconded and (d) how long those secondments lasted.

Ben Gummer:

The PwC staff are seconded to HM Treasury and the Crown Commercial Service.

The individual seconded to HM Treasury is undertaking a role at pay band 1 of the Senior Civil Service, in the Finance Insight Team of the Public Spending Group. The secondment is from 04 October 2016 until 29 September 2017.

The individual seconded to the Crown Commercial Service is undertaking a role at Civil Service Grade 6 in the Strategic Programmes Directorate. The secondment is from 16 January 2017 until 16 January 2018.

These secondments are part of a centrally-managed talent programme in the Cabinet Office.

TREASURY■ **Beer: Excise Duties**

Graham Evans: [\[66175\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of excise duty rates on beer exports.

Graham Evans: [\[66176\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect on jobs and investment in pubs and breweries of the (a) reduction in beer duty in 2014, (b) reduction in beer duty in 2015 and (c) freeze in beer duty in 2016.

Jane Ellison:

HM Treasury engages with a wide variety of organisations to understand industry developments, including the beer and pub industry.

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

■ **Children: Poverty**

Ronnie Cowan: [\[66159\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what comparative estimate he has made of the number of children living in poverty in (a) the UK, (b) Scotland and (c) Inverclyde constituency if child benefit is (i) frozen and (ii) increased in line with inflation in the next three years.

Mr David Anderson: [\[66164\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of freezing rates of child benefit and child tax credit on families in Blaydon constituency.

Jim Fitzpatrick:

[66165]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of freezing rates of child benefit and child tax credit on families in Poplar and Limehouse constituency.

Neil Gray:

[66179]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of children living in poverty in Airdrie and Shotts constituency if child benefit is (a) frozen and (b) increased in line with inflation in the next three years.

Mr David Gauke:

The Government has considered the impact on all benefits and tax credits rates that are included in the four year uprating freeze. The Government has published an impact assessment at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/documents/impact-assessments/IA15-006C.pdf>

■ Debts: Families

Julie Elliott:

[65883]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will bring forward proposals to protect families recovering from debt from internet enforcement action and other charges related to such debt.

Simon Kirby:

The government has committed to exploring whether some form of “breathing space” would be a useful and viable addition to the current range of debt solutions available to consumers and creditors. Work is continuing on this review, and the government plans to provide an update in due course.

■ Inheritance Tax

Rachel Reeves:

[65490]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent estimate he has made of the cost to the Exchequer of lost revenue resulting from changes to inheritance tax thresholds announced in Budget 2015 in the (a) 2017-18, (b) 2018-19, (c) 2019-20 and (d) 2020-21 fiscal year.

Jane Ellison:

At Summer Budget 2015, the Government announced the introduction of a new ‘residence nil rate band’ for inheritance tax when a home is passed on death to a direct descendent. It will start at £100,000 in 2017-18, increasing in £25,000 increments to £175,000 in 2020-21. This, in addition to the existing nil rate band of £325,000, will increase the inheritance tax free threshold to £500,000 for many individuals, and up to £1 million for many married couples and civil partners by 2020-21.

The latest estimates of the cost to the Exchequer of introducing the residence nil rate band from 2017-18 to 2020-21 are published in Table 2.2 of the Budget 2016 official publication at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/508193/HMT_Budget_2016_Web_Accessible.pdf.

The next update to this publication is scheduled for 8 March 2017, following the Spring Budget 2017 announcements.

■ Landfill Communities Fund

Valerie Vaz: [66226]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much funding his Department has provided to the Landfill Communities Fund in each of the last five years.

Jane Ellison:

The taxpayer-funded, credit element of the Landfill Communities Fund has contributed the following amounts to the fund over the last five years for which full data is available:

2011/12 - £68.7m

2012/13 - £66.1m

2013/14 - £79.6m

2014/15 - £61.7m

2015/16 - £52.3m

■ Local Growth Deals: Swansea Bay City Region

Jonathan Edwards: [65700]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to announce his decision on the proposed Swansea Bay City Region deal.

Mr David Gauke:

The government is working constructively with local partners and the Welsh Government towards a city deal for the Swansea Bay city region. Each city deal is bespoke and we will announce the right deal for the Swansea Bay region as soon as we are able to do so.

Jonathan Edwards: [65904]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what representations he has received from the Welsh Government on the proposed Swansea Bay City Region deal.

Mr David Gauke:

The government has regular engagement with the Welsh Government to discuss matters of economic importance to Wales. The government is working constructively with local partners and the Welsh Government towards a city deal for the Swansea

Bay city region. Each city deal is bespoke and we will announce the right deal for the Swansea Bay region as soon as we are able to do so.

Jonathan Edwards:

[\[65937\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Wales on the proposed Swansea Bay City Region deal.

Mr David Gauke:

The government has regular discussions on matters of economic importance to Wales. The government is working constructively with local partners and the Welsh Government towards a city deal for the Swansea Bay city region. Each city deal is bespoke and we will announce the right deal for the Swansea Bay region as soon as we are able to do so.

■ **Personal Injury: Compensation**

Justin Madders:

[\[66117\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans his Department has to make available additional funds to the NHS in order to mitigate the potential effect of changes to the personal injury formula.

Mr David Gauke:

There will clearly be significant implications across the public and private sector following the change in the personal injury discount rate.

The Government has committed to ensuring that the NHS Litigation Authority has appropriate funding to cover changes to hospitals' clinical negligence costs.

The Department of Health will also work closely with General Practitioners (GPs) and Medical Defence Organisations to ensure that appropriate funding is available to meet additional costs to GPs, recognising the crucial role they play in the delivery of NHS care

■ **Rented Housing**

Kwasi Kwarteng:

[\[65891\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of section 24 of the Finance (No. 2) Act 2015 on (a) rental costs and (b) the supply of rental housing.

Mr David Gauke:

The government estimates that only 1 in 5 landlords will pay more tax as a result of this measure.

Given this, the government does not expect it to have a large impact on either rental costs or the supply of rental housing. The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) also expect the impact on the housing market will be small and did not adjust their forecast for house prices.

Basic rate income tax relief will still be available on a landlord's finance costs, and when the restriction is introduced in April 2017, it will be phased in over 4 years, giving landlords time to adjust.

■ Sugar: Taxation

Sir Hugo Swire:

[\[65915\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will consider mitigating the effects of the soft drinks industry levy on those manufacturers currently paying additional tax to use organic rather than conventional sugar.

Jane Ellison:

The levy is designed to encourage companies to reformulate their products to tackle the overconsumption of sugar in the UK. Treating soft drinks producers who use organic sugar differently would be counter to the aims of the levy and would not encourage producers to reduce the amount of added sugar in their drinks. Health experts have told us that sugary soft drinks are a leading factor in the over-consumption of sugar, a source of “empty calories” and a specific driver of childhood obesity.

Organic soft drink producers can reduce their levy liability, or escape the charge altogether, by reducing the amount of added sugar in their drinks or reducing portion sizes for high sugar products.

■ Taxation: Multinational Companies

Dr Alasdair McDonnell:

[\[66080\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, when the Government plans to implement provisions in the Finance Act 2016 to require (a) multinational enterprises and (b) UK subgroups of multinational enterprises to provide annual country-by-country tax reports to HM Revenue and Customs.

Jane Ellison:

The Government has been a supporter of greater tax transparency and the provision in the Finance Act 2016 mirrors this position.

It remains important that the provision is used to deliver a model of public country-by-country reporting that has been agreed on a multilateral basis. This will ensure public country-by-country reporting applies to both UK headquartered and foreign headquartered multinationals, requiring them to report on their profits and taxes for the full range of countries in which they operate.

We will continue to work with international partners on greater public disclosure of the tax affairs of multinational enterprises, including our continued participation in the discussions on the European Commission's proposal.

■ **Taxis: VAT Exemptions**

Gill Furniss:

[\[66083\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will assess the potential merits of exempting all new zero-emissions taxis from VAT from 2018 to 2025.

Jane Ellison:

There are no plans to alter the VAT treatment of new taxis.

Where a driver who owns or rents a taxi, or a business which operates a number of taxis, is registered for VAT, they will generally be able to recover any VAT they incur in the course of their business activities.

■ **VAT: Golf**

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[\[66090\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent estimate he has made of the number of golf clubs which are run as (a) members' and (b) proprietors' clubs for the purpose of VAT assessment; and if he will make a statement.

Jane Ellison:

The information requested is not held. When a golf club registers for VAT they are not required to specify what kind of club they are.

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ **Communities and Local Government: Procurement**

Jon Trickett:

[\[64994\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how many civil servants of his Department oversee contracts which have been awarded to external providers.

Mr Marcus Jones:

As of 2 March 2017 there are 110 individuals in DCLG with contract management responsibility.

■ **Communities and Local Government: Senior Civil Servants**

Jon Trickett:

[\[65551\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what proportion of senior civil servants of his Department are (a) men, (b) women, (c) disabled, (d) from working-class backgrounds and (e) from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The Office for National Statistics annually publish Civil Service employment statistics which includes a breakdown of the Department's officials split by ethnicity, gender, and disability status. This information can be found on the Office for National Statistics website:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/publicsectorpersonnel/datasets/civilservicestatistics>

Information about the socio-economic background of staff in my department is not held centrally and is therefore not available.

■ **Council Tax: Dorset**

Mr Christopher Chope: [66173]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, pursuant to his Answer of 1 March 2017 to Question 65508, what assumption about the notional amount of council tax for 2019-20 was included in the submission of 9 February 2017; and what criteria he will use to evaluate the financial case without making any such assumption himself.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The full details of the proposal submitted by the six Dorset Councils on 9 February 2017 are publicly available at <https://futuredorset.co.uk/> and I refer the Hon Member to my response of 28 February 2017 to Question UIN 65271.

■ **European Union Solidarity Fund**

Holly Lynch: [64213]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, when the Government first became aware that payments to the EU were required in relation to the UK's 2007 Solidarity Fund application.

Holly Lynch: [64241]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, with reference to the Written Statement of 16 January 2017, on winter flooding 2015-16, HCWS412, on what date he first became aware that the UK was legally obliged to make a payment of £14.5 million in respect of the 2007 application for Solidarity Fund assistance.

Andrew Percy:

[Holding answer 22 February 2017]: Commission audits which ended in 2012 on the UK's use of the European Union Solidarity Fund in response to the 2007 floods argued that errors were made in the use and management of this funding among government departments. The Commission issued a final invoice for payment for £14.5 million in May 2016.

Holly Lynch: [64253]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, with reference to the Written Statement of 16 January 2017, on Winter Flooding 2015-16, HCWS412, how much of the £60 million in assistance from the EU Solidarity Fund has been attributed to the effect of clawback through the UK rebate.

Andrew Percy:

[Holding answer 22 February 2017]: The Commission has now proposed to the European Parliament and Council that the UK receives a notional €60.3 million in assistance (subject to approval by the two bodies). However, owing to the costs involved in making an application and the effect of clawback through the UK rebate, the overall net benefit to the UK is only estimated to be €17 million (circa £15 million). This will be further offset by a payment of £14.5 million that the UK is legally obliged to make to the EU in respect of the UK's 2007 application (by the then Labour Government) for Solidarity Fund assistance following the serious floods that year. The UK Government is obliged to repay funding where there was ineligible spending under the Labour administration. Consequently, this funding does not offer additional support.

Holly Lynch:[\[64254\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, with reference to the Written Statement of 16 January 2017, on Winter Flooding 2015-16, HCWS412, what the cost (a) in total and (b) of each constituent element of making an application to the EU Solidarity Fund was.

Andrew Percy:

[Holding answer 22 February 2017]: The Commission has now proposed to the European Parliament and Council that the UK receives a notional €60 million (circa £51.6 million) in assistance (subject to approval by the two bodies). However, owing to the costs involved in making an application and the effect of clawback through the UK rebate, the overall net benefit to the UK is only estimated to be €17 million (circa £15 million). This will be further offset by a payment of £14.5 million that the UK is legally obliged to make to the EU in respect of the UK's 2007 application (by the then Labour Government) for Solidarity Fund assistance following the serious floods that year. Consequently, this funding does not offer additional support, but is only eligible to reimburse a small portion of the extensive financial support that has already been given by the government to areas affected.

■ Floods: European Union Solidarity Fund**Alan Brown:**[\[65570\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, with reference to the Written Statement of 16 January 2017, HCWS412, how much of the €60 million from the EU Solidarity Fund for flood support will be allocated to each region.

Andrew Percy:

As I said in my written statement on 16 January 2017, in the days that followed the flooding in December 2015 and early January 2016, the government very quickly identified that the immediate priority was to respond to the urgent needs of those affected and we have paid out almost £300 million.

All of the £300 million came from the government, and the government will continue to ensure that there is help available in the places that it is needed.

Housing Revenue Accounts

John Healey: [\[64412\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what right to buy receipts local authorities have paid to the Exchequer including (a) capital receipts, (b) any interest accrued and (c) any other relevant amount in each financial year from 2012-13.

Gavin Barwell:

I refer the Rt Hon Member to my answer to Question UIN 64700 on 1 March 2017.

Local Government: Dorset

Mr Christopher Chope: [\[66022\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 28 February 2017 to Question 64857, on Local Government: Dorset, what the latest date will be that alternative proposals can be submitted to be considered as part of his initial decision alongside the proposal on local government reorganisation submitted by six Dorset councils on 9 February 2017.

Mr Christopher Chope: [\[66023\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 28 February 2017 to Question 64857, on Local Government: Dorset, whether he will ensure that his initial decision will not be taken until all interested parties have had the opportunity to examine the evidence in support of the submission of 9 February 2017 on local government reorganisation by some Dorset local authorities.

Mr Christopher Chope: [\[66169\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, pursuant to his Answer of 1 March 2017 to Question 65075, what evidence he will have before him on the opinions and counter-proposals of the three councils which do not support the proposal.

Mr Marcus Jones:

We are now considering carefully the unitary proposal on which the nine Dorset councils have been working, and which six of those councils have formally submitted, together with all the representations we have received to date, including the material submitted by East Dorset District Council under cover of a letter of 21 February from the Council Leader and by Christchurch Borough Council under cover of a letter of 22 February from the Council's Acting Leader.

Our intention is to reach and announce an initial decision as to how we are minded to proceed as soon as practicable. Once we have announced our initial decision, there will still be an opportunity for those interested to submit further representations, including any additional material which East Dorset District Council or Christchurch Borough Council wishes to submit, before we take our final decision.

Mr Christopher Chope:

[\[66170\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, pursuant to his Answer of 1 March 2017 to Question 65075, what options he will consider in determining how to proceed.

Mr Marcus Jones:

I refer the Hon Member to my response of 28 February 2017 to Question UIN 65271.

Mr Christopher Chope:

[\[66171\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, pursuant to his Answer of 1 March 2017 to Question 65075, how long councils and others interested will have to make representations.

Mr Marcus Jones:

Once we have announced our initial decision on any proposals we have received, we will ensure interested parties have reasonable time to make further representations.

Mr Christopher Chope:

[\[66172\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what meetings he has had with Dorset hon. Members since 1 January 2017 at which possible reorganisation of local government structures in Dorset has been discussed; what the dates of those meetings were; and which hon. Members were present at each meeting.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government has had no departmental meetings with Dorset Hon Members on this matter since 1 January 2017.

■ Private Rented Housing: Evictions

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[65454\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what assessment the Government has made of the effectiveness of provisions on preventing retaliatory evictions in the Deregulation Act 2015.

Gavin Barwell:

The retaliatory eviction provisions introduced in the Deregulation Act 2015 are designed to protect tenants from the small minority of rogue landlords who respond to a legitimate complaint about the condition of the property by seeking to serve an eviction notice.

A review of the provisions will be conducted later this year and will assess how effective the legislation has been, whether there are any elements that are not working as they should, and whether any further action is needed to ensure the right protections are in place.

■ Social Networking: Fines

Nusrat Ghani:

[\[65479\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing fines for social media companies which fail to remove offensive and hate material from their platforms.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The Government has reached agreement through the European Commission's High-Level Group on Hate Crime with social media companies, that they should have robust processes in place to act promptly when online hate abuse is reported. This includes acting quickly to assess the report; removing content within twenty-four hours which does not comply with the acceptable use policies or terms and conditions; and, where appropriate, suspending or terminating the accounts of those breaching the rules that are in place. Collaborative efforts are ongoing to find and evaluate a range of solutions that balance free speech and protection from harm, with the potential to introduce fines if insufficient progress is made. The Government will continue to engage with social media companies and other interested parties to tackle online hate crime, as set out in our Hate Crime Action Plan.

■ Tenancy Deposit Schemes

Diana Johnson:

[\[48710\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, with reference to the Answer of 16 November 2015 to Question 13604, on tenancy deposit schemes, what the total value is of all the deposits currently held by each of the schemes on either a custodial or an insurance-based basis.

Diana Johnson:

[\[48727\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, with reference to the Answer of 16 November 2015 to Question 13604, what proportion of the deposits handed back in each of the schemes and for each of the years listed in the Table of Adjudications were subject to adjudication by their respective deposit protection scheme.

Diana Johnson:

[\[48728\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, with reference to the Answer of 16 November 2015 to Question 13604, on tenancy deposit schemes, what the total value was of the deposit money (a) given back to tenants and (b) withheld by landlords in each of the schemes for each of the years listed.

Gavin Barwell:

The three Government approved Tenancy Deposit Schemes in England help ensure that tenants are treated fairly at the end of their tenancy through protecting deposits.

A deposit can be protected in a custodial scheme where the deposit is paid (submitted) and held by the scheme until the end of the tenancy. The scheme will pay the deposit back (return) to the tenant if they have fulfilled all their obligations at the end of the tenancy. A deposit can also be protected in an insured scheme, where the

landlord or agent holds the deposit and pays it back to the tenant at the end of the tenancy. The deposit is not submitted to or returned by the scheme.

The figures available for the number of deposits protected for tenants in Greater London since 2011, are set out in Table 1, and for deposits submitted and returned in Table 2.

Table 1 – tenant's deposits protected in Greater London

YEAR	TOTAL NUMBER OF DEPOSITS PROTECTED
2011-12	434,031
2012-13	398,635
2013-14	453,200
2014-15	499,098
2015-16	545,937

Table 2 – tenant's deposits submitted and returned in Greater London

YEAR	NUMBER OF DEPOSITS SUBMITTED	NUMBER OF DEPOSITS RETURNED
2011-12	74,202	55,550
2012-13	77,709	62,341
2013-14	82,613	67,583
2014-15	88,465	70,105
2015-16	90,849	76,305

The differences between the number of deposits submitted and returned are due to different lengths of tenancies, cases going through the dispute resolution process, and the protection of more deposits as the private rental market continues to grow.

Overall, 98 per cent of all deposits protected in England since the launch of the tenancy deposit scheme in 2007, are returned to the tenant at the end of their tenancy.

■ Tenancy Deposit Schemes: Greater London

Stella Creasy:

[63888]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how many deposits of tenants in London were protected by the Government-accredited tenancy deposit protection scheme in each year since 2011.

Stella Creasy:**[63889]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how many deposits of tenants in London were (a) submitted and (b) returned under the Government-accredited tenancy deposit protection scheme in each year since 2011.

Gavin Barwell:

[Holding answer 20 February 2017]: The three Government approved Tenancy Deposit Schemes in England help ensure that tenants are treated fairly at the end of their tenancy through protecting deposits.

A deposit can be protected in a custodial scheme where the deposit is paid (submitted) and held by the scheme until the end of the tenancy. The scheme will pay the deposit back (return) to the tenant if they have fulfilled all their obligations at the end of the tenancy. A deposit can also be protected in an insured scheme, where the landlord or agent holds the deposit and pays it back to the tenant at the end of the tenancy. The deposit is not submitted to or returned by the scheme.

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2015-16	90,849	

■ Veolia Environment

Mr Charles Walker:

[\[65875\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, with reference to his letter of 16 July 2015 to Joanne Demetrius of Veolia ES (UK) Ltd, reference APP/M1900/V/13/2192045, if he will place in the Library a copy of the correspondence between his Department and Mr Kosky referred to in paragraph 250 of that letter.

Gavin Barwell:

At the point in his Report where the Inspector refers to Mr Kosky's opinion, the Inspector was paraphrasing the closing submission made on behalf of Veolia, rather than referring to any correspondence between Mr Kosky and the department. No such correspondence exists.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ British Nationals Abroad: Musicians

Tim Loughton:

[\[63787\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what her Department's policy is on paying the travel expenses of British musicians invited to overseas countries to perform with national orchestras.

Matt Hancock:

None.

■ Broadband

Louise Haigh:

[\[66180\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to page 2, Part 1 of her Department's Digital Strategy, published on 1 March 2017, whether the independent research cited indicates the speed to which broadband would need to be increased to add £17 billion to UK output by 2024.

Matt Hancock:

The £17 billion estimated uplift is set out in the UK Broadband Impact Study, and based on the estimate of the benefits of extending superfast broadband coverage and its impacts on business growth and productivity. The study is available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/257006/UK_Broadband_Impact_Study_-_Impact_Report_-_Nov_2013_-_Final.pdf

The study estimates the impact of the Government's Superfast Broadband programme by comparing the possible distribution of speeds over time with and without the intervention, including changes in availability of full fibre-on-demand. The ranges of speeds involved are analysed in Chapter 3 of the report.

■ Digital Technology: Libraries

Louise Haigh: [\[66227\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate she has made of the change in the number of librarians trained in digital skills from 2010 to date.

Mr Rob Wilson:

The UK Digital Strategy, published on 1 March 2017, highlights the role of libraries in improving digital inclusion by providing digital access, training and support for local communities. Since August 2014 over 16,500 library staff have enrolled on the 'Digital Information Skills for Library Workforce' course, funded by Arts Council England and the Society of Chief Librarians. This is an e-learning development programme designed to improve digital skills and confidence of library staff.

■ Digital Technology: Training

Louise Haigh: [\[66229\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the UK Digital Strategy published on 1 March 2017, how many people are expected to take part in pilots of new ways to include digital skills and careers in the National Citizen Service; and when she expects such content to become a core part of the National Citizen Service programme.

Mr Rob Wilson:

NCS Trust is planning to test a digital component to the NCS programme over an initial two year period, in partnership with the Raspberry Pi Foundation. The outcomes of the pilot will be evaluated rigorously each year and the Trust will roll out the content nationally if successful.

The precise details of the pilots are still being agreed between NCS and the Raspberry Pi Foundation, so we are not able to provide definitive numbers at this stage.

Louise Haigh: [\[66259\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to page 3, Part 2 of the Digital Strategy 2017, what budget has been provided to the Council for Digital Inclusion to increase collaboration and deliver initiatives to help more citizens to confidently go online and take advantage of the internet.

Matt Hancock:

The Council for Digital Inclusion brings together senior leaders in government and the private and voluntary sectors. It isn't all about spending taxpayers' cash. The Council has commissioned work which required private sector members' investment. For example, Lloyds Banking Group are leading a national partnership to increase motivation and digital capability among small businesses and charities.

In addition to the work of the Council itself, government is working with Council members and others to deliver initiatives to help more citizens confidently go online. For example, over £10m has been spent by HMG since October 2014 to fund Good

Things Foundation to support approximately 800,000 people to gain basic digital skills, through the Future Digital Inclusion and Widening Digital Participation programmes.

■ Government Departments: Reprography

Jim Dowd: [\[65470\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, whether her Department is responsible for ensuring that government departments adhere to licensing requirements related to the scanning and photocopying of documents where secondary royalties may be due to the author or creator of such documents.

Jim Dowd: [\[65472\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she is taking to ensure that government departments adhere to licensing requirements related to the scanning and photocopying of documents where secondary royalties may be due to the author or creator of such documents.

Matt Hancock:

The Cabinet Office currently coordinates the purchase of a cross-Government licence on behalf of Departments, however each department is responsible for its own licensing adherence.

■ Writers

Jim Dowd: [\[65464\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, which organisations and individuals from the creative industries she has met since her appointment.

Jim Dowd: [\[65465\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what meetings she has had with (a) individual writers and (b) representatives of writers since her appointment.

Jim Dowd: [\[65466\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, if she will meet with the Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society to discuss issues related to writers.

Jim Dowd: [\[65467\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, if she will meet the Society of Authors to discuss issues related to authors.

Jim Dowd: [\[65468\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, if she will meet the Writers' Guild to discuss issues related to writers.

Jim Dowd:

[65469]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, if she will convene a joint meeting with organisations representing writers to discuss issues related to that profession.

Matt Hancock:

Details of Ministerial meetings with external stakeholders are available via the Department's transparency returns, which can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/search?q=DCMS+ministerial+meetings>.

DEFENCE

■ Armoured Fighting Vehicles

Margaret Ferrier:

[65703]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, on how many days in 2016 Special Escort Group's armoured protected patrol vehicles were unavailable for service.

Harriett Baldwin:

It is Ministry of Defence policy that we do not comment on the operational details of convoys transporting Defence Nuclear Material, for the purpose of safeguarding national security.

■ Defence Discount Service

Danny Kinahan:

[66383]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how his Department is promoting the Defence Discount Service in each region and constituent part of the UK.

Danny Kinahan:

[66384]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the uptake level has been of the Defence Discount Service in each region and constituent part of the UK since its introduction.

Mark Lancaster:

The Defence Discount Service (DDS) is operated by Blue Light Card Ltd on behalf of the Ministry Of Defence. Blue Light is responsible for all marketing and promotion of the DDS throughout the United Kingdom and uses a variety of initiatives to engage both locally and nationally.

As at 3 March 2017, the DDS scheme had approximately 386,000 members. A regional breakdown of membership is unavailable. However, the following table provides a breakdown by constituent part of the UK:

ENGLAND	316,400
Scotland	29,700
Wales	23,200
Northern Ireland	5,800
Outside UK	2,300
Opted not to provide location	8,700

■ **Defence Equipment: Procurement**

Nia Griffith: [\[66092\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of changes in the exchange rate on the Equipment Plan 2016 to 2026.

Harriett Baldwin:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 22 November 2016 to Question 53647 to the hon. Member for Blaneau Gwent (Mr Smith).

Attachments:

1. Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft [Hansard Extract 22 November 2016.doc 53647.docx]

■ **Defence Fire and Rescue Service**

Rachael Maskell: [\[66104\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, for what reasons the Defence Fire and Rescue Project is not listed in the Ministry of Defence Government Major Projects Portfolio data.

Rachael Maskell: [\[66105\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the value is of the Defence Fire and Rescue Project.

Mark Lancaster:

The Defence Fire and Rescue Project does not meet the criteria to be listed in the Ministry of Defence Government Major Projects Portfolio. The criteria are set out in the Treasury Approvals Process for Programmes and Projects, which can be found at the following link:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/576015/Treasury_approvals_process_for_programmes_and_projects.pdf

The whole life cost of the project is expected to be in excess of £400 million, to release further details could undermine the ability to drive maximum benefit from the on-going commercial competition.

■ Defence: Expenditure

Nia Griffith: [\[66096\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what proportion of the Government's reporting to NATO on defence expenditure in 2016 was categorised as (a) war pensions, (b) contributions to UN peacekeeping missions, (c) the Single Intelligence Account and (d) pensions for retired civilian personnel.

Sir Michael Fallon:

The figures used in the Government's reporting to NATO for Defence spending in 2016 are still estimates, as they represent spending in the 2016-17 financial year. We estimate that these items in total will represent no more than 5% of total defence expenditure in 2016.

■ Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[66265\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 24 February 2017 to Question 64606, what further steps he is taking as part of the review to address the lack of manpower needed to support Initial Capability of the F-35 Lightning II programme.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[66266\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 24 February 2017 to Question 64606, how many specialist personnel from the (a) Royal Navy and (b) Royal Air Force were part of the increase in specialist personnel needed to support the Lightning II programme since his Department's Major Projects Portfolio data was published.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[66271\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 24 February 2017 to Question 64606, which (a) Royal Navy and (b) Royal Air Force roles required to support the F-35 Lightning II programme are undermanned; and what estimate he has made of the number of personnel required to adequately support that programme.

Harriett Baldwin:

The majority of military posts required to support F-35 Lightning II Initial Operating Capability have been established and are being filled. In the limited areas where posts are waiting to be established, work is on-going to address this through the formal processes and will be dependent upon a successful outcome. Whilst Lightning posts are being filled on a priority basis, current manning is under review.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[66268\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 24 February 2017 to Question 64606, how many Defence Equipment and Support staff are working in direct support of the F-35 Lightning II programme.

Harriett Baldwin:

There are currently 105 Defence Equipment and Support staff working directly on the Lightning programme.

Mr Kevan Jones:[\[66270\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 24 February 2017 to Question 64606, how many additional Defence Equipment and Support staff are needed to reduce the manning risk to Initial Capability of the F-35 Lightning II programme.

Harriett Baldwin:

The overall Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S) manpower requirement for the Lightning programme is being considered as part of the wider DE&S Transformation programme and will be defined by April 2017. This includes any additional staff needed to meet Lightning initial operating capability and to support the aircraft as it comes into service.

■ Ministry of Defence: Brexit**Maria Eagle:**[\[65638\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what (a) EU agencies and other organisations within his Department's remit the Government plans to withdraw from when the UK leaves the EU, (b) staff time was spent on engagement with those bodies and (c) financial resources were spent on engagement with those bodies in 2015-16.

Mike Penning:

As set out in the recent White Paper, the United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union (Cm9417) dated February 2017, the Government will discuss with the EU and Member States our future status and arrangements with regard to EU agencies. It would not be appropriate to prejudge the outcome of the negotiations.

■ Ministry of Defence: ICT**Justin Madders:**[\[65980\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much his Department spent on (a) iPads and tablets and (b) paper in each of the last five years for which figures are available.

Harriett Baldwin:

Information on expenditure on iPads and tablets is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Ministry of Defence teams are responsible for ordering their own paper via a Crown Commercial Services framework arrangement. Expenditure on standard paper, in each of the last five financial years (FY), is provided below:

FY 2012-13	FY 2013-14	FY 2014-15	FY 2015-16	FY 2016-17 TO DECEMBER 2016
£3,162,951	£2,543,410	£2,448,835	£2,177,024	£1,560,460

■ Ministry of Defence: Procurement

Nia Griffith: [66097]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the total value was of contracts awarded by his Department to single-source suppliers in each of the last seven years for which figures are available.

Harriett Baldwin:

Information about the contracts that the Ministry of Defence has awarded on a non-competitive basis is published annually on the gov.uk website in the Trade, Industry and Contracts bulletin. The latest information is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/mod-trade-industry-and-contracts-2016>.

While the published data provides overall percentages, the specific value of non-competitive contracts awarded in each year since 2009-10 is provided below.

FINANCIAL YEAR	VALUE (£ MILLION)
2015-16	3,535
2014-15	5,526
2013-14	3,437
2012-13	3,417
2011-12	3,688
2010-11	2,583
2009-10	6,818

Nia Griffith: [66098]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many penalty notices his Department has issued to suppliers for failing to disclose information on costs and pricing in each of the last seven years for which figures are available.

Harriett Baldwin:

Prior to the introduction of the Defence Reform Act and the Single Source Contract Regulations in December 2014, there was no statutory reporting regime and the Department could not issue compliance or penalty notices. Since the introduction of the Single Source Contract Regulations, the Department has not had occasion to

issue any such notices on qualifying Defence contracts or qualifying Defence sub-contracts.

■ Nuclear Weapons Safety Committee

Margaret Ferrier: [\[65699\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, (a) what the terms of reference are, (b) how many members there are, (c) who the current chair is, (d) what the date of the last meeting was and (e) what the date of the next meeting is of the Nuclear Weapons Safety Committee.

Margaret Ferrier: [\[65704\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many (a) accidents, (b) incidents and (c) near misses have been reported to the (i) Nuclear Weapons Safety Committee and (ii) Warhead Safety Co-ordinating Committee in each year since 2005; and if he will provide details of any such incidents.

Harriett Baldwin:

The Nuclear Weapons Safety Committee no longer exists. The Warhead Safety Co-ordinating Committee ceased to exist in 1993.

■ Type 26 Frigates

Chris Stephens: [\[66079\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 12 January 2017 to Question 59241, what the planned date is for the main investment decision and contractual signing for the procurement of the Type 26 frigates.

Harriett Baldwin:

Subject to successful contract negotiations, we will be able to place the contract for the first batch of Type 26 Global Combat Ships by the middle of this year, to enable the start of manufacture this summer.

EDUCATION

■ Business: Females

Diana Johnson: [\[65482\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of the enterprise champions recruited through the Inspiring the Future scheme were women in each fiscal year since 2012-13.

Robert Halfon:

The Inspiring the Future scheme is a programme run by the Education and Employers Taskforce and connects schools with volunteers from the world of work.

As the Education and Employers Taskforce is an independent charity we do not hold information on the numbers and proportion of the enterprise champions recruited

onto the scheme that were women, from the financial year 2012-13. Information about the scheme can be found on their website at www.inspiringthefuture.org or by contacting the company directly at enquiries@inspiringthefuture.org.

■ Civil Partnerships

Andy Slaughter: [65730]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether her Department has agreed a timetable for deciding on the future status of civil partnerships.

Caroline Dinéage:

The Government carried out a consultation on the future of civil partnerships in 2014. Views were invited on three options: abolishing civil partnerships; phasing them out; or extending them to opposite sex couples.

The review found that there was no clear consensus on the future of civil partnerships. A majority of respondents to the consultation were against extending civil partnerships to opposite sex couples and several significant stakeholders thought it was too soon to consider making changes to civil partnerships until the impact of extending marriage to same sex couples is known. Given the lack of any consensus, the Government did not change the Civil Partnership Act 2004.

The decision not to change the law was judicially reviewed last year and the Government won in the High Court. The Court of Appeal dismissed an appeal against the High Court judgment this week and confirmed that the Government's approach is lawful.

We welcome the Court's ruling. Before we take any action on this issue, it is right that we evaluate the impact that same sex marriage has on the take-up of civil partnerships. We will also carefully consider this judgment and its implications before deciding on our next steps.

■ Department for Education: Brexit

Maria Eagle: [65639]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what (a) EU agencies and other organisations within her Department's remit the Government plans to withdraw from when the UK leaves the EU, (b) staff time was spent on engagement with those bodies and (c) financial resources were spent on engagement with those bodies in 2015-16.

Caroline Dinéage:

As set out in the recent White Paper (The United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union), the Government will discuss with the EU and Member States our future status and arrangements with regard to EU agencies. It would not be appropriate to prejudge the outcome of the negotiations.

■ Department for Education: ICT

Justin Madders:

[65981]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much her Department spent on (a) iPads and tablets and (b) paper in each of the last five years for which figures are available.

Caroline Dineneage:

The Departmental spend on iPads and tablets is available for each of the last five financial years and is as below:

FINANCIAL YEAR	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
£000	Less than 2	0	0	42	18

The Departmental spend on paper is available for each of the last five financial years and is as below:

FINANCIAL YEAR	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
£000	78	128	134	101	64

The information regarding the amount of money spent by the Department on paper for each of the last five years is published by the Department and is available online.

The DfE Consolidated Annual Report and Accounts for 2014-15 is online at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/517766/DfE-consolidated-annual-report-and-a-counts-2014-to-2015-Web-version.pdf.

Page 89 of this report shows the spend on paper in financial years 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14 and 2014-15.

This report should be read in conjunction with the DfE Consolidated Annual Report and Accounts for 2015-16 which is available online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dfe-consolidated-annual-report-and-accounts-2015-to-2016>.

Page 165 of this report shows the figures for financial year 2015-16.

■ Department for Education: Senior Civil Servants

Jon Trickett:

[65554]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of senior civil servants of her Department are (a) men, (b) women, (c) disabled, (d) from working-class backgrounds and (e) from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds.

Caroline Dinenage:

The proportion of senior civil servants at the Department for Education from the groups listed above is – (a) 45.2%, (b) 54.8%, (c) 3.7%, (e) 3.3%.

We do not hold information about (d) the proportion of senior civil servants from working-class backgrounds.

The information is also available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education/about/equality-and-diversity>

■ Digital Technology: Curriculum**Louise Haigh:****[66228]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the UK Digital Strategy published on 1 March 2017, by what date the Government expects to deliver coding in the National Curriculum from Key Stage 1 onwards.

Nick Gibb:

The reforms to the National Curriculum introduced computing as a new subject in 2014, replacing the outdated information and communications technology (ICT). These new computing programmes of study include coding from Key Stage One onwards. The new National Curriculum is statutory in maintained schools at all Key Stages and academies and free schools may use it as a benchmark.

The new computing curriculum aims to equip young people with the knowledge and skills they need to become active creators of digital technology. It focuses on the hard elements of computer science and teaching about how computers work, the basics of programming and designing computer programs to address real world problems. The curriculum was developed in association with subject experts from industry.

■ Health Education: Young People**Justin Tomlinson:****[65293]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make it her policy to give local authorities discretion in providing educational support to young adults over the age of 25 with an Education Health and Care Plan in the event that they have not received their full entitlement to support before their 25th birthday.

Robert Halfon:

Young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are not automatically entitled to maintain their Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans after they turn 19. EHC plans are maintained beyond 19 where young people need special educational provision to meet the outcomes set out in their EHC plan. Those outcomes should focus on meeting the young person's aspirations, and preparing them for adulthood.

When a 19- to 25-year-old continues with an EHC plan, the local authority must review it at least annually. The plan must contain outcomes that should enable the

young person to complete their education and training successfully and move on to the next stage of their lives. This will happen at different stages for individual young people, and EHC plans extended beyond age 19 will not all need to remain in place until age 25.

For young people with more complex needs who are likely to continue to need specialist support in adult life, services will need to work together at a local level to plan and fund a smooth transition. These include children's services, adult social care, housing and health.

This strategic planning, aided by joint commissioning and integrated services, will support a young person to transition successfully to adult life, and receive the right support from adult services where needed.

For students aged 19 and above who don't have an EHC plan, [learner support funding](#) may be available to help them meet the additional needs of learners with learning difficulties and / or disabilities, and / or the costs of reasonable adjustments as set out in the Equality Act 2010.

This support can cover a range of needs including:

- funding to pay for specialist equipment and helpers;
- arranging note takers;
- particular help in lectures and seminars; and
- special arrangements for exams.

■ Primary Education

Justin Madders:

[\[64752\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans she has to issue guidance alongside the new primary school framework.

Nick Gibb:

There are currently no new primary school frameworks and therefore we have no plans to issue any guidance.

■ Schools: Admissions

Mr Roger Godsiff:

[\[65815\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether the Government has made an assessment of parents' preferences between increasing (a) faith and (b) non-faith school places.

Caroline Dinenage:

The latest figures for the secondary school application round show that there is a higher demand by parents for places in faith schools in relation to offers than there is for non-faith school places. They also show that parents' relative preferences for faith and non-faith school places have remained stable over the last 3 years.

Schools: Finance

Tim Farron: [66031]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Efficiency Review of 27 February 2017, what assessment she has made of the effect of the proposed six per cent budget savings on spending on schools.

Nick Gibb:

As included in HM Treasury's announcement of the Efficiency Review, the protected core schools budget does not come under the scope of the review. We are providing advice and support to help schools use their funding in cost effective ways, so they get the best possible value for their pupils.

The announcement of the Efficiency Review can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/efficiency-review-to-drive-productive-public-services>

Chi Onwurah: [66261]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 28 February 2017 to Question 64974, on what date the Schools Funding Formula will be published.

Nick Gibb:

The consultation on the national funding formula will conclude on 22 March. We are looking to engage extensively, right across the sector, to ensure that our final decisions are right. The results of the consultation and the Government's response will be published on GOV.UK in summer 2017. The formula will be introduced from April 2018.

Schools: Internet

John Mann: [66001]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make representations to (a) Wikihow and (b) YouTube on the content hosted on their sites on how to hack into school websites and servers.

Nick Gibb:

The Government does not censor or interfere with legal content online. If online content is deemed illegal, it is a matter for law enforcement to investigate.

However, cyber security is a top priority for the Government. We are investing £1.9 billion in the national cyber security strategy and have opened the National Cyber Security Centre which is working with public and private sector organisations to make the UK the safest place for online activity.

All organisations should have good basic cyber security measures in place, such as the Government's Cyber Essentials scheme, which protects against common vulnerabilities, which are widely reported online, and will not be specific to schools. They should also ensure they have appropriate protections in place for sensitive data such as personal details.

Schools: North East**Julie Elliott:****[65887]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to ensure that schools in the North East are adequately funded.

Julie Elliott:**[65888]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the effects of the introduction of the National Funding Formula on funding for schools in the North East.

Nick Gibb:

Since 2010, this Government has protected the core schools budget. This year, it is the largest ever on record, totalling over £40 billion. It will continue to rise for the rest of this Parliament, as pupil numbers rise.

We are currently consulting on a national funding formula for schools, which will be implemented from 2018-19. Our proposals for funding reform will mean that schools will, for the first time, receive a consistent and fair share of the schools budget, so that they can give every child the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Schools in the North East would overall gain 1.0% per-pupil as a result of our proposals and 60% (622) of schools in the region would see an increase in funding.

Schools that are due to gain funding will do so quickly, with increases of up to 3% per pupil in 2018-19 and 2.5% in 2019-20.

To ensure stability for schools, we have proposed substantial protections to limit reductions to any individual school's budget to manageable levels. No school will face a reduction of more than 1.5% per pupil per year or 3% per pupil overall.

We are also supporting schools to improve their financial health and efficiency. We have produced a collection of tools, information and guidance, which can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/schools-financial-health-and-efficiency>.

This collection includes benchmarking tools and the recently published Schools' Buying Strategy which will help schools make significant savings, over £1 billion a year by 2019-20, in non-pay and procurement costs.

Chi Onwurah:**[66260]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 28 February 2017 to Question 64973, whether the Schools Funding Formula reflects the higher labour market costs of attracting labour to hard to access areas.

Nick Gibb:

The second stage consultation on the national funding formula for schools confirms that we will use a 'hybrid' area cost adjustment to reflect the variation in labour market costs. The hybrid methodology takes into account both general labour market trends and the particular salary variations in the teaching profession. This methodology received strong support in the first stage consultation.

More information about how the area cost adjustment is calculated can be found in the technical note, at: <https://consult.education.gov.uk/funding-policy-unit/schools-national-funding-formula2/>.

■ Schools: Staff

Daniel Kawczynski: [65914]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of recent changes in local government funding on the workloads of staff in schools.

Nick Gibb:

Removing unnecessary workload for teachers is a priority for the Government. We are continuing our extensive work with the profession, teaching unions and Ofsted to challenge unhelpful practices so that teachers can concentrate on teaching and continue to inspire all young people to fulfil their potential.

We have protected the core schools budget in real terms. That means that in 2016-17, schools will have more funding than ever before for children's education, totalling over £40 billion, the highest on record.

We have published a wide range of tools, information, and support for schools, to support them to improve their financial health and efficiency, in one collection at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/schools-financial-health-and-efficiency>.

This includes School Workforce Planning Guidance to help school leaders when reviewing their staff structures.

On Friday 24 February we published the findings of the Department's Teacher Workload Survey of 2016, and a clear action plan, including an offer of targeted support for schools to tackle workload where it is most needed.

■ Schools: Vocational Guidance

Rishi Sunak: [66133]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what progress has been made on simplifying, clarifying and rationalising the quality awards system for careers education, information and guidance in England's schools.

Robert Halfon:

The Government recommends that all secondary schools should work towards a quality award for careers education, information, advice and guidance as an effective means of carrying out a self-review and external evaluation of the school's careers programme. This is stated in the statutory guidance for schools, which underpins their duty to secure independent careers guidance. The national validation, the Quality in Careers Standard, ensures that each of the awards is of the same national standard and assists schools to determine an appropriate quality award to pursue.

The Sub-Committee on Education, Skills and the Economy carried out an inquiry into careers education, information, advice and guidance at the end of 2016 and

recommended that Government should encourage the bringing together of the twelve different awards recognised by the Quality in Careers Standard into a single award.

The Government welcomes recent work, led by the Quality in Careers Consortium Board, to simplify the awards. The Board has reached agreement with the current 12[1] independent awarding organisations to migrate from national validation to a simpler National Licensing system. The 12 award providers will cease to award their individually named award. They will become Licensed Awarding Bodies for the single national careers quality award which will use the copyright brand, "The Quality in Careers Standard".

(i) [1] Career Connect; (ii) Career Mark (Futures Advice, Skills & Employment; (iii) The C & K Careers Quality Standard; (iv) Inspiration IAG; (v) Investing in Quality; (vi) Investor in Careers (Careers South West); (vii) The Humber LEP Gold Standard for CEIAG; (viii) Quality Award for CEIAG (Prospects); (ix) Recognition of Quality Award for CEIAG; (x) The Sheffield Careers Standard; (xi)CEIAG; (xii) The Stoke on Trent CEIAG Quality Award

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[66162]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how the performance of careers services provided in secondary schools is assessed.

Robert Halfon:

Maintained schools must secure access to independent careers guidance for all pupils in years 8 to 13. In doing so, schools must have regard to statutory guidance which sets out the key features of a high quality careers programme.

The quality of the school's careers provision is monitored by Ofsted. As part of standard (Section 5) Ofsted school inspections, inspectors make graded judgements on the effectiveness of leadership and management; the quality of teaching, learning and assessment; pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare; and pupils' outcomes. Matters relating to careers provision feature within three of these four judgements.

First, in judging leadership and management, inspectors take account of the leadership of the curriculum and the impact of the curriculum in preparing pupils for their future. Second, in judging pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare, inspectors consider the impact of impartial careers guidance. Finally, in judging outcomes, inspectors consider information about pupils' destinations.

Destinations data has become an even more significant part of school accountability, as it is now included in Key Stage 4 and 16-18 performance tables.

There continue to be opportunities outside of routine inspection for Ofsted to examine careers provision. For example, Ofsted has conducted thematic surveys on apprenticeships and on enterprise, employability and employer engagement, which draw on evidence about the quality of careers information, advice and guidance.

■ Teachers: Greater London**Mr David Lammy:****[66093]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of the housing market on teacher (a) recruitment and (b) retention rates in (i) Tottenham constituency, (ii) the Borough of Haringey and (iii) Greater London.

Nick Gibb:

The Government does not publish analysis on the effect of the housing market on recruitment and retention in particular professions. However, we recognise that the housing shortage can pose significant challenges for people who want to move closer to their places of work. The Government's Housing White Paper sets out a comprehensive package of reforms to help build the homes we need as a country.

At a national level we are retaining and recruiting the teachers we need. We recognise however, that the strengthening economy and growth in pupil numbers have made the situation more challenging and that this is more acute in certain subjects and particular schools or areas of the country.

Many schools are now participating in programmes that allow them to train their own teachers, including School Direct programmes, which are training over 10,600 postgraduates this year – including over 1,900 through teacher training providers in London.

In September we published the Schools workforce in England 2010 to 2015: trends and geographical comparisons report which can be found here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550970/SFR44_2016_text.pdf

This is an analysis of the annual School Workforce Census Statistical First release data at regional level. We are exploring data at a sub-regional level and investigating the factors which influence schools' recruitment and retention of staff including the effect of the housing market.

The Greater London Authority is undertaking work to understand recruitment and retention issues for teachers in London and we will continue to work with them, sharing our knowledge and findings.

■ Teachers: Haringey**Mr David Lammy:****[66094]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of changes to school funding on (a) teacher numbers, (b) school standards, (c) pupil outcomes and (d) levels of youth crime in (i) Tottenham constituency and (ii) the Borough of Haringey.

Nick Gibb:

As a result of our proposals for a national funding formula, schools in Tottenham constituency would see an overall 2.8% reduction in funding. Schools in the Borough of Haringey would see an overall 2.7% reduction in funding. Haringey's allocation

from the central school services block, which will provide local authorities with funding for services they offer to all pupils, including local education welfare services, would increase by over £360,000. London schools, including those in Haringey, will remain among the highest funded in the country under our proposals, with schools in inner London attracting 30% more funding per pupil than the national average.

We are supporting schools to improve their financial health and efficiency and have recently published a schools' buying strategy to help schools maximise savings from their £10 billion of non-staff spend.

Evidence shows that high-quality teaching is the most important school-based determinant of pupil outcomes. We have also published workforce planning guidance to help ensure that schools are always investing in the right mix of staff to deliver excellent pupil outcomes. This guidance is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/schools-financial-health-and-efficiency>.

■ Teachers: Recruitment

Stephen Timms:

[64894]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether her Department has a programme to encourage former teachers to return to that profession; and if she will make a statement.

Nick Gibb:

Our Returners Engagement Programme (REP) pilot provides funding to schools in the North West and South East to support and employ returning maths, physics and languages teachers. Many returning teachers wish to teach on a part-time, flexible or job share basis, and this has shown to be one of the most significant barriers for teachers wanting to return to the profession. Consequently, the pilot is open to schools that are willing to support and employ returning teachers who wish to work on a part-time or flexible basis.

Participating teachers are given a bespoke programme of support to help overcome the barriers that have prevented them from returning to teaching, such as recent classroom experience. They are also eligible for a bursary to contribute towards any increased requirement of childcare provision, travel costs or time off work.

The REP pilot complements the wider national package of support from the dedicated Return to Teaching Adviser service. Through this, returning teachers benefit from one to one support, including help in assessing their readiness in returning to teaching, and resources to help secure that readiness.

■ Young Enterprise: Females

Diana Johnson: [\[65483\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of people registered online with Young Enterprise are women.

Robert Halfon:

Young Enterprise runs programmes that link schools and employers to develop young people's personal and business skills.

As Young Enterprise is an independent charity we do not hold information on the numbers and proportion of women that are registered with them online. Information about the charity's work can be found on their website at www.young-enterprise.org.uk or by contacting the company directly at info@y-e.org.uk.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS**■ Agriculture: Subsidies**

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[66174\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what information she holds on the total value of Basic Payment Scheme payments (a) not paid on time and (b) paid on time since January 2016; and if she will make a statement.

George Eustice:

The Basic Payment Scheme payment window runs from 1st December to 30th June each scheme year. Since January 2016 the Rural Payments Agency has paid £75m outside of the Basic Payment Scheme payment window and £2,430m within.

■ Air Pollution

Charlotte Leslie: [\[65582\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what information her Department holds on local authority payments to the DVLA for air quality improvement purposes.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

Defra does not hold information on local authority payments to the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) for air quality improvement purposes.

■ Bovine Tuberculosis: Disease Control

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[65971\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of extending the badger cull; and if she will make a statement.

George Eustice:

The UK Chief Veterinary Officer has published his advice that the outcome of the 2016 badger culling operations indicates that industry-led culling can deliver the level of effectiveness required to be confident of achieving disease control benefits.

The UK Chief Veterinary Officer's advice can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bovine-tb-chief-veterinary-officers-advice-on-the-outcome-of-the-2016-badger-culls>

Mr Laurence Robertson:**[66235]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans she has to tackle bovine tuberculosis in high risk areas which have not undergone trial badger culling.

George Eustice:

We are taking strong action to deliver a long-term plan to eradicate the disease and protect the future of the UK's dairy and beef industries. In addition to badger control in areas where TB is rife, our comprehensive strategy includes strengthening cattle testing and movement controls and improving biosecurity on farm and when trading.

A summary of current measures and additional future measures or options is included in the Government's Strategy for achieving Officially Bovine Tuberculosis Free status for England which can be found on the GOV.UK website.

Cats: Conservation**Mr Jim Cunningham:****[65968]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she is taking to protect the Scottish wildcat population in the UK.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The Scottish wild cat is protected in the UK in accordance with the EU Habitats Directive. The only recorded population living in the wild in the UK is in Scotland. As wildlife protection is a devolved issue any additional measures for their protection in Scotland is a matter for the Scottish Government.

Circuses: Animal Welfare**Mr Christopher Chope:****[66045]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many (a) wild animals and (b) different species of animal are licensed under the Welfare of Wild Animals in Travelling Circuses (England) Regulations 2012.

George Eustice:

I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for York Central on 31st January 2017, 61557. Circus animals licenced to perform in circuses are licensed under the Welfare of Wild Animals in Travelling Circuses (England) Regulations 2012.

■ Common Agricultural Policy and Common Fisheries Policy

Caroline Lucas: [\[65633\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the need for new legislation resulting from replacement of the Common Agricultural Policy and Common Fisheries Policy after the UK leaves the EU.

George Eustice:

The Government will bring forward legislation in the next session that, when enacted, will repeal the European Communities Act 1972 and ensure a functioning statute book on the day we leave the EU. This 'Great Repeal Bill' will end the authority of EU law and return power to the UK.

All Government departments are currently reviewing the issues and opportunities arising from exit, including any requirements for legislation in addition to the Great Repeal Bill.

The Government will bring forward a White Paper on the Great Repeal Bill in due course that provides more detail about our approach. We will ensure it is published in time to allow Parliament sufficient time to digest its contents in advance of introduction of the Great Repeal Bill in the next session.

■ Crop Spraying

Mr Laurence Robertson: [\[66101\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what requirements are placed on farmers who use knapsack sprayers to undertake training on the use of those sprayers; and if she will make a statement.

George Eustice:

Farmers using knapsacks to apply pesticide products authorised for use by professionals only must hold a certificate. Certificates are awarded to candidates passing a test of their knowledge of how to apply pesticides safely using their chosen equipment. There are different categories of certificate, so those using only a knapsack sprayer do not need to show that they can use a boom sprayer. Candidates for the test will normally first take a short training course, but this is not mandatory.

■ Crops: EU Action

Grant Shapps: [\[65794\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will seek to delay the EU's proposed three-crop diversification scheme's implementation.

Grant Shapps: [\[65795\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will make an assessment of the effect that the EU's proposed three-crop diversification scheme will have on the UK's farming economy.

George Eustice:

The Common Agricultural Policy's Greening requirements, which include the crop diversification rule, were implemented in 2015.

As we prepare to leave the EU, we are looking at removing the rules that are unnecessarily burdensome, focusing instead on what works best for the UK. We want to free our farmers to grow more, sell more and export more British food, whilst upholding our high standards for the environment and animal health and welfare.

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Brexit**Paul Blomfield:**[\[66011\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 28 February 2017 to Question 64543, what discussions her Department had with the Department for Exiting the European Union on the drafting of the White Paper entitled The United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union, Cm 9417, published in February 2017.

George Eustice:

We, and other Departments, are working closely with the Department for Exiting the European Union on all aspects of exiting the European Union. This is to build a detailed understanding of how withdrawal will affect domestic policies and to coordinate policy work across Government.

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Senior Civil Servants**Jon Trickett:**[\[65555\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what proportion of senior civil servants of her Department are (a) men, (b) women, (c) disabled, (d) from working-class backgrounds and (e) from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds.

George Eustice:

Information about the socio-economic background of staff in my department is not held centrally and is therefore not available.

As at 31 December 2016, the proportion of Senior Civil Servants in the Department who are a) men, b) female, c) disabled & e) BAME, are as follows:

- a) Men – 59%
- b) Female – 41%
- c) Disabled – ***
- e) BAME – ***

This response covers only those officers who have declared their diversity and to protect the confidentiality of individual employees, percentages based on 5 or fewer individuals are not reported and shown as ***.

■ Flood Control

Tim Farron:

[\[66032\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Efficiency Review of 27 February 2017, what assessment she has made of the effect of the proposed six per cent budget savings on spending on flood defences.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

Government is investing £2.5 billion over six years to better protect the country from flooding. This includes over 1,500 flood defence schemes, which will better protect more than 300,000 homes by 2021. The Efficiency Review will take a strategic look at how government delivers services across the whole public sector, seeking opportunities to make improvements and drive value for money. Defra, like all other departments, will now under take a process of assessing the scope for efficiencies across its portfolio.

■ Genetically Modified Organisms: USA

Barry Gardiner:

[\[65446\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether it is her policy to maintain current food safety, sanitary and phytosanitary controls for (a) chlorinated chicken, (b) hormone enhanced beef and (c) genetically modified goods in the event of any future UK-US trade agreement.

George Eustice:

Once we have left the EU, maintaining the UK's high standards of food safety will remain a priority.

■ Horticulture: Employment Schemes

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[\[66010\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what her policy is on the future of the Horticultural Workers scheme.

George Eustice:

Defra is very aware that migrant workers from other EU countries will be one of the complex issues that will have to be resolved as part of our exit negotiations and future relationship with the EU. We are now focused on making sure that all our policies are delivering for the UK and to grow our world-leading food and farming industry.

The Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme was closed in 2013 on the advice of the Migration Advisory Committee. The Government keeps the position under review.

Until we have left, the UK will remain a member of the EU with all of the rights and obligations that membership entails, and employers in the agricultural and food processing sectors are free to continue to recruit EU workers to meet their labour needs.

■ International Whaling Commission

Mrs Anne Main:

[\[65928\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the main outcomes and decisions from the 66th annual International Whaling Commission meeting; and whether the UK has successfully implemented the required actions from that meeting.

George Eustice:

I have assessed the main outcomes and decisions of the 66th annual International Whaling Commission (IWC) and consider that the meeting was a success for the UK. We secured a number of important UK priorities and officials are now working hard in collaboration with other IWC Parties to ensure that the actions arising from the meeting are implemented during the intercessional period in a coordinated and effective way.

Mrs Anne Main:

[\[65929\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what potential effect the UK leaving the EU will have on the UK's future participation in the International Whaling Commission.

George Eustice:

The UK is committed to continuing to participate fully in the work of the International Whaling Commission following our exit from the EU. We will maximise the opportunities afforded us from exiting the EU while maintaining the close and important relationships we have with EU Member States party to the Convention. We will ensure that the UK remains a strong and influential voice and continues to be at the forefront of championing efforts to improve conservation and welfare outcomes for cetaceans globally.

■ Marine Environment: Microplastics

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[66167\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the answer of 27 February 2017 to Question 65236 on microplastics, what estimate she has made of the reduction in harm to the marine environment as a consequence of the proposed ban on the use of microbeads in cosmetics and personal care products.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

A Defra funded study has demonstrated that microplastics can cause harm to marine animals. The estimated use of microbeads associated with skin cleansing products in the UK alone is 680 tonnes per year. Our proposals will reduce harm by ensuring that these microbeads and those contained in other cosmetics and personal care products no longer enter the marine environment.

■ Natural England: Maps

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[\[66089\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of funding provided to Natural England for carrying out mapping.

George Eustice:

In 2016/2017, Natural England received Grant In Aid funding to support 43 posts to provide the wide range of mapping services required for NE's duties - from mapping the England Coastal Path to marine designated areas. Natural England received funding of £157,000 in 2016/2017 for the licensing of mapping products, and also access Ordnance Survey map data through the Public Sector Mapping Agreement which is funded by the UK government centrally. In addition to dedicated mapping personnel, staff across Natural England are able to access and use maps and spatial data in their work. This includes staff handling mapped information from Environmental and Countryside Stewardship applicants and agreement holders and also accessing Rural Land Register farmland map information maintained by RPA. Natural England also provides open access to maps and spatial data to individuals and organisations outside of NE through the Magic web service.

■ Sheep Meat: New Zealand

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[\[66009\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what checks are carried out to ensure that lamb imports from New Zealand are whole carcasses and not part joints.

George Eustice:

New Zealand is able to export up to 288,254 tonnes of sheepmeat duty free to the EU under a tariff rate quota. The rules governing the operation of the quota laid down in Commission Regulation (EU) No 1354/2011 express the quota in terms of carcase weight equivalent. Operators in New Zealand are able to use the quota to export lamb joints and cuts, as well as carcasses, and the Regulation lays down a series of coefficients to convert boneless and bone-in cuts into a carcase weight equivalent. Veterinary checks on products of animal origin are carried out by Port Health Authorities at Border Inspection Posts. Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs' (HMRC) customs declaration processes for non-EU imports ensure that all products of animal origin have been issued with a valid Common Veterinary Entry Document (CVED) before the consignment is cleared by customs in the UK.

■ Turtles: Conservation

Helen Goodman:

[\[65710\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what representations she has made to her international counterparts on ensuring that legislation introduced to protect turtles and their habitat is being enforced.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The UK is a signatory to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia and discusses implementation of the MoU with other signatory states at its triennial meetings. At the last meeting in September 2014, which the UK attended, signatory states discussed a number of turtle enforcement issues.

Helen Goodman:[\[65711\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what funding the Government has provided to projects seeking to protect turtles.

Helen Goodman:[\[65712\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what funding and other support the Government provides for research into the conservation of turtles.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The UK Government has provided funding of around £550,000 to protect turtles.

The Darwin Initiative has funded projects seeking to protect turtles in developing countries and in the UK Overseas Territories. A current Darwin project is promoting the conservation and sustainable use of marine turtles in Southwest Madagascar. Another, led by the University of Exeter, is working in Peru to find a solution to the thousands of endangered turtles who die as a result of gillnet fisheries around the world by employing the use of light emitting diodes (LEDs).

Through the Overseas Territories Environment and Climate fund, also known as Darwin Plus, Defra has funded a project in the Cayman Islands assessing how best to reduce threats to wild marine turtles.

The Flagship Species Fund, a partnership between Defra and Fauna and Flora International (FFI), has supported all six of the world's hard-shelled marine turtle species and most recently funded a project supporting sea turtle conservation through applied research in Anguilla.

■ UN Environment Programme**Helen Goodman:**[\[65709\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the UK contributes financially to the United Nations Environment Programme.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

Defra contributes £3.3 million on an annual basis to the operation of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Defra also pays mandatory subscriptions to a range of UN conventions that the UK is signed up to relating to specific environmental issues that UNEP oversees including climate change, biological diversity and ecosystem management, international wildlife trade, organic pollutants, chemicals and waste.

■ Waste Management

Richard Graham: [\[66095\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she is taking to (a) improve the recyclability of black plastic and (b) reduce the amount of waste going to landfill.

Richard Graham: [\[66099\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she is taking to reduce companies' use of non-recyclable black plastic packaging.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The Packaging (Essential Requirements) Regulations require businesses to ensure that all packaging does not exceed what is needed to make sure that the products are safe, hygienic and acceptable for both the packed product and for the consumer. They are also required to ensure that it is recyclable or recoverable at end of life.

The Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) has been working in partnership with industry to overcome technical barriers to the recycling of black plastics from using particular pigments in the manufacturing process. It is now possible to create a material that is almost identical in colour, but can be identified by the optical sorting equipment used by many materials recovery facilities. This could lead to increased recycling of the most common black plastic used in packaging. We therefore recommend that where plastic packaging is required to be black, retailers, brand owners and packaging manufacturers use detectable black colourants to enable the environmental benefits of recycling black plastics to be fully realised.

We recognise that there are still challenges. As part of the work on greater consistency in household recycling which industry and WRAP are taking forward, an advisory group supporting the consistency framework has recognised the recyclability of plastic packaging as an issue preventing comprehensive collection of dry recycling and has included an action to improve this, with black plastic as one of the key focus areas.

The Landfill Tax is the main driver in diverting residual waste from landfill. The standard rate is currently £84.40 per tonne. Defra is also investing £3 billion in a number of local authority projects through waste infrastructure grants. This is contributing towards the reduction of waste sent to landfill, promoting renewable energy, recycling and stimulating growth.

■ Water Supply: National Policy Statements

Mr Charles Walker: [\[65876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether her Department remains committed to developing a National Policy Statement for water supply for infrastructure; what recent assessment she has made of the need for such a statement; and if she will make a statement.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The Government remains committed to making a decision on whether to develop a National Policy Statement for water supply infrastructure. We are still assessing the evidence to support this decision.

EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION**■ Department for Culture, Media and Sport: Brexit**

Paul Blomfield: [\[65960\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what consultations his Department had with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport on the drafting of the White Paper entitled the United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union, Cm 9417, published in February 2017.

Paul Blomfield: [\[65961\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what consultations his Department had with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on the drafting of the White Paper entitled the United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union, Cm 9417, published in February 2017.

Paul Blomfield: [\[65962\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what consultations his Department had with the Department for International Development on the drafting of the White Paper entitled the United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union, Cm 9417, published in February 2017.

Paul Blomfield: [\[65963\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what consultations his Department had with the Cabinet Office on the drafting of the White Paper entitled the United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union, Cm 9417, published in February 2017.

Paul Blomfield: [\[65964\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what consultations his Department had with the Department for Communities and Local Government on the drafting of the White Paper entitled the United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union, Cm 9417, published in February 2017.

Paul Blomfield: [\[65965\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what consultations his Department had with the Department for Work and Pensions on the drafting of the White Paper entitled the United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union, Cm 9417, published in February 2017.

Paul Blomfield:

[\[65966\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what consultations his Department had with HM Treasury on the drafting of the White Paper entitled the United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union, Cm 9417, published in February 2017.

Paul Blomfield:

[\[65967\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what consultations his Department had with the Department for Transport on the drafting of the White Paper entitled the United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union, Cm 9417, published in February 2017.

Mr Robin Walker:

The White Paper sets out the Government's approach to forging a new strategic partnership between the United Kingdom and the EU. The Department for Exiting the European Union coordinates policy work across Government and works closely with officials in departments on all of its work, including the White Paper.

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

Paul Blomfield:

[\[65821\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what discussions his Department held with the Home Office on the drafting of the White Paper entitled The United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union, Cm 9417, published in February 2017.

Paul Blomfield:

[\[65822\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what discussions his Department held with the Ministry of Justice on the drafting of the White Paper entitled The United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union, Cm 9417, published in February 2017.

Paul Blomfield:

[\[65823\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what discussions his Department held with the Scotland Office on the drafting of the White Paper entitled The United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union, Cm 9417, published in February 2017.

Paul Blomfield:

[\[65824\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what discussions his Department held with the Wales Office on the drafting of the White Paper entitled The United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union, Cm 9417, published in February 2017.

Paul Blomfield: [\[65825\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what discussions his Department held with the Attorney General's Office on the drafting of the White Paper entitled The United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union, Cm 9417, published in February 2017.

Paul Blomfield: [\[65826\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what discussions his Department held with the Department of Health on the drafting of the White Paper entitled The United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union, Cm 9417, published in February 2017.

Paul Blomfield: [\[65827\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what discussions his Department held with the Department for International Trade on the drafting of the White Paper entitled The United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union, Cm 9417, published in February 2017.

Paul Blomfield: [\[65828\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what discussions his Department held with the Ministry of Defence on the drafting of the White Paper entitled The United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union, Cm 9417, published in February 2017.

Paul Blomfield: [\[65829\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what discussions his Department held with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on the drafting of the White Paper entitled The United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union, Cm 9417, published in February 2017.

Paul Blomfield: [\[65830\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what discussions his Department held with the Department for Education on the drafting of the White Paper entitled The United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union, Cm 9417, published in February 2017.

Paul Blomfield: [\[65831\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what discussions his Department held with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on the drafting of the White Paper entitled The United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union, Cm 9417, published in February 2017.

Paul Blomfield: [\[65832\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what discussions his Department held with the Northern Ireland Office on the drafting of the White Paper

entitled The United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union, Cm 9417, published in February 2017.

Mr Robin Walker:

The White Paper sets out the Government's approach to forging a new strategic partnership between the United Kingdom and the EU. The Department for Exiting the European Union coordinates policy work across Government and works closely with officials in departments on all of its work, including the White Paper.

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

Jon Trickett: [\[65684\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what the procurement spend of his Department was in each year since 2010.

Mr Robin Walker:

The Department for Exiting the European Union was created in July 2016. Information relating to the Department's expenditure in 2016-17 will be published in the Annual Report in July 2017.

■ **Department for Exiting the European Union: Senior Civil Servants**

Jon Trickett: [\[65556\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what proportion of senior civil servants of his Department are (a) men, (b) women, (c) disabled, (d) from working-class backgrounds and (e) from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds.

Mr Robin Walker:

The information requested cannot be released as individuals may be identifiable. The Department for Exiting the European Union is committed to the creation of a diverse and inclusive working environment to ensure staff do not face any barriers to success, and all staff feel supported at work. As such, the Department is committed to the steps established in the 2016 Talent Action Plan to help the Civil Service become the most inclusive employer in the UK. The department is also committed to working with a diverse range of external organisations, to ensure our work reflects a broad range of opinions across the UK.

■ **European Arrest Warrants**

Yasmin Qureshi: [\[65515\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of leaving the European Arrest Warrant system on the effectiveness of the criminal justice system as part of his Department's negotiations for leaving the EU.

Mr David Jones:

The safety of the British public is the top priority for the Government. It is in all our interests that we continue our deep cooperation with the EU and its Member States to tackle crime and terrorism.

As the recent White Paper made clear, the Government will look to negotiate the best deal we can with the EU to cooperate in the fight against crime and terrorism. We will seek a strong and close future relationship with the EU, with a focus on operational and practical cross-border cooperation.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE**Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Government Contracts****Jon Trickett:**[\[64394\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what the total (a) number and (b) value of Government contracts that have been contracted out by his Department was in each year since 2010; what the value of pro bono costs was in each such year; and what estimate he has made of the number of work days contracted out in each such year.

Sir Alan Duncan:

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) externally sources a number of services including cleaning, security, catering, IT and facilities management. Many of these services were externally sourced before 2010. The two major examples of outsourcing contracts since 2010, where we have contracted for services previously managed internally, are:

- A Facilities Management Contract for the Asia Pacific Region in 2010 (valued at £133 million) which absorbed a combination of previously internally and externally sourced services; and
- A Service Management Integrator Contract in 2013 (valued at £55 million to date) which also absorbed a combination of previously internally and externally sourced services.

Major contracts are managed centrally, but our network of Posts around the world are also able to enter into smaller contracts. To collate information on all contracts managed in the UK and overseas would incur disproportionate cost.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Senior Civil Servants**Jon Trickett:**[\[65557\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what proportion of senior civil servants of his Department are (a) men, (b) women, (c) disabled, (d) from working-class backgrounds and (e) from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds.

Sir Alan Duncan:

As of 31 December 2016, in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (a) 69.3 % of senior civil servants are men; (b) 30.7% of senior civil servants are women; (c) 8.2% of the senior civil servants have a disability; (d) in common with other government departments, the FCO do not yet record the socio-economic background of our civil servants and (e) 5% of the senior civil servants are from black and minority ethnic backgrounds.

India: Religious Buildings**Wes Streeting:**[\[66238\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will commission a public inquiry into UK involvement in the 1984 Amritsar massacre.

Alok Sharma:

We recognise the scars that this tragic event left and the strong feelings in the Sikh community, but believe there are no grounds for a public inquiry.

The Cabinet Secretary's investigation in 2014 was extensive. It concluded that UK assistance was advisory only, ended several months before Operation Blue Star and had limited impact in practice.

Intelligence Services: Detainees**Mr Alistair Carmichael:**[\[65920\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, which of the recommendations set out by the Intelligence Services Commissioner in the Supplementary Report to the Annual Report of 2015, HC 458, the Government has implemented.

Sir Alan Duncan:

In the written statement of 15 September 2016, HCWS 157, the Prime Minister confirmed that the Government would look carefully at the Intelligence Services Commissioner's report and take steps to address the issues where he has identified shortcomings in the response at the time, drawing upon the report's recommendations. It is the long standing policy of successive Governments not to comment on the intelligence agencies and their work.

Mr Alistair Carmichael:[\[65921\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether the Government plans to revise its guidance entitled, Consolidated Guidance to Intelligence Officers and Service Personnel on the Detention and Interviewing of Detainees Overseas, and on the Passing and Receipt of Intelligence Relating to Detainees, published in July 2010.

Sir Alan Duncan:

The Government is currently considering what changes might be made to the Consolidated Guidance in the light of the points raised by the Intelligence Services Commissioner.

■ Israeli Settlements: UN Resolutions**Tommy Sheppard:**[\[65902\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure implementation of UN resolution 2334 (2016).

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 20 January 2017 (PQ 59710).

■ Sri Lanka: Human Rights**Wes Streeting:**[\[66241\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment his Department has made of Sri Lanka's progress in implementing UN Human Rights Council Resolution 30/1; and if he will make a statement.

Alok Sharma:

Sri Lanka's co-sponsorship of United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) resolution 30/01 in October 2015 was a landmark moment. The High Commissioner for Human Rights presented his final progress report at the UNHRC's 34th session on 3 March. The report acknowledged the positive engagement of the Government of Sri Lanka and noted some progress in the human rights situation in Sri Lanka since 2015. However, it also highlighted the slow fulfilment of transitional justice commitments.

In my meeting with Foreign Minister Samaraweera on 28 February, I welcomed Sri Lanka's engagement with the UN and international community and their progress to date in implementing Human Rights Council Resolution 30/01. I raised the importance of further land releases, constitutional reform, the development of new counter-terrorism legislation in line with international human rights standards, and the establishment of credible transitional justice mechanisms – starting with making the Office of Missing Persons operational.

■ Sudan: Prisoners**Alison Thewliss:**[\[65874\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent representations he has made to his Sudanese counterpart on the imprisonment of Reverend Hassan Abduraheem, Petr Jašek and Abdulmonem Abdumawla.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

We welcome the release of Mr Petr Jasek, but remain concerned about the sentencing of Pastor Hassan Abduelraheem Kodi and Mr Abdulmonem Abdumawlla.

Officials from our Embassy in Khartoum regularly raise this case with the Government of Sudan, most recently with the Director for Europe at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 25 February.

More widely, we remain concerned at the continued persecution of Christians in Sudan. We continue to raise the importance of freedom of religion or belief in our human rights dialogue with the Government of Sudan. We urge the government to uphold the commitment to religious freedom in the Interim Constitution of 2005.

■ **Violette Uwamahoro**

Hilary Benn:

[\[66030\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to the Government of Rwanda on the disappearance of Violette Uwamahoro.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

Officials at the British High Commission in Kigali are in touch with local authorities and providing consular assistance to Violette Uwamahoro and her family following her arrest.

HEALTH

■ **Atrial Fibrillation: Strokes**

Derek Twigg:

[\[66086\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 30 January 2017 to Question 61544, what estimate has been made of the average five year (a) health and (b) social care costs of atrial fibrillation-related stroke after onset for patients aged (i) 50 to 59, (ii) 60 to 69, (iii) 70 to 79, (iv) 80 to 89 and (v) over 90.

Derek Twigg:

[\[66087\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 30 January 2017 to Question 61544, what estimate has been made of the average (a) health and (b) social care costs of atrial fibrillation-related stroke to the NHS in each of the first five years after onset.

David Mowat:

The Department has made no such assessment.

■ **Brain: Tumours**

Martyn Day:

[\[65516\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the implications for his Department's policies of recommendations made by the Brain Tumour Charity in its Patient Guide to Brain Tumour Treatment and Services, published in November 2016.

Martyn Day:

[65517]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the implications for his Department's policies of recommendations made by the Brain Tumour Charity in its report, *Finding Myself: The Reality of Brain Tumour Treatment and Care*, published in February 2016.

David Mowat:

The recommendations made by The Brain Tumour Charity in its report and guidance align with the recommendations in the independent Cancer Taskforce's 2015 report, *Achieving World-Class Cancer Outcomes: A strategy for England 2015-2020*¹, which represented the consensus views of the whole cancer community.

Improving early diagnosis of cancer is a priority for this Government. We have committed to delivering the independent Taskforce's recommendations on early diagnosis, including the introduction of a 28 day waiting times standard. NHS England's Accelerate, Co-ordinate, Evaluate programme is testing innovative ways of diagnosing cancer earlier. The second wave of the programme is piloting multi-disciplinary diagnostic centres for patients with vague or non-specific symptoms. The pilots are taking place in London, Greater Manchester, Leeds, Bristol, Oxfordshire and Airedale, Wharfedale and Craven (Yorkshire).

Additionally, patient experience was one of the six strategic priorities identified by the independent Cancer Taskforce, and 'overall patient experience' is one of the four key metrics included in the Clinical Commissioning Group Improvement and Assessment Framework published for the first time in 2016.

A new Department of Health Task and Finish Working Group on Brain Tumour Research is bringing together clinicians, charities, patients, and officials to discuss how, working together with research funding partners, we can address the need to increase the level and impact of research into brain tumours. The Working Group is chaired by Professor Chris Whitty, the Department's Chief Scientific Adviser. The Working Group met for the second time on 30 January, and plans to report to the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Public Health and Innovation by summer 2017.

The Department's National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) supports brain tumour clinical trials via its Biomedical Research Centres, Clinical Research Facilities, and its Clinical Research Network (CRN). The CRN comprises 15 Local CRNs (LCRNs). In a new initiative from April 2015, each of these LCRNs has designated a senior clinician as the Subspecialty Lead for Brain Tumours. These local leaders are liaising with the National Cancer Research Institute's Clinical Studies Groups to help plan the development and delivery of the national portfolio of brain tumour research, identifying new research opportunities and areas of clinical need. In the financial year 2015/16 the NIHR CRN supported recruitment of 1,061 patients to 37 brain cancer studies.

To support people after treatment ends, in December 2016, NHS England announced a fund of over £200 million available to Cancer Alliances over the next two years,

specifically to support those areas of the Cancer Taskforce strategy that it estimated would need significant investment. This includes implementation of the Recovery Package so that patients have personalised care and support from the point they are diagnosed to improve their quality of life.

The report also included recommendations on palliative care. The Government's ambition is for everyone approaching the end of life to receive high quality care that reflects their individual needs, choices and preferences. On 5 July 2016, we set out plans to improve end of life care in England. Our proposals are based on a commitment to high quality, personalised end of life care that we are making to all people at, or approaching the end of life.

Note:

¹http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/sites/default/files/achieving_world-class_cancer_outcomes_-_a_strategy_for_england_2015-2020.pdf

■ Cancer

Jim Fitzpatrick:

[65489]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, with reference to page 5 of the Report of the Independent Cancer Taskforce, *Achieving world-class cancer outcomes: a strategy for England 2015-20*, published in July 2015, when his Department plans to publish its strategic review of the cancer workforce.

David Mowat:

Health Education England (HEE) is continuing to develop its workforce plan to be published for consultation from March 2017. HEE produced an initial workforce baseline review in 2016 and shared it with partners, the National Cancer Advisory Group, and Cancer Research UK and Macmillan, amongst others, as a starting point for conversations around workforce. This review, and an initial skills mix review, will be wrapped up in the cancer workforce strategy.

■ Cannabis

Alex Salmond:

[65539]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether his Department has made an assessment of the implications for its policy on the use of medicinal cannabis of the findings in *The health effects of cannabis and cannabinoids*, published by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine in 2017; and if he will make a statement.

Alex Salmond:

[65540]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what plans he has to devolve policy on the medicinal use of cannabis to the Scottish Parliament.

Nicola Blackwood:

Cannabis is controlled as a Class B drug under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and, in its raw form, currently has no recognised medicinal benefits in the United Kingdom. It is therefore listed as a Schedule 1 drug under the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001.

There is a clear regime in place, administered by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, to enable medicines (including those containing controlled drugs such as cannabis) to be developed, licensed and made available for medicinal use to patients in the UK. It is important that all medicines containing controlled drugs are thoroughly trialled to ensure they meet rigorous standards so that doctors and patients are sure of their efficacy and safety. This is important to ensure fulfilment of all established and necessary regulations for approving medicines in the UK.

There are no plans to devolve policy on the medicinal use of cannabis to the Scottish Parliament.

Dementia**Mr Jim Cunningham:**[\[66177\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of treatment provision for people diagnosed with early onset dementia.

David Mowat:

No such assessment has been made.

Once a diagnosis of dementia has been made, each person and their carer should be offered a care plan and post-diagnostic support that is appropriate to their needs.

Clinical commissioning groups and local authorities have a responsibility to commission services that best meet the needs of their populations, including those diagnosed with early-onset dementia.

The Dementia Atlas is an interactive online resource which allows people to review how well their area is performing against a range of measures across the Dementia Well Pathway from diagnosis through to end of life care.

The Atlas is available at:

<https://shapeatlas.net/dementia>

Depressive Illnesses**Jessica Morden:**[\[65744\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of training therapists involved in the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies programme to deliver mindfulness-based cognitive therapy for recurrent depression.

Nicola Blackwood:

Mindfulness-based cognitive behavioural therapy is a specific National Institute for Health and Care Excellence-approved treatment available through Improving Access

to Psychological Therapies services. Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy is not currently included in core training for Improving Access to Psychological Therapies practitioners as a relapse prevention treatment, but is under consideration by NHS England.

■ **Drugs: Misuse**

Luciana Berger:

[66248]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the reasons for the increase in drug-related deaths in 2015.

Nicola Blackwood:

Public Health England (PHE) led an inquiry last year into the rises in drug-related deaths. The report of the expert working group convened by PHE concluded that the reasons behind the increase in drug-related deaths are multiple and complex.

The longer-term upward trend in drug-related deaths is largely caused by an ageing cohort of heroin users, many of whom started to use heroin in the 1980s and 90s, who are now experiencing cumulative physical and mental health conditions that make them more susceptible to overdose.

Understanding and preventing drug-related deaths: The report of a national expert working group to investigate drug-related deaths in England is available to view here:

<http://www.nta.nhs.uk/uploads/phe-understanding-preventing-drds.pdf>

■ **Eating Disorders: Children and Young People**

Norman Lamb:

[66234]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 8 February 2017 to Question 63015, on eating disorders: children and young people, whether the referral to treatment performance data will be published for each clinical commissioning group.

Nicola Blackwood:

From May 2017, NHS England will be publishing the national and regional data on progress towards meeting the eating disorder standard. NHS England is working on the provider and clinical commissioning group level data to understand how frequently to display the data at this level given the disclosure risks posed by small numbers.

■ **General Practitioners: Fees and Charges**

Yasmin Qureshi:

[65514]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what discussions he has had with GPs on charging patients for weekend or evening appointments.

David Mowat:

National Health Service general practitioner (GP) appointments are free. The Department has no plans to charge for evening and weekend appointments and there have been no discussions with GPs on doing so.

■ General Practitioners: Newham

Stephen Timms: [\[66222\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what plans he has to increase the recruitment of GPs in the London Borough of Newham.

David Mowat:

Clinical commissioning groups across east London are working together on a transformation plan to actively recruit more general practitioners (GPs), to retain existing staff and to make the best use of the wider primary care workforce available. The Newham GP Federation has recently established a pilot programme to help retain as many GPs as possible who are considering leaving the profession or reducing their time providing primary care. GPs will be encouraged to work in areas of special interest, cover for sickness, provide training support and adopt a new approach to working collectively across an area.

The Government has committed to an extra 5,000 doctors in general practice by 2020, as part of a wider increase to the total workforce in general practice of 10,000.

■ Health Professions: Training

Alison Thewliss: [\[66110\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 28 February 2017 to Question 65346, on health professions: training, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on the roll out of that training.

Mr Philip Dunne:

No meetings have been held between the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions and Secretary of State for Health on this issue.

Discussions relating to this policy are ongoing at official level.

■ Health Services: Reciprocal Arrangements

Tommy Sheppard: [\[65901\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of establishing a scheme for UK citizens who cannot get private health insurance in the event that UK citizens cease to have access to a European Health Insurance Card after the UK leaves the EU.

David Mowat:

While the people of the United Kingdom have voted to leave the European Union, until exit negotiations are concluded, the UK remains a full member of the European Union and all the rights and obligations of EU membership remain in force, including the rights associated with medical treatment abroad.

Nothing has yet been decided on the future of British citizen medical treatment abroad. Government officials are considering the positions and options available to us with the aim of achieving the best outcome for British citizens in the UK and abroad.

■ Health Services: Research

Lucy Powell: [65898]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what proportion of healthcare research funding was allocated to each region in the most recent year for which figures are available.

Nicola Blackwood:

The Department does not hold this information.

■ HIV Infection

Tulip Siddiq: [65896]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will publish a list of the savings targets for HIV treatment NHS England has asked each regional team to make in (a) 2017-18 and (b) 2018-19; and if he will make a statement.

Nicola Blackwood:

NHS England has a range of initiatives to support improved efficiency in the National Health Service, including an initiative to ensure that HIV services are prescribing the lowest cost, clinically appropriate anti-retroviral drug options available. This initiative has been developed and led by HIV clinical experts and patient representatives. Based on advice about clinically appropriate treatment options, NHS England has calculated that this initiative is likely to deliver overall a 2.5% efficiency on the cost of antiretroviral drugs during 2016/17 and 2017/18. NHS England will monitor whether clinical practice matches these assumptions. The assumption for 2017/18 is that this initiative will deliver savings of £24 million. Assumptions for 2018/19 are not yet available. Regional breakdowns have not been published.

■ Hospitals: Cameras

Sir Greg Knight: [65742]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will develop guidelines to govern the admission of television cameras to hospital wards; whether rules are in place to prevent patients being interviewed or filmed against their will and when their judgment may be impaired through either drugs or illness; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The guidance for National Health Service organisations on filming on their premises is available at:

http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130107105354/http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/@dh/@en/documents/digitalasset/dh_4124371.pdf

Interest in the workings of the National Health Service reflects its importance to the public, but the interests of the patient remain paramount. The guidance therefore sets out the responsibilities of NHS organisations and gives advice for patients, relatives, carers and NHS staff. Consent for filming must be explicitly given by people for filming to take place. If consent cannot be given, for instance because of the patient's condition, the guidance includes procedures to protect these patients' well-being and right to privacy.

■ Knee Replacements

Tom Blenkinsop: [\[66263\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many patients have waited longer than (a) two weeks, (b) five weeks, (c) 10 weeks and (d) 15 weeks between an assessment for knee replacement surgery and for that surgery taking place.

Tom Blenkinsop: [\[66264\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many patients have had to wait longer than (a) two weeks, (b) five weeks, (c) 10 weeks and (d) 15 weeks between being assessed for hip replacement surgery and that surgery taking place.

Mr Philip Dunne:

Information is collected representing the time from decision to admit to treatment for knee and hip replacement surgery. The latest available data is for 2015-16 and is shown in the following table.

A count of finished admission episodes (FAEs) ¹ with an eligible time waited from decision to admit to treatment for main ² or secondary ³ procedure for hip and knee replacements (and revisions) with waiting times (in days) of two and five weeks (14 - 35 days), between five and 10 weeks (36 - 70 days), between 10 and 15 weeks (71 - 105 days) and longer than 15 weeks (106 days and over) in England for 2015-16

TIME WAITED (DAYS)	HIP OPERATIONS (FAEs)	KNEE OPERATIONS (FAEs)
2-5 weeks (14-35 days)	8,826	9,341
5-10 weeks (36-70 days)	17,893	19,672
10-15 weeks (71-105 days)	16,220	18,992
15 weeks and over (106 days and over)	20,941	27,169

Source : Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), NHS Digital, Activity in English National Health Service Hospitals and English NHS commissioned activity in the independent sector

Notes

1. Total admissions with eligible time waited information

The total number of eligible admissions includes waiting list, booked admissions and planned (elective) admissions. A waiting list admission is one in which a patient has been admitted electively into hospital from a waiting list, having been given no date of admission at the time a decision to admit was made. Booked admissions are those in which the patient was admitted electively having been given a date at the time it was decided to admit. Planned admissions are usually part of a planned sequence of clinical care determined mainly on clinical criteria, which, for example, could require a series of events, perhaps taking place every three months, six months or annually. A FAE is the first period of admitted patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider. FAEs are counted against the year or month in which the admission episode finishes. Admissions do not represent the number of patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the period.

1. Main procedure

The first recorded procedure or intervention in each episode, usually the most resource intensive procedure or intervention performed during the episode. It is appropriate to use main procedure when looking at admission details, (eg time waited), but a more complete count of episodes with a particular procedure is obtained by looking at the main and the secondary procedures.

1. Secondary procedure

As well as the main procedure, there are up to 23 (11 from 2002-03 to 2006-07 and three prior to 2002-03) secondary procedure fields in HES that show secondary procedures performed on the patient during the episode of care.

■ **Medicine: Chelmsford**

Sir Simon Burns:

[\[65918\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether he has received an application from Anglia Ruskin University in Chelmsford to establish a new medical school.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The Department has not received a formal application from Anglia Ruskin University to establish a new medical school. It is the responsibility of the General Medical Council (GMC) to maintain the list of United Kingdom bodies entitled to award a primary medical qualification and therefore the GMC is responsible for the application process to determine whether new medical schools meet the required standards. Anglia Ruskin University has expressed interest in establishing a new medical school.

■ **Mental Health Services: Hertfordshire**

Mr Charles Walker:

[\[65917\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how much of the recently announced additional funding for mental health and dementia services will be allocated to Hertfordshire; and what criteria will determine where and how that funding is spent.

Nicola Blackwood:

The Mental Health Five Year Forward View dashboard shows the expenditure for 2015/16, and planned expenditure for 2016/17, on mental health services by clinical commissioning groups (CCGs), including those for Hertfordshire. The dashboard is attached.

The Mental Health Investment Standard, under which all National Health Service CCGs are required to increase baseline spend on mental health, is planned to be met across England as a whole in 2017/18 and 2018/19.

There have been no recent funding announcements for dementia services.

Attachments:

1. PQ65917 [PQ65917 attached document.xlsx]

■ **Mental Health Services: Prisons****Luciana Berger:**[\[66024\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 14 November 2016 to Question 52459, whether the collection of data on the transfer of prisoners to hospital under the Mental Health Act 1983 has changed since that Answer.

Nicola Blackwood:

The collection of data has not changed since the response to Question 52459.

■ **NHS: Finance****John Healey:**[\[66178\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many Individual Funding Requests (IFRs) have been considered by (a) the IFR Screening Group and (b) the IFR Panel in each of the last five years; how many of those IFRs have been approved; and what the total cost of those procedures was.

David Mowat:

The following table sets out the number of Individual Funding Requests (IFRs) considered and approved in the last five years.

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17*	TOTAL
Decisions made at IFR Screening Group	1,493	953	633	345	3,424
Decisions made at IFR Panel	428	402	300	80	1,210

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17*	TOTAL
Approved IFRs	256	249	179	29	713

*based on the period from April to November 2016

It should be noted that all IFRs considered at the IFR panel will have previously been considered at a screening panel.

The cost of procedures approved through the IFR process is not routinely collected nationally.

■ NHS: Migrant Workers

Tulip Siddiq: [\[66034\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many non-UK EU nationals are employed in the NHS; and what proportion of those work in (a) oncology, (b) neurological and (c) maternity services.

Mr Philip Dunne:

NHS Digital publishes data on the nationality of staff working in the National Health Service in England. Nationality is self-reported within the NHS human resources and payroll system, the electronic staff record. As at 30 November 2016, 61,173 identify themselves as non-United Kingdom European Union nationals employed in NHS Hospital and Community Health Services; of this group 1.4% (838) work in oncology, 1.5% (919) in neurological and 3.4% (2,063) in maternity services.

The 30 November data is the most recent data available.

Oncology staff include staff with a specialty of Clinical Oncology or Medical Oncology or a secondary area of work of Clinical Oncology or Medical Oncology.

Neurology staff include staff with a specialty of Clinical neurophysiology, Diagnostic Neuropathology, Neurology, Neuropathology, Neurosurgery or Paediatric neurology or a secondary area of work of Clinical Neurophysiology, Neurology, Neurosensory Sciences or Neurosurgery.

Maternity staff include staff defined by their occupation code, as working in maternity services or a secondary area of work of Maternity.

■ NHS: Procurement

Tom Blenkinsop: [\[66091\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how much of the NHS budget was spent on commissioning private providers in each of the last five years.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The requested information is supplied in the following table:

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
	£ million	£ million	£ million	£ million	£ million
Total commissioner spend on independent sector	5,320	5,669	6,467	8,067	8,722
Total National Health Service revenue expenditure	100,266	102,570	106,495	110,554	114,730
Spend on independent sector as a percentage of total NHS revenue spend	5.3%	5.5%	6.1%	7.3%	7.6%

■ NHS: West Midlands

Liam Byrne:

[\[66221\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many NHS apprenticeships have been provided in the West Midlands in each (a) local authority and (b) NHS Trust area in (i) the last year for which figures are available, (ii) 2015 and (iii) 2010; and how many nursing associates have been appointed in the West Midlands in the same areas and in the same years.

Mr Philip Dunne:

Data on the number of Apprenticeships provided by individual Trusts and local authorities across the West Midlands is not collected centrally.

From April 2017, a new apprenticeship levy and public sector apprentice target will come into force. As part of the public sector target, Trusts and other public sector organisations will be required to report annually their number of apprentice starts.

The Nursing Associate role is a new role, with the first 1,000 trainees commencing their training in January 2017; as such data for previous years is not available.

As at January 2017, 95 Nursing Associates have commenced training at Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust.

Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust is an established Nursing Associate Test Pilot Partnership spanning a wide area of Employment Partners across the West Midlands. The test sites are as follows:

- Burton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust;
- Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust;
- Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust;
- South Staffordshire and Shropshire Healthcare NHS Foundation;
- Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Partnership NHS Trust;
- The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust;
- The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust;
- Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group; and
- Wolverhampton Clinical Commissioning Group.

Further trainees across other Partnerships in the West Midlands below will be recruited for an April 2017 start.

- Birmingham and Solihull Partnership (Heart of England);
- Black Country and Partners (Walsall);
- The Herefordshire and Worcestershire Partnership (Worcestershire);
- Coventry and Warwickshire Nursing Associate Pilot (South Warwickshire); and
- Transforming Care Together (Birmingham).

■ Orthopaedics

Tom Blenkinsop:

[\[66233\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he has taken to reduce waiting times for orthopaedic operations in the last 12 months; and whether waiting times for such operations have reduced in the last 12 months.

Mr Philip Dunne:

NHS England publishes monthly data on referral to treatment waiting times to report performance against the right that patients have to start consultant-led treatment within a maximum of 18 weeks from referral for non-urgent conditions. These data show that average median waiting times for patients on a waiting list to start trauma and orthopaedic treatment in admitted patient or outpatient settings were 7.4 weeks at the end of December 2015 and 8.1 weeks at the end of December 2016.

Maintaining waiting time performance is a key objective in the Government's Mandate to NHS England for 2016-17. Both NHS England and NHS Improvement are providing support and challenge to National Health Service commissioners and providers to reduce waiting times for hospital treatment.

■ Paramedical Staff: Migrant Workers

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[66047\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many people from other EU countries are employed as paramedics in the NHS.

Mr Philip Dunne:

NHS Digital publishes data on the nationality of staff working in the National Health Service in England. Nationality is self-reported within the NHS human resources and payroll system, the electronic staff record. As at 30 November 2016, 217 Qualified Paramedics employed in NHS Hospital and Community Health Services identify themselves as non-United Kingdom European Union nationals.

The November data is the most recent data available.

■ Personal Injury: Compensation

Justin Madders:

[\[66115\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Justice on changes to the personal injury formula.

Justin Madders:

[\[66116\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether he was consulted prior to the announced changes to the personal injury formula.

Justin Madders:

[\[66118\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on the NHS of changes to the personal injury formula.

Mr Philip Dunne:

Under the Damages Act 1996, the Lord Chancellor has the power to set the discount rate. Before deciding what the rate will be, the Lord Chancellor must consult the Treasury and the Government Actuary. Both were properly consulted. Legally, the Lord Chancellor cannot consider the financial implications of a rate change on defendants, whether public or private sector, when setting the rate.

The Secretary of State for Justice spoke to the Secretary of State for Health before making her decision.

Medical indemnity in secondary care is provided by the NHS Litigation Authority (NHS LA). General practitioners (GPs) are responsible for securing their own indemnity cover, primarily through mutual organisations called Medical Defence Organisations .

The Government will adjust the NHS LA's budget to meet the additional costs associated with the change in the discount rate, and ensure that appropriate funding is available to meet additional costs to GPs.

■ Physician Associates

Anne Marie Morris: [\[66107\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate he has made of the number of additional physician associates required to support the delivery of seven-day working in the NHS.

Anne Marie Morris: [\[66108\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to support the education and professional development of physician associates.

Anne Marie Morris: [\[66109\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, when the consultation on the role of physician associates announced in his keynote speech to the NHS Providers conference on 30 November 2016 will be launched.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The Government has committed to having 1,000 Physicians Associates (PAs) available to work in general practice by 2020, contributing to a more flexible workforce skill mix and supporting general practitioners.

Health Education England is supporting professional development for the role by working with stakeholders to develop a career framework and professional identity for the profession.

At present qualified PAs are not subject to statutory regulation but the Faculty of Physician Associates, based at the Royal College of Physicians, administers a PA Managed Voluntary Register that has 319 registrants as at March 2017.

The Department is currently considering options for a consultation on the regulation of Physician Associates, which will be published in due course.

■ Private Patients

Mr Christopher Chope: [\[66021\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 27 February 2017 to Question 65076, on private patients, for what reason the information given on co-payments at the web address identified and dated April 2013 is marked interim, and when he expects a final version of that website to be available.

Mr Philip Dunne:

When it was established in 2013, NHS England published a set of so-called 'generic commissioning policies' including the policy on "Defining the boundaries between the NHS and private healthcare". These policies were intended to guide NHS England's decision-making for its directly commissioned services. The policies were published on an interim basis as it was recognised that they would benefit from further engagement and testing with stakeholders, including patients and the public.

In October 2016 NHS England launched a public consultation on the set of policies, to test whether they were sufficiently clear and effective in supporting decision-making. The consultation followed a period of review and testing with stakeholders. As well as testing the detail of some of the policies, the consultation was intended to test whether the policies would continue to be appropriate in light of other Department of Health or NHS England policy developments, or whether they risked duplication.

NHS England's response to the consultation is planned for publication shortly. The response will set out the planned changes to the set policies based on feedback received during the consultation.

■ **Psychiatry: EU Nationals**

Luciana Berger:

[\[66262\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate he has made of the number of nationals of other EU countries working in the NHS as psychotherapists; and what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the UK leaving the EU on (a) the number of such nationals and (b) NHS productivity.

Mr Philip Dunne:

NHS Digital publishes data on the nationality of staff working in the National Health Service in England. Nationality is self-reported within the NHS human resources and payroll system, the electronic staff record.

Psychotherapists include a range of staff groups including Medical Psychotherapy and Consultant Therapists / Scientists, Other Scientific staff and Therapeutic and Technical Staff.

As of 30 November 2016, 383 psychotherapists employed within NHS trusts and clinical commissioning groups declared their nationality as European Union nationals, excluding the United Kingdom. This is out of a total headcount of 5,265. The November data is the most recent data available.

The potential effect on the number of EU nationals and NHS productivity of leaving the EU will be dependent on the outcome of negotiations. The Prime Minister has been clear that she wants to protect the status of EU nationals already living here. It is the Government's aim to get the best settlement for the UK in all areas including the healthcare system.

■ **Sugar: Obesity**

Sir Hugo Swire:

[\[65916\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the effects of high-cost and low-volume sugary drinks on levels of obesity.

Nicola Blackwood:

No assessment has been made specifically of the link between high-cost, low-volume sugary drinks and levels of obesity. However, in July 2015 the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) published its report on Carbohydrates and Health

which considers the relationship between the intake of sugars-sweetened drinks and weight gain.

Evidence from randomised controlled trials conducted in children and adolescents indicate that consumption of sugars-sweetened drinks, compared with non-calorically sweetened drinks, results in greater weight gain and increases in body mass index. This finding suggests that there is inadequate reduction in energy from other foods or drinks to compensate for energy delivered as sugars.

SACN recommended that consumption of sugars-sweetened beverages should be minimised in children and adults.

The SACN report on Carbohydrates and Health is available to view here:

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

HOME OFFICE

■ Asylum: Children

Mr Charles Walker:

[66137]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many refugees have been resettled in the UK in each of the last five years; what countries those refugees arrived from; what those refugees' countries of origin were; how many of those refugees were assessed as being under the age of 19; and if she will make a statement.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The Home Office publishes data on the number resettled refugees, asylum applications and age dispute cases in the quarterly Immigration Statistics. The latest figures are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-october-to-december-2016/list-of-tables#asylum>

■ Counter-terrorism

Graham Evans:

[909068]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure that police and security services have the powers necessary to apprehend people planning terrorist attacks in the UK.

Mr Ben Wallace:

The UK has one of the world's most effective legal regimes for tackling terrorism. The Investigatory Powers Act, which the Government passed last year, ensures that law enforcement and the security and intelligence agencies have the powers they need in a digital age to disrupt terrorist attacks, subject to strict safeguards and world-leading oversight. And the Criminal Finances Bill will add to the ability of UK law enforcement to identify, investigate and disrupt terrorist finance activity.

■ Fire and Rescue Services: Floods

Karl Turner:

[909070]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure that fire and rescue services' flood response is adequately funded.

Brandon Lewis:

Fire and Rescue Services undertake a vital and lifesaving role and public safety is our top priority.

There is no question that the Fire and Rescue Service has the resources it needs to do their important work; single purpose FRAs will see a reduction in their core spending power of only 0.8% over the entire current spending review period to 2019/20 in cash terms.

■ Health Services: Foreign Nationals

Gareth Johnson:

[65486]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many non-EU nationals who have left the UK with NHS debts of more than £500 outstanding for two months have been refused permission to re-enter the UK.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

This information is not held centrally. The Migration Statistics Quarterly Report (MSQR), which provides a quarterly summary of long-term international migration statistics, includes data relating to general refusals at the UK border. However, this data does not capture details relating to NHS debtor refusals specifically.

■ Home Office: Senior Civil Servants

Jon Trickett:

[65560]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of senior civil servants of her Department are (a) men, (b) women, (c) disabled, (d) from working-class backgrounds and (e) from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds.

Sarah Newton:

The Department's latest published information on the diversity of its senior civil servants can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/workforce-diversity-and-attendance-management-information-june-2008-to-june-2013>

■ Housing: Fire Prevention

Yasmin Qureshi:

[65519]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of providing people over 65 with advice on the prevention of fires in domestic homes.

Brandon Lewis:

It is for individual fire and rescue services to determine how best they can use their resources to mitigate the risks associated with fire in their communities. Over 65's are disproportionately represented in fire fatality statistics; they consistently make up about 50% of those who die in dwelling fires, yet make up less than 18% of the population.

Of the 581,000 visits by fire and rescue services to individuals in their own homes carried out in 2015/16, nearly half (268,000) were made to those aged 65 and over.

These visits are designed to help householders to assess the risk of fire and enable fire and rescue services to provide them with tailored fire prevention advice and, in some cases, with products designed to minimise the risks should a fire break out.

These could include smoke alarms, flame retardant bedding, electric deep fat fryers and, in some cases, personal fire suppression systems.

■ Immigration: EEA Nationals**Paul Blomfield:**[\[65974\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to alter the residency rights or ability to obtain residence rights of EEA nationals resident in the UK (a) before the UK leaves the EU or (b) on the date the UK leaves the EU.

Paul Blomfield:[\[66048\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union on (a) changes to the rights of EU citizens resident in the UK before the UK's departure from the EU and (b) the effect of such changes on (i) negotiations with the EU and (ii) the UK's future relationship with the EU.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

At present, the UK remains in the EU.

The Prime Minister has been clear that she wants to secure the status of those EU nationals already living in the UK as early possible once formal negotiations begin.

As part of this process, the Home Secretary will continue to work closely with colleagues across Whitehall and the Government will engage with relevant stakeholders.

■ Immigration: EU Nationals**Paul Blomfield:**[\[65973\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to involve the Migration Advisory Committee in decisions about the rights of entry, residence and right to work of EU citizens.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

We are considering the options for our future immigration system very carefully. As part of that it is important that we understand the impacts of different options on different sectors of the economy and the labour market.

We will ensure businesses and communities have the opportunity to contribute their views and we intend to commission advice from the Migration Advisory Committee.

Steve McCabe:[\[66114\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reasons the entitlement to free NHS care is not considered as fulfilling the comprehensive sickness insurance requirement for EU nationals applying for permanent residency.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The Free Movement Directive (Directive 2004/38/EC) states that EU citizens who are exercising Treaty rights as a self sufficient person or student must not become a burden on the social assistance system of the host Member State and must hold comprehensive sickness insurance. The Home Office considers that, allowing such EU citizens to rely on the National Health Service does not satisfy the comprehensive sickness insurance (CSI) requirement.

The latest Court of Appeal judgment on this question, *Ahmad*, supports the Home Office's position and found that reliance on the NHS by an EU national could not, as a matter of law, meet the comprehensive sickness requirement.

■ Visas**Corri Wilson:**[\[909067\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her policy is on reviewing the process for visit visa applications.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The UK provides an excellent visa service, with application points in over 300 countries around the world.

The Home Office is continuously working to refine and improve the products and services on offer to customers, and keeps the efficiency and effectiveness of the visa application process under regular review.

Recent improvements include the launch of a new online application route for visitors, and the expansion of priority visa services.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION**■ Palace of Westminster: Gun Sports**

Patrick Grady: [65833]

To ask the right hon. Member for Carshalton and Wallington, representing the House of Commons Commission, further to the published FOI House of Lords disclosure log entitled Parliamentary rifle range [FOI 988], what verification steps were taken to ensure firearms were held in locked cabinets in compliance with the Firearms Act 1968.

Tom Brake:

Routine external inspections were carried out by the Police, consistent with the practices applied to other private rifle clubs and ranges. *Ad hoc* internal checks were carried out by Black Rod and Black Rod staff.

Patrick Grady: [65838]

To ask the right hon. Member for Carshalton and Wallington, representing the House of Commons Commission, whether representations were made by law enforcement agencies on the security of firearms held in the parliamentary rifle range at any time during the operation of that facility.

Tom Brake:

The Commission is not aware of any representations having been made.

Patrick Grady: [65839]

To ask the right hon. Member for Carshalton and Wallington, representing the House of Commons Commission, between what dates a rifle club was allowed to use space on the parliamentary estate; and what discussions members and officials of the House of Commons and House of Lords had on safety at the parliamentary rifle range.

Tom Brake:

The range was opened in 1916 and the decision to close it was taken by the House of Lords Administration and Works Committee on 20 January 2015. Assurances were routinely notified to the House Authorities regarding the safety and security arrangements as inspected by the Police.

Patrick Grady: [65840]

To ask the right hon. Member for Carshalton and Wallington, representing the House of Commons Commission, on what date the parliamentary rifle range closed, and what the reasons were for that closure.

Tom Brake:

The range and premises were vacated by the Rifle Club by 2 April 2015. The House of Lords Administration and Works Committee agreed the closure of the rifle range to provide a cost-effective location for fire safety equipment. A minute setting out the reasons for the decision was made publicly available:

<http://www.parliament.uk/documents/lords-committees/admin-and-works/Minutes20Jan2015.pdf>.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**■ Cape Verde: Overseas Aid****Helen Goodman:**[\[65784\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether the Government sponsors any aid programmes in Cape Verde that support eco-development.

James Wharton:

DFID provides support to ecological development in Cape Verde through the Adaptation for Smallholder Agricultural Programme. DFID's core contributions to multilateral institutions also support Cape Verde.

■ Department for International Development: Brexit**Maria Eagle:**[\[65645\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what (a) EU agencies and other organisations within her Department's remit the Government plans to withdraw from when the UK leaves the EU, (b) staff time was spent on engagement with those bodies and (c) financial resources were spent on engagement with those bodies in 2015-16.

Rory Stewart:

As set out in the recent White Paper (The United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union), the Government will discuss with the EU and Member States our future status and arrangements with regard to EU agencies.

Paul Blomfield:[\[66005\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 27 February 2017 to Question 64547, what discussions her Department had with the Department for Exiting the European Union on the drafting of the White Paper entitled The United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union, Cm 9417, published in February 2017.

Rory Stewart:

DFID and other Departments are working closely with the Department for Exiting the European Union to build a global UK with a strong new partnership with the EU after our exit.

■ Developing Countries: Abortion**Kate Osamor:**[\[65734\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, if her Department will contribute to the new, global fund to help women access abortion services launched by the Netherlands on 25 January 2017.

Priti Patel:

The UK is the second largest bilateral donor in the world for family planning, after the US. Our funding is allocated on the basis of whatever mechanism will deliver the best value and outcomes for women around the world. We will continue to be a global

leader on family planning, women's rights and sexual and reproductive health, including where appropriate access to safe abortion.

■ HIV Infection

Hilary Benn:

[\[66029\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what plans she has to update her Department's HIV/AIDS strategy.

James Wharton:

The 2013 review of the 2011 UK HIV Position Paper 'Towards Zero Infections' identified the integration of HIV with wider development needs.

Our programmes pursue this approach through strengthening health systems, supporting sexual reproductive health and rights, and tackling the broader drivers of the HIV epidemic such as stigma, discrimination and gender inequality. DFID have no immediate plans for developing a stand-alone strategy.

■ Humanitarian Aid

Stephen Doughty:

[\[65899\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what proportion of her Department's humanitarian aid budget in 2016 was allocated for a period of two or more years.

Rory Stewart:

Due to the nature of Humanitarian Responses, DFID cannot always allocate humanitarian budgets in advance. However, in 2016 over 80 per cent of DFID's spend on humanitarian aid was to projects with an operational period of two or more years.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Agriculture

Barry Gardiner:

[\[65442\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether his plans for World Trade Organisation schedule liberalisation include the agriculture and food production industry; and what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on commissioning an assessment of the effects of that liberalisation on UK farmers.

Greg Hands:

As my Rt hon Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade made clear in his Written Ministerial Statement on 5 December 2016, HCWS316, we will seek to replicate our commitments at the World Trade Organisation as we leave the EU. This Department is working closely with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural

Affairs and the devolved administrations to ensure that UK farmers face a smooth transition as we leave the EU.

■ **Agriculture: Subsidies**

Barry Gardiner:

[\[65441\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether his plans for World Trade Organisation schedule liberalisation include lower levels of subsidies for the UK's agricultural sector after 2020.

Greg Hands:

As my Rt hon Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade made clear in his Written Ministerial Statement on 5 December 2016, HCWS316, we will seek to replicate our commitments at the World Trade Organisation as we leave the EU.

■ **Business: Females**

Diana Johnson:

[\[65475\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many and what proportion of the recipients of support from UK Export Finance were companies with at least one woman in a leadership position in each fiscal year since 2009-10.

Greg Hands:

UK Export Finance (UKEF) is open to applications for its support from all UK companies looking to export and is raising awareness of its offer among businesses in all sectors and in all regions of the UK. UKEF does not currently collect information on the gender of staff in leadership positions for the companies that it supports.

Where such information is not commercially sensitive, the companies supported by UKEF since 2009-2010 are listed in its Annual Report and Accounts which are presented to Parliament.

■ **Department for International Trade: Senior Civil Servants**

Jon Trickett:

[\[65562\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what proportion of senior civil servants of his Department are (a) men, (b) women, (c) disabled, (d) from working-class backgrounds and (e) from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds.

Greg Hands:

The proportion of senior civil servants working in the Department for International Trade and the UK Export Finance in the categories requested is shown in the table below.

CATEGORY	PROPORTION*
Men	63.5%
Women	36.5%

CATEGORY	PROPORTION*
Disabled	4.7%
from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds	3.7%

* as at 12 January 2017

This data is based on the self-declared information of the senior civil servants, and therefore may not be truly representative.

Data on the social background of our senior civil servants is not held centrally. To capture and analyse this would incur disproportionate costs.

■ Developing Countries: Trade Agreements

Chris Leslie: [\[66106\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether he plans to replicate existing EU non-reciprocal preferential trade agreements with developing countries after the UK leaves the EU; and if he will make a statement.

Greg Hands:

The Government is currently reviewing its trade policy as the UK prepares to leave the EU.

The UK remains committed to ensuring developing countries can reduce poverty through trading opportunities. We recognise the need for a smooth transition which minimises disruption to our trading relationships, including with developing countries.

■ Motor Vehicles: Manufacturing Industries

Barry Gardiner: [\[65443\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the draft World Trade Organisation schedules on the cost-efficiency of UK automotive industry exporters should those schedules apply to UK trade with the EU after the UK leaves the EU.

Barry Gardiner: [\[65444\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the draft World Trade Organisation schedules on the cost-efficiency of UK exporters of component parts for the automotive sector should those schedules apply to UK trade with the EU after the UK leaves the EU.

Greg Hands:

The Prime Minister set out a clear and comprehensive plan for our future relationship with Europe including, as a priority, the pursuit of a bold and ambitious Free Trade Agreement.

We are closely engaged with stakeholders in the automotive and other sectors to understand their interests in the UK's future trading arrangements with the EU and to ensure the best possible outcome for UK businesses and consumers.

■ South Africa: Trade Promotion

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[66166\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when he plans to fill the role of trade envoy to South Africa.

Greg Hands:

We have a strong trade and investment relationship with South Africa and wide-ranging activities on the broader prosperity and inclusive growth agenda. South Africa is the UK's third biggest Commonwealth trading partner; the UK's largest export market in Africa; and the largest recipient of UK investment in Africa, some £13.75 billion in 2015, accounting for 45% of South Africa's FDI.

An announcement on vacant Trade Envoy posts will be made in due course.

■ Trade Agreements: Agriculture

Tommy Sheppard:

[\[65900\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what plans he has to ensure that future UK trade deals take account of the Government's policy on increasing equity and support for farmers and other workers in developing countries.

Greg Hands:

The Department for International Trade and the Department for International Development (DFID) are working together to ensure development and global prosperity are at the heart of UK trade and investment policy.

DFID's first Economic Development Strategy, launched in January 2017, sets out how the Government will support trade, investment and job creation in manufacturing, infrastructure and commercial agriculture to provide strong foundations for inclusive growth in the developing world.

We are committed to helping countries in the developing world leave aid dependency behind and become our trading partners of the future.

JUSTICE

■ Administration of Justice: Mental Health

Andrew Bingham:

[\[64631\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessments she has made of the effectiveness of the training provided to (a) court staff and (b) members of the judiciary on identifying and supporting court users with a mental health condition.

Andrew Bingham:

[64632]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what training is provided to (a) court staff and (b) members of the judiciary on identifying and supporting court users with a mental health condition.

Sir Oliver Heald:

All Ministry of Justice employees are required to complete a mandatory Equality and Diversity training module which makes specific reference to mental health conditions and supporting vulnerable customers. In addition, Mental Health Awareness courses have also been delivered to employees across the country and frontline court training materials also link into the 'Every Witness Matters' handbook to ensure that employees are aware of the potential impact that a mental health condition may have on a court user. Colleagues working in National Business Centres have been provided with specific training on 'Dealing with Traumatic Calls'.

Under the Constitutional Reform Act 2005, responsibility for the training of the judiciary rests with the Lord Chief Justice as Head of the Judiciary. Training on mental health issues is limited to awareness in order to help judges ensure that all court users are treated equally and fairly. Judges are able to access advice and guidance on this through the Equal Treatment Bench Book which is publicly available at: <https://www.judiciary.gov.uk/publications/equal-treatment-bench-book/>

Data relating specifically to the effectiveness of the training is not held but the department is committed to the continued development of initiatives to ensure employees can support customers who may be suffering from a mental health condition.

■ Child Rearing

Philip Davies:

[65950]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many cases of parental alienation have been recorded in the family courts in each of the three years.

Sir Oliver Heald:

Parental alienation is not recorded as a specific issue by family courts. Allegations of parental alienation may arise at any point during the proceedings about a child's upbringing. Where such allegations are made, the court will consider how to address these.

■ Coroners: Greater London

Seema Malhotra:

[65576]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the reasons are for recent trends in the level of funding to West London Coroners District; and if she will make a statement.

Dr Phillip Lee:

Coroner services are funded by local authorities, not the Ministry of Justice. The local authorities which fund the West London coroner service are the London Boroughs of

Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham (the lead authority), Hillingdon, Hounslow, Kingston upon Thames and Richmond upon Thames. They are independent of central government and are responsible for managing their budgets in line with local priorities.

■ Crime: Victims

Tracy Brabin: [\[64533\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps her Department takes to ensure that victims of crime are made aware of the existence of the Victims' Code.

Tracy Brabin: [\[64646\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how agencies in the criminal justice system are held accountable for any failures to comply with the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime.

Dr Phillip Lee:

The Victims' Code is freely available online, but we know more must be done to support and protect victims. We have made positive steps to improve the experience of victims, by reducing unnecessary stress and emotional turmoil of attending court. We have also reconvened the Victims' Panel, so we can learn from the experiences of victims of crime.

Under the Victims' Code those victims who feel that their rights have not been met can complain directly to the criminal justice agency concerned, and if they remain dissatisfied can take their complaint to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman. We are currently considering how compliance with the Victims' Code might be improved and monitored, and exploring how those delivering services can be better held to account. Plans to engage with and obtain the views of victims and victims' groups and criminal justice agencies are being developed. We will set out our strategy for victims within 12 months, and will bring forward any appropriate primary legislation.

■ Human Rights

Matthew Pennycook: [\[65541\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, on what dates she plans to submit the UK National Report for the UK's Universal Periodic Review third cycle.

Sir Oliver Heald:

The UK submitted its National Report to the UN on 10 February. The report will be published in due course.

■ Immigration: Appeals

Keith Vaz: [\[65584\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what number of cases awaited a hearing at the immigration (a) First-tier and (b) Upper Tribunal at 1 February 2017.

Sir Oliver Heald:

The number of registered appeals awaiting a hearing as at 30 September 2016 in the Immigration and Asylum Chamber were as follows:

(a) First-tier - 58,357

(b) Upper Tribunal – 1,401

These figures are the most recent available official statistics. This information is covered by the Code of Practice.

Judiciary: EU Nationals

Tulip Siddiq: [\[66046\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many nationals from other EU countries work within the judiciary.

Sir Oliver Heald:

The information requested is not held centrally.

Legal Aid Scheme: Domestic Violence

Tom Watson: [\[65872\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what plans the Government has to reform requirements for eligibility for legal aid for victims of domestic violence.

Tom Watson: [\[65873\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will take steps to ensure that domestic violence victims are not required to pay a fee to their GP to provide evidence of eligibility to legal aid.

Sir Oliver Heald:

Last year we committed to working with domestic violence support groups and legal representative bodies to review the domestic violence evidence requirements for legal aid in private family cases. This review is now coming to end, and we recognise the need for improvements to the system.

We have already announced our intention to completely remove the time limit on all forms of evidence, and to broaden the evidence types to include, for instance, letters from domestic violence support organisations and housing support officers. We will provide further details of the full extent of our proposals shortly.

Ministry of Justice: Brexit

Maria Eagle: [\[65647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what (a) EU agencies and other organisations within her Department's remit the Government plans to withdraw from when the UK leaves the EU, (b) staff time was spent on engagement with those bodies and (c) financial resources were spent on engagement with those bodies in 2015-16.

Sir Oliver Heald:

As set out in the recent White Paper (The United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union), the Government will discuss with the EU and Member States our future status and arrangements with regard to EU agencies. It would not be appropriate to prejudge the outcome of the negotiations.

■ Open Prisons**Yasmin Qureshi:****[65510]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prisoners serving custodial sentences for serious violent and sexual assaults were held in open prisons on 1 January (a) 2013, (b) 2014, (c) 2015, (d) 2016 and (e) 2017.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The information requested is not held centrally and can only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ Police: Hoaxes and False Alarms**Keith Vaz:****[65586]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people were (a) prosecuted and (b) convicted of wasting police time in the last 12 months for which figures are available.

Sir Oliver Heald:

The number of defendants proceeded against at magistrates' courts and found guilty of causing wasteful employment of the police in England and Wales in 2015 can be found in the 'Criminal Justice Statistics Quarterly: December 2015' on Gov.uk.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-justice-system-statistics-quarterly-december-2015>.

■ Prisoners: Death**Yasmin Qureshi:****[65511]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many (a) self-inflicted, (b) non self-inflicted, (c) other non-natural causes, (d) restraint, (e) homicide and (f) awaiting classification deaths there were in (i) adult male, (ii) adult female, (iii) youth male and (iv) youth female prisons in each year since 2013.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The Government publishes quarterly statistics on deaths in custody, including their apparent causes. Those and the latest annual figures, which include data on the ages of the deceased and the prisons in which the deaths occurred, can be viewed in the Safety in Custody section on gov.uk

The very small number of individuals who have died whilst being restrained are not shown as a separate category.

■ Prisoners: Self-harm

Luciana Berger: [\[66269\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the oral contribution of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Justice of 1 March 2017, Official Report, column 101WH, when the new self-harm diagnostic tool for use by prison governors and staff will be in place.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

We are planning to release the self-harm diagnostic tool to prison establishments in April 2017.

■ Prisons: Drugs

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[62294\]](#)

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

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The number of drug-related deaths in prisons remains low. However, every death in custody is a tragedy and we work hard to learn the lessons from each one.

The Government believes that prisons should be places of safety and reform. The number of self-inflicted deaths is extremely concerning and we are committed to reducing it. Our recent White Paper set out specific steps that we are taking to improve safety. They include investing over £100m to recruit an additional 2,500 staff across the estate by the end of 2018. We have taken immediate action to stabilise the estate by tackling the drugs, drones and phones that undermine security.

We have also provided an additional £10m of new annual funding for prison safety, supplemented by £2.9m from existing budgets. This has given a significant number of governors the opportunity to improve safety levels in their establishments. The government publishes statistics on deaths in custody quarterly on gov.uk.

■ Prisons: Facilities

Yasmin Qureshi: [\[65512\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many activity spaces per prisoner there were in (a) adult male, (b) adult female and (c) youth female prisons on 1 March (i) 2013, (ii) 2014, (iii) 2015 and (iv) 2016 in (A) the prison estate and (B) each prison.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

Central records are not currently kept for prisoner activity spaces in a manner that would enable the question to be fully answered without incurring disproportionate cost.

SCOTLAND

■ Scotland Office: Brexit

Maria Eagle:

[\[65649\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what (a) EU agencies and other organisations within his Department's remit the Government plans to withdraw from when the UK leaves the EU, (b) staff time was spent on engagement with those bodies and (c) financial resources were spent on engagement with those bodies in 2015-16.

David Mundell:

As set out in the recent White Paper (The United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union), the Government will discuss with the EU and Member States our future status and arrangements with regard to EU agencies. It would not be appropriate to prejudge the outcome of the negotiations.

■ Scotland Office: Procurement

Jon Trickett:

[\[65694\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what the procurement spend of his Department was in each year since 2010.

David Mundell:

Other than minor or bespoke purchases, the Scotland Office does not normally undertake direct procurement or tendering projects. It uses existing service contracts between suppliers and the Scottish Government or the Ministry of Justice. The Scotland Office do not therefore hold records of procurement spend.

TRANSPORT

■ A417

Alex Chalk:

[\[65488\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when the consultation on the proposed A417 road improvement scheme will open.

Mr John Hayes:

It is expected that public consultation on scheme options for the A417 Air Balloon Roundabout improvement scheme will take place by the end of December 2017.

■ Abellio Greater Anglia

Will Quince:

[\[66103\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much compensation has been paid to passengers under the Consumer Rights Act 2015 by Abellio Greater Anglia in each year for which compensation has been paid.

Paul Maynard:

The Government is not required to collect information on compensation paid by train operators to their customers under the Consumer Rights Act 2015, which came into force for all transport providers on 1 October 2016, and does not hold this information.

It is the responsibility of train operators to ensure that their customers are made aware of their rights to compensation or other redress in cases of service failure or disruption. Train operators' existing compensation schemes provide the main means of redress for passengers.

■ **Cross country railway line: Gloucester****Richard Graham:**[\[65924\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many trains per day there were travelling between Birmingham and Bristol that stopped at Gloucester in (a) the last year and (b) 2001.

Paul Maynard:

(a) In the current December 2016 timetable, which applies between 11 December 2016 and 20 May 2017, CrossCountry operate the following number of services between Birmingham and Bristol which call at Gloucester:

DAY	SOUTHBOUND	NORTHBOUND
Monday to Friday	2	1
Saturday	1	1
Sunday	1	1

(b) CrossCountry have operated the current franchise since 2007. In 2001 when the franchise was operated by Virgin Trains, the following services were provided between Birmingham and Bristol which call at Gloucester:

DAY	SOUTHBOUND	NORTHBOUND
Monday to Friday	8	6
Saturday	8	7
Sunday	6	7

The information for 2001 in table (b) is based on the September 2000 timetable compiled by Railtrack (now Network Rail), which applied between 24 September

and 19 May 2001 and constitutes the only information available to the Department for Transport. Numbers of services on Saturdays and Sundays were subject to minor fluctuation, dependent on when engineering works were scheduled during the September 2000 to May 2001 timetable.

■ **Cross Country Trains: Standards**

Richard Graham: [65922]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many times in the last year CrossCountry trains travelling from Birmingham to Bristol were late arriving at Cheltenham but on time arriving at Bristol Temple Meads.

Paul Maynard:

The Department does not hold the information at the level of detail requested.

Richard Graham: [65923]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many CrossCountry trains from (a) Birmingham to Bristol and (b) Bristol to Birmingham via Gloucester were on time in (i) each of the last five years and (ii) each year from 1998 to 2003.

Paul Maynard:

The Department does not hold the information at the level of detail requested.

■ **Department for Transport: Senior Civil Servants**

Jon Trickett: [65566]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what proportion of senior civil servants of his Department are (a) men, (b) women, (c) disabled, (d) from working-class backgrounds and (e) from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds.

Mr John Hayes:

Information about the socio-economic background of staff in my department is not held centrally and is therefore not available.

Our department goes beyond our duties under the Equality Act by annually publishing our staff's diversity data on gov.uk. The 2015/2016 report can be found [here](#).

■ **Parliament Square**

Sir Greg Knight: [65743]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will hold regular discussions with (a) Transport for London and (b) the Mayor of London on ensuring that roadworks, lane closures and maintenance works in Parliament Square and nearby are kept to a minimum at times when Parliament is sitting.

Andrew Jones:

Ministers and officials from the Department for Transport have regular meetings with their counterparts in Transport for London and the Greater London Authority at which

a variety of issues are discussed, including the impact of roadworks on London's traffic.

Transport for London, Westminster City Council and the Royal Parks Authority are each responsible for different roads near to Parliament Square, and all roadworks in the Westminster area are planned and managed in such a way as to minimise any disruption to traffic. The London area-wide permitting scheme also allows the relevant highway authority to request that roadworks are carried out at particular times.

TfL and others also regularly discuss the timing of, and potential disruption arising from, works in the vicinity of Parliament Square with the Parliamentary Estate. Where possible, roadworks are scheduled in such a way as to avoid disrupting Parliamentary Business: recent roadworks at Carriage Gates, for example, were scheduled to coincide with the February recess.

■ Railways: Bradford

Judith Cummins:

[65478]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential economic benefits to Bradford of its being included as a stop on the Northern Powerhouse Rail network.

Andrew Jones:

The Department is working closely with Transport for the North to assess the case for Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) including whether the NPR network can serve key markets such as Bradford.

■ Railways: Compensation

Andy McDonald:

[R] [65975]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department plans to review the National Rail Conditions of Travel to ensure compliance with consumer protection laws.

Paul Maynard:

The Secretary of State has an approval role under the Ticketing and Settlement Agreement for changes to the National Rail Conditions of Travel.

The Rail Delivery Group is responsible for the management of the National Rail Conditions of Travel and it is for them to propose changes to the Secretary of State for approval.

Will Quince:

[66100]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps the Government is taking to tackle non-compliance of train companies related to the provision to passengers of information relating to their rights required under the Consumer Rights Act 2015.

Paul Maynard:

It is the responsibility of train operators to ensure they are compliant with their legal obligations and, as service providers, that their customers are made aware of their

rights to compensation or other redress in cases of service failure or disruption. Train operators' own compensation schemes provide the main means of redress for passengers.

My Department has worked with the Office of Rail and Road (ORR), industry and consumer groups to identify actions to improve passenger awareness of their rights to claim compensation, including all options open to them. The ORR has also been working with the Rail Delivery Group and individual train operators over the last year to raise their awareness of the Consumer Rights Act 2015 (CRA) and their obligations under it.

The ORR is currently reviewing train operators' compliance with the rules around how refunds must be paid under the CRA.

■ Railways: Tickets

Will Quince:

[\[66138\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress the rail industry has made on making new data available to third party retailers in the rail ticketing market.

Paul Maynard:

In the Action Plan for Information on Rail Fares and Ticketing, launched on 13 December 2016, the Rail Delivery Group committed to provide better and more targeted information to website and app developers to enable them to develop new products and services for consumers by December this year.

This information will include timetable and fares data and live running information, so that they can be used to create better and consistent consumer-facing products. The overall Action Plan is a set of stretching actions to drive real improvement for passengers. Progress is reviewed regularly, working towards two key reports as set out in the Action Plan.

■ Roads: Repairs and Maintenance

Lucy Powell:

[\[65897\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much per capita funding was spent on roads maintenance in each region in the most recent period for which figures are available.

Andrew Jones:

The latest data available regarding spend on roads, in England outside London, including roads maintenance in each region is from the Treasury's country-and-regional-analysis-2016 data. The table below which gives details of the total spend and per capita spend per region is based on this data.

However, it should first be recognised that figures showing road maintenance spend per head of population need to be interpreted with care. Spending on road maintenance in any given region will be driven more by factors such as the nature of the highway asset (which includes not just roads but also bridges, lighting, footways

and structures) in that region and the number or density of roads and highway assets in that region than necessarily by how many people live there.

Further, in terms of spending on national roads such as motorways, whilst the spending is allocated statistically to the region in which the maintenance is carried out this will benefit not just those people in that region but also those travelling across the country from other regions and using that motorway.

In terms of spending on local roads, whilst the Department for Transport allocates roads maintenance funding to local highway authorities, this funding is not ring-fenced and how much each local highway authority in any given region chooses to spend on highways maintenance will reflect their own local priorities.

CURRENT SPEND: LOCAL ROADS AND NATIONAL ROADS (£000)

2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	
North East	138,373	126,543	113,734	104,811	115,357
North West	269,883	229,482	209,391	207,885	252,738
Yorkshire and The Humber	259,354	252,881	244,289	221,242	246,860
East Midlands	217,024	179,881	160,116	150,850	184,834
West Midlands	235,159	212,394	220,876	200,130	252,556
East	302,927	265,192	259,754	242,388	289,872
South East	469,799	497,259	527,773	502,935	441,460
South West	275,149	246,087	175,353	170,115	203,499
England (excluding London)	2,167,668	2,009,719	1,911,286	1,800,356	1,987,176

Mid-Year Population Estimates

2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	
North East	2,596,441	2,602,310	2,610,481	2,618,710	2,624,621
North West	7,055,961	7,084,337	7,103,261	7,132,991	7,173,835
Yorkshire and The Humber	5,288,212	5,316,691	5,337,711	5,360,027	5,390,576
East Midlands	4,537,448	4,567,731	4,598,431	4,637,413	4,677,038
West Midlands	5,608,667	5,642,569	5,674,712	5,713,284	5,751,000

CURRENT SPEND: LOCAL ROADS AND NATIONAL ROADS (£000)

East	5,862,418	5,907,348	5,954,316	6,018,383	6,076,451
South East	8,652,784	8,724,737	8,792,766	8,873,818	8,947,913
South West	5,300,831	5,339,637	5,377,596	5,423,303	5,471,180
England (excluding London)	44,902,762	45,185,360	45,449,274	45,777,929	46,112,614

Per capita (£)

2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	
North East	53	49	44	40	44
North West	38	32	29	29	35
Yorkshire and The Humber	49	48	46	41	46
East Midlands	48	39	35	33	40
West Midlands	42	38	39	35	44
East	52	45	44	40	48
South East	54	57	60	57	49
South West	52	46	33	31	37
England (excluding London)	48	44	42	39	43

Note that this includes non-DFT spend.

Further details and can be found in HM Treasury's Public Expenditure Statistical Analysis for 2015/16;

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/569815/Country_and_Regional_Analysis_November_2016.pdf

■ ScotRail: Compensation

Andy McDonald:

[65972]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if the Government will provide a breakdown of compensation paid to passengers under the Consumer Rights Act 2015 by ScotRail.

Paul Maynard:

The Government is not required to collect information on compensation paid by train operators to their customers under the Consumer Rights Act 2015, which came into force for all transport providers on 1 October 2016, and does not hold this information.

It is the responsibility of train operators to ensure that their customers are made aware of their rights to compensation or other redress in cases of service failure or disruption. Train operators' existing compensation schemes provide the main means of redress for passengers.

■ Taxis: Licensing**Gill Furniss:**[\[65919\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will bring forward proposals to address the use to local authority-specific licences for private hire vehicles in areas not covered by that licence.

Andrew Jones:

At the request of the Department for Transport, the Law Commission conducted a comprehensive review of private hire vehicle and taxi regulation in England and Wales. The Government is currently considering all the recommendations in the report, against the background of a rapidly changing industry. We will formally respond to the Law Commission and announce our intentions once that scrutiny is completed.

Gill Furniss:[\[66088\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when the Government plans to bring forward proposals on cross-border hiring and sub-contracting clause in the Deregulation Act 2015.

Andrew Jones:

At the request of the Department for Transport, the Law Commission conducted a comprehensive review of private hire vehicle and taxi regulation in England and Wales. The ability to sub-contract private hire work across licensing authority boundaries was a recommendation of the Law Commission. Section 11 of the Deregulation Act 2015 enabled this and has allowed private hire operators to work more flexibly to meet the needs of their passengers.

The Government is currently considering the remaining recommendations in the report, against the background of a rapidly changing industry. We will formally respond to the Law Commission and announce our intentions once that scrutiny is completed.

WALES**■ Wales Office: Brexit****Maria Eagle:**[\[65652\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what (a) EU agencies and other organisations within his Department's remit the Government plans to withdraw from when the UK leaves the EU, (b) staff time was spent on engagement with those bodies and (c) financial resources were spent on engagement with those bodies in 2015-16.

Alun Cairns:

As set out in the recent White Paper (The United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union), the Government will discuss with the EU and Member States our future status and arrangements with regard to EU agencies. It would not be appropriate to prejudge the outcome of the negotiations.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES**■ Business: Females****Diana Johnson:**[\[65484\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, whether the Government provides financial support for an awards scheme specifically for outstanding female entrepreneurs and businesswomen.

Caroline Dinéage:

Innovate UK, the UK's innovation agency, is continuing its mission to challenge the disproportionately low numbers of women entrepreneurs in the UK through its inaugural 'infocus – Women in Innovation' competition.

Launched in May 2016, the nationwide competition aimed to increase the number of women led applications for Innovate UK funding opportunities. Each winner was awarded £50,000, a tailored business support package and was paired with a business mentor. The winners of the first competition were announced in November 2016.

■ Equality and Human Rights Commission: Expenditure**Philip Davies:**[\[65952\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, how much the Equality and Human Rights Commission has spent settling discrimination and equal pay claims (a) internally, (b) before an employment tribunal determination and (c) after an employment tribunal determination in the last 10 years.

Caroline Dinéage:

The Equality and Human Rights Commission is an independent body and makes its own decisions about handling discrimination and equal pay claims. I have therefore asked the Chief Executive of the Commission to write to the honourable member with

the information requested. I will place a copy of the letter in the libraries of both Houses.

■ **Government Equalities Office: Brexit**

Maria Eagle: [\[65642\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what (a) EU agencies and other organisations within the Government Equalities Office's remit the Government plans to withdraw from when the UK leaves the EU, (b) staff time was spent on engagement with those bodies and (c) financial resources were spent on engagement with those bodies in 2015-16.

Caroline Dinenage:

As set out in the recent White Paper (The United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union), the Government will discuss with the EU and Member States our future status and arrangements with regard to EU agencies. It would not be appropriate to prejudice the outcome of the negotiations.

■ **Government Equalities Office: Procurement**

Jon Trickett: [\[65534\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, how many officials of the Government Equalities Office oversee contracts awarded to external providers after those contracts have been awarded.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Government Equalities Office does not have a separate contract management function. Some members of staff oversee a specific contract or contracts as part of a wider role in the organisation.

■ **Government Equalities Office: Senior Civil Servants**

Jon Trickett: [\[65558\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what proportion of senior civil servants of the Government Equalities Office are (a) men, (b) women, (c) disabled, (d) from working-class backgrounds and (e) from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Government Equalities Office employs fewer than five staff at senior civil service level and therefore cannot provide this information as it could be used to identify specific individuals.

■ **Small Businesses: Females**

Diana Johnson: [\[65485\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what the Government's strategy is for increasing the proportion of women in leadership positions in small and medium-sized enterprises.

Caroline Dinenage:

Women benefit from the full range of business support available from the Government, including Start-Up Loans, a third of which have gone to women, enabling them to lead their own businesses. I am proud that 1.2m businesses in the UK are led by women.

However, we want to see more women at the top of business. There are a huge number of talented women in the UK and we need to ensure they are able to utilise their skills and reach their potential.

Women's Business Council**Diana Johnson:**[\[65474\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, if she will publish the Women's Business Council's business plan for 2017-18; and how many full-time equivalent staff that Council has employed in each fiscal year since it was established.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Women's Business Council, an independently led, government-backed body publishes a Progress Report annually, to account for business activity. The Council's latest Progress Report was published in October 2016, and set out the Council's current priorities for 2016-17.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/560524/6.2658_GEO_WBC_3_years_on_v5_web.pdf

The Progress Report due for publication in July 2017, will set out the Council's priorities for 2017-18.

The Council does not directly employ any staff. The secretariat for the Council is based in the Government Equalities Office, which has provided two full-time equivalent posts to support the Council since its creation in 2012.

WORK AND PENSIONS**Bereavement Benefits: Parents****Michelle Thomson:**[\[65889\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate he has made of the proportion of people who will be affected by proposed changes to support for bereaved parents.

Caroline Nokes:

Bereavement Support Payment will be introduced from 6 April 2017 for new claimants only. Existing claimants of Widowed Parent's Allowance and Bereavement Allowance will remain on those benefits. We estimate that approximately 8,500 parents will claim Bereavement Support Payment in 2017/18.

■ Children: Maintenance**Ms Karen Buck:**[\[66223\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to his Answer of 14 November 2016 to Question 51999, how many referrals of those defaulting on their child maintenance liabilities have been made to credit reference agencies since March 2015.

Caroline Nokes:

The Department remains committed to the policy of referring those defaulting on their child maintenance payments to credit reference agencies.

Following the change in legislation in March 2015, we have been working with the credit reference agencies to put in place a process to share liability order information. In January 2017 we successfully signed a contract with Experian (one of the three main credit reference agencies) and are now working with them to develop a plan that will enable us to share information. Design work has commenced and a full delivery plan will be in place by mid-March 2017. To date no liability order information has been shared, but it continues to be the Department's intention to do so as soon as possible.

As at 2nd March 2017 there are a total of 1,522 cases prepared and ready to share with credit reference agencies. We plan to disclose this information with credit reference agencies once a process, with the appropriate controls and safeguards, is in place. In the interim we continue to issue warning letters to prompt action by non-resident parents to settle their arrears, and will where appropriate consider other enforcement actions on these cases.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Brexit**Maria Eagle:**[\[65653\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what (a) EU agencies and other organisations within his Department's remit the Government plans to withdraw from when the UK leaves the EU, (b) staff time was spent on engagement with those bodies and (c) financial resources were spent on engagement with those bodies in 2015-16.

Damian Hinds:

As set out in the recent White Paper (The United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union), the Government will discuss with the EU and Member States our future status and arrangements with regard to EU agencies. It would not be appropriate to prejudge the outcome of the negotiations.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Senior Civil Servants**Jon Trickett:**[\[65659\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what proportion of senior civil servants of his Department are (a) men, (b) women, (c) disabled, (d) from working-class backgrounds and (e) from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds.

Caroline Nokes:

DWP's diversity statistics are published on the gov.uk website at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/dwp-equality-information-2016-employee-data>

Information about the socio-economic background of staff in the Department is not held centrally and is therefore not available.

■ Employment and Support Allowance**Corri Wilson:****[65724]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Seventh Report of the Work and Pensions Committee, Disability Employment Gap, HC56, if he will make it his policy to postpone the introduction of the new rate of employment and support allowance for people in the work-related activity group until new programmes to support such people are introduced.

Penny Mordaunt:

We intend to proceed with our reforms to Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) because we believe they are the best way to ensure that we provide the right support for those who are unable to work due to a health condition or disability. That support is not limited to just money, but also practical help for ESA claimants to take steps towards and into work, while keeping an important safety net in place for those who are vulnerable or unable to work.

This change will only apply to new claims from 3 April 2017 and will only affect those in the ESA Work Related Activity Group

Existing ESA claimants with a current claim prior to 3 April will not be affected and will continue to get the same level of financial support, with additional protections, including when reassessed and placed in the Work Related Activity Group, set out in regulations.

A key part of our reforms is the allocation of a total of £330m for new, voluntary employment support for people with limited capability for work, over four years starting from April 2017, and an extra £15 million through a top up to the existing Flexible Support Fund in both 2017/18 and 2018/19.

This additional funding means that from April 2017 we will be offering people newly placed in the Work Related Activity Group, and it's Universal Credit equivalent, more assistance to move closer to the labour market and when they are ready into work.

As well as the £330m set out above, the 2015 Spending Review announced the new Work and Health Programme, which will focus support on people with a disability or health condition. In addition to beginning a commercial process to let contracts with a total value in excess of £400m for the Work and Health Programme in the rest of England and Wales, the Department has announced its intention to provide around £100m of funding to London and Greater Manchester to develop, procure and deliver localised versions of the new Work and Health Programme to fit the needs of their

residents. We are also in discussion with the Scottish Government about devolving an appropriate level of funding for equivalent support they may wish to offer.

Kate Green: [\[65870\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps the Government is taking to provide advice and mentoring support to those who will receive the new lower rate of employment and support allowance; who will provide such advice and mentoring support; and when those measures will be in place.

Penny Mordaunt:

We have allocated a total of £330m for new, voluntary employment support for people with limited capability for work, over four years starting from April 2017.

This additional funding means that from April 2017 we will be offering people newly placed in the Work Related Activity Group, and it's Universal Credit equivalent, more assistance to move closer to the labour market and when they are ready into work.

Improving Lives, The Work, Health and **Disability** Green Paper' provides further details of this Personal Support Package for people with health conditions and disabilities which will be in place from April 2017. This includes a range of new interventions and initiatives designed to provide support that is tailored to the individual needs of claimants including Peer Support Job clubs.

We are rolling out Peer Support job clubs to 71 Jobcentre Plus areas to offer a personalised package of employment support, delivered away from the Job Centre by people who have a lived experience or expert knowledge of disability. The Peer Support job clubs will be overseen by a Community Employment Specialist who will use their experience and knowledge of disability to support participants in the Peer Support job club and the job centre.

Ms Karen Buck: [\[66224\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many claims for Employment Support Allowance (ESA) were made in each of the last three years from claimants who had received ESA (a) at any time and (b) in the year prior to the claim.

Penny Mordaunt:

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

■ Funerals: Low Incomes

Ms Margaret Ritchie: [\[65708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what financial support the Government provides for families affected by funeral poverty after the death of a child.

Caroline Nokes:

The Department for Work and Pensions makes available Social Fund Funeral Expenses Payments to people who are arranging a funeral, including the funeral of a

child, and who are in receipt of a qualifying income-related benefit. Funeral Expenses Payments make a significant contribution towards the cost of arranging a funeral.

Mr Roger Godsiff:

[65811]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 23 February to Question 64628, what assessment the Government has made of whether the current Social Fund Funeral Expenses Payments scheme is sufficient to prevent funeral poverty among bereaved parents; and how the level of support given to such parents is decided.

Caroline Nokes:

Social Fund Funeral Expenses Payments provide help towards the cost of arranging a funeral, including the funeral of a child, for people claiming eligible benefits. They make a significant contribution to the costs of a simple funeral. The amount that an applicant will receive will vary depending on the type of funeral chosen.

Funeral Expenses Payments cover reasonable costs for the following:

- burial fees and exclusive rights to burial in a particular plot,
- cremation fees, including the cost of the doctor's certificate,
- one return journey to arrange or attend the funeral,
- the costs of moving the body within the UK for any part of the journey that is over 50 miles.

In addition, Funeral Expenses Payments can provide up to £700 as a contribution to other funeral expenses.

Details of specific payments and conditions of entitlement can be found in Chapter 39 of the Decision Makers Guide: Social Fund Payments at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/572416/dmgch39.pdf.

■ **Housing Benefit: Young People**

Ms Karen Buck:

[66225]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when he expects to publish regulations on the treatment of 18-21 year old housing benefit claimants.

Caroline Nokes:

The Universal Credit (Housing Costs Element for claimants aged 18 to 21) (Amendment) Regulations 2017 were laid on Friday 3rd March 2017.

■ **Jobcentres: Liverpool**

Luciana Berger:

[66025]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will publish the equality impact assessment reports his Department has undertaken on jobcentre closures in Liverpool, Wavertree constituency.

Damian Hinds:

Throughout the development of these proposals, the Department has been mindful of its duties under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. Consideration of the potential impact on staff and customers has been informed by statistical analysis of population data, local knowledge and consultation.

As we obtain further local, site-specific information for all sites, including those in the Liverpool Wavertree constituency, we will ensure any issues identified are also taken fully into consideration when the final decisions are made. We intend to complete this work within the next 12 weeks; equality analysis is not generally published separately but it will be used to inform final decisions.

Luciana Berger:[\[66026\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many lone parents are registered at the jobcentre in (a) Wavertree and (b) Edge Hill.

Damian Hinds:

The information requested is not available. However, such information that is available is (a) the number of Lone Parents claiming Income Support within Liverpool Wavertree Parliamentary Constituency; plus in the table (b) the number of new claims by Lone Parents to Income Support who are registered at Wavertree and Edge Hill Jobcentres.

(a) The number of Lone Parents claiming Income Support within Liverpool Wavertree Constituency at August 2016 is 770.

(b) The number of new claims by Lone Parents to Income Support who are registered at Wavertree and Edge Hill Jobcentres.

PERIOD	THE NUMBER OF NEW CLAIMS BY LONE PARENTS TO INCOME SUPPORT WHO ARE REGISTERED AT WAVERTREE JOBCENTRE	THE NUMBER OF NEW CLAIMS BY LONE PARENTS TO INCOME SUPPORT WHO ARE REGISTERED AT EDGE HILL JOBCENTRE
January 2016 to December 2016	60	103

Luciana Berger:[\[66027\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 17 February 2017 to Question 64229, on jobcentres in Liverpool, which local public transport route planner applications his Department used in those calculations.

Damian Hinds:

The Department has used information from local transport provider websites, such as Traveline, that provide services in Liverpool to calculate travel costs.

Distances and journey times have been calculated using variety of methods to improve accuracy, including Google Maps which has been cross verified using the

AA route mapping tool and information collected about local public transport routes with input from local DWP colleagues.

Luciana Berger:

[\[66028\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment his Department has made of the number of people who use (a) Wavertree and (b) Edge Hill jobcentres to attend daily work clubs.

Damian Hinds:

There are no daily work clubs at Wavertree Jobcentre or Edge Hill Jobcentre.

Jobcentre Plus does not contract for the delivery of Work Clubs and we are not responsible for the delivery. Work Clubs can be set up or supported by any suitable group including voluntary sector organisations, local authorities, community groups, and both local employers, and national employers through their local outlets. The role of Jobcentre Plus is to signpost claimants to local Work Clubs where they exist and where advisers believe the support offered will help the claimant find work. There is no requirement for follow up on the number of claimants who subsequently attend.

■ **Jobcentres: Whitley Bay**

Mr Alan Campbell:

[\[66035\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people are registered at Whitley Bay Jobcentre.

Damian Hinds:

The information requested is not available. However, such information that is available is in the tables and provides the number of (a) Jobseeker's Allowance and Universal Credit (required to seek work) claimants; plus the number of new claims to (b) Employment and Support Allowance and Income Support from people who are required to attend Whitley Bay Jobcentre.

Table (a) The number of Jobseeker's Allowance and Universal Credit (required to seek work) claimants required to attend Whitley Bay Jobcentre

THE NUMBER OF JOBSEEKER'S ALLOWANCE AND
UNIVERSAL CREDIT CLAIMANTS REQUIRED TO
ATTEND WHITLEY BAY JOBCENTRE

Position at January 2017

400

Table (b) The number of new claims to Employment and Support Allowance and Income Support from people required to attend Whitley Bay Jobcentre

POSITION FOR 12 MONTH PERIOD	THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE MAKING A NEW CLAIM TO EMPLOYMENT AND SUPPORT ALLOWANCE REQUIRED TO ATTEND WHITLEY BAY JOBCENTRE	THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE MAKING A NEW CLAIM TO INCOME SUPPORT REQUIRED TO ATTEND WHITLEY BAY JOBCENTRE
January 2016 to December 2016	554	47

Mr Alan Campbell:

[66038]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, on what date his Department (a) announced proposals to close Whitley Bay Jobcentre Plus and (b) informed the current landlords of that property of that decision.

Damian Hinds:

The Department announced its proposals for Whitley Bay Jobcentre on 26 January 2017. The full list of sites we have announced has been published and is available from the Gov.uk website at this address: <http://qna.files.parliament.uk/ws-attachments/678953/original/DWP%20Estates%20Proposals.pdf>.

Since 1998 the Department occupies the majority of its accommodation under a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) known as the PRIME contract. Under the terms of this 20-year PFI, the Department contracts to occupy fully serviced accommodation from its private sector partner, Telereal Trillium.

The lease for the building in question is included within the provisions of this PFI arrangement and is therefore not held directly by DWP. Telereal Trillium was informed of the proposals to close Whitley Bay Jobcentre on 26 January 2017.

■ Local Housing Allowance

Mr David Lammy:

[66076]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much his Department is making available for the Targeted Affordability Funding concession to the freeze on local housing allowance rates in (a) 2016-17, (b) 2017-18, (c) 2018-19 and (d) 2019-20.

Caroline Nokes:

Around 30 per cent of the savings from the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) Freeze will be recycled to use as Targeted Affordability Funding. No Targeted Affordability Funding was available in 2016/17 as there were no savings from the LHA Freeze due to zero inflation levels. The amount available for 2017/18 is £13.33 million and we will announce the funding for future years in due course

Mr David Lammy:

[66077]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate he has made of the number of housing benefit applicants that have benefitted from the three per cent

increase in local housing allowance rates in areas where it has been increased through the Targeted Affordability Funding concession.

Caroline Nokes:

There were no Targeted Affordability Funding increases to Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates in 2016/17 because the four year LHA freeze policy was not estimated to have any savings in 2016/17.

In 2017/18 we estimate that 70 thousand households receiving housing benefit or universal credit will benefit from a three per cent Targeted Affordability Funding increase to their LHA rate.

Mr David Lammy:

[66120]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make an assessment of the effect on tenants in the private rented sector of the changes in local housing allowance rates of housing benefit to the 30th percentile of local market rents and the freeze of those rates since April 2016.

Caroline Nokes:

The Department commissioned an independent evaluation of the changes to Local Housing Allowance (LHA) which were introduced from April 2011 and included setting LHA rates at the 30th percentile of local rents. The final report was published in July 2014 and can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-housing-allowance-monitoring-the-impact-of-changes>

We have no plans to formally evaluate the effect of the LHA 'Freeze' policy, but will continue to monitor the relevant administrative and survey data.

■ **Local Housing Allowance: Greater London**

Mr David Lammy:

[66078]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reasons there is no planned increase in the local housing allowance rate for any property size in the Outer North East London Broad Rental Market Area under the Targeted Affordability Funding concession in 2017-18.

Caroline Nokes:

The level of Targeted Affordability Funding for 2017/18 was set by Treasury. The allocation of this fixed funding pot has been based on ranking all 960 LHA rates in Great Britain according to the share of the private rental market they can afford in each area according to the latest available rent officer data, with a 3% increase applied to the 48 uncapped LHA rates below the 5th percentile of market rents. All five LHA rates for the Outer North East London Broad Rental Market Area were assessed as above the 5th percentile of market rents and therefore did not qualify for a Targeted Affordability Funding increase in 2017/18.

■ Personal Independence Payment: Mental Illness

Stephen Timms:

[\[66250\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reasons he plans to deny additional points in the assessment for personal independence payments to people who are unable to plan the route of a journey, or follow the route of a familiar or unfamiliar journey without help, if the reason is psychological distress.

Penny Mordaunt:

This Government is absolutely committed to ensuring our welfare system is a strong safety net for those who need it. That's why we spend around £50bn a year supporting people with disabilities and health conditions; approx. 2.5% of GDP and over 6% of all Government spending

We have been very clear about the reasons we are making these changes to two of the activities within the PIP assessment criteria. Recent legal cases have broadened the way the PIP assessment criteria are interpreted. We need to clarify the criteria to restore the original aim of the policy and make sure we are giving the most support to those who need it most.

These changes will not result in any claimants seeing a reduction in the amount of PIP previously awarded by DWP. It is not a change to the policy nor is it intended to make new savings.

Many people experiencing psychological distress still qualify for PIP through other assessment criteria. In fact, more people with a mental health condition are getting higher payments for both PIP components, compared to the DLA equivalents.

Overall, 27% of PIP recipients with a mental health condition get the enhanced rate mobility component, compared to 9% receiving the higher rate DLA mobility component.

■ Personal Independence Payment: Multiple Sclerosis

Chris Law:

[\[66081\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the daily living activity 3 of the personal independence payment assessment, how many people with multiple sclerosis have scored points on descriptors c, d, e or f for (a) new claims and (b) disability living allowance reassessments in (i) each year before and (ii) the period since November 2016.

Penny Mordaunt:

The two tables below give statistics on the number of people with main disabling condition multiple sclerosis who scored on descriptors c, d, e or f on Activity 3 of their assessment for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) for both new claimants and Disability Living Allowance (DLA) reassessments.

Table 1 – Number of new claimants each calendar year that scored c, d, e or f on Activity 3 of their PIP assessment

NEW CLAIMS	2013	2014	2015	2016 (TO 8 TH SEPTEMBER)
Number scoring c, 10 d, e or f on Activity 3		80	80	40

Table 2 – Number of DLA reassessment claimants each calendar year who scored c, d, e or f on Activity 3 of their PIP assessment

DLA REASSESSMENTS	2014	2015	2016 (TO 8 TH SEPTEMBER)
Number scoring c, d, e 30 or f on Activity 3		120	430

Notes: Figures for both tables have been rounded to the nearest 10.

Data beyond September 2016 is not readily available; preparing it would require us to link together several complex datasets and take steps to assure the quality of the results.

■ Rodents: Pest Control

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[\[66102\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate he has made of the additional cost to farmers of purchasing rodent control products as a result of the recent change to the licensing of such products.

Penny Mordaunt:

The rodent control products in question contain anticoagulant chemicals which are very harmful to humans and the environment. In particular, when used outdoors, these products pose unacceptable risks to non-target mammals and birds such as barn owls.

The changes are the result of an industry led initiative, the UK Rodenticide Stewardship Regime, introduced to enable the continued use of professional anticoagulant rodenticides in the UK. The body that oversees the operation of the regime is the Campaign for Responsible Rodenticide Use (CRRU). CRRU membership includes all of the major rodenticide manufacturers, the pest control industry, the farming sector and gamekeepers.

The regime requires those who choose to use professional quantities of rodenticides to demonstrate they are competent to do so, for example through membership of an approved farm assurance scheme or by taking a free self-study course for farmers. As the regime is industry led, the government has not assessed the cost to farmers.

■ Social Security Benefits: Disqualification

Corri Wilson:

[65786]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the findings of the reports from (a) the National Audit Office on Benefit Sanctions, published on 30 November 2013 and (b) the oral evidence to the Work and Pensions Committee of 28 November 2016, HC56, on the disability employment gap, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of exempting (i) disabled people and (ii) those experiencing mental ill health from the benefit sanctions regime.

Damian Hinds:

Sanctions are only used in a very small percentage of cases and as a last resort.

They are an important part of our benefits system and encourage claimants to stick to their agreed commitments to prepare for or find work, based on their individual needs and circumstances. The sanction system is under continuous review to ensure that it functions effectively and fairly - where we identify an issue, we act to put it right.

Jo Churchill:

[66242]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policies of research by Oxford University, published by The Trussell Trust in October 2017, on the effect of benefit sanctions on food insecurity and food bank usage.

Damian Hinds:

The report, which was published on 27 October 2016, does not provide evidence of a causal link between benefit sanctions and the use of food banks. In the year to September 2016 the number of JSA sanctions has halved.

We know the most effective route out of poverty is work. That is why we are determined to help people find employment through a wide range of support targeted to each individual's personal circumstances.

■ Social Security Benefits: EU Nationals

Keith Vaz:

[65597]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the total amount of benefits paid to non-UK citizens living in the UK was in 2016 by benefit type.

Damian Hinds:

DWP's social security benefit system does not contain information on the nationality of the claimant.

However, we have published an ad-hoc report on DWP benefit expenditure on EEA national-led claims in 2013/14, by benefit type. This information was published in February 2016 and is available here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/502129/benefit-expenditure-eea-nationals-ad-hoc-stats.pdf

Additionally, in August 2016, HMRC published information on Tax Credits and Child Benefit expenditure for EEA nationals in 2013/14. This information is available here: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/548156/HMRC - Ad Hoc Stats Release - further TC statistics on EEA Nationals JULY - FINAL 23rd August 2016.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/548156/HMRC_-_Ad_Hoc_Stats_Release_-_further_TC_statistics_on_EEA_Nationals_JULY_-_FINAL_23rd_August_2016.pdf)

For non-EEA nationals, the numbers in receipt of benefit is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/nationality-at-point-of-nino-registration-of-dwp-working-age-benefit-recipients-data-to-feb-2015>

■ Social Security Benefits: Yorkshire and the Humber

Louise Haigh:

[65999]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many benefit claimants have been sanctioned for being late by jobcentres in Yorkshire and the Humber since 2015.

Damian Hinds:

This information is not available.

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

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

■ State Retirement Pensions: EU Nationals

Steve McCabe:

[66111]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether EU nationals who have made national insurance contributions for 20 years or more will be entitled to a state pension after the UK leaves the EU.

Richard Harrington:

We want to guarantee the rights of EU citizens who are already living in Britain, and the rights of British nationals in other member states, as early as we can. The Prime Minister has told other EU leaders that we could give people the certainty they want straight away, and reach such a deal now. It remains an important priority for Britain – and for many other member states – to resolve this challenge as soon as possible because it is the right and fair thing to do. We are about to begin these negotiations and it would be wrong to set out further positions in advance.

■ Working Conditions: Temperature

Sarah Olney:

[65445]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of a statutory maximum workplace temperature.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Government has no plans to make a further assessment of the merits of a statutory workplace maximum temperature. For information on the existing law and guidance on workplace temperature, I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 09 September 2016 to Question UIN [44106](#).

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Local Government: Dorset

Mr Christopher Chope:

[\[66022\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 28 February 2017 to Question 64857, on Local Government: Dorset, what the latest date will be that alternative proposals can be submitted to be considered as part of his initial decision alongside the proposal on local government reorganisation submitted by six Dorset councils on 9 February 2017.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 6 March 2017. The correct answer should have been:

Mr Marcus Jones:

We are now considering carefully the unitary proposal on which the nine Dorset councils have been working, and which six of those councils have formally submitted, together with all the representations we have received to date, including the material submitted by East Dorset District Council under cover of a letter of 21 February from the Council Leader and by Christchurch Borough Council under cover of a letter of 22 February from the Council's Acting Leader, **and from Purbeck District Council under cover of an email of 3 March from the Chief Executive.**

Our intention is to reach and announce an initial decision as to how we are minded to proceed as soon as practicable. Once we have announced our initial decision, there will still be an opportunity for those interested to submit further representations, including any additional material which East Dorset District Council, ~~or~~ Christchurch Borough Council, **or Purbeck District Council** wishes to submit, before we take our final decision.

DEFENCE

■ Armed Forces: Body Armour

Nia Griffith:

[\[65607\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he expects the roll-out of Virtus body armour to be complete.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 2 March 2017. The correct answer should have been:

Harriett Baldwin:

There have been 20,407 sets of Virtus body armour issued, with further sets to be issued, and the full operating capability for Virtus to occur in ~~2015~~**2025**.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

■ British Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies: LGBT People

Catherine West:

[\[64954\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, which Government Minister has responsibility for the protection of LGBT rights in the (a) overseas territories and (b) Crown Dependencies.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 2 March 2017. The correct answer should have been:

Sir Alan Duncan:

The protection and promotion of human rights, including LGB&T rights, are primarily the responsibility of the Overseas Territory and Crown Dependency governments. Baroness Anelay of St Johns is the Minister of State for the Overseas Territories, excluding the Falklands and Gibraltar, for which I am responsible. The Secretary of State for Defence is responsible for the Sovereign Base Areas of Akrotiri and Dhekelia. The Attorney General is responsible for the Crown Dependencies **in Whitehall**.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Staff

Tracy Brabin:

[\[63215\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many work coaches his Department has employed in each (a) region and (b) constituent part of the UK in each of the last three years; and how many work coaches his Department plans to employ in each such region and part of the UK in each of the next three years.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 9 February 2017. The correct answer should have been:

Damian Hinds:

The number of work coaches employed by the department in each of the last three years, shown by each nation within Great Britain and also by Jobcentre Plus district can be seen in the tables below.

By the end of March 2018 we plan to have around 2,500 more Work Coaches in Jobcentres across the nations and regions of Great Britain. However, the final allocation of work coaches will be based on funding, claimant activity and determined by need.

	MARCH 2014	MARCH 2015	MARCH 2016
National	12,613	11,341	11,596
England	10,855	9,723	9,659

		MARCH 2014	MARCH 2015	MARCH 2016
	Scotland	1,136	997	1,186
	Wales	622	620	750
Jobcentre Plus Region	Jobcentre Plus District	March 2014	March 2015	March 2016
Central England	Birmingham & Solihull	476	412	449
Central England	Black Country	369	381	355
Central England	* Derbyshire	192	349 0	326 0
Central England	East Anglia	375	272 349	296 326
Central England	Leicestershire & Northamptonshire	270	324 272	327 296
Central England	Lincolnshire Nottinghamshire & Rutland	348	246 321	242 327
Central England	Mercia	240	406 216	409 242
Central England	*Midland Shires	0	406	409
Central England	* Staffordshire & Shropshire	257	238 0	228 0
London and the Home Counties	Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire	267	445 238	374 228
London and the Home Counties	East London	555	288 445	238 374
London and the Home Counties	Essex	314	249 288	246 238
London and the Home Counties	Kent	293	390 249	336 246
London and the Home Counties	North London	479	555 390	464 336

		MARCH 2014	MARCH 2015	MARCH 2016
Home Counties				
London and the Home Counties	South London	624	369 555	361 464
London and the Home Counties	West London	413	332 369	362 361
North East England	Durham & Tees Valley	374	353 332	336 362
North East England	North East Yorkshire & Humber	388	352 353	377 336
North East England	Northumberland Tyne & Wear	372	344 352	377
North East England	South Yorkshire	366	573 344	523 377
North East England	West Yorkshire	548	1,392 573	343 523
North West England	Cumbria & Lancashire	347	293	370 343
North West England	Greater Manchester Central & Cheshire	404	344	374 370
North West England	Greater Manchester East & West	390	372	427 371
North West England	Merseyside	410	383	315 427
Scotland	East & South East Scotland	314	289	395 315
Scotland	Glasgow Lanarkshire & East Dunbartonshire	387	319	205 395
Scotland	North of Scotland	188	180	274 205

		MARCH 2014	MARCH 2015	MARCH 2016
Scotland	West of Scotland	247	210	392 271
Southern England	Devon Cornwall & Somerset	314	273	363 330
Southern England	*Avon Severn and Thames	0	0	302
Southern England	*Berkshire, Surrey and Sussex	0	0	363
Southern England	* Gloucestershire & West of England	325	262	330 0
Southern England	Greater Wessex	445	401	435
Southern England	* Surrey & Sussex	348	282	750 0
Southern England	* Thames Valley	338	267	172 0
Wales	North & Mid Wales	129	141	303 172
Wales	South East Wales	271	271	275 303
Wales	South West Wales	222	207	449 275

Notes

1. The number of Work Coaches is expressed as a Full Time Equivalent.
2. Numbers rounded to the nearest whole number.
3. Numbers may not sum due to rounding
4. * **Highlights change to District structure**

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ **Departmental Contingent Liability Notification - Postal Services Holding Company Limited**

The Secretary of State (Greg Clark):

[\[HCWS519\]](#)

The Government intends to put the Postal Services Holding Company Limited into voluntary liquidation on 30 March 2017. This company, previously known as Royal Mail Holdings plc, is wholly owned by Government.

The Government has decided that, following the disposal of all of the Royal Mail shares held by the company, there is no longer a need to retain the company. The voluntary liquidation will save the tax payer money by removing the company's running costs of around £120,000 per annum.

Shares held by the company in Post Office Limited (POL) will be transferred to direct ownership by the Secretary of State for BEIS and this transfer will have no impact on POL's operations.

The Directors of the company (all unremunerated, public or civil servants) are required to issue a Declaration of Solvency prior to the company's liquidation.

The expectation is that all the company's identified and existing liabilities will be met, apart from minimal expenses incurred during the liquidation process, after placing into to liquidation.

However, there is a small risk that some as yet unidentified liabilities could emerge. To give the Directors comfort that such liabilities could be met, and to enable them to sign the Declaration of Insolvency, my Department intends to grant an indemnity to the Postal Services Holding Company Limited. The granting of an indemnity is effectively neutral to BEIS because if the company were not placed into liquidation and a liability emerged, the company would look to work with the Department, as sole shareholder, to address that liability.

The indemnity will be uncapped for a period of 6 years and will be issued prior to the liquidation.

When a government department proposes to undertake a contingent liability in excess of £300,000 for which there is no specific statutory authority, it is required practice for the Minister concerned to present a departmental Minute to parliament giving particulars of the liability created and explaining the circumstances; and to refrain from incurring the liability until fourteen parliamentary sitting days after the issue of the Minute, except in cases of special urgency.

As a matter of record I have attached a departmental minute for both Houses explaining the procedure followed and containing a description of the liabilities undertaken.

Attachments:

1. DEPARTMENTAL MINUTE FROM BEIS [DEPARTMENTAL MINUTE FROM BEIS.docx]

CABINET OFFICE**■ Anonymous electoral registration****Minister for the Constitution (Chris Skidmore):****[\[HCWS518\]](#)**

I am pleased to publish the Government's plans setting out our aim of ensuring survivors of domestic abuse can participate in our democracy by making it easier for them to register to vote without their names and addresses appearing on the electoral register.

Our proposals are intended to make the anonymous electoral registration scheme more accessible to those escaping domestic abuse. They will broaden the evidentiary requirements for an application for anonymous registration to make them more accessible and relevant for survivors of abuse, while maintaining clarity and certainty around the registration process for electoral administrators. The policy will provide more ready access to anonymous registration for those whom it is intended to help.

The publication of the policy will welcome comment from domestic abuse organisations, professional bodies and those with technical electoral expertise.

This is one of a number of proposals to make sure our democracy works for everyone. The Government is also encouraging registration in under-registered areas, equalising constituencies, and giving all British citizens who have lived in the UK a lifelong right to vote in Parliamentary elections.

I am placing a copy of the policy statement in the Libraries of both Houses.

HEALTH**■ Health Redress****Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Nicola Blackwood):****[\[HCWS520\]](#)**

On 13 July 2016 the Government announced its response to the January 2016 consultation on reform of the current ex-gratia payment schemes for individuals infected with HIV and/or hepatitis C following treatment with NHS-supplied blood or blood products before September 1991.

The Government recognises the suffering experienced by people as a result of this tragedy and the Prime Minister apologised on behalf of the Government in March 2015. Since 1988, successive Governments have set up five schemes to provide financial and other support to those affected. This Government committed further funding of up to an additional £125m over the existing baseline budget. This additional money more than doubles the Department of Health's annual spend on the scheme over the Spending

Review period to April 2021. This is significantly more than any previous Government has provided for those affected by this tragedy.

On account of this increased allocation, July's consultation response set out a package of support measures for those infected and affected by the infected blood tragedy. For the first time, almost 2,500 beneficiaries with chronic hepatitis C infection were eligible to receive an annual payment of £3,500 per year. Those with advanced hepatitis C and HIV received an uplift in their annual payment to £15,500, and we introduced a new £10,000 payment to bereaved partners and spouses.

Since July, the Government has also worked on the detail of the measures proposed for 2017/18 for scheme beneficiaries infected in England such as the new special appeals mechanism for those with chronic hepatitis C infection and reformed discretionary support scheme. The special appeals mechanism, which is now called Special Category Mechanism (SCM) will be a significant new element of the infected blood reforms. Therefore, today the Government announces the launch of a new consultation on the details of the new SCM and our proposals for ensuring the scheme remains within its budget as a result of the new SCM. We invite beneficiaries and other interested parties to comment on our proposals.

The consultation published today and attached will run until 17 April 2017. This is a 6-week consultation to ensure that all those who wish to respond have time to do so. There are four elements of reform on which the Government would welcome views.

- The addition of a new condition to qualify for the higher financial support given to those infected with hepatitis C who have developed advanced liver disease.
- The new Special Category Mechanism (with appeal) (SCM) to identify hepatitis C stage 1 beneficiaries whose infection has a substantial and long term adverse impact on their ability to carry out normal daily activities, offering those who are successful the higher annual payment.
- Proposals to keep the scheme within budget in light of the increased annual payment for successful SCM applicants while preserving discretionary fund.
- The type of support the reformed discretionary scheme would offer that is fair to all groups of beneficiaries.

The Government understands that there has been uncertainty about how the SCM and reformed discretionary support will be implemented during 2017. The outcome of the consultation will be crucial to informing our final decisions about these elements. Informed by the consultation responses, the Government will implement the decisions as soon as possible in 2017/18. The Government does not anticipate that there will be any reduction in current spending as a result of the consultation proposals. No-one who currently receives an annual payment will be worse off than they are now as a result of the proposed changes to the annual payments.

This consultation does not affect any of the reform elements introduced in the financial year of 2016/17.

Finally, the Government has heard beneficiaries' feedback regarding our plans for a new scheme administrator. As a result, we announce today that the NHS Business Services Authority will become the new single scheme administrator during 2017. While this transition takes place, annual and discretionary payments and services will continue to be made by the current schemes to ensure a smooth transition to the new scheme administrator with minimum impact on the important financial and non-financial ex gratia services infected blood beneficiaries will receive this Parliament.

Attachments:

1. Consultation Document [20170303 SCM Consultation Document FINAL.pdf]