



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 14 December 2016 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:32 P.M., 14 December 2016). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Carbon Emissions

Mr Jonathan Lord:

[[56789](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what main policy areas will be covered by his Department's forthcoming Emissions Reduction Plan; and when his Department plans to publish that plan.

Mr Nick Hurd:

We are looking ahead to our emissions reduction plan which will set out how we will reduce emissions through the 2020s and so form an important signal to the markets, businesses and investors.

We are investing the time now to undertake critical preparatory work to ensure we get this right. This includes engaging across businesses, industry and other stakeholders on the shared challenge of moving to a low carbon economy.

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Work Experience

Louise Haigh:

[[56299](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many unpaid internships there are in his Department.

Margot James:

There are no unpaid internships in BEIS. BEIS participates in the Civil Service wide Summer Diversity Internship Programme, which is a two month placement and is paid. The Civil Service also runs the Early Diversity Internship Programme which is for a week only (and more akin to work experience) – it provides expenses to encourage applications and ensure there is no financial loss.

■ Economic Growth

Mr Philip Hollobone:

[[56685](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to support business growth in (a) Northamptonshire and (b) England.

Margot James:

Support for those seeking to start and grow a business is available online at Gov.uk or from the National Business Support Helpline which provides signposting, diagnostic support and advice on a range of issues. The service can be accessed by telephone on 0300 456 3565 or via webchat, email, Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. There are 39 Growth Hubs across England which join up local and national business support for businesses in their area. Northamptonshire businesses have access to the

Northamptonshire Growth Hub and South East Midland's Velocity. The Midlands Engine Investment Fund, due to be launched in 2017 (subject to final funding arrangements), is expected to provide over £250m of support to the region's 460,000 smaller businesses. The British Business Bank and Innovate UK also provide assistance to support business growth.

■ Foreign Investment in UK

Dr Andrew Murrison:

[\[56537\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what safeguards his Department has to ensure that rules on mergers and acquisitions do not damage foreign direct investment.

Margot James:

The UK has one of the highest rates of foreign direct investment in the world. Our merger regime, based on transparent rules that are administered by independent bodies, supports this. Ministers can intervene in mergers that concern public interest issues relating to national security, financial stability, and media plurality. This provides confidence to investors.

■ Groceries Code Adjudicator

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[\[56817\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will take steps to ensure that the Groceries Adjudicator can take evidence of alleged breaches of the supermarket code from all producers and not just from the suppliers of supermarkets.

Margot James:

Anyone can make a complaint to the Groceries Code Adjudicator (GCA), this includes: retailers, suppliers, trade bodies, other organisations and individuals. However, the GCA may investigate whether a large retailer has broken the Groceries Code, if the Adjudicator has reasonable grounds to suspect that a retailer has broken the Groceries Supply Code of Practice.

At present, the Groceries Code regulates agreements as between a direct supplier and the supermarket. However, the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy is currently running a call for evidence regarding the remit of the Groceries Code Adjudicator. This is open until 10 January 2017 and we would encourage any interested party to respond.

■ Innovation: Finance

Anna Turley: [\[56926\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how his Department monitors the effect on existing commercial innovation facilities after an award of public funding has been made for new innovation facilities.

Joseph Johnson:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer I gave on 20 October 2016 to Questions UIN [49036](#), [49037](#) and [49038](#).

■ Minimum Wage

Caroline Lucas: [\[56533\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 9 September 2016 to Question 44312, what the total sum of arrears was that was recovered by HM Revenue and Customs for non-compliance with the national minimum wage in the first half of 2016-17; how many (a) workers and (b) employers those arrears relate to; how much of that total sum of arrears was recovered through the self-correction mechanism introduced in 2015; and how many (i) workers and (ii) employers those self-corrected arrears relate to.

Margot James:

Provisional data for the first six months of the 2016-17 reporting year (April 2016 to September 2016) show that £3,968,649 in total arrears have been identified for 48,154 workers from 1,420 employer investigations.

Further breakdowns of National Minimum Wage enforcement statistics will be available following the conclusion of the 2016-17 reporting year.

■ Property: Ownership

Margaret Hodge: [\[56841\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what progress his Department has made on developing a public register of UK property ownership.

Margot James:

At the International Anti-Corruption Summit in London on 12 May, the previous Prime Minister announced that the Government will require overseas companies that own or purchase UK properties or bid on UK Government procurement contracts to provide details of their beneficial owners to a public central register.

This will be the first register of its kind in the world and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) has been working with the devolved administrations, delivery partners and other experts to develop this novel and complex policy that will have to operate effectively across UK and international company law, and within the three different land registration regimes of the UK. BEIS intends to publish a call for evidence seeking views on the policy in the coming months.

■ Pubs Code Adjudicator

Greg Mulholland: [\[56905\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the evidential basis is for the Pubs Code Adjudicator's statement on the ITV documentary, The Great British Pub Revolution, screened on 8 December 2016, that many of the tenants he has met are supportive of him in his role.

Margot James:

This is a matter for the Pubs Code Adjudicator. I have asked the Pubs Code Adjudicator to write to the Hon Member directly. A copy of the response will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

■ UK Intellectual Property Office: North of England

Diana Johnson: [\[56793\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to page 20 of the Northern Powerhouse Strategy, what the planned (a) locations and (b) delivery dates are of pilots of Intellectual Property Offices in the north of England.

Joseph Johnson:

The Northern Powerhouse strategy states that the Intellectual Property Office will place representatives in key locations, starting with pilots in the Northern Powerhouse region. These pilots will be designed to stimulate effective intellectual property commercialisation, provide advice which catalyses local growth and ensure that intellectual property is fully integrated within the local business support landscape to build innovative businesses.

The IPO are currently recruiting with one pilot based in the Greater Manchester Business Growth Hub covering the North West region primarily Greater Manchester and Liverpool. The other based within the Greater Birmingham & Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership covering that region along with the Black Country and Coventry & Warwickshire.

The IPO expects its representatives to be in place by end of March 2017.

■ Universities: North of England

Peter Kyle: [\[55071\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to paragraph 4.9 of the Government's Northern Powerhouse Strategy, published in November 2016, from which funding streams the £100 million spending to 2020-21 on incentivising university collaboration in tech transfer and working with business will be drawn; and how those funds will be distributed.

Joseph Johnson:

[Holding answer 1 December 2016]: The Autumn Statement (para 3.31) confirmed that additional funding for science and research of £100 million will be provided until 2020-21 to incentivise university collaboration in tech transfer and in working with business.

This will support universities working together across England on the commercialisation of research, with the devolved administrations receiving funding through the Barnett formula in the usual way. The funding for England will be allocated by Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). We are working with HEFCE on options to support these activities. Funding will be allocated through competitive processes and mechanisms, complementing and building on established Higher Education Innovation Funding (HEIF) mechanisms.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Cybercrime: Publicity

Antoinette Sandbach:

[\[907863\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to improve public and business awareness of cyber security.

Ben Gummer:

The National Cyber Security Centre makes authoritative cyber security guidance available online, directing members of the public and businesses to initiatives, like Cyber Essentials, that help companies protect themselves.

The £1.9 billion National Cyber Security Programme also funds a government campaign called Cyber Aware which encourages the public and Small and Medium Enterprises to adopt more secure online behaviour.

■ Electoral Register

Carol Monaghan:

[\[907860\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will take steps to modernise the process of electoral registration.

Chris Skidmore:

Work on modernising the process of electoral registration is already under way. I recently announced 23 pilots across Great Britain - including Glasgow - designed to modernise the annual canvass. We are also sponsoring work in Grampian on using private sector data to make registration more efficient.

■ Government Departments: Staff

Stephen Gethins:

[\[907865\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to ensure adequate civil service support for new government departments.

Ben Gummer:

The Cabinet Office is responsible for the majority of cross-cutting government services that make corporate changes easier, including supporting new departments to build their capability. For the two most recently established departments (the Department for

Exiting the European Union and the Department for International Trade) we provided practical guidance, and for the Department for Exiting the European Union in particular, interim Estates, IT, HR, finance, security and telephony services.

■ Honours: Disclosure of Information

Mary Glendon: [\[907864\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, when he plans to report on the inquiry into the leak of the Prime Minister's Resignation Honours list.

Ben Gummer:

We take any 'leaking' of official information very seriously as it is damaging and corrosive to good government. However it has been the policy of successive administrations not to normally comment on the formulation, operation or the outcome of these investigations.

■ Public Sector: Assets

John Stevenson: [\[907870\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent assessment he has made of the performance of the One Public Estate programme.

Ben Gummer:

One Public Estate covers 50% of councils in England and expects to deliver at least £56 million in running cost savings, £138 million in capital receipts, 36,000 jobs, and 16,500 homes by 2020. There remain many exciting proposals nationally, which is why £31 million of funding was announced at Autumn Statement 2015 to expand it.

TREASURY

■ Dental Services: Children

Judith Cummins: [\[56362\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the Government plans to use the revenue raised from the soft drinks industry levy to fund oral health improvement programmes for children.

Jane Ellison:

The Treasury is working closely with other Departments to deliver the objectives of the levy, including programmes to reduce obesity and encourage physical activity and balanced diets.

■ Treasury: Equal Pay

Jake Berry: [\[56612\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans his Department has to publish information on the gender pay gap among its employees.

Simon Kirby:

The Treasury is committed to promoting greater transparency on gender pay gap reporting. The Treasury will publish data in accordance with the final mandatory public sector pay gap reporting requirements and their timescales.

■ **Treasury: Travel**

Tim Farron:

[56237]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much his Department spent on travel that was not standard class in each of the last five years.

Simon Kirby:

There are two publications which are published as part of the Government's commitment to Transparency which contain information on travel and subsistence for Senior Officials and Ministers.

These can be found on the Gov.uk website following the links below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/senior-officials-expenses>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-ministers-meetings-hospitality-gifts-and-overseas-travel>

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ **English Language: Training**

Lyn Brown:

[56334]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how many hours of learning were provided on average to people undertaking lessons in English as a second language as a result of courses funded by his Department in each year since 2008-09.

Lyn Brown:

[56335]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how many people his Department has helped to learn English as a second language as a result of courses funded by his Department in each year since 2008-09.

Mr Marcus Jones:

From 2013/14 the Department has directly funded various innovative projects, each with different delivery models to engage isolated adults with poor or no English who had not previously accessed mainstream training. By March 2017, these projects will have supported over 39,800 isolated adults to learn English.

We do not hold figures on the average number of hours of tuition undertaken as training may vary dependent on need and in some instances includes online resources as well as guided learning.

Prior to 2013/14 the Department's funding to support delivery of English language was channelled via the Skills Funding Agency to Further Education colleges and other providers in areas facing significant integration challenges. The Department does not hold figures on the number of learners undertaking lessons or the average length of tuition.

■ Non-domestic Rates

Mr Peter Bone: [56271]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what progress his Department has made on enabling local authorities to retain 100 per cent of business rates.

Mr Marcus Jones:

We recently conducted a consultation on our approach to the implementation of 100% Business Rates Retention. There were over 450 responses from local authorities, businesses interests and other organisations. My officials are currently considering these and we will publish a summary of the responses and our proposed way forward in due course. In the meantime, we will continue close collaboration with local government in taking this work forward, including through the Business Rates Retention Steering Group, which is jointly chaired by the Local Government Association and the Department for Communities and Local Government.

The Steering Group was established to consider the mechanisms needed to set up and run the new business rates system, as well as the timetable and implementation of the reforms. It oversees the work of a set of technical working groups, each looking at particular aspects of the reforms. The Group meets on a regular basis and has done so on 7 occasions since April 2016. All papers for meetings are published here:

<http://www.local.gov.uk/business-rates>

■ Non-domestic Rates: Solar Power

Mr Roger Godsiff: [49675]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if his Department will examine the effect of the revaluation of business rates for self-owned rooftop solar power on the solar industry taking account of the draft list of rateable values, published by the Valuation Office Agency.

Mr Marcus Jones:

Business rates are based on valuations from the Valuation Office Agency and we do not intervene in their independent assessments. We have proposed a £3.4 billion transitional relief scheme to ensure that no ratepayer is unfairly penalised by the 2017 revaluation.

■ Written Questions: Government Responses

Mr Jim Cunningham: [56904]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 28 October 2016 to Question 50216, when he plans to provide a full reply to that Question.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The department will provide an answer to the hon Member for Coventry South in due course.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Mobile Phones: Radio Frequencies

Daniel Kawczynski:

[\[56388\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what progress has been made by National Trust and National Parks England in providing proposals to her Department that outline better engagement with communications providers to assist in tackling mobile not sports since February 2016.

Matt Hancock:

We engage with the National Trust and National Parks England on mobile and broadband issues. We remain committed to improving connectivity across the UK and in November reforms to the mobile planning laws came into force that make it easier to install mobile infrastructure.

■ Pornography: Children

Karen Lumley:

[\[56266\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions she has had with non-governmental organisations on children's access to pornographic material.

Tracey Crouch:

My Department has had discussions with a variety of non-governmental organisations on children's access to online pornographic material including charities and support groups, IT sector, regulators, payments companies and advertisers, pornography providers and the tech industry.

■ Tech City UK and Tech North

Louise Haigh:

[\[52415\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, how much funding the Government has spent on (a) Tech City and (b) Tech North to date.

Matt Hancock:

The government has supported Tech City through two separate initiatives:

From April 2011 to 31 March 2014, UK Trade and Investment (now the Department for International Trade) funded the Tech City Investment Organisation (TCIO) to a total of £5,590,000. TCIO's remit was to attract inward investment into the 'Tech City' cluster in East London, and to support companies in the cluster to expand internationally.

In January 2014, Tech City UK was set up as a company limited by guarantee. Tech North was established in 2015/16 FY as part of Tech City UK, and supports the digital economy across the Northern Powerhouse. Up to October 2016, the Government has funded Tech City UK to a total of £8,742,061, of which £2,734,831 was for Tech North.

DEFENCE

■ Army: Recruitment

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[56526\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many and what proportion of recruits enlisting into the Army (a) under and (b) over the age of 18 were enlisted into (i) the infantry and (ii) any other frontline role in each of the last 10 years.

Mike Penning:

The table below shows the number and percentage of recruits under and over the age of 18 who were recruited into the infantry:

FINANCIAL YEAR	AGE GROUP	INFANTRY ENLISTMENTS	% OF TOTAL ARMY ENLISTMENTS
2007-08	Under 18	1,720	36.8%
	18 and Over	2,670	35.1%
2008-09	Under 18	1,640	37.7%
	18 and Over	3,240	38.4%
2009-10	Under 18	1,330	37.2%
	18 and Over	3,270	37.3%
2010-11	Under 18	1,100	46.0%
	18 and Over	2,220	41.1%
2011-12	Under 18	1,300	44.6%
	18 and Over	3,270	44.9%
2012-13	Under 18	930	40.5%
	18 and Over	2,910	40.7%
2013-14	Under 18	690	39.1%
	18 and Over	1,380	30.9%

2014-15	Under 18	720	9.8%
	18 and Over	1,980	35.9%
2015-16	Under 18	730	40.8%
	18 and Over	1,960	34.0%
1 April to 1 October 2016	Under 18	490	40.9%
	18 and Over	990	32.1%

The Army does not define roles as frontline or non-frontline. All soldiers, regardless of capbadge, are trained for a wide range of operational tasks and environments, including combat.

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[56737\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether it remains the Government's policy to restrict army applicants aged under 16 years and six months from enlisting for frontline combat and driving roles.

Mark Lancaster:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave her on 6 June 2016 to Question 38553. The Army does not define roles as frontline or non-frontline. All soldiers, regardless of capbadge, are trained for a wide range of operational tasks and environments, including combat. Established procedures are in place to ensure that Service personnel under the age of 18 are not deployed on operations.

Attachments:

1. 38553 - WQnA extract on Armed Forces: Young People
[20160606_38553_Armed_Forces_Young_People.docx]

■ **Military Aircraft: Air Misses**

Douglas Chapman:

[\[56521\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many airprox incidents there have been by (a) category and (b) location in the last 12 months.

Mike Penning:

The UK Airprox Board publish all reports and analysis on their website at <https://www.airproxboard.org.uk/home/>. For ease of reference the attached table identifies the total number within each category and by geographic area for 2016. There are a number of reports which are unassessed as they remain under-investigation, these are included under category U.

Due to the range of UK military aviation activity that occurs overseas I have also included data on Airprox occurrences involving UK military aircraft operating outside UK Airspace, as assessed by the Military Aviation Authority.

Attachments:

1. 56521 - Ministry of Defence Airprox Incidents [56521 - Airprox Incidents by Category and Location in the Last 12 Months.docx]

■ **Ministry of Defence: Equal Pay**

Jake Berry: [\[56599\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans his Department has to publish information on the gender pay gap among its employees.

Mark Lancaster:

The Ministry of Defence, including all of its Trading Fund Agencies and Arm's Length Bodies that employ more than 250 individuals, is working towards publishing gender pay gap details by November 2017. This is in accordance with the requirements and timelines set out in the proposed changes to the Specific Duties Regulations.

■ **Ministry of Defence: Travel**

Tim Farron: [\[56228\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much his Department spent on travel that was not standard class in each of the last five years.

Mark Lancaster:

Ministry of Defence (MOD) expenditure, by financial year (FY), on non-standard class rail and air travel, in each of the last five years, is in the table below.

Non-standard class travel expenditure (£million)

FY2011-12	FY2012-13	FY2013-14	FY2014-15	FY2015-16
£15.541	£14.183	£12.771	£13.948	£12.122

Travel by MOD staff makes a key contribution to achieving defence objectives. The MOD has sites in many parts of the country and internationally, and staff need to travel between them to conduct business.

Non-standard class travel is subject to a rigorous approvals process. It is only authorised exceptionally, for example, where there are medical reasons or where significant business has to be undertaken following an overnight flight. All staff incurring business expenses of any kind must demonstrate the highest standards of financial propriety, ensuring that any travel is undertaken in the most economical way possible, taking into account both cost and officials' time.

Expenditure on non-standard class travel is reducing, as is overall MOD travel spend. We have achieved savings of around £60 million a year in non-operational travel since 2009-10 and plan to make further savings over the rest of this Parliament. This will be delivered in a number of ways, including by making greater use of video and audio conferencing.

■ Russia: Tanks

Mr Philip Hollobone: [\[56687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the capabilities of the new Russian, T-14, Armata main battle tank.

Mike Penning:

The Russian T-14 Armata is an expensive new generation of tank, its technical capabilities are assessed to be a significant improvement over its predecessors.

■ Single Source Regulations Office

Douglas Chapman: [\[56331\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he expects the Single Service Regulations Office report on wage inflation to be published.

Harriett Baldwin:

The Secretary of State commissioned a report from the Single Source Regulations Office on wage inflation to give him a better understanding of a significant component of cost in Defence contracts. The Secretary of State is considering this report, and which parts of it, if any, should be published.

■ Submarines: Decommissioning

Tim Farron: [\[56838\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Royal Navy submarines are due to be scrapped; and for how long those submarines have been decommissioned.

Harriett Baldwin:

There are 27 submarines due to be dismantled as part of the Submarine Dismantling Programme. The oldest submarine was retired from service in 1980. 19 have been decommissioned and a further eight submarines that are still in service will also be in scope.

■ Warships: Wrecks

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[56522\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, on what date his Department learned of the disappearance of HMS (a) Exeter, (b) Encounter and (c) Electra.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[56523\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to protect war graves in overseas waters.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[56524\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what representations his Department has made to the Indonesian government on the disappearance of (a) HMS Exeter, (b) HMS Encounter and (c) HMS Electra.

Mike Penning:

The Government of the United Kingdom would strongly condemn any desecration of any site of maritime military graves. By invoking the principle of Sovereign Immunity, and by designating specific vessels under the Protection of Wrecks Act 1973 and the Protection of Maritime Remains Act 1986, we endeavour to protect these important sites where we are able.

Where we have evidence of desecration of the wrecks of Royal Navy vessels, we will take appropriate action, including working with regional Governments and partners to prevent inappropriate activity at such sites. It should be appreciated however that, given the vast locations of Royal Navy wrecks around the world, that there are limitations on what protection we can provide.

The Department became aware of the possible illegal salvage of items from HMS Exeter, Encounter and Electra on 8 November 2016.

As is appropriate, Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials have been in contact with the Indonesian Government, expressing our serious concerns and requesting that the reports are fully investigated.

EDUCATION■ **Academies****Karen Lumley:**[\[56265\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what support her Department offers to schools making applications to the Regional Academies Growth Fund.

Edward Timpson:

Trusts wanting to apply for the Regional Academy Growth Fund (RAGF) can seek advice on the application process and priorities from their Regional Schools Commissioner's (RSC) office.

Applications to the RAGF are open to established Academy Trusts and Multi-Academy Trusts. Guidance, contact details for RSCs and the RAGF application form can be found on the Government's website, at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/regional-academy-growth-fund>.

■ Child Arrangements Orders

Richard Fuller: [56500]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many child contact centres operated in England in each of the last five years for which figures are available.

Edward Timpson:

Child contact centres are run by a variety of independent organisations that form the membership of the National Association of Child Contact Centres (NACCC), along with affiliated members such as family lawyers, CAFCASS, CAFCASS CYMRU and the judiciary. As such this information is not collected by the Department for Education. However, the NACCC has a 'find a centre' feature on its website at:

<http://www.naccc.org.uk/>.

■ Department for Education: Research

Dan Jarvis: [56914]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much her Department has spent on evaluation studies in each of the last five years.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Department for Education commissions external organisations to carry out policy research and evaluation. All of the commissioned research and evaluation feeds into policy strategy, development and refinement.

We follow Government Social Research (GSR) commissioning and publication protocol and ensure that research and evaluation products are publicly available and releases them promptly upon completion.

The following link shows the total expenditure on policy research and evaluation since 2011:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/governmentpublicsectorandtaxes/researchanddevelopmentexpenditure/bulletins/ukgovernmentexpenditureonscienceengineeringandtechnology/2014>

■ Department for Education: Travel

Tim Farron: [56229]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much her Department spent on travel that was not standard class in each of the last five years.

Caroline Dinenage:

The table below outlines 'non-standard' travel in each of the last five financial years.

Non-standard travel includes:

Rail (incl. Eurostar Bookings): First Class, Business Class, Premium Economy & Mixed bookings (multiple ticket bookings for which we are unable separate the class of travel).

Flights: First Class, Business Class & Premium Economy

The Department's Policy is to allow First Class bookings where;

- Disability or health reasons mean that an employee would not be able to secure suitable facilities in standard class;
- There are good grounds for security concerns – e.g. significant risk of unwarranted attention from the Press or the public;
- Colleagues are travelling with a Minister who is travelling first class;
- The overall cost of the first class ticket is less than the overall cheapest ticket for standard class.

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION

Financial Year	NON STANDARD CLASS TRAVEL SPEND
2011-12	£191,146.28
2012-13	£182,339.93
2013-14	£224,505.75
2014-15	£225,776.31
2015-16	£129,944.07

■ Department for Education: Work Experience

Louise Haigh: [\[56304\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many unpaid internships there are in her Department.

Caroline Dinenage:

The department does not have any unpaid internships.

■ History of Art: GCE A-level

Michael Gove: [\[56624\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many state schools offered History of Art A-level in academic year 2015-16; how many such schools were comprehensive schools; and if she will place a list of those schools in the Library.

Nick Gibb:

Provisional 2016 national figures show that there were 12 state-funded schools where at least one student had been entered for A level history of art, nine of which were comprehensive schools. The list of these schools will be placed in the House library.

As I announced in a Written Ministerial Statement on 1 December, the exam board Pearson has confirmed that it intends to develop a new A level in history of art for teaching from September 2017.

■ Primary Education: Disadvantaged

Royston Smith:

[\[56159\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to increase the number of (a) Russell Group graduates and (b) graduates with a first class degree working in primary education in deprived communities.

Nick Gibb:

The Government encourages top graduates to enter teaching by providing high-value or otherwise preferential bursaries to first class degree holders in primary education and in many secondary subjects.

The Government continues to support the growth of Teach First, a two-year teacher training programme recruiting high quality graduates. This includes 21% with first class degrees and 71% from Russell Group universities in 2016/2017, to train in primary and secondary schools in some of the most deprived areas of the country.

■ Primary Education: Sports

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[56333\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how she plans to measure the effect of the new Primary PE and Sport Premium on children's activity levels.

Edward Timpson:

We want all pupils to be healthy and active. That is why we have provided over £600M of ring-fenced funding since 2013 through the Primary PE and Sport Premium and have doubled funding to £320M a year from autumn 2017.

We know this funding is having an effect. Independent research found that the most common use for the PE and sport premium was to up-skill and train existing staff, and that since the introduction of the PE and sport premium there has been an increase in the number of schools with a specialist PE teacher from 30 per cent before the premium to 46 per cent in 2014/15. The research also found that 87% of schools reported that the quality of PE teaching had increased, and 84% that there had been an increase in pupil engagement in PE during curricular time, and in the levels of participation in extra-curricular activities. Schools also reported almost universally that the PE and sport premium had had a positive impact on physical fitness, healthy lifestyles, and the behaviour of pupils.

We continue to work with the sector to determine how best to further measure the effect of the doubled premium, and details will be announced in due course. At a local level, schools will continue to report online how they are spending their funding, which includes reporting on the impact that the funding is having on pupils' PE and sport participation.

■ Pupils: Personal Records

Angela Rayner: [49953]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will publish the agreement between her Department and the Home Office on the sharing of data from the national pupil database.

Nick Gibb:

We have today released the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to those who have requested it and we have laid a copy in the House Library.

■ School Meals

Judith Cummins: [56268]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she plans to introduce guidelines on nutritional standards for packed lunches in schools.

Edward Timpson:

The Government supports measures to ensure that children eat a healthy, nutritious meal at lunchtime. This is why we set out, through legislation, the minimum standards for food provided by schools. Governing boards are responsible for their school meals policies, including packed lunches and implementing these effectively. We have no current plans to legislate for packed lunches.

However, we want to make it easier for parents to feel confident that they are preparing balanced, nutritious lunches for their children. Further information such as recipes, tips and swap suggestions that are practical and affordable for parents are available on the Change4Life website at: <https://www.nhs.uk/change4life-beta/healthier-lunchboxes>. We will continue to work with Public Health England to promote healthy packed lunches.

■ School Standards and Framework Act 1998

Mr Graham Allen: [56128]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Equality and Human Rights Commission report, Religion or belief - is the law working, published in December 2016, if she will obtain independent legal advice to establish whether sections 60 (4) and (5) of the School Standards Framework Act (SSFA) comply with the EU Employment Equality Directive Article 4 (2) and whether exceptions allowed under the SSFA are legitimate and proportionate.

Nick Gibb:

The Department has already given this issue careful scrutiny and is confident that the provisions in the School Standards and Frameworks Act 1998 are lawful and comply with the EU Employment Equality Directive Article 4 (2). This issue has also been considered by the European Commission, which agrees with the Department's interpretation of the legislation.

Employment, equality and human rights law applies to the employment practices of all schools, and they must act reasonably and proportionately. We have not been made aware of any firm evidence that schools are acting outside of this framework and have

not been alerted to any alleged faith-discrimination cases from members of the school workforce.

It is important that faith schools are able to maintain their particular religious ethos and deliver the form of education which they have historically provided and which parents value.

■ Schools: Bristol West

Thangam Debbonaire:

[56753]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps the Government plans to take to protect state maintained schools in Bristol West from the effect on their budgets of rising (a) staff and (b) other costs and real-terms funding reductions in 2016-17 and in 2017-18.

Nick Gibb:

The Government recognises the importance of investing in education, and at the Spending Review confirmed a real terms protection for the core schools budget. Throughout this Parliament, the money available for our schools will increase as pupil numbers rise.

As with other public services, we recognise that schools are facing cost pressures from salary increases, the introduction of the National Living Wage, increases to employers' National Insurance and Teachers' Pension Scheme contributions and general inflation.

We are introducing a National Funding Formula to give greater certainty on funding and allow schools to plan ahead effectively. This is to ensure that resources are matched fairly and consistently across the country to school and pupil need.

We are also committed to providing support for schools to improve their levels of efficiency. In January we published a wide range of tools and support available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/schools-financial-health-and-efficiency>, and we will launch a school buying strategy to support schools to save over £1bn a year by 2019-20 on their non-staff spend.

■ Schools: Disadvantaged

Stephen Timms:

[56815]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to increase the number of (a) Russell Group graduates and (b) graduates with a first class degree working in (i) secondary schools and (ii) sixth form colleges in deprived communities.

Nick Gibb:

The Government encourages top graduates to enter teaching by providing high-value or otherwise preferential bursaries to first-class degree-holders in primary and many secondary subjects.

The Government continues to support the growth of Teach First, a two-year teacher training programme recruiting high quality graduates. This includes 21% with first class degrees and 71% from Russell Group universities in 2016/17, to train in schools in some of the most deprived areas of the country. These include schools with sixth-forms.

■ Schools: Sports

Michael Gove: [\[56628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the effect of PE and Sports Premium funding on participation in competitive sport; and if she will make a statement.

Edward Timpson:

We want all pupils to be healthy and active. Through the Primary PE and Sport Premium, the government has invested over £600m of ring-fenced funding since 2013 to primary schools to provide additional and sustainable improvements to PE and sport.

In independent research, 70% of schools reported that participation in inter-school competitions had increased since the premium was introduced, while 53% reported an increase in intra-school competitions. Furthermore, 87% of schools reported that the quality of PE teaching had increased, and 84% that there had been an increase in pupil engagement in PE during curricular time, and in the levels of participation in extra-curricular activities.

We know that there is more for us to do. That is why we have committed to doubling the funding for the Primary PE and Sport Premium to £320m a year from September 2017.

■ Sex and Relationship Education

Mrs Sharon Hodgson: [\[56782\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when she plans to identify further actions the Government will take to ensure all children and young people have access to Sex and Relationships Education.

Edward Timpson:

Sex education is already compulsory in secondary maintained schools, and the Government is clear that all schools should make provision for high quality, age-appropriate sex and relationship education (SRE) which is a vital part of preparing young people for life in modern Britain.

The Secretary of State agrees that we need to look again at the case for further action on PSHE and sex education provision, with particular consideration to improving quality and accessibility. We are actively considering what steps we could take, including whether to update the existing SRE guidance.

■ Written Questions: Government Responses

Justin Madders: [\[55080\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when she plans to answer written Questions 52771, 52770 and 52769, tabled on 14 November 2016 by the hon. Member for Ellesmere Port and Neston.

Nick Gibb:

Parliamentary questions 52771, 52770 and 52769 were answered on 09 December 2016.

Ian Austin:

[\[55583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when she plans to answer Question 54622, tabled on 23 November 2016 by the hon. Member for Dudley North.

Nick Gibb:

Parliamentary question 54622 was answered on 09 December 2016.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Travel

Tim Farron:

[\[56230\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much her Department spent on travel that was not standard class in each of the last five years.

George Eustice:

The table below sets out expenditure on rail and air travel that was not standard class during financial years 2011/12 to 2015/16, and as a proportion of spend on all ticket types.

	2014/15				2015/16
FINANCIAL YEAR	2011/12 (£000)	2012/13 (£000)	2013/14 (£000)	(£000)	(£000)
Expenditure	267	366	399	303	150
Proportion of expenditure	19%	21%	18%	13%	8%

These figures include the following classes of travel: business, first, mixed, other and premium economy.

The figures up until May 2012 are likely to be understated since they only take information from our travel supplier's system. During this period it was possible for non-standard travel to be booked via a different method.

■ Fisheries: North Sea

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[56465\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment her Department has made of future levels of fish stocks in the North Sea.

George Eustice:

The International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) assess the state of EU fish stocks annually, including future stock status (levels). The most recent ICES' advice for

the majority of fish stocks in the UK and European waters, including the North Sea, was released in June 2016 with updates released in November 2016. Their advice can be found on the ICES website.

This advice informs decisions on 2017 fishing opportunities taken at the December 2016 EU Fisheries Council, and supports the UK's objectives of bringing fish stocks to their Maximum Sustainable Yield by 2020 at the latest.

Some commercial stocks in the North Sea have recovered (e.g. plaice, saithe) or are in the process of recovering. While the North Sea cod stock is still rebuilding we are now close to fishing it sustainably and able to bring it under the landing obligation as from next year.

■ Food: Labelling

Mr Laurence Robertson: [\[56420\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she is taking to increase take-up by supermarkets of the Red Tractor Scheme.

George Eustice:

Defra encourages membership of food assurance schemes by farmers. Such schemes can help to build consumer confidence and gain new market opportunities for producers who can comply with specific health, welfare and/or environmental standards.

We are working with third party assurance bodies, including Red Tractor, to increase the use of earned recognition. For example, welfare inspection selection processes have been adjusted to ensure that the likelihood of farmers who are members of certain accredited farm assurance or organic schemes being inspected is significantly reduced, and operational trials for new areas of recognition are underway.

EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION

■ Department for Exiting the European Union: Working Hours

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[56894\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what estimate he has made of the average number of hours worked by civil servants in his Department since it was created; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[56895\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, how many employees in his Department have opted out of the EU working time directive; and if he will make a statement.

Mr David Jones:

We have an enthusiastic and dedicated staff who are fully applied to the task at hand. The Department follows the guidelines set out in Civil Service policies. Information on

working hours is managed locally. The Civil Service is committed to ensuring that staff maintain a work-life balance.

Please see the link to Gov.uk on the EU working time directive:
<https://www.gov.uk/maximum-weekly-working-hours>

■ Health Services and Social Services

Justin Madders:

[56389]

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, pursuant to the Answer of 5 December 2016 to Question 55030, on health services and social services, if he will publish the findings of his Department's work with the Department for Health prior to the submission of notice of intention to leave the EU under Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty.

Mr Robin Walker:

We are continuing to work closely with the Department of Health to build a detailed understanding of how withdrawing from the EU will affect health and social care. We will set out as much as is possible as long as it does not undermine our negotiating position.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

■ Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Travel

Tim Farron:

[56231]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how much his Department spent on travel that was not standard class in each of the last five years.

Sir Alan Duncan:

The FCO's spending on non standard class travel is detailed in the table below as First class rail and Business class air travel. The data represents travel originating in the UK and booked through the Government's nominated travel agency.

	FIRST CLASS RAIL	BUSINESS CLASS AIR
2010/11	£38,081	£4,785,512
2011/12	£24,455	£5,167,379
2012/13	£19,724	£6,103,300
2013/14	£1,590	£5,421,348
2014/15	£3,057	£4,496,046
2015/16	£2,597	£4,629,774
2016/17 (to end November 2016)	£142	£2,011,741

FCO Policy is that public transport should be used whenever possible.

FCO staff travelling by air are required to book the lowest standard fare possible, subject to budget holder approval. As the FCO is present in over 170 countries there is a need for long distance travel, but FCO officials may fly business class only if the flight is ten hours or longer, although there are occasional exceptions to this rule.

All FCO staff are directed to use standard class for rail travel unless there are exceptional circumstances e.g. illness, disability or where First class facilities are essential for working while travelling. In these exceptional circumstances, prior line management approval must be given.

■ Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Work Experience

Louise Haigh: [\[56307\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many unpaid internships there are in his Department.

Sir Alan Duncan:

All interns who join the Graduate Internship scheme are paid.

HEALTH

■ Agency Nurses

Diana Johnson: [\[56796\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many NHS trusts employed the maximum possible number of nursing agency staff within the spending limits set for 2015-16; and how many have done so to date in 2016-17.

Mr Philip Dunne:

National Health Service trusts are responsible for taking the appropriate action to allow them to staff wards in a way that ensures quality patient care and delivers value for money including decisions about how and when to make use of staff employed by agencies. The Department monitors total spend on all agency staff employed by NHS trusts, however this data is not broken down by staff group.

The Department has introduced a package of measures to support trusts to reduce their use of agency staff, including price caps limiting the amount a trust can pay to an agency for a temporary member of staff. The measures have had a significant impact - across the country trusts are using the price caps to negotiate lower rates and secure a better deal for taxpayers. The NHS spent £300 million less than it was projected to in 2015/16 with further savings forecast for the current financial year.

■ Autism

Mrs Cheryl Gillan: [\[56882\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the autism referral to treatment pathway announced in the Five Year Forward View on Mental Health is being developed; and for what reasons it was not included in NHS England's implementation plan for the Five Year Forward View.

David Mowat:

NHS England's Implementation Plan for the Five Year Forward View for Mental Health was published in July 2016. It described the national programme of work that will be taken forward to deliver the recommendations of the Mental Health Task Force. This will include work to develop an evidence based treatment pathway for people who have co-occurring mental health needs and neurodevelopmental conditions such as autism. In parallel, the Department plans to work with partners to improve tracking of referral to assessment times for an autism diagnosis.

■ Cancer: Medical Treatments

Jim Shannon: [\[56853\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what information his Department holds on the timetable for availability of molecular PIM1 on the NHS.

David Mowat:

To better understand different cancers and develop new treatments, researchers are identifying and exploring the numerous promising molecular and bio-marker 'targets' in many cancers. PIM1 is an example of a promising target which is currently being explored.

The timeline for introducing promising molecular and bio-marker tests, such as for PIM1, into routine use in the National Health Service in England does vary. Usually this is related to the development and approvals process for linked treatments. The timeline for introducing PIM1 testing is at present unclear because the trials of treatments with this target in blood cancers are at a very early stage and those in breast cancer have not begun yet.

■ Care Homes: Nurses

Anne Marie Morris: [\[56902\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether his Department has made an assessment of the effect of the changes in the cost of funded nursing care on the budgets of community care groups.

Anne Marie Morris: [\[56903\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether his Department has made an assessment of the effect of the changes in the cost of funded nursing care on the commissioning decisions made by community care groups.

David Mowat:

In July 2016 the National Health Service-funded Nursing Care rate for 2016/17 was increased to £156.25 on an interim basis. This was backdated to 1 April 2016 and was an increase of 40% over the 2015/16 rate.

Clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) are responsible for the funding provided to nursing care homes to support the provision of nursing care by a registered nurse and for commissioning decisions to meet the needs of the individual.

The Department considered the impact of the increase to the NHS-funded Nursing Care rate at the time of the review. The total cost of the increase to the rate of NHS-funded Nursing Care in 2016/17 was estimated at around £190 million.

■ Cervical Cancer: Health Education

Paula Sherriff: [\[56798\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what plans the Government has to fund and run national awareness campaigns on cervical cancer prevention.

David Mowat:

Public Health England's (PHE) 'Be Clear on Cancer' campaigns aim to raise awareness of the signs and symptoms of specific cancers, and to encourage those with symptoms to see their doctor promptly. The decision on which cancers should be the focus of 'Be Clear on Cancer' campaigns is informed by a steering group, whose members include primary and secondary care clinicians, and key voluntary sector organisations.

PHE is currently developing a generic approach which will enable us to cover a range of symptoms in one campaign. A regional pilot campaign to raise awareness of a range of abdominal symptoms that can indicate a wider number of cancers, including cervical, and the need to visit the doctor promptly with these symptoms will run from 9 February until 31 March 2017 in the East and West Midlands. This work has been developed with the help of a number of experts, including clinicians and charities.

As usual, the regional pilot will be evaluated and results will help inform decisions about whether to expand this campaign nationally in the future.

■ Cosmetics: Regulation

Jim Shannon: [\[56857\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what recent assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of regulation of the cosmetics industry.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The *Government Response to the Review of the Regulation of Cosmetic Interventions* was published in February 2014. It accepted the majority of the recommendations of the independent Review chaired by Sir Bruce Keogh, which published its report in February 2013 with recommendations on improving the quality of care, informing and empowering the public, and ensuring there were resolutions and redress available when interventions go wrong. A work programme was put in place, with relevant partners, to

take forward the recommendations, which are now starting to come into effect to help improve standards for practitioners and the public.

In April 2016, the Royal College of Surgeons (RCS) published *Professional Standards for Cosmetic Surgery* for clinicians working in the cosmetic field. It also launched a patient information hub in June 2016 and has set in place a minimum dataset to assist the collection and collation of data related to cosmetic surgical activity. The General Medical Council (GMC) published new guidance for doctors performing cosmetic procedures which came into effect from 1 June 2016. The Care Quality Commission has also developed a new inspection framework which will take account of the new RCS and GMC requirements.

Earlier in the year, Health Education England (HEE) published qualification requirements for practitioners performing non-surgical cosmetic procedures. A Joint Council of Cosmetic Practitioners has recently been established that will look to build on the work of HEE by developing qualification requirements to deliver non-surgical cosmetic procedures, and aim to improve the standards and safety of the cosmetic industry. A breast and cosmetic implant registry was launched in October 2016 by NHS Digital, and NHS England aims to improve the reporting of adverse incidents and device failure to support overall improvement. In addition, NHS Choices is contributing information and advice on cosmetic interventions for the public.

■ Dementia

Jim Shannon:

[\[56375\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the implications for his Department's policies are of the relative increase in the number of people dying as a result of dementia as opposed to heart disease.

David Mowat:

In February 2015, we published the Challenge on Dementia 2020 to ensure that dementia care, support, awareness and research are transformed. By 2020, we want to see greater awareness and understanding of factors that can increase the risk of developing dementia and how people can reduce their risk by living a more healthy lifestyle. Public Health England has lead responsibility and will continue to reduce the incidence and prevalence of dementia through its work on initiatives such as the NHS Health Check and reducing health inequalities.

We have an ageing population with people living for longer and with more complex co-morbid health conditions. We have made great strides in the number of people with dementia receiving a diagnosis. Timely diagnosis unlocks the door to appropriate care and treatment.

To ensure a coordinated approach to supporting people with dementia, we published the 'Joint Declaration on Dementia Post-Diagnostic Care and Support' in January 2016 signed by leaders across the health, social care, local government and voluntary sector organisations. It sets out our joint ambition to improve the quality of post-diagnostic

care and defines the principles that organisations should take into account when providing high quality care and support for people with dementia and their carers.

On 5 July 2016, we set out our 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.

■ Dental Services: Children

Judith Cummins:

[56272]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment his Department has made of the factors that limit children's access to NHS dental services; whether those factors differ in different parts of the UK; and what steps his Department is taking to increase such access.

David Mowat:

NHS England has a duty to commission primary dental services to meet need throughout England.

NHS England is introducing a programme of dental practice-based initiatives that will assist parents/guardians to improve the oral health of under five year olds. The programme will focus on all children, particularly those who are not currently visiting the dentist, for evidence based preventive advice about reducing sugar intake and increasing the exposure to fluoride on teeth. There will be patient and practice level interventions alongside work to strengthen relationships with local communities.

The programme intends to complement existing local initiatives and complement the work of the Child Oral Health Improvement Programme Board. Further work is being undertaken to develop the programme.

Public Health England supports local authorities and NHS England with their respective roles for child oral health improvement and dental access.

At the British Dental Association conference on 27 May the then Minister of State for Community and Social Care (Alistair Burt), announced that he had agreed with NHS England that they will work in 10 high needs areas within England to look at more creative ways of using their commissioning expenditure to improve children's oral health. These areas will be announced in the new year.

■ Exercise: Children

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[56290]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of inactivity on children's academic performance.

Nicola Blackwood:

Generally, researchers have tended to investigate whether there is a correlation between physical activity and academic performance (and not inactivity). A systematic review of the literature did conclude that there is a positive long term association with moderate to vigorous physical activity on academic attainment in some subjects.

■ General Practitioners

Steve McCabe:

[\[56319\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 8 November 2016 to Question 51861, what the current GP to patient ratio is in England; how many more patients he estimates there will be by 2021; and what estimate he has made of the expected GP to patient ratio by 2021.

David Mowat:

As at 31 March 2016, there were 64.3 full-time equivalent general practitioners (GPs) per 100,000 registered population.

The Department does not hold an estimate of patient numbers in 2021, or of the expected GP to patient ratio by 2021.

The Government has a commitment to provide an additional 5,000 doctors working in general practice by 2020. In order to achieve this, there will be increasing GP training recruitment, a major national and international recruitment campaign, bursaries and post-certificate of completion of training fellowships in hard to recruit areas, and GPs will be encouraged to return to general practice.

■ Health

Jim Shannon:

[\[56378\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether his Department plans to produce a strategy for healthy living for the NHS.

Mr Philip Dunne:

There is already a strategy in place for healthy living for the National Health Service. Over the past few years, NHS organisations have been encouraged to improve the health and wellbeing of their staff through the implementation of five high impact changes (HICs).

The HICs are: developing local evidence-based improvement plans; with strong visible leadership; supported by improved management capability; with access to better, local high-quality accredited occupational health services; and where all staff are encouraged and enabled to take more personal responsibility.

The above work has since been complemented by the launch, last year, of NHS England's £5 million initiative to improve NHS staff health and wellbeing which includes "a major drive for improved NHS staff health, led by a group of leading NHS hospital, mental health, ambulance, community and clinical commissioning group (CCG) employers, in partnership with NHS Employers and Public Health England".

This year, NHS England introduced an employer incentive scheme, a CQUIN (Commissioning for Quality and Innovation) challenging NHS organisations to improve the health and wellbeing of their staff through the introduction of employer led schemes. From 2017 to 2019, a two year CQUIN sets a goal for NHS trusts to 'Improve

the support available to NHS Staff to help promote their health and wellbeing in order for them to remain healthy and well’.

NHS trusts agree their plans to improve the health of their workforce with their local CCG which are best placed to respond to specific inquiries.

■ Health Education England: Finance

Diana Johnson: [\[56795\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how much funding Health Education England has received in each year since 2012; and how much has been allocated for 2020-21.

Mr Philip Dunne:

In 2012/13, the strategic health authorities nationally were allocated £4.879 billion to spend on education and training in the National Health Service. This budget was transferred to Health Education England (HEE) from 1 April 2013 when it assumed full operational responsibilities for workforce planning, education and training.

From 2013 to 2016, HEE received the following annual budget allocations from the Department: £4.867 billion in 2013/14; £4.933 billion in 2014/15; and £4.912 billion in 2015/16.

For the current year, HEE’s revenue allocation is £4.995 billion as at 31 August 2016. Further in-year capital and revenue allocations will be made to HEE later in this financial year.

HEE’s budget for 2017/18 and beyond is yet to be determined through the Departmental business planning process.

■ Health Service Medical Supplies (Costs) Bill 2016-17

Derek Thomas: [\[56382\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, for what reasons the ambit of the Health Service Medical Supplies (Costs) Bill 2016 was changed to include medical supplies other than pharmaceuticals during the drafting stage of that Bill.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The scope of the Bill did not change during drafting stage to add medical supplies. It was always intended to cover health service medicines and health service medical supplies.

■ Health Services: Temporary Employment

Justin Madders: [\[56360\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the average cost to the public purse per day is of agency staff employed through (a) NHS Professionals Ltd. and (b) the private sector.

Mr Philip Dunne:

NHS Professionals does not employ or supply agency staff. Its business consists of the supply of bank workers, many of whom also have substantive jobs with National Health

Service organisations. Bank staff rates of pay are broadly comparable with standard NHS pay scales.

The Department does not calculate the average cost per day of agency staff employed through the private sector. In 2015/16 NHS trusts spent £3.7 billion on agency workers.

The Department has introduced a package of measures to support trusts to reduce their use of agency staff, including price caps limiting the amount a trust can pay to an agency for a temporary member of staff. The measures have had a significant impact – across the country trusts are using the price caps to negotiate lower rates and secure a better deal for taxpayers. The NHS spent £300 million less than it was projected to in 2015/16 with further savings forecast for the current financial year.

■ Heartlands Hospital

Jess Phillips:

[\[56747\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what progress has been made on recruitment for the new paediatric neuromuscular consultant post to be based at Birmingham Heartlands Hospital.

David Mowat:

The information requested is not available centrally. It may be obtained from Heart of England NHS Foundation Trust. We have written to the Rt. Hon. Jacqui Smith, Chair of the Trust, informing her of the hon. Member's enquiry. She will reply shortly and a copy of the letter will be placed in the Library.

■ Hospitals: Standards

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[56391\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many and which hospitals inspected by the Care Quality Commission in 2015-16 did not meet the requirements set out in Regulation 14 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulation Activities) Regulations 2014.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) is the independent regulator of health and adult social care in England.

The CQC records breaches of the regulations on the basis of whether it has taken enforcement action in respect of a breach. In the case of Regulation 14 the CQC has advised that its records show that it has not taken any enforcement action for the period 1 April 2015 to date for a breach of Regulation 14. The 1 April 2015 is when Regulation 14 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) 2014, came into force.

It might be the case that the CQC has taken enforcement action based on wider safety concerns, part of which Regulation 14 might have been considered.

■ Infant Foods

Mrs Sharon Hodgson: [\[56800\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, when his Department plans to commission the next Infant Feeding Survey.

Mr Philip Dunne:

There are no plans to commission a further Infant Feeding Survey (IFS). Following the discontinuation of IFS, the Department has been exploring with Public Health England and other key stakeholders alternative methods and sources of information to monitor the impact of its policy on infant feeding.

In future, the Maternity and Children's Dataset will regularly capture data on breastfeeding initiation and prevalence from all women using NHS services rather than using a survey sample. This means that local service providers and commissioners can have up-to-date (for example, quarterly) information about outcomes for their local populations, enabling service provision to be more agile, responsive and targeted.

Breastfeeding is also included as an indicator in the Public Health Outcomes Framework so that the improvements can be tracked, and action taken as needed.

■ Leeds and York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

Rachael Maskell: [\[56739\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, with reference to the findings of the Care Quality Commission in its quality reports on the Leeds and York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, published in November 2016, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of governance arrangements at that NHS Foundation Trust.

Mr Philip Dunne:

We expect the Leeds and York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust to take the action necessary to meet the requirements identified by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Commissioners of services, NHS Improvement and the CQC all have responsibility for assessing the adequacy of governance arrangements at the Trust. The CQC will continue to meet the Trust to assess progress, including matters in relation to governance arrangements.

■ Neuromuscular Disorders: Paediatrics

Andrew Gwynne: [\[56512\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to increase specialist neuromuscular consultant support for children; and if he will make a statement.

Andrew Gwynne: [\[56518\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many specialist neuromuscular consultants were employed by the NHS in each period from 2012.

Andrew Gwynne:

[56519]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many specialist paediatric neuromuscular consultants were employed by the NHS in each period from 2012.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The information requested is not collected. NHS Digital collects data on the number of neurologists working in the National Health Service in England by grade, but not to the level of specialist or specialist paediatric neuromuscular consultants.

As the national body for education and training, Health Education England (HEE) provides national leadership for and co-ordinates workforce planning and education commissioning activity to ensure that sufficient numbers of skilled workers are available in England for the NHS.

HEE reports that the numbers currently undertaking neurology training are sufficient to ensure the consultant workforce supply continues to grow at current rates over the next five years. Neuromuscular is part of the specialty training for neurologists. HEE does not plan to the level of the sub specialty requested.

■ Neuromuscular Disorders: South Yorkshire

Angela Smith:

[56618]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to increase psychology support for adults with muscle-wasting conditions in south Yorkshire.

David Mowat:

NHS England is responsible for commissioning specialised neurological services, including services for patients with neuromuscular disorders. NHS England has published a service specification for neurological care that sets out what providers must have in place to offer evidence-based, safe and effective services.

The specification can be found at the following link:

www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/d04-neurosci-spec-neuro.pdf

NHS providers, working with local area teams, may establish patient access to neuromuscular care advisers if they consider it would benefit service provision; such decisions are a local matter.

■ NHS Professionals

Justin Madders:

[56353]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate he has made of the forecast net profit of NHS Professionals Ltd in each of the next three financial years.

Mr Philip Dunne:

Ministers announced the potential sale of a stake in NHS Professionals Limited on 17 November. In line with standard procurement practice, the information requested cannot be released as it is commercially sensitive.

■ **NHS: Inflation**

Justin Madders: [\[56357\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate he has made of the rate of NHS-specific inflation in each of the last five financial years.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The Department publishes an index; the Health Service Cost Index (HSCI), using information available to measure the price change for each of 41 sub-indices of goods and services purchased by the Hospital and Community Health Services sectors. The sub-indices are weighted together according to the proportion of total expenditure which they represent, to give the overall HSCI value.

The following table shows the growth over the past five years.

HSCI VALUE

2011-12	4.13%
2012-13	3.05%
2013-14	1.77%
2014-15	1.71%
2015-16	2.70%

Due to resourcing and data issues we now publish the data quarterly, previously it was monthly. When published quarterly the data sources used are incomplete and require estimation. We have no method of testing whether the data we receive is correct. We are currently consulting to drop the index. A more appropriate, tailored measure for the National Health Service is being developed by the Carter team.

■ **NHS: Job Satisfaction**

Julie Cooper: [\[56907\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to improve the morale of the NHS workforce.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The Department uses staff engagement as a proxy for measuring National Health Service staff morale and the 2015 NHS Staff Survey showed an improvement in the overall engagement score for the NHS. The 2016 NHS Staff Survey is due to be published early next year.

The Department is not complacent about NHS staff morale given the wide variation in engagement scores, so continues to commission NHS Employers to support trusts in improving staff engagement and staff health and wellbeing ¹ through advice, guidance and good practice.

NHS Employers is also working with NHS England and Public Health England on NHS England's initiative ² to improve staff health and wellbeing which includes a "CQUIN" ³ (Commissioning for Quality and Innovation), a new three part indicator focussing on getting staff better access to health and wellbeing initiatives, supporting them to make healthy choices and lead healthy lives.

The "call to action" to NHS bodies to tackle high levels of bullying and harassment in the NHS was launched on 7 December 2016 by the Social Partnership Forum which includes the Department, employers and unions. This initiative drew on evidence and frontline experiences which were developed into a range of resources, advice and good practice to enable organisations to develop their own plans to tackle bullying in the NHS.

Notes :

1 <http://www.nhsemployers.org/your-workforce/retain-and-improve/staff-experience>

2 <https://www.england.nhs.uk/2015/09/improving-staff-health/>

3 <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/cquin-guidance-16-17-v3.pdf>

■ Occupational Health

Jim Shannon:

[56377]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether his Department plans to produce an occupational health strategy for the NHS.

Mr Philip Dunne:

There is already an occupational health strategy in place for the National Health Service. Over the last few years, NHS organisations have been encouraged to improve the health and wellbeing of their staff based on local improvement plans which included access to occupational health services including, for example, counselling for stress and other mental health issues and rapid access physiotherapy for musculoskeletal illnesses.

This is being complemented by the £5 million initiative led by NHS England with NHS Employers and Public Health England to improve NHS staff health and wellbeing which includes, for example, "a new nationally-specified occupational health service for GPs suffering from burnout and stress, in partnership with the Royal College of GPs and BMA General Practitioners Committee". Details of the NHS England programme can be found at:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/2015/09/nhs-workplace/>

■ Paediatrics: Hospital Beds

Justin Madders:

[56356]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of NHS paediatric bed availability.

Mr Philip Dunne:

Data for available and occupied paediatric critical care beds, for the week ending 4 December 2016, was published on Friday 9 December as part of the winter weekly sitreps on NHS England's website.

The data is available at the link below:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/winter-daily-sitreps/>

■ Prostate Cancer: Alcoholic Drinks

Jim Shannon:

[56374]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what discussions his Department has had with clinical bodies on the potential connection between levels of alcohol consumption and prostate cancer.

Nicola Blackwood:

Departmental officials have regular discussions with individuals and organisations, including clinical bodies, in which a wide range of topics are discussed. There have been no meetings specifically to discuss the potential links between levels of alcohol consumption and prostate cancer.

The United Kingdom Chief Medical Officers did make an assessment of the effect of moderate alcohol consumption and some cancers as part of their review of low risk drinking guidelines.

The UK Chief Medical Officers low risk drinking guidelines are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/alcohol-consumption-advice-on-low-risk-drinking>

■ Psychology

Mr Charles Walker:

[56316]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the current position of NICE is on the funding of energy psychology as a psychological treatment available through the NHS; and if he will make a statement.

Nicola Blackwood:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence has advised that it has not considered energy psychology as a psychological treatment through its topic selection process for its technology appraisal and highly specialised technologies programmes.

Mr Charles Walker:

[56317]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what analysis his Department has undertaken of the effectiveness of energy psychology; and if he will make a statement.

Nicola Blackwood:

Neither the Department nor the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence has undertaken any analysis on the effectiveness of energy psychology.

Mr Charles Walker:

[\[56318\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether his Department has (a) commissioned and (b) reviewed independent research on the efficacy of energy psychology; and if he will make a statement.

Nicola Blackwood:

The Department recently announced £816 million of health-based research through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). This includes almost £70 million for mental health, part of which has been committed to creating the first ever Biomedical Research Council dedicated to mental health.

The Department's NIHR and the Department's Policy Research Programme have neither commissioned nor funded a systematic review into the efficacy of energy psychology.

The Department welcomes funding applications for research into any aspect of human health, including the efficacy of energy psychology. These applications are subject to peer review and judged in open competition, with awards being made on the basis of the importance of the topic to patients and health and care services, value for money and scientific quality. In all disease areas, the amount of NIHR funding depends on the volume and quality of scientific activity.

■ Sepsis

Jim Shannon:

[\[56373\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to (a) better diagnose and (b) reduce the incidence of sepsis in hospitals.

Mr Philip Dunne:

Our programme of work to improve early recognition and awareness developed with the Cross System Sepsis Programme Board includes:

- A Commissioning for Quality and Innovation quality payment for sepsis focusing on prompt recognition and treatment of sepsis in people admitted to hospitals as emergencies.
- National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidance on sepsis that highlights earlier diagnosis of sepsis including the use of National Early Warning Scoring in hospitals.
- A package of educational resources from Health Education England.
- Tools for health professionals to support diagnosis from the UK Sepsis Trust.
- Launch of the "Think sepsis" campaign in November 2016, by NHS England and the UK Sepsis Trust, a call to action to health professionals to redouble their efforts on sepsis.
- A public awareness of sepsis aimed at parents of young children from Public Health England campaign which will be launched in December 2016.

The above sepsis specific initiatives and the plans that NHS Improvement are co-ordinating to improve infection prevention and control, announced on 8 November 2016, will contribute to both improving sepsis diagnosis and reducing incidence. However, action is required across the whole health system as reducing delays in accessing medical advice and treatment will help improve patient outcomes.

■ Social Services: Finance

Julie Cooper: [\[56906\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what recent assessment his Department has made of the effect of changes in social care budgets on the length of time that older people spend in hospital.

David Mowat:

Elderly patients should never be stuck in hospital unnecessarily, and the majority of patients are discharged quickly, with average lengths of stay falling from 6.6 days in 2005-06 to 4.9 days in 2015-16, a 26% decrease.

There is disparity in performance on discharging patients from hospital in different parts of the country which does not reflect variation between local authorities' social care budgets. In October 2016 50% of all delayed transfers occurred in 16% of local authorities. The Department continues to work with health and care sector partners to better understand and support the complex relationships between health and care services.

The Department also continues to provide a wide-ranging package of support to help local areas improve their transfers out of hospital and reduce delays. The Local Government Association and Association of Directors of Adult Social Services have produced a range of tools to help local systems, including Eight High Impact Changes for Reducing Delayed Transfers of Care. NHS England and partners have published guidance to improve discharge practices at local level. We are investing in social care – giving local authorities £3.5 billion extra by 2020.

■ Spinal Injuries: Medical Treatments

Jim Shannon: [\[56856\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether the NHS has made an assessment of the potential effect of spinal tap on increasing the mobility of wheelchair-bound patients.

David Mowat:

Lumbar puncture or 'spinal tap' is used to test for conditions affecting the brain, spinal cord or other parts of the nervous system. The hon. Member may be referring to a pioneering treatment, the Injured Spinal Cord Pressure Evaluation Procedure, used to reduce inflammation by reducing pressure build up within the spinal column caused by swelling and so preserving nerve function. This treatment is at an early stage of development and no assessment has yet been made of its potential effect on increasing the mobility of wheelchair users.

NHS England will only consider commissioning procedures and interventions that are evidenced and where the evidence is published or where the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence has produced guidance. This procedure remains in trial phase for acute spinal injury.

■ Streptococcus

Royston Smith:

[56291]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will take steps to introduce the gold-standard framework, developed by Dr Keri Thomas, for detecting group B streptococcus infection.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The Gold Standards Framework Centre that was developed by Dr Keri Thomas is a private, non-profit organisation that provides training to National Health Service and care home staff in improving the quality of end of life care. There is not an equivalent gold standard framework for detecting group B streptococcus (GBS) infection.

The Enriched Culture Medium (ECM) test is used for detecting GBS carriage at 35-37 weeks of pregnancy and is included in Public Health England's UK Standards for Microbiology Investigations: Detection of Carriage of Group B Streptococci. In June 2015, Public Health England, in response to requests to introduce the ECM test into Public Health England laboratories, published an advisory position paper which sets out that within current accepted clinical guidelines, there are no indications for testing women using ECM methods. The position paper is available on the gov.uk website at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/group-b-streptococcus-infection-enriched-culture-medium-test>

The UK National Screening Committee (UK NSC), the body which advises Ministers in all four United Kingdom countries on all aspects of screening, recommended in 2012 that antenatal screening for GBS carriage at 35 -37 weeks of pregnancy should not be offered because currently there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that the benefits to be gained from screening would outweigh the harms. The UK NSC is currently reviewing its recommendation on antenatal screening for GBS carriage. A public consultation on the UK NSC's review opened on 28 October 2016 and will close on 25 January 2017. A copy of the consultation is available at:

<https://legacyscreening.phe.org.uk/groupbstreptococcus>

A recommendation is expected from the UK NSC following its meeting in February 2017.

HOME OFFICE■ **Asylum**

Diana Johnson: [56172]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of her Department's asylum caseworkers are trained in how to treat evidence from the Medico-Legal Report service when making asylum decisions from people who claim to have been tortured in their home country.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

All members of staff who make decisions in asylum, receive training on inter-national and domestic law and safeguarding issues supplemented by a mentoring programme with an experienced caseworker that can last up to 6 months. Within this course there are specific sections that detail torture and Medico Legal Reports and how they should be used and analysed in asylum claims.

Asylum Operations recently received funding from the Asylum Migration and Integration Fund to review and redevelop its training prospectus. As part of that work, Asylum Operations is liaising with a range of external stakeholders -including migrant charities and non-governmental organisations - to ensure a robust and effective safeguarding training product.

■ **Deportation**

Mr Andrew Smith: [50069]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many deportation decisions were made against non-EEA nationals from July 2012 to July 2014.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The number of deportations of non-EEA Foreign National Offenders can be found in table: 'rt_06_q: Returns of foreign national offenders' at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-july-to-september-2016/returns>

■ **Deportation: Appeals**

Mr Andrew Smith: [50064]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many appeals lodged in cases where section 94B decisions were made for non-EEA nationals were allowed by the Tribunal from July 2014 to July 2016.

Mr Andrew Smith: [50066]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many appeals in cases where section 94B decisions were made for non-EEA nationals were lodged from outside the UK from July 2014 to July 2016.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

HM Courts and Tribunal Service publishes appeals data on a quarterly basis which can be accessed at the following link:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550952/tribunal-and-gpc-stats.pdf

Mr Andrew Smith:

[50065]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many section 94B decisions were made against non-EEA nationals from July 2014 to July 2016.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

Our records indicate that approximately 900 such decisions were made between the dates requested. Due to the operational nature of this data it can be subject to change.

■ Firearms: Seized Articles

Jim Shannon:

[52084]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many illegal firearms have been seized in each of the last five years.

Brandon Lewis:

The Home Office does not maintain records of firearms seized by police forces in England and Wales. The National Ballistics Intelligence Service regularly assesses the volume and type of illegal firearms in use in the UK.

■ Immigration: Peterborough

Mr Stewart Jackson:

[56491]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the nationalities are of each of the people granted indefinite leave to remain in the Peterborough City Council area since 2010; and if she will make a statement.

Mr Stewart Jackson:

[56492]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications for indefinite leave to remain have been received for people who gave a residential address within the Peterborough City Council area in each year since 2010; how many of those applications were (a) granted and (b) appealed after being declined; of those applications that were appealed, how many were (i) successful and (ii) unsuccessful; and if she will make a statement.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

We do not publish data in this format, however details of individuals granted Indefinite Leave to Remain in the United Kingdom as a whole can be found as part of published Migration Statistics: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immigration-statistics-quarterly-release>

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

■ Department for International Development: Equal Pay

Jake Berry: [\[56606\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what plans her Department has to publish information on the gender pay gap among its employees.

Rory Stewart:

DFID has reported mean and median gender pay gap data since 2008 as part of the annual release of *Civil Service Statistics* by the Office for National Statistics.

The latest gender pay gap data (published in October earlier this year) can be found on the Office for National Statistics website:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/publicsectorpersonnel/bulletins/civilservicestatistics/2016>

In October 2015, the Prime Minister announced that new gender pay gap reporting measures being introduced across the private and voluntary sector from April 2017 would be extended to also apply across the public sector. We are actively working to ensure the gender pay gap data we report in future fully mirrors these new requirements.

■ Department for International Development: Travel

Tim Farron: [\[56234\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how much her Department spent on travel that was not standard class in each of the last five years.

Rory Stewart:

DFID spend on non-standard class travel in each of the last 5 years is shown in the table below.

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total spend on non-standard travel	£1,798,021	£1,911,160	£895,728	£618,448	£596,721

DFID policy is for employees always to use the most efficient and economic means of travel for duty visits. All journeys of up to 5 hours must be in economy/standard class. Journeys of over 5 hours must also be in economy/standard class unless there is legitimate business approval provided in advance for a higher standard of travel.

The information provided represents the travel bookings made through our contracted travel provider. Travel booked locally is not included. The non-standard travel costs may be overstated due to credits (e.g. from cancellations) having the incorrect class of travel applied.

■ Department for International Development: Work Experience

Louise Haigh:

[56310]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how many unpaid internships there are in her Department.

Rory Stewart:

DFID has no unpaid internships. The Civil Service has been running the Summer Diversity Internship Programme (SDIP) for 15 years. This is a paid, two months programme specifically for BAME, lower socio-economic and those from disabled backgrounds. It is targeted at penultimate/final year undergraduates and is a major plank of the Civil Service early talent diversity strategy. DFID has participated in this scheme for the last 3 years. In 2016 we took 4 summer diversity internships, 2 in 2015 and 4 in 2014.

■ Developing Countries: Human Trafficking

Thangam Debbonaire:

[56324]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how much her Department has spent on anti-human trafficking programmes in each year since 2010.

Rory Stewart:

The information about the total amount DFID has spent on anti-human trafficking in each year since 2010 is not available in the form requested. DFID is committed to tackling trafficking and exploitation and is, for example, supporting a regional "Work in Freedom" programme led by the International Labour Organisation which supports safe migration and government capacity building in Asia. The programme helps stop women and girls from being trafficked through prevention, protection and empowerment. To date it has helped provide over 90,000 women with training to help them make informed migration decisions, reducing their risk of being trafficked from India, Nepal and Bangladesh.

■ Developing Countries: Politics and Government

Chi Onwurah:

[56790]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what funding her Department (a) has given in the last year and (b) plans to allocate in 2017 for the support of democracy and political governance; and how organisations can bid for such funding.

Rory Stewart:

DFID spent £685m on Governance and Civil Society in 2015.

DFID's governance work will champion greater transparency and accountability, and defend the rights of civil society in the face of pressure to close down space for democratic dialogue and debate. The Secretary of State has stated that "The UK Government, as part of its commitment to freedom of thought, association and expression, will stand alongside civil society against these encroachments. And we will support the extraordinary bravery of people who work for CSOs, often at serious personal risk, in some of the world's most dangerous places." This includes support for

more open governments, politics, and societies which are the foundations of prosperity. DFID welcomes funding bids from a broad range of organisations and information about funding opportunities is available on the DFID website. We are currently accepting proposals from small and medium CSOs through DFID's UK Aid Direct programme.

■ Developing Countries: Slavery

Thangam Debbonaire: [\[56323\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, which organisations her Department is working with to end modern day slavery.

Rory Stewart:

DFID has a key part to play in helping to end modern slavery in all its forms. Tackling modern slavery will require partnering both with countries where the problem in its various forms exists, and with a wider set of partners including other countries, multilateral organisations including the United Nations, non-governmental organisations, businesses, academia, charities and faith groups.

■ Iraq: Minority Groups

Stephen Twigg: [\[56651\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps her Department is taking to support Yazidis, Christians and other vulnerable minorities in Iraq.

Rory Stewart:

All UK-funded humanitarian aid is distributed on the basis of need irrespective of race, religion or ethnicity. The organisations through which we channel our support in Iraq do not identify or record beneficiaries by their religion. Since June 2014, the UK has committed £169.5 million in humanitarian assistance to the crisis in Iraq. This includes access to clean water, food, medicines, protection and other life-saving assistance, targeted towards the most vulnerable people in Iraq.

Through the Conflict, Security and Stabilisation Fund (CSSF), the UK provides funding for projects designed to support community cohesion and encourage reconciliation, acceptance and tolerance between communities.

In our dialogue with the Government of Iraq, the Kurdistan Regional Government, and the United Nations, UK Ministers and officials frequently raise the importance of protecting the rights of minorities.

■ Overseas Aid

Dame Caroline Spelman: [\[56339\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how her Department ensures that aid finance is predictable and reliable for recipient countries.

Rory Stewart:

The United Kingdom is the only G7 country to legislate on its promise to provide 0.7% gross national income towards helping the world's poor. In doing so we have given a very strong commitment to stable and predictable aid finance.

The Government recognises the importance of providing predictable flows to partner countries. To this end DFID has published indicative forward country budgets in its Annual Report and details of approved projects in every country. It is important that Ministers continually review where, how and how much we spend, to ensure that aid is being used to maximum effect in reducing poverty in the national interest, and that our work responds to changing global challenges and volatile country situations.

Stephen Twigg: [\[56478\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether her Department plans to open any new country programmes as a result of the Bilateral Development Review 2016.

Priti Patel:

DFID does not plan to open any new country programmes as a result of the Bilateral Development Review.

Stephen Twigg: [\[56484\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what changes her Department plans to make to the list of priority countries as a result of the Bilateral Development Review 2016.

Priti Patel:

DFID's 2015/16 Annual Report (available [here](#)) provides a list of the countries we currently work in. We keep this list under review, given the dynamic nature of the department's work and the volatility of current conflicts, particularly in the Middle East.

Stephen Twigg: [\[56534\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether her Department plans to exit or transition from any country programmes as a result of the Bilateral Development Review 2016.

Priti Patel:

DFID has not taken any decisions to exit specific country programmes as a result of the Bilateral Development Review. However, we will continue to review readiness for countries to self-finance their development, or transition from traditional aid to different forms of UK support based on mutual interest and engaging other parts of the UK Government.

Paula Sherriff: [\[56727\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what projects her Department has agreed to fund in the 2017-18 financial year; and what the budget is for such funding for that year.

Rory Stewart:

Details of DFID's approved projects, including those which will operate in financial year 2017-18, are available on the Development Tracker. Indicative allocations broken down by DFID programme are available in Annex B of DFID's Annual Report and Accounts 2015-16.

Paula Sherriff:[\[56776\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 1 December 2016 to Question 55212, how she will assess the (a) value for money and (b) performance; and by when decisions will be made on project cancellations in the 2017-18 financial year.

Rory Stewart:

The Secretary of State regularly reviews the progress of projects and takes decisions, as and when required, about closing or restructuring projects that no longer offer value for money for taxpayers. The assessment focuses on progress towards objectives and whether the balance between costs, risks and expected returns remains appropriate.

Paula Sherriff:[\[56777\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 1 December 2016 to Question 55212, on what previous occasions the Overseas Development Assistance budget has been reduced since 2010.

Rory Stewart:

The Government will continue to meet the commitment to spend 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI) on Official Development Assistance (ODA) in every year of the Parliament. In line with this commitment, and to reflect the latest economic forecasts, adjustments were announced at Spring Budget 2016 and at Autumn Statement 2016.

■ Syria: Refugees**Mr Jim Cunningham:**[\[56635\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what estimate she has made of the number of refugees who have left Syria since conflict in that country began; how many such refugees now reside in each other country; and if she will make a statement.

Rory Stewart:

According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees there are over 4.8 million registered Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries. Of this total figure, Turkey hosts over 2.7 million; Lebanon 1 million; Jordan more than 655,000; Iraq over 228,000; Egypt over 115,000; and 29,000 Syrian refugees are in North Africa. A further 1.1 million applications for asylum have been made by Syrians throughout Europe, with the majority in Germany and Serbia.

The UK is at the forefront of the response to the crisis and our support is reaching hundreds of thousands of people affected by it across the region and inside Syria.

Between February 2012 and August 2016 we have provided over 21.7 million food rations, vaccines to over 6.3 million people and medical consultations to over 4.9 million people.

■ Yemen: Diesel Fuel

Edward Argar: [\[56435\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment her Department has made of the availability within Yemen of diesel oil for the (a) generation of electricity and (b) functioning of water pumps used as wells.

Rory Stewart:

In October 2016, the World Food Programme reported that 39% of Yemen's estimated fuel needs (including for diesel oil) were imported into Yemen. Although we do not have precise figures, this is likely to have affected the availability of diesel for the generation of electricity and functioning of water pumps as Yemen is dependent on imports for the majority of its fuel needs.

The Department of International Development is providing £1.42 million to the UN Verification and Inspection Mechanism (UNVIM) to speed up the clearance process for shipments of essential fuel and food to Yemen.

■ Yemen: Malnutrition

Edward Argar: [\[56436\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what estimate her Department has made of the number of Yemenis who are at risk of malnutrition; and what proportion of those people are children.

Rory Stewart:

According to the recently published [UN Humanitarian Needs Overview for Yemen](#), almost 4.5 million people are at risk of malnutrition or require treatment or prevention services for malnutrition. Of that number, almost half a million children under 5 suffer from severe acute malnutrition, and 2.8 million children and pregnant or lactating women are affected by moderate acute malnutrition.

The UK is providing £19 million to UNICEF this year to treat children with severe acute malnutrition and support mobile health clinics. Last year, we helped treat over 150,000 children under 5 for severe acute malnutrition.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE■ **Department for International Trade: Work Experience**

Louise Haigh: [\[56311\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many unpaid internships there are in his Department.

Greg Hands:

The Department for International Trade has no unpaid internships.

■ **Department for International Trade: Working Hours**

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[56892\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what estimate he has made of the average number of hours worked by civil servants in his Department since it was created; and if he will make a statement.

Greg Hands:

Since the formal creation of the Department for International Trade (DIT) on 9th November 2016, approximately 440,000 hours have been worked by Civil Servants in this department. This calculation is based upon the number of full time equivalent officials working for DIT at home and abroad working a 37 hours week on average, up to and including the 9 December.

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[56893\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many employees in his Department have opted out of the EU working time directive; and if he will make a statement.

Greg Hands:

Information on working hours for the whole department is not managed centrally. The Civil Service modernised terms and conditions anticipate that a full time Civil Servant will work 37 hours a week on average. The Civil Service is committed to ensuring staff maintain a work-life balance. All staff have access to information on both flexible working and the working time directive and should they wish to opt out of the EU working time directive then this is processed in line with Civil Service policies.

■ **Overseas Trade: USA**

Andrew Rosindell: [\[56348\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what representations his Department has received from the transition team of President-elect Donald Trump on future trade relations between the US and the UK.

Greg Hands:

The Prime Minister has spoken twice with President-elect Donald Trump to congratulate him on his election victory and discuss how his transition plans are progressing. She highlighted her wish to strengthen bilateral trade and investment with the US as we

leave the EU, saying that she looks forward to working with President-elect Donald Trump, building on these ties to ensure the security and prosperity of our nations in the years ahead.

JUSTICE

■ Ministry of Justice: Work Experience

Louise Haigh: [\[56312\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many unpaid internships there are in her Department.

Dr Phillip Lee:

The MoJ does not offer any unpaid Internships.

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ Northern Ireland Office: Equal Pay

Jake Berry: [\[56609\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what plans his Department has to publish information on the gender pay gap among its employees.

James Brokenshire:

My Department already publishes data on staff composition by gender in its Annual Report and Accounts and is working to build a diverse and inclusive workforce at all levels. The Northern Ireland Office is aligned to the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) terms and conditions in respect of pay policy. The MoJ collects gender pay gap data and plans to publish information on the gender pay gap amongst its employees in line with legislation. My Department currently employs fewer than 150 staff and is therefore not required to publish this data, but I will give consideration to its publication in due course.

PRIME MINISTER

■ Channel Four

Tom Watson: [\[56395\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, what meetings she has held with ministerial colleagues on the options for the future of Channel 4 since her appointment.

Tom Watson: [\[56400\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, what discussions she has had on the future of Channel 4 since her appointment.

Mrs Theresa May:

I discuss a range of issues with Ministerial colleagues. It has been the practice of successive Governments not to disclose information relating to internal discussions.

SCOTLAND

■ Jobcentres: Glasgow

Margaret Ferrier: [\[56910\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on planned jobcentre closures in Glasgow.

Margaret Ferrier: [\[56916\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, whether he was made aware of the proposed jobcentre closures in Glasgow that are planned for 2018 prior to the announcement of such closures on 7 December 2016.

David Mundell:

I meet regularly with DWP officials and ministers to discuss a range of issues.

DWP is currently reviewing its estate strategy on a nationwide basis, to ensure this best meets the current, medium and long-term needs for its business and work. By paying only for the space DWP needs it will help save several millions of pounds of taxpayers' money. Where it makes sense to do so, DWP will continue to make use of opportunities to co-locate to share office space, cut costs and embrace closer working with local authorities and other organisations, meaning customers can access a range of services in one place. These decisions and proposals will help DWP to deliver an estate that meets the needs of customers and Government today, and in the future. DWP will be conducting a public consultation in areas where customers have to travel more than three miles or more than 20 minutes to help inform the final decision and planning on changes to jobcentres in Glasgow.

■ Scotland Office: Equal Pay

Jake Berry: [\[56611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what plans his Department has to publish information on the gender pay gap among its employees.

David Mundell:

The Scotland Office does not employ staff directly. Matters relating to the terms and conditions of service of staff, including pay and gender pay gap analysis, are matters for the employing bodies.

TRANSPORT**■ Department for Transport: Travel**

Tim Farron: [\[56236\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much his Department spent on travel that was not standard class in each of the last five years.

Mr John Hayes:

The Department for Transport currently consists of a Central Department, three Accident Investigation Branches and four executive agencies.

Up until 31 March 2015, the Departmental family also included the Highways Agency.

Each agency has a different travel provider and information on spend is not held centrally.

From the 1st October 2014, the policy on first class travel changed and first class travel is now no longer available to Civil Service Staff in the Department for Transport except in exceptional circumstances.

■ Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency

Richard Burden: [\[56398\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much extra money his Department has made available for the establishment of the Market Surveillance Unit in the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency.

Andrew Jones:

The Department has allocated an additional £1m for the establishment and work of the new Market Surveillance Unit in this financial year. The Unit has been established and its initial testing programme is underway.

■ Great Western Railway Line

Mr Edward Vaizey: [\[56784\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether (a) public and (b) Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) consultations will be held on potential visually appropriate designs for the Great Western Mainline modernisation of overhead line equipment through AONB.

Paul Maynard:

Consultations with the relevant local communities are planned for January and February 2017, where residents will view the output of the Landscape and Visual Appraisals undertaken alongside potential design and mitigation measures that could be employed.

Network Rail has been working with Natural England and the Conservation Officers for the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) & North Wessex Downs AONB already affected by works as part of the Great Western Mainline modernisation. They will develop a package of suitable retrospective mitigation measures including Overhead

Line Electrification designs to ensure due regard is given to protecting the visual amenity of the AONBs.

■ Railways: Repairs and Maintenance

Kelly Tolhurst: [\[56495\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions (a) his Department and (b) Network Rail has with local authorities ahead of major rail maintenance work in the areas covered by those authorities.

Paul Maynard:

The Department for Transport does not hold such discussions. Network Rail route teams have an ongoing programme of general engagement with local authorities. Network Rail needs to agree all access to the railway for maintenance, engineering and upgrade works with Train Operating Companies (TOCs). TOCs are primarily responsible for taking account of passenger and other local needs, liaising with local authorities where applicable.

Kelly Tolhurst: [\[56496\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what procedures his Department has agreed with Network Rail on the avoidance of major weekend rail maintenance works on lines serving locations where events likely to attract substantial numbers of people are scheduled.

Paul Maynard:

Network Rail has responsibility for scheduling major weekend rail maintenance works and operates at arm's length from the Department for Transport. Network Rail plans its major engineering work up to two years in advance. The company considers major recurring events that happen at the same time each year during the early stages of planning, and ensures routes for services are kept available.

■ Severn River Crossing

Jessica Morden: [\[56881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the annual maintenance cost was of the Severn Bridges in the last year for which statistics are available; and how many toll paying vehicles in each vehicle category crossed the bridges in that year.

Mr John Hayes:

The combined operating and maintenance costs from Severn River Crossing Plc's (SRC) 2015 accounts were £13.39m. SRC do not provide the separate maintenance costs within the accounts. In addition, in 2015-16, Highways England incurred costs of £0.35m for winter maintenance on the Severn Crossings and £1.15m from the maintenance and inspection of the Severn Bridge main suspension cable. There are additional regular but not annual costs, such as the specialised resurfacing required for the M48 bridge.

In 2015 there were 13.9 million crossings by toll paying vehicles, with 10.9 million of these by category 1 vehicles (cars and other vehicles up to 9 seats), 1.5 million crossings by category 2 vehicles (small buses and small goods vehicles) and 1.5 million crossings by category 3 vehicles (large buses and large goods vehicles).

■ South West Railway Line

Mrs Flick Drummond:

[56634]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the causes of signal and power failures on the South West main line between Woking and Eastleigh on 6 December 2016.

Paul Maynard:

The Department does not generally make an assessment of the causes of individual operational incidents. Network Rail, as the infrastructure provider, is best placed to do this. I am aware, however, that on this occasion the problems were caused by two power surges from the National Grid supply to the signalling centre in Basingstoke that damaged the signalling equipment which had to be repaired and reset.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Carer's Allowance: Children and Young People

Paul Blomfield:

[56619]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 2 December 2016 to Question 55467, if he will make it his policy that carers who are in school and college and do not qualify for loans and grants in the educational maintenance system receive Carer's Allowance.

Penny Mordaunt:

The primary purpose of Carer's Allowance is to provide a measure of financial support and recognition for people who give up the opportunity of full-time employment in order to provide regular and substantial care for a severely disabled person.

Carers who study part-time can already claim Carer's Allowance if they meet the qualifying conditions, including providing at least 35 hours of care a week. However, it is not the purpose of Carer's Allowance to financially support those studying full-time.

The Government has no plans to change the system of financial support for people who are both caring and studying. We believe that the current mix of support from the educational maintenance system for full-time students, and access to Carer's Allowance for part-time students, is the right one and this reflects a long standing principle in the way students are treated in the benefit system.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Research

Dan Jarvis: [56915]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much his Department has spent on evaluation studies in each of the last five years.

Caroline Nokes:

The information requested could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Travel

Tim Farron: [56238]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much his Department spent on travel that was not standard class in each of the last five years.

Caroline Nokes:

The DWP's business travel policy requires all alternatives to travel to be explored first. Where travel is deemed appropriate, the policy requires the use of the most cost effective mode of transport.

In the last five years the Department has spent the following amounts on travel that was not standard class.

FINANCIAL YEAR	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Cost (£)	111,139	188,933	181,212	114,127	118,233

■ Farms: Death

Jim Shannon: [56383]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what information his Department holds on the number of farm-related deaths from (a) slurry, (b) machinery, (c) disease and (d) collapsing buildings in each of the last five years.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Health and Safety Executive publishes figures on farm-related deaths annually in a report 'Fatal injuries in agriculture, forestry and fishing in Great Britain. These are available on the HSE website at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture/resources/fatal.htm>. The published reports do not include deaths attributable to disease.

Most diseases have a range of causes and so the scale of mortality attributed specifically to occupational causes such as exposures in farming has to be estimated based on epidemiological information. An exception is occupational alveolitis, an allergic lung disease for which annual deaths can be identified directly from national mortality statistics, and which are shown in the table below for the five most recent available years. Most of these deaths were due to a form of the disease called "Farmer's lung" which is caused by inhalation of dust or spores arising from mouldy hay, grain and straw.

DEATHS DUE TO FARMERS LUNG AND OTHER OCCUPATIONAL ALLERGIC ALVEOLITIS IN GREAT BRITAIN:

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total
8	9	10	4	7	38

An indication of the current scale of annual cancer deaths attributed to past occupational exposures is provided by HSE commissioned research into the burden of occupational cancer. Using mortality data for year 2005, this research estimated that approximately 86 annual cancer deaths are attributable to past exposures to carcinogens in farming. Estimates are currently not available of how many annual Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) deaths are attributable to past occupational exposures in farming.

■ Jobcentres

Margaret Ferrier: [56917]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people have used the services of jobcentre offices in each of the last five years in (a) Aberdeen, (b) Dundee, (c) Edinburgh, (d) Glasgow, (e) Inverness, (f) Perth, (g) Stirling, (h) Cardiff, (i) London, (j) Scotland, (k) England, (l) Wales and (m) the UK.

Damian Hinds:

The Department for Work and Pensions does not measure the number of people visiting its network of Jobcentres.

Statistics on the claimant count, which shows the number of Jobseeker's Allowance and Universal Credit claimants by geography, can be found at:

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/default.asp>

Guidance on how to extract the information required can be found at:

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/home/newuser.asp>

■ Motability: Garston and Halewood

Maria Eagle: [56582]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people in Garston and Halewood constituency have had mobility components stopped which enable access to the Motability Scheme in each year since 2010.

Penny Mordaunt:

The information requested is not readily available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

■ **Pre-school Education: Finance**

Dan Jarvis: [\[56896\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 8 December 2016 to Question 56075, on pre-school education, how much funding his Department provided to the Early Years Intervention Foundation in each of the last three years.

Caroline Nokes:

The Department provides funding to the Early Intervention Foundation (EIF) as one contributor to a joint contract and is not the contract holder. For the financial year 2016/17 the Department provided £300 000 of funding to support the EIF's work to build on and disseminate the evidence base on the effectiveness of early years intervention. The Department contributed £1.5m to the contract covering the financial years 2013/14 to 2015/16. An additional £100 000 in 2015/16 covered the costs of the evidence review 'What works to enhance interparental relationships and improve children's outcomes' which was published in March 2016.

■ **Social Security Benefits: Disqualification**

Mr Roger Godsiff: [\[56908\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the findings of the National Audit Office's report, Benefit sanctions, published on 30 November 2016, what plans he has to review or consult on the benefits sanction system.

Damian Hinds:

As with all of our policies, we keep this under continuous review, and will take into account the NAO recommendations in the regular process of continuous improvement. We will respond to the NAO report in its entirety in due course.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Post-Council Statement – Energy Council, 5 December 2016

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
(Jesse Norman): [\[HCWS354\]](#)

The Energy Council, chaired by the Slovak Presidency, took place in Brussels on 5 December. I represented the UK at the Council on 5 December.

The meeting began with a political debate on the options for regional cooperation, solidarity and transparency for the Gas Security of Supply Regulation. The aim of the Presidency was to find compromises and get political guidance from Member States.

On regional cooperation, there was a broad split with no clear majority for either option put forward by the Presidency. A majority of Member States supported a risk-based approach, whilst others wanted the clarity and certainty provided by the fixed region approach. On solidarity, most Member States supported some flexibility but others wanted some detail laid down in the regulation in order for arrangements to be consistent across the Union. On transparency of contracts, most Member States agreed on the need for strengthened exchange of information. On the basis of the discussion, the Presidency developed a compromise set of conclusions which gave more flexibility to Member States on solidarity, more transparency on contracts and agreement to pursue a risk-based approach to regional co-operation but with greater clarity on the composition of regions. These conclusions were consistent with the UK position and were agreed by all Member States. Adoption of these conclusions sets the path towards a general approach, which will form the basis for negotiating a final agreement with the European Parliament.

Vice President Šefčovič (Energy Union) introduced the Commission's Clean Energy Package, which was published on 30 November. He highlighted the Energy Union governance framework, and a need for reliable, transparent and long-term monitoring that streamlined reporting as well as the need to support the 2014 and 2015 European Council Conclusions. Commissioner Cañete (Climate Action and Energy) then provided a high-level overview of each of the main elements of the package, which together were intended to ensure that the EU stayed ahead in the clean energy transition and in mobilising the Paris agreement. An informal exchange of views on the package took place over lunch. We are considering how best to work with the Commission and other Member States during the forthcoming negotiations to improve the proposals in the package.

The Council then held an exchange of views on the external dimensions of EU energy policy. There was general support for the progress that the EU had made in relation to its relationship with third countries on energy policy. Some Member States stressed the importance of the work with Ukraine, and that it should remain a priority. Others stated that diversification of supply sources and routes for energy into Europe was critical.

The Council received an update from the Presidency on progress in negotiation of the Energy Efficiency Labelling Directive and the Decision on Inter-Governmental Agreements.

The Commission presented recent developments in the field of external energy relations, which included the Paris agreement entering into force and the recent signature of the Memorandum of Understanding with Ukraine.

Finally, the Maltese delegation presented its priorities for its Presidency. These fell into three areas: completing files already under discussion; creating momentum on the clean energy package, with informal and formal Council meetings focussed on this agenda; and EU-Mediterranean cooperation.

■ PUBLICATION OF THE RENEWABLE HEAT INCENTIVE: A REFORMED SCHEME. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

Minister of State for Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Mr Nick Hurd): [\[HCWS353\]](#)

Today my noble Friend the Minister of State for Energy and Intellectual Property has made the following statement:

In March 2016, the Government set out its proposals to reform the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) scheme in the consultation ' [The Renewable Heat Incentive - A reformed and refocused scheme](#) '. The consultation ran from 3 March to 27 April 2016 and received 370 responses from individuals, businesses, trade bodies and other organisations. I am pleased to announce that the Government Response to the consultation has been published today.

Heat accounts for almost half of UK energy use and a third of UK carbon emissions. Decarbonising how we use heat in our homes, businesses and buildings is therefore an essential part of how we transition to a low carbon economy. It can also in time help to make heating homes and other buildings more efficient and affordable.

In November 2015, the Government renewed its commitment to the transition to a low carbon economy by confirming a continued budget for the RHI out to 2020/21. By confirming the available budget and setting out a number of reforms for how the scheme will operate, the Government intends to provide the level of certainty needed for consumers and industry to invest in renewable heating and for the market to transition towards being sustainable without Government support in future.

It is vital that the scheme delivers value for money for taxpayers and supports the development of technologies that will be important for the long term. That is why we will be reforming the scheme to ensure it:

- Focuses on long-term decarbonisation: promoting the deployment of the right technologies for the right uses, while ensuring the RHI contributes to both our decarbonisation targets and to the UK's renewable energy target.
- Offers better value for money and protects consumers: improving how costs are controlled, giving consumers more confidence in the performance of particular technologies and addressing potential loopholes in the scheme.

- Supports supply chain growth and challenges the market to deliver: driving cost reductions and innovation to help build growing markets that provide quality to consumers and are sustainable without Government support in future.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

■ North Korea (the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, DPRK)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Alok Sharma): [\[HCWS355\]](#)

I would like to update the House on recent developments regarding the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the international response and what actions the government is taking.

The Government remains deeply concerned by North Korea's continued development of its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes. This year we have seen two nuclear tests from North Korea, and an unprecedented number of ballistic missile launches. These actions have been accompanied by threatening rhetoric, and the continued prioritisation of the weapons programme over the well-being and needs of the North Korean people.

On 14 September, I informed the House that the UN Security Council had agreed that North Korea's fifth nuclear test on 9 September was a clear violation of existing Security Council resolutions, and that there would be a robust response.

On 30 November, the UN Security Council adopted Security Council resolution 2321, a package of new, stronger measures to deter and challenge North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programmes. This resolution builds on the provisions of UN Security Council resolutions 1718, 1874, 2087, 2094 and 2270.

Significant measures in the new resolution are designed to constrain and disrupt the DPRK's nuclear intentions. The new cap on coal exports, with a UN oversight mechanism, will directly affect the DPRK's ability to raise foreign currency for their nuclear and ballistic missile programmes. This is estimated to reduce DPRK foreign trade income by \$700m, and when combined with a metals export ban, will cut DPRK trade income by a quarter.

The resolution tightens existing measures, and enhances controls on technology imports, on shipping, and on banking, as well as demonstrates a new resolve to disrupt any abuse of diplomatic privileges. This will send a strong signal as well as have important practical effects. This text, in addition to the UN Third Committee resolution on DPRK Human Rights adopted on 15 November, makes clear the explicit link between the DPRK's proliferation choices and their shameful treatment of their own people. The United Kingdom has worked closely with P5 partners throughout the development of UNSCR 2321, and will be at the forefront of the discussion amongst EU Member States as we transpose the UNSCR swiftly into EU law.

Both I and My Rt Hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, have spoken with counterparts regarding the increasingly belligerent and dangerous behaviour of the DPRK. The threat posed by the DPRK's programmes to both regional and international security will continue to be at the forefront of our work.

As the United Kingdom has done on many occasions, we continue to urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to return to credible and authentic multilateral talks on its nuclear programme. We ask it to abide by its obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and to permit full access by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

HOME OFFICE

■ Announcement of the new Chair of the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD)

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Amber Rudd): [\[HCWS352\]](#)

I am pleased to announce that Dr Owen Bowden-Jones has been appointed to the ACMD both as a member and as its new Chair. This appointment is for a 3 year term, beginning on 1st January 2017. Dr Bowden-Jones is an experienced clinician who provides assessment and treatment for people experiencing harms from emerging problem drugs.

The ACMD was established under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and provides advice to Government on issues related to the harms of drugs. It also has a statutory role under the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016. Dr Bowden-Jones will replace Professor Les Iversen, whose term ends at the end of this year.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Professor Iversen for his dedication to chairing the ACMD over the past seven years.