



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 15 March 2017 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:41 P.M., 15 March 2017). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Citizens' Advice Bureaux

Rachael Maskell:

[\[66780\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will assess the adequacy of the level of Government funding for Citizens Advice services; and if he will make a statement.

Margot James:

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy provides core funding to Citizens Advice, the umbrella body for the local Citizens Advice service in England and Wales. That core funding allows for the provision of essential central services to the network including IT, information, training and the recruitment of volunteers and the auditing of bureaux to ensure they retain their capability and capacity to deliver.

Central Government does not fund individual Citizens Advice offices (formerly referred to as bureaux) who receive funding from a variety of public, charity and private sources, with core funding typically provided by the Local Authority in which they are located.

■ Climate Change: Snow and Ice

Mr Peter Lilley:

[\[66792\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what information he holds on whether there are declines of snow or ice, other than of Arctic sea ice extent, that are inconsistent with reasonably expected natural variability.

Mr Nick Hurd:

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has not made its own assessment of the above question.

Evidence that present rates of decline in the extent of Arctic sea ice are not consistent with reasonably expected natural variability is synthesised in the 5th Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC AR5). Long-term records of Arctic sea ice extent in this report show that the decline from 1980 onwards lies outside of what would be expected from natural variability alone. IPCC AR5 reports high confidence that human influences are *very likely* (>90% probability) to have contributed to the observed Arctic sea ice loss since 1980.

Mr Peter Lilley:

[\[66793\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of whether present rates of decline in the extent of Arctic sea ice are consistent with reasonably expected natural variability.

Mr Nick Hurd:

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has not made its own assessment of the above question.

Evidence that present rates of decline in the extent of Arctic sea ice are not consistent with reasonably expected natural variability is synthesised in the 5th Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC AR5). Long-term records of Arctic sea ice extent in this report show that the decline from 1980 onwards lies outside of what would be expected from natural variability alone. IPCC AR5 reports high confidence that human influences are *very likely* (>90% probability) to have contributed to the observed Arctic sea ice loss since 1980.

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Meetings**Susan Elan Jones:****[R] [67316]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many meetings (a) Ministers and (b) officials of his Department have had with (i) businesses and (ii) registered charities in each of the last five years.

Margot James:

Records of all Ministerial meetings are published quarterly on the Gov.uk website at the following links:

Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications?departments%5B%5D=department-for-business-energy-and-industrial-strategy&publication_type=transparency-data

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/bis-quarterly-publications-april-to-june-2012>

Department for Energy and Climate Change

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ministers-meeting-with-external-organisations>

Information about meetings between officials, businesses and charities are not centrally held and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Secondment**Susan Elan Jones:****[R] [67307]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many (a) full-time and (b) part-time staff in his Department have been seconded from (i) businesses and (ii) charities.

Margot James:

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy currently has 44 staff seconded from (a) businesses and 11 from (b) a charity.

We don't hold centralised data on how many are (a) full time and (b) part time.

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

Justin Madders:

[\[66887\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many people undertook an unpaid work placement in his Department in each of the last five years for which figures are available; and how many such placements lasted for longer than one month.

Margot James:

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) participates in centrally run and unpaid work placement schemes designed to promote social mobility and offer the opportunity to work shadow/gain work experience in the Civil Service. This continues practice in its legacy departments of Business, Innovation Skills (BIS) and Energy and Climate Change (DECC).

The schemes in question on which we can report numbers are:

- The Early Diversity Internship Programme, a work shadowing scheme offered to years 1-2 undergraduates, for a week at Easter
- Civil Service Work Experience is for school students between the ages of 15 and 18. Placements are for less than 1 month based on school holidays.
- Movement to Work to help 18-24 year olds into work, for 4-6 weeks. Job Seeker's Allowance is still paid together with any travel costs.

Since the formation of BEIS in July 2016, we have had 1 Movement to Work placement lasting for 6 weeks and 11 Civil Service Work Experience placements lasting less than one month.

Prior to the formation of BEIS, former BIS had 2 Early Diversity Internship Programme students in April 2016.

Available figures from legacy departments for Movement to Work and Civil Service Work Experience schemes for the previous 5 financial years are below:

DATES	TOTAL NUMBER OF UNPAID PLACEMENTS	NUMBER OF PLACEMENTS LASTING FOR LONGER THAN ONE MONTH
April 2015 to March 2016	Former BIS = 11	0
April 2014 to March 2015	Former DECC = 1	Former DECC = 1
April 2013 to March 2014	Not available	Not available
April 2012 to March 2013	Not available	Not available
April 2011 to March 2012	Not available	Not available

■ Easter

Sir Greg Knight:

[\[66998\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will take steps to bring into force the provisions of the Easter Act 1928 to fix the date of Easter from 2018 onwards.

Margot James:

At present, Easter occurs on the first Sunday after the first ecclesiastical full moon following the spring equinox. The Easter Act 1928, which remains on the Statute Book, would set the date for Easter to fall on the Sunday that follows the second Saturday in April (i.e. between 9 and 15 April). The Act has not been brought into force. To do so would require an Order in Council, with the approval of both Houses of Parliament. The Act also requires that, before the Order is made, "regard shall be had to any opinion officially expressed by any Church or other Christian Body."

■ Electricity: Exports

Callum McCaig:

[\[67351\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential to increase exports of electricity through new and existing interconnectors.

Jesse Norman:

[Holding answer 14 March 2017]:

The Government stated in the 2016 Budget that it supports at least 9 gigawatts of additional interconnection, and noted that there is likely to be merit in more depending on the market being connected to. We have three projects under construction and three more with regulatory approval, which together could add 7.7 gigawatts of interconnection capacity by 2022. In addition to this, there are a number of new projects coming forward seeking regulatory approval. Ofgem is currently assessing whether these projects are in the interests of British consumers.

■ Electricity: Prices

Callum McCaig:

[\[67353\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect on electricity prices of the (a) UK leaving the EU and (b) developing Energy Union.

Jesse Norman:

[Holding answer 14 March 2017]: The UK's future relationship with EU electricity markets following its exit from the EU will be determined by negotiations between the UK and the EU. The future of the EU Internal Electricity Market will be determined by negotiations on the Commission's proposals for market design. In both these negotiations the Government remains committed to getting the best deal for consumers.

■ Wind Power: Seas and Oceans

Alex Cunningham: [67119]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many wind turbines were installed in the (a) Irish Sea, (b) North Sea and (c) English Channel in each year between 2006-07 and 2016-17.

Jesse Norman:

The Department does not hold information on annual turbine installation rates.

However, Wind Europe's " *The European Offshore Wind Industry, key trends and statistics 2016* " records that, at the end of 2016, the UK had a total of 1,472 turbines installed and connected across 28 windfarms.

The details can be found at <https://windeurope.org/wp-content/uploads/files/about-wind/statistics/WindEurope-Annual-Offshore-Statistics-2016.pdf>.

The Rampion project is in the process of installing the first turbines in the English Channel.

CABINET OFFICE**■ Average Earnings: Coventry South**

Mr Jim Cunningham: [67420]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the average salary of full-time equivalent employees was in Coventry South constituency in April of each of the last five years.

Chris Skidmore:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA Response to PQ67420 [PQ 67420 v.02 (1) (1) (1).pdf]

■ Cabinet Office: ICT

Justin Madders: [65978]

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

Justin Madders: [65990]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how much 10 Downing Street spent on (a) iPads and tablets and (b) paper in each of the last five years for which figures are available.

Ben Gummer:

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

Prior to 2014 there was no support for any tablet or iPad devices on the Cabinet Office IT system nor were there any tablet or iPad items available for staff to purchase.

Since 2014 the Cabinet Office have purchased the following Ipads and Tablets:

YEAR	COST
2014/15	£1,540
2015/16	£6,620
2016/17	£17,012

Since April 2015 the Cabinet Office have outsourced the printing capability functions and the associated paper purchase costs to a new supplier on a new system.

Due to the migration of Cabinet Office financial records onto a new shared services financial system all paper purchases prior to 2015 were aggregated into an overall stationary cost so are not readily available within a reasonable timeframe for an answer to the question.

For the financial years 2015/16 and 2016/17 the following information is available:

YEAR	COST
2015/16	£45,610
2016/17	£29,198

■ Cabinet Office: Meetings

Susan Elan Jones:

[R] [67317]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many meetings (a) Ministers and (b) officials of his Department have had with (i) businesses and (ii) registered charities in each of the last five years.

Ben Gummer:

Details of Ministers' and Permanent Secretary meetings with external organisations, including senior media figures, are published routinely on Gov.uk and can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ministers-transparency-publications>

Information about meetings between officials, businesses and charities are not centrally held and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ Elections: Fraud

Andrew Stephenson:

[\[67268\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the level of electoral fraud; and if he will undertake a review of legislation with a view to restricting on-demand postal and proxy votes.

Chris Skidmore:

The Government published its response to *Securing the Ballot* in December, setting out a clear and comprehensive package for reform of the electoral system that will strengthen the integrity of our electoral processes, and enhance public confidence in our democracy.

“On demand” postal and proxy voting were both considered as part of Sir Eric Pickles’ review, and the response outlines the Government’s position on both issues.

The Government agrees with Sir Eric that requiring postal voters to reapply for their ballot every three years would add rigour to the current process. We intend to consider the practical implications of making such a change, in consultation with the Electoral Commission. We will also be giving careful consideration to strengthening the rules on proxy voting, including by exploring changing the deadline for the registration of an emergency proxy, and clarifying current legislation on proxy voting offences.

Where reforms require primary legislation, the Government is clear that their implementation will depend on the availability of parliamentary time.

■ Nitrous Oxide: Misuse

Mike Wood:

[\[67408\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate his Department has made of the number of deaths attributable to the inhalation of nitrous oxide.

Chris Skidmore:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA Response to PQ67408 [PQ67408 V.02 (1) (1).pdf]

■ Tax Avoidance

Kirsten Oswald:

[\[67012\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what guidance his Department provides to people taking up public appointments against the use of aggressive tax avoidance schemes.

Chris Skidmore:

The Cabinet Office's standard terms and conditions for Public Appointees include a clause stating that all remuneration relating to the appointment is taxable and PAYE

in respect of income tax and National Insurance Contributions will be deducted at source.

In cases where alternative contractual arrangements are in place these must be handled in accordance with the Procurement Policy Note 'Tax Arrangements of Public Appointees'. The note can be found on GOV.UK.

In addition, all public appointees are expected to comply with the Seven Principles of Public Life.

TREASURY

■ Air Passenger Duty

Grahame Morris: [\[66841\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of devolving Air Passenger Duty to the Scottish Parliament on airports in the North of England.

Grahame Morris: [\[66842\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make it his policy to reduce Air Passenger Duty to match any reduction in that duty made by the Scottish Parliament after April 2018.

Grahame Morris: [\[66843\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will introduce a congestion based approach for Air Passenger Duty.

Grahame Morris: [\[66844\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing a congestion based approach for Air Passenger Duty for airports in the North of England.

Jane Ellison:

The Government considered various options on how to support English regional airports against the impacts of Scottish devolution as part of the consultation "Options for supporting English regional impacts of air passenger duty devolution". There was no stakeholder consensus for a structural change to the way that Air Passenger Duty (APD) is levied.

The Government response to the consultation was published at Autumn Statement 2016. This indicated that the Government would keep the issue under review and would return to it once the UK leaves the European Union.

Rates of APD are kept under review and the Chancellor announces any changes at fiscal events. Rates for 2019-20 will be set at Autumn Budget 2017.

■ **Excise Duties: Fuels**

Byron Davies: [\[66876\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much revenue the Exchequer has received in each year from 2009-10 from the taxation of Avgas.

Byron Davies: [\[66877\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much revenue the Exchequer has received since 2009-10 from the duty on the sale of the private aviation turbine fuel Autur.

Jane Ellison:

Total tax receipts for Avgas and Avtur from 2009-10 are shown in the table below:

YEAR	AVGAS (£M)	AVTUR (£M)
2009/10	9.1	0.1
2010/11	9.3	0.1
2011/12	9.4	0.1
2012/13	7.6	0.1
2013/14	7.7	0.1
2014/15	7.8	0.2
2015/16	7.7	0.2

■ **Treasury: Information Officers**

Justin Madders: [\[67442\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 2 March 2017 to Question 65105, what estimate he has made of the amount spent by his Department in each of the last 10 years on staff undertaking media relations and communications roles.

Simon Kirby:

The information requested can only be provided at a disproportionate cost.

■ **Treasury: Meetings**

Susan Elan Jones: [\[R\] \[67322\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many meetings (a) Ministers and (b) officials of his Department have had with (i) businesses and (ii) registered charities in each of the last five years.

Simon Kirby:

Treasury Ministers and officials have meetings with a wide variety of organisations in the public and private sectors as part of the process of policy development and

delivery. Details of ministerial and permanent secretary meetings with external organisations on departmental business are published on a quarterly basis and are available at:

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

■ Treasury: Work Experience

Justin Madders:

[66904]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people undertook an unpaid work placement in his Department in each of the last five years for which figures are available; and how many such placements lasted for longer than one month.

Simon Kirby:

The Treasury hosts internships which are paid. There were no unpaid work placements over 2 weeks.

The Treasury participates in the formal civil service wide work experience scheme for school and college students. This is part of the government's social mobility strategy. Work experience of 2 weeks or less is unpaid but there are costs to participating departments i.e. £1000-2000 per student. These costs support activities for the students on career choices, travel expenses and accommodation where the work-experience scheme is residential. The numbers of students hosted from the central scheme are below:

YEAR	CIVIL SERVICE WORK EXPERIENCE STUDENTS IN HM TREASURY
2012	2
2013	3
2014	3
2015	4
2016	3

Informal work- experience is also permitted of less than 2 weeks for young people under the age of 22. These placements are unpaid and numbers are not collated centrally.

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Homelessness: Young People

John Healey:[\[66779\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on the potential effect of ending the automatic entitlement to housing benefit for 18 to 21 year-olds on levels of homelessness.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The Department for Communities and Local Government and the Department for Work and Pensions work closely together to ensure that our policy priorities are aligned. The two departments are in regular contact at ministerial level.

■ Housing: Corrosion

Craig Williams:[\[66865\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what guidance his Department has issued for home owners on the risk of wall tie corrosion.

Gavin Barwell:

Statutory guidance to the Building Regulations in [Approved Document A Structure](#) states that wall ties should be made of stainless steel (which is considered to be corrosion resistant) and have a minimum embedment length in each wall leaf of 50mm.

The Department has not issued any guidance to home owners, as identification, investigation and specifying repairs of corroded wall ties are specialist technical matters that are best left to a structural engineer or building surveyor. It is also likely that the building insurer will be involved.

DEFENCE

■ Catterick Barracks

Rishi Sunak:[\[67223\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many (a) serving personnel and (b) dependents will be based at Catterick in each year between 2017 and 2020.

Mark Lancaster:

The planned estimated number of Service personnel to be based at Catterick between 2017 and 2020 is provided below:

	2017	2018	2019	2020
Number of Service Personnel	6,960	6,960	7,700	7,890

Figures are rounded to the nearest ten and based upon internal Army planning data; the actual number will continuously fluctuate over the period as individual assignments, medical issues and training and other activities away from their unit, affect unit strengths. There will also be periods of fluctuation as units relocate in and out of the Garrison. This data includes permanent staff assigned to the School of Infantry but does not include the circa 3,000 recruits and other trainees who pass through every year.

The Army currently estimates that there are 5,120 dependents resident in Catterick and this figure will increase over this period, proportionate to the Service personnel numbers shown above.

■ **Defence Equipment: Bridgend**

Mrs Madeleine Moon:

[67330]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the (a) date and (b) location is of the small and medium-sized enterprise defence equipment event in Bridgend constituency; whether the hon. Member for Bridgend will be invited to that event; and if he will make a statement.

Harriett Baldwin:

An event aimed at small and medium-sized enterprises wishing to sell to the Ministry of Defence (MOD) is taking place on 28 June 2017 at the Waterton Technology Centre, Bridgend. While the MOD is supporting this forum, it is being organised by the manufacturing trade body EEF, which is also managing invitations.

Titled 'How to sell to the MOD, Cyber Essentials and Export Defence Products Update', the event will outline the many defence procurement opportunities available for smaller businesses. MOD representatives will also be on hand to offer advice on becoming part of the defence supply chain.

The hon. Member would of course be most welcome to attend.

■ **United States Africa Command**

Kirsten Oswald:

[67275]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 24 February 2017 to Question 64012, how many UK personnel are assigned to US Africa Command; at what bases they are stationed; and what roles they undertake.

Mike Penning:

The UK currently has eight posts established within US Africa Command (Stuttgart) and its subordinate command Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) (Djibouti):

- One Senior UK Liaison Officer (Stuttgart)
- One Deputy UK Liaison Officer and Intelligence Liaison Officer (Stuttgart)

- One Embed Planning Officer (Stuttgart)
- Three Liaison Planning/Operations Officer (Stuttgart)
- One Embed Planning Officer (Djibouti)
- One Embed Intelligence Officer (Djibouti)

■ War Memorials: Greater London

Stephen Kinnock:

[\[67325\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what criteria were used to determine who was invited to the unveiling of the Iraq and Afghanistan Memorial on 9 March 2017.

Mike Penning:

The Iraq and Afghanistan Memorial honours the contribution of all those in the UK Armed Forces and all UK citizens who supported the campaigns in the Gulf region, Iraq and Afghanistan from 1990-2015. As these operations spanned over 25 years, involving some 300,000 Service personnel and many tens of thousands of civilians, attendance could only be on a representative basis. Therefore, to ensure as broad a representation as possible, the Ministry of Defence consulted with a wide and diverse range of groups, including across Government with those Departments and agencies from which personnel had deployed. This included current serving personnel, veterans (including the wounded, holders of gallantry awards and prisoners of war), civil servants, and the very many civilian and charitable organisations that played a role to represent the memory of those who did not return. Attendance from the bereaved community was made on a representative basis via recognised charities and representative groups as with others attending.

EDUCATION

■ Apprentices: Ethnic Groups

Andrew Stephenson:

[\[67229\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she plans to take to encourage people from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds to undertake apprenticeships.

Robert Halfon:

We are committed to increasing the proportion of apprentices with a Black and Minority Ethnic background (BAME) by 20% by 2020, as part of the overall commitment to reach 3 million Apprenticeship starts in England.

We have taken action through our current marketing campaign, 'Get in Go Far' to ensure that there is clear representation from apprentices from BAME backgrounds, including showcasing BAME apprentices in high status professional roles.

On 21 February 2017 we launched the Apprenticeships Diversity Champions Network. This network, chaired by Nus Ghani MP, will be engaging and inspiring employers and communities to ensure that apprenticeships are represented by

people from a diverse range of backgrounds, reflecting the widest spectrum of our society. The 23 members are committed to encouraging other employers to promote diversity in apprenticeships, and to championing apprenticeships in BAME communities.

The National Careers Service provides information about learning and work, with a helpline giving professional advice on making the right choices, before and during apprenticeships.

■ Further Education: Warrington

Helen Jones:

[66935]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate her Department has made of the (a) capital and (b) revenue costs of the Future Tech Studio in Warrington.

Edward Timpson:

For reasons of commercial confidentiality and to ensure that the department and the free school proposers are able to maintain strong bargaining positions during negotiations, capital costs are not disclosed before costs are finalised. Capital funding for open free schools, UTCs and studio schools where costs have been finalised are published on Gov.UK at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/capital-funding-for-open-free-schools>.

The final capital costs Future Tech Studio in Warrington have not yet been published but are due to be included in the next publication round in coming months.

The revenue costs are published online as follows -

Schools block funding allocations are published on Gov.UK. The link for Pre 16:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schools-block-funding-allocations-2016-to-2017> and post 16 Data: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-education-funding-allocations>.

Pre and post open grant allocations for studio schools are published on Gov.UK at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/revenue-spending-on-open-and-withdrawn-utcs-and-studio-schools>

Pupil premium: allocations and conditions of grant are published on Gov.uk at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings>.

■ NHS: Migrant Workers

Dr Philippa Whitford:

[66866]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether exemptions from the immigration skills charge will be available to NHS employers.

Dr Philippa Whitford:

[66867]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will estimate the cost of the immigration skills charge to providers in financial year 2017-18.

Dr Philippa Whitford:[\[67154\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether the Government plans to support the NHS to mitigate the financial cost of the immigration skills charge for financial year 2017-18.

Robert Halfon:

Exemptions from the Immigration Skills Charge for employers were announced on 24 March 2016. These include exemptions for employers of specified occupations skilled to PhD level and individuals switching from a Tier 4 student visa to Tier 2 (General). All employers, including the NHS, who recruit workers through the Tier 2 skilled worker route will benefit from these exemptions.

We have not estimated the potential annual cost of the charge to providers. The cost will depend on employer use of the Tier 2 skilled worker route. The Government has no plans to reimburse the cost of the Immigration Skills Charge for any employer.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Air Pollution: West Midlands

Mr Jim Cunningham:[\[67404\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, in how many years since 2010 (a) Coventry and (b) the West Midlands have been in breach of EU air pollution levels.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

Defra assesses compliance against EU air quality limit values for 43 regional zones and agglomerations across the UK. This monitoring covers five key pollutants: particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}), sulphur dioxide (SO₂), ozone (O₃) and nitrogen dioxide (NO₂). We do not hold compliance data at a local authority level.

Monitoring data is available up to 2015. Details of compliance in each year since 2010 that data is available for is set out in the table below.

PERFORMANCE AGAINST THE EU LIMIT VALUES FOR PM₁₀ AND PM_{2.5}, SO₂, O₃ AND NO₂ BETWEEN 2010 AND 2015.

Zone	Year NO ₂ hourly limit value exceeded	Year NO ₂ annual mean value exceeded	SO ₂ , PM ₁₀ , PM _{2.5} and O ₃
Coventry/Bedworth Urban Area	No exceedances	2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	No exceedances
West Midlands Urban Area	No exceedances	2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	No exceedances

■ Bovine Tuberculosis: Disease Control

Mary Glendon:

[\[67291\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate she has made of the total value of cattle slaughtered due to the detection of bovine TB within the herd in each of the last five years.

George Eustice:

Compensation for cattle which are compulsorily slaughtered for the purpose of controlling bovine TB in England is based on the actual market prices for 51 categories of bovines. Therefore, the total gross expenditure on compensation is the best measure of the value of those cattle, had they not been affected by the disease.

Total gross expenditure on compensation over the last five full financial years is set out below:

FINANCIAL YEAR	TOTAL GROSS EXPENDITURE FOR CATTLE COMPULSORILY SLAUGHTERED FOR THE PURPOSE OF CONTROLLING BOVINE TB IN ENGLAND (£M)
2011/12	31.6
2012/13	33.6
2013/14	31.2
2014/15	29.6
2015/16	29.7

■ Fisheries: EU Law

Calum Kerr:

[\[67416\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if her Department will seek to exempt EU-related fisheries law from being incorporated into UK law as part of the Great Repeal Bill.

George Eustice:

All Government Departments are currently reviewing the EU laws that apply in their policy areas and how our withdrawal from the EU will affect the operation of those laws. The Government will set out the content of the Great Repeal Bill and its implications in due course.

We are currently analysing all EU fisheries legislation. No decision has yet been made on the extent to which the EU legislation governing the Common Fisheries Policy will be incorporated into domestic law.

■ Roads: Pollution**Andrew Rosindell:****[67173]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans her Department has to reduce roadside pollution.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The Government is firmly committed to improving the UK's air quality and cutting harmful roadside emissions. That is why we have committed more than £2 billion since 2011 to reduce transport emissions and the autumn statement provided a further £290 million to support greener transport. Air quality is improving, but the Government recognises that we need to go further and faster and we will be consulting on a new national plan on nitrogen dioxide concentrations by 24 April 2017. The final plan will be in place by the end of July 2017.

As the UK improves air quality, air quality hotspots are going to become even more localised and the importance of local action will increase. Local authorities have opportunities to improve air quality for the protection of public health and the environment through decisions they make on land use planning, permitting, roads and air quality management areas (AQMAs). Local authorities can voluntarily introduce Clean Air Zones should they wish to do so using their powers under the Transport Act 2000. They also have the powers to issue fixed penalty notices of £20 to drivers who allow their vehicle engines to run unnecessarily while the vehicle is stationary, using powers under the Road Traffic (Vehicle Emissions) (Fixed Penalty) (England) Regulations 2002.

EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION**■ Department for Exiting the European Union: Work Experience****Justin Madders:****[66894]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, how many people undertook an unpaid work placement in his Department in each of the last five years for which figures are available; and how many such placements lasted for longer than one month.

Mr Robin Walker:

As a new department, DExEU is not in a position to report on the use of unpaid work placements undertaken over the past 5 years. DExEU intends to make use of central Civil Service run schemes including the Summer Diversity Internship Programme, which is a paid two month placement, and the Early Diversity Internship Programme.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE**■ Europe: Migration****Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[66936\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department is taking in consultation with other EU member states to discourage migrants from travelling to Europe by sea.

Sir Alan Duncan:

The UK and the EU are pursuing a comprehensive approach, addressing the root causes and consequences of migration. The Malta Declaration, which followed the Valletta Informal European Council in February, sets out areas where the EU can collectively help address the rising number of refugees and migrants crossing the Central Mediterranean. We also remain committed to working with our European partners to ensure that the EU-Turkey Statement is implemented in an effective and sustainable way.

■ Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Work Experience**Justin Madders:**[\[66895\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many people undertook an unpaid work placement in his Department in each of the last five years for which figures are available; and how many such placements lasted for longer than one month.

Sir Alan Duncan:

All those who undertook work experience at the FCO between 2012-2016 were paid an allowance, except:

- The four participants on the Movement to Work Scheme in 2016, who each continued to receive their benefits during their two-week placement
- The two participants on a one-week Civil Service Work Experience (CSWE) placement in 2016. Participants received an advance payment to cover their travel and lunch costs
- 15 Social Mobility Interns between 2012-2015 on a two-week residential work experience programme. Participation was free and interns received an advance payment to cover meal and travel costs.

■ Israel: Demolition**Richard Burden:**[\[67392\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the representations he has received from the Israeli Government on the threatened demolition of Khan al-Ahmar.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

We have not received any representations from the Israeli government on Khan al-Ahmar. But the Foreign Secretary, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Mr Johnson) highlighted the UK's grave concern about demolitions, including with regards the village of Khan al-Ahmar, with Prime Minister Netanyahu during his visit to Israel on 8 March.

Richard Burden:[\[67393\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he raised the threatened demolition of the village of Khan al-Ahmar with the Israeli Government during his recent visit to that country.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The Foreign Secretary, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Mr Johnson) raised the UK's grave concerns about demolitions, including the village of Khan al - Ahmer, with Prime Minister Netanyahu during his visit to Israel on 8 March.

Turkey: Armed Forces**Richard Arkless:**[\[66910\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations the Government has made to the Turkish Government on recent military activity in the Aegean Sea.

Sir Alan Duncan:

As NATO allies, the UK and Turkish governments regularly discuss military activity in the Aegean Sea, particularly NATO operations.

HEALTH**Alzheimer's Disease: Medical Treatments****Jim Shannon:**[\[66802\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will make the magnetic brain-training therapy, NeuroAD, available on the NHS.

David Mowat:

We welcome the development of new drugs and treatments for people with different stages of dementia. However, there needs to be further research and evidence about the effectiveness of magnetic brain-training therapy, NeuroAD, before it can be considered for potential use by the National Health Service.

Care Homes: West Midlands**Mr Jim Cunningham:**[\[67422\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many places there were in registered care homes in (a) Coventry and (b) the West Midlands in each of the last five years.

David Mowat:

The information requested is set out in the table below:

	AUGUST-2012	AUGUST-2013	AUGUST-2014	AUGUST-2015	AUGUST-2016
Coventry	1,860	1,867	1,983	2,055	2,092
West Midlands	46,370	46,732	46,996	47,113	47,534
England	464,126	463,909	463,887	462,153	460,642

The figures are published by the Care Quality Commission.

■ Carers: Training

Rosie Cooper:[\[66985\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what duty is on local authorities to ensure that home care agencies provide mandatory bowel and bladder training for carers.

David Mowat:

It is the responsibility of employers to ensure their staff are suitably trained and appropriately supported to undertake the roles for which they are employed.

The Care Quality Commission's Fundamental Standards include a regulation on staffing which ensures that suitably qualified, competent, skilled persons must be deployed.

■ Catheters

Rosie Cooper:[\[66943\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will ensure that NHS England and clinical commissioning groups provide a choice of single-use catheter products for use outside the home for intermittent self-catheterisation users.

David Mowat:

Commissioning appropriate care for patients is the responsibility of individual clinical commissioning groups (CCGs), or, in the case of some directly commissioned services, NHS England.

The legislation under which NHS England and CCG commission services requires them to arrange for the provision of services for which they are responsible, to such extent as they consider necessary to meet all reasonable requirements. For CCGs, this includes offering continence services as part of their obligation to provide community health. Although CCGs often focus on prevention and treatment, we would expect any standard continence service should include access to products.

■ Clinical Commissioning Groups

Sir Greg Knight: [\[66999\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will review the powers of clinical commissioning groups to make them more accountable to the public.

David Mowat:

Section 14Z2 of the Health and Social Care Act 2006 (as amended in 2012) places a duty on clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) to involve and consult the public.

Duties under this include the duty to include individuals when developing or changing services, including a statement of principles in their constitution and having regard to any guidance on consultation published by NHS England.

If a CCG is failing to meet its functions, NHS England is able to issue directions to them, setting out what action it should take.

■ Dental Services

Steve McCabe: [\[66938\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 20 February 2017 to Question 63405, on dental services, how many adults were seen by a NHS dentist in each 24-month period that his Department holds data for.

Steve McCabe: [\[66939\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 20 February 2017 to Question 63405, on dental services, how many children were seen by a NHS dentist in each 12-month period that his Department holds data for.

Steve McCabe: [\[67081\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 20 February 2017 to Question 63405, how many adults were seen by an NHS dentist in each of the last 24 months.

Steve McCabe: [\[67082\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 20 February 2017 to Question 63405, how many children were seen by an NHS dentist in the latest 12-month period for which figures are available.

David Mowat:

The number of adult patients seen by a National Health Service dentist in each 24-month period ending from 31 March 2006 can be found in the attached table.

The number of children seen by a NHS dentist in each 12 month period ending from 31 December 2015 can be found in the attached table.

NHS Digital do not collect data monthly on the number of adults seen by an NHS dentist in each of the last 24 months.

Attachments:

1. PQ66938 attached table 1 [Number of adult patients aged 18 and over seen in the previous 24 months.docx]
2. PQ66938 attached table 2 [Number of patients aged 0 to 17 seen by an NHS dentist in the previous 12 months.docx]

Steve McCabe:[\[67156\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 20 February 2017 to Question 64306, if he will provide data from each bi-annual publication of the GP Patient Survey Dental Statistics since 2010 for the statistics listed under the main results section of the data published on 7 July 2016.

David Mowat:

Data under the main results section from each bi-annual publication of the GP Patient Survey (GPPS) Dental Statistics is available from the reporting period January-March 2016 to July-September 2011 and can be found in the attached document.

The July to September 2011 publication was the first bi-annual version and due to a change in methodology it cannot be compared to subsequent GPPS results.

Attachments:

1. PQ67156 attached document [PQ67156 GP Patient Survey.docx]

■ Dental Services: Registration**Mr Roger Godsiff:**[\[67033\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what service standard his Department has set Capita for the average turnaround time for applications to the National Dental Performers List; and what penalties are in place in the event that those standards are not achieved.

Mr Roger Godsiff:[\[67038\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the average turnaround time is for applications to the National Dental Performers List since that service has been taken over by Capita.

David Mowat:

NHS England holds the contract with Capita for the administration of Primary Care Support Services, including the National Dental Performers List. NHS England has informed us that that it does not hold information on the average turnaround time for applications to join the National Dental Performers List. There is an expectation that applications should take 12 weeks to process but for some applications it can take longer. The Performers List process checks that applicants have the correct evidence to ensure that safeguards are in place for the protection of the public.

Service standards set in the Capita contract are a matter for NHS England as the contract holder. NHS England advises the contract contains a range of remedies to incentivise and address performance. These include the application of financial service credits where agreed levels of performance are not achieved and rectification processes to affect improvement in service performance where this falls below expected levels.

■ Department of Health: Overseas Aid**Philip Davies:****[66933]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 9 February 2017 to Question 62581, if he will provide the (a) title, (b) location, (c) value, (d) organisation in receipt of the funding, (e) objectives and (f) timeframe of each project funded by his Department's Official Development Assistance budget in each year since 2014; whether any officials were on secondment as part of each such project; and what the expected outcome of each such project was; and if he will place in the Library a copy of that information.

Nicola Blackwood:

The attached table shows the projects funded from the Department's Official Development Assistance budget over the Spending Review period.

The Fleming Fund represents an investment in improving laboratory capacity for diagnosis and surveillance of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in low-income countries where AMR has a disproportionate impact and presents a global risk. The Fleming Fund will play a major role in supporting countries across the world to build their capacity for AMR surveillance, enabling the international community to better pinpoint and target the emergence of resistance at source.

The International Health Regulations Project will strengthen international efforts to improve global health security, through increased compliance with International Health Regulations. UK funding will contribute to action at national, regional and global, levels and lead to measurable strengthening of public health systems in up to four countries.

The Vaccines Network Project will develop vaccines, vaccine platform technologies and vaccine manufacturing technologies in preparation for, and response to, outbreaks of diseases with epidemic potential.

The United Kingdom Rapid Support Team will respond to urgent requests from countries around the world within forty eight hours to help control disease outbreaks that pose a threat to public health, intervening before they can develop into a global emergency.

Building on the strengths of UK health research leadership and world-leading expertise in public health and medical research, the Global Health Research funding will enable UK universities (in collaboration with institutions in developing countries), to undertake research to address health challenges. One focus of the fund will be non-communicable diseases, such as diabetes, which affect people in the UK and increasingly in low and middle-income countries.

For details on the Tobacco Control Plan project, I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Christchurch (Mr Christopher Chope MP) on 14 November 2016 to Question [52127](#).

Attachments:

1. PQ66933 attached table [PQ66933 attached document.docx]

■ Department of Health: Work Experience

Justin Madders:

[66896]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many people undertook an unpaid work placement in his Department in each of the last five years for which figures are available; and how many such placements lasted for longer than one month.

David Mowat:

The Department does not hold central records on the number of people undertaking unpaid work placements in the Department.

■ Diabetes

Charlotte Leslie:

[67004]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the (a) clinical and (b) cost effectiveness of the provision of bariatric surgery alongside other preventative public health measures in reducing cases of type two diabetes.

Nicola Blackwood:

It is for the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) to provide national clinical guidance and advice, based on best evidence of clinical and cost effectiveness, for use of interventions, technology and devices.

NICE has published a clinical guideline on the identification, assessment and management of obesity that contains recommendations for assessment for bariatric surgery to be considered for people with recent-onset type 2 diabetes within specified criteria:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg189/chapter/1-recommendations>

It has not, however, published guidance on the specific role of bariatric surgery as an intervention to prevent type 2 diabetes in those at high risk.

■ General Practitioners: Education

Dr Sarah Wollaston:

[67159]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what change there will be in GP education budgets in each Health Education England region between 2016-17 and 2017-18.

David Mowat:

The Department is working closely with Health Education England to agree its budget for 2017-18. Beyond the need to reduce running costs and seek greater efficiency from education support costs, no decisions have been taken on the levels of funding that will be available for any given programme.

■ General Practitioners: Recruitment

Dr Sarah Wollaston:

[67157]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the 90 per cent fill rate for GP positions in England in 2016

as set out in Health Education England's General Practice ST1 recruitment figures; and if he will make a statement.

Dr Sarah Wollaston: [67158]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he is taking to increase recruitment of GPs.

David Mowat:

The Government is committed to having an extra 5,000 doctors working in general practice by 2020/21. The Department is working with NHS England and Health Education England (HEE) to increase the number of general practitioner (GP) training places. In 2016, HEE recruited the highest ever number of GP trainees (3,019 out of 3,250) – 93% fill rate. In addition to increasing the number of trainees, we are taking forward a range of other measures to increase both recruitment and retention such as encouraging return to general practice, attracting medical students to become GP trainees, as well as a strengthened package of support to help GPs remain in clinical general practice.

■ Health Professions: Training

Dr Philippa Whitford: [66932]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, with reference to his Department's news story of 4 October 2016, entitled Up to 1,500 extra medical training places announced, when the Government plans to publish its consultation on how these proposals can be implemented; and what the reasons are for the time being taken to publish that consultation.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The consultation on the expansion of undergraduate medical education was published on Tuesday 14 March 2017. The consultation can be accessed at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/expanding-undergraduate-medical-education>

■ Health Services: North East Bedfordshire

Alistair Burt: [67056]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what plans he has to expand health services in North East Bedfordshire to meet growing demand as a result of additional houses being built.

David Mowat:

This information is not held centrally. Decisions regarding the planning of services in a local area are the responsibility of individual clinical commissioning groups.

■ Health Services: Reciprocal Arrangements

Mr Peter Lilley: [\[66794\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many European Health Insurance Cards were issued in each of the five financial years preceding 2016-17.

Mr Peter Lilley: [\[66795\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many S1 applications were approved in each of the five financial years preceding 2016-17.

Mr Peter Lilley: [\[66796\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many applications for treatment under S2 arrangements were approved retrospectively in each of the five financial years preceding 2016-17.

Mr Peter Lilley: [\[66874\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the cost was of reimbursing health care treatment received by UK nationals resident in (a) each EEA/EU country and (b) Switzerland under EU Regulations 883/2004 and 987/2009 and Directive 2001/1/24 under the (i) European Health Insurance Card, (ii) S1 and (iii) S2 schemes in each of the last five financial years.

Mr Philip Dunne:

As insurability under European Union law is not determined on the basis of nationality, it is not possible to provide information on the reimbursement costs under EU Regulations 883/2004 and 987/2009, and Directive 2001/1/24 under the European Health Insurance Card, S1 and S2 scheme. Other Economic European Area (EEA) countries and Switzerland reimburse the United Kingdom for the cost of the National Health Service providing treatment to people they are responsible for under EU law, including UK nationals insured in another EEA country or Switzerland, irrespective of nationality.

The following table provides information on the numbers of S2 forms issued.

FINANCIAL YEARS APRIL-MARCH

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
S2/E112					
Out-going	1,442	1,312	1,354	1,355	1,330

Source: Overseas Healthcare Team (OHT), Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

Note: It is possible that issued S2s to customers have not been used

Information on S2 arrangements approved retrospectively is not available.

The following table provides information on the numbers of S1 forms registered by individuals in Foreign Authorities (FA) for whom the UK is responsible under the EU law.

REGISTRATION IN FINANCIAL YEARS APRIL-MARCH

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Registered by FA	7,561	19,887	46,412	28,600	25,198

Source: OHT, DWP

Note: Data is from 1 April to 31 March

Data above includes forms issued E106, E109, E120, E121, E122 and S1, these exclude PRC, E123, DA1, E112 and S2.

Timeline of data

2011 to 2012

OHT moved to Washington and staff training started. There were low skill levels in this period.

2013

OHT had a back log of work which was taken on and cleared by staff in Porth.

2014

Registrations start to level out.

The following list provides information on how many European Health Insurance Cards were issued in the last five years:

2015-16 6,069,233

2014-15 5,414,977

2013-14 5,571,060

2012-13 5,240,608

2011-12 6,830,734

Source: NHS Business Services Authority

■ Health Services: West Midlands

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[67421]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of public sector pay restraints on levels of expenditure by the NHS on agency staff in (a) Coventry and (b) the West Midlands.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The independent NHS Pay Review Bodies, in place for decades, are relied on by Government and other stakeholders to consider all the written and oral evidence they receive and to make recommendations on the level of pay award that will enable the National Health Service to continue to recruit, retain and motivate the staff it needs. Both Pay Review Bodies received evidence on agency spend in 2016/17.

The NHS Pay Review Bodies recommended a 1% pay award for 2016/17 which the Government accepted in full.

My Rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State introduced a series of radical measures to bring agency spending back under control in 2015, including price caps limiting the amount a trust can pay to an agency for temporary staff. The measures are working; as of Quarter 3, 2016-17 the NHS had spent £1 billion less on agency staff than it was projected to had we not taken tough action to bring in controls on agency spending, with further savings forecast for the current financial year.

Data on agency spending is not currently collected by city or standard regions, but acute trusts in the Coventry and West Midlands fall under the NHS England Midlands and East region. An up-to-date list of these trusts is available at:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/mids-east/ccg-trust/>

The latest national list of best and worst performers on agency spending is available at:

[https://improvement.nhs.uk/uploads/documents/Quarter_Three_201617 - NHS provider sector performance report - Feb 2017.pdf](https://improvement.nhs.uk/uploads/documents/Quarter_Three_201617_-_NHS_provider_sector_performance_report_-_Feb_2017.pdf)

Three of the best performing Trusts are from the West Midlands – West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust, Birmingham Women's NHS Foundation Trust and Birmingham Childrens Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.

Both Pay Review Bodies received evidence on agency spend for this year's pay round – 2017/18.

The Government has now received the NHS Pay Review Bodies reports for 2017/18 which it will consider very carefully. An announcement will be made in due course.

■ Heart Diseases**Mr Virendra Sharma:****[67163]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate his Department has made of the cost of heart failure to (a) the NHS and (b) Ealing Clinical Commissioning Group in each of the last three years.

David Mowat:

This information is not available in the format requested.

Such information as is available is shown in the table below.

The data in the table is for adults only and is only for the inpatient activity related to their care. It does not include any potential costs incurred for follow-up treatments such as rehabilitation or future outpatient appointments. Additionally, the data available is for the whole of the National Health Service in England and is not broken down by clinical commissioning group.

The data source for the table is from reference costs, which are the average unit costs to NHS trusts and NHS foundation trusts of providing defined services in a given financial year to NHS patients. Reference costs for acute care are collected by healthcare resource group, which are standard groupings of clinically similar treatments which use common levels of healthcare resource.

The table below shows the total cost, in millions, to the NHS of inpatient stays for heart failure from 2013-14 to 2015-16.

YEAR	£ MILLION
2013-14	259
2014-15	276
2015-16	309

Source: Department of Health Reference Costs.

Mr Virendra Sharma:

[67165]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department and the NHS are taking to support uptake and implementation of the NICE Quality Standard on acute heart failure.

David Mowat:

Most heart failure services are commissioned by clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) and NHS England expects CCGs to be following National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance.

To help the National Health Service understand what a good quality service looks like, NICE publish quality standards which define best practice within a topic area and it has published quality standards for acute and chronic heart failure. These can be found at:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/Guidance/QS9>

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/qs103>

NHS England does commission specialised services and this includes some implantable pacemakers/defibrillators for heart failure patients, and for which a service specification exists. A best practice tariff exists for providers which admit acute heart failure patients and is related to adherence to NICE quality standards.

Mr Virendra Sharma:

[\[67166\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that adequate services are available for patients in areas where there is a high prevalence of heart failure.

David Mowat:

Most heart failure services are commissioned by clinical commissioning groups (CCGs). If a CCG has a high prevalence of heart failure, it is expected that this would be reflected in local prioritisation.

■ Incontinence

Rosie Cooper:

[\[66961\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether the Care Quality Commission is responsible for carrying out inspections on the standards of continence care in (a) hospitals, (b) residential homes and (c) nursing homes.

David Mowat:

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) is the independent regulator of health and adult social care providers in England. All providers of regulated activities, including National Health Service and independent providers, have to register with the CQC and follow a set of fundamental standards of safety and quality below which care should never fall.

The CQC assess providers against the fundamental standards. The CQC has advised that the lack of adequate continence care could breach a number of the CQC fundamental standards; for example that people:

- must have care and treatment that is tailored to them and meets their needs and preferences;
- are treated with dignity and respect at all times whilst receiving care and treatment; and
- do not suffer any form of abuse or improper treatment, including neglect or degrading treatment, while receiving care.

The CQC considers continence as part of inspections wherever appropriate. If a specific concern over continence care was raised, the inspection would focus on this issue in greater detail.

■ Junior Doctors: Working Hours

Dr Philippa Whitford:

[\[66873\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what consideration has been given to recording data on rota gaps.

Mr Philip Dunne:

It is the responsibility of individual National Health Service organisations to ensure safe staffing levels.

The Department reduced bureaucracy by removing the burden of central monitoring of the Working Time Directive by leaving organisations to conduct assessments of their rotas and compliance at a local level. The last central collection of compliance data was in March 2010. There is no current proposal to reinstate the six-monthly collection.

■ **Midwives: Insurance**

Gordon Henderson:

[\[66911\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what level of indemnity insurance for midwives is classified as adequate by his Department.

Mr Philip Dunne:

Whether or not a midwife's indemnity cover is appropriate is a decision for the Nursing and Midwifery Council as the independent regulatory body responsible for the regulation of midwives in the United Kingdom.

The Government supports choice in maternity services, but this has to be a safe choice. It is therefore right that registered midwives are required to have appropriate indemnity insurance to cover their scope of practice.

■ **NHS: Disclosure of Information**

Shabana Mahmood:

[\[66878\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what reforms to whistleblowing procedures in the NHS have been made since the Freedom to speak up report was published in February 2015.

Mr Philip Dunne:

Following the publication of the Freedom to speak up report the Department has introduced a number of changes to help create a culture in the National Health Service where staff feel able to raise concerns and that those concerns are acted on without reprisal.

These changes include the introduction of a National Guardian for whistleblowing based in the Care Quality Commission (CQC). The National Guardian leads and supports a network of individuals within NHS trusts appointed as 'local freedom to speak up guardians'. The National Guardian will offer advice, share good practice, report on national or common themes, and identify any barriers that are preventing the NHS from having a truly safe and open culture.

Local Guardians are being appointed across the NHS to act in a genuinely independent capacity and are the first point of call for individuals who do not feel that their concerns are being dealt with appropriately through the usual systems. They will provide advice and support to staff about raising and handling concerns, and also to the trust's Chief Executive and Board.

The Department is also strengthening protection for whistle-blowers in legislation:

- Putting in place regulations which prohibit discrimination against whistle-blowers (or applicants believed by the prospective employer to have been whistle-blowers) when they apply for jobs with prescribed NHS employers by summer 2017, subject to the parliamentary timetable.
- Imposing a duty on prescribed persons (such as the CQC and the professional regulatory bodies) to report annually on whistleblowing disclosures made to them.
- The Government has extended the definition of 'worker' within the whistleblowing statutory framework in the Employment Rights Act 1996 to include student nurses and student midwives, meaning those people are now afforded protection under the Public Interest Disclosure Act; our intention is to extend the definition further to include other healthcare students in 2017.

The Department has introduced a statutory duty of candour which applies to organisations that are registered with the CQC. It is designed to foster an open culture throughout the organisation, and providers are accountable to the CQC for meeting the duty of candour. Providers of care are expected to implement the new duty of candour through staff across their organisations - including educating, training and, if needs be, disciplining their staff appropriately.

Also a new Healthcare Safety Investigation Branch (HSIB) will become fully established by April 2017 and will investigate some of the most serious patient safety incidents each year to generate lessons that will make NHS treatment and care safer. HSIB will implement the principle of 'safe space'; evidence submitted to safety investigations will be given entirely in confidence, such that staff will be able to speak up where things have gone wrong.

■ NHS: Reorganisation

Justin Madders:

[\[67287\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate he has made of the number of sustainable and transformation plans that will not receive additional funding as part of the allocation announced in Budget 2017.

Justin Madders:

[\[67323\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what criteria were used to determine the first sustainable and transformation plan areas to receive Government funding.

Justin Madders:

[\[67387\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, which sustainability and transformation plans (STP) will receive funding as part of the allocation announced in paragraph 6.1 of the Spring Budget 2017; and how much funding each STP will receive.

Justin Madders:

[\[67388\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many sustainability and transformation plan areas will receive the funding announced in paragraph 6.1 of the Spring Budget 2017.

David Mowat:

The Department has not yet determined how many Sustainability and Transformation Plan areas will receive the additional funding allocated in the Spring Budget.

■ **NHS: Staff****Dr Philippa Whitford:**[\[66875\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department has taken to ensure the accuracy of the workforce minimum data set data.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The Workforce Information Architecture programme was established in 2011 by the Department as part of the Health and Social Care reforms to review, improve and test the arrangements for handling workforce data and intelligence that will be necessary for the reformed systems to operate effectively. The review recommended that a workforce Minimum Data Set (wMDS) be collected by NHS Digital from all providers of National Health Service-funded care. The reforms also presented an opportunity to improve data quality, as well as data coverage and completeness, to support a step change in the effectiveness of workforce planning.

Healthcare workforce statistics in England are compiled from data supplied by around 500 NHS organisations and some independent healthcare providers.

To comply with its responsibilities regarding national workforce data quality, NHS Digital ensures that it undertakes rigorous data quality checking of the data submitted to it, or extracted from different systems to produce the wMDS. Additionally, NHS Digital liaises with these 500 organisations and their agents to encourage complete data submission, and to minimise inaccuracies and the effect of missing and invalid data.

Whilst NHS Digital seeks to minimise inaccuracies and the effect of missing and invalid data the responsibility for data accuracy lies with the organisations providing the data. Methods are continually being updated to improve data quality.

■ **Nutrition****Mrs Sharon Hodgson:**[\[67086\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 9 February 2017 to Question 62903, what the timescale is for publishing the review of the nutrient profile model; and what the reasons are for the time taken to publish that review.

Nicola Blackwood:

The proposed timescale for the review of the nutrient profiling model is still currently under review and is expected to be published on gov.uk shortly.

The proposed timescales are set to ensure that the options for the review are fully considered through a transparent process and will uphold the latest government recommendations for sugar and fibre.

■ Plastic Surgery

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[66850\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what plans the Government has to reclassify dermal fillers as prescription only medicines.

Nicola Blackwood:

Currently, the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency only regulates dermal fillers that are placed on the United Kingdom market as medical devices, as defined in the Medical Devices Regulations 2002. The majority of these products are intended to be used in reconstructive surgery, and as a result they are considered to be medical devices.

The conformity of medical devices in general is approved by independent certification organisations called 'Notified Bodies'. As a result, medical devices are CE marked (rather than 'approved' or licenced), and a manufacturer is obliged to obtain a CE mark for their product via a Notified Body.

Dermal fillers come within the highest risk classification in the Medical Device Directive and as such, the manufacturer must be able to provide evidence of the safety, quality and performance of their product before they are granted a CE mark by the Notified Body and allowed on to the market.

Medical devices cannot be designated as "prescription only", as this term only applies to medicinal products. The Government currently has no plans to introduce such a category for medical devices.

■ Strokes

Chris Leslie:

[\[66917\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Oral Answer of 7 February 2017, Official Report, column 226, to the hon. Member for St Ives, what steps his Department is taking to produce a detailed implementation plan to improve stroke services in England.

Chris Leslie:

[\[66918\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 22 November 2016 to Question 53101, on strokes, what criteria NHS England uses to renew or develop condition-specific strategies.

David Mowat:

The National Health Service will continue to build on the successes of the current Stroke Strategy. There has been significant, sustained improvement in the quality of stroke care over the last decade and we will continue to deliver our ambition for truly world leading care. That is why the NHS rigorously audits the quality of stroke care across the country each year. It means that we now have some of the fastest improvements in hospital recovery rates for stroke and heart attacks in Europe.

Decisions on whether the stroke strategy should be renewed are a matter for NHS England. As NHS England has moved away from disease specific strategies towards

guidance that is more cross cutting, and because the stroke strategy remains valid and implementation of it continues, NHS England has no current plans to renew it.

NHS England's approach to priority setting was set out in its Five Year Forward View, available at:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/5yfv-web.pdf>

NHS England makes decisions about commissioning on advice from its Clinical Priorities Advisory Group, full details of which can be found at:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/commissioning/cpag/>

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[67400]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that rehabilitation wards for stroke patients receive adequate funding.

David Mowat:

Local commissioners are responsible for funding local services in line with their assessment of the needs of the population. A number of regulatory and supervisory agencies, including the Care Quality Commission and the medical Royal Colleges, ensure that standards are met.

The quality of stroke care has improved over the past decade, with world class outcomes for patients, and the National Health Service rigorously audits the quality of stroke care, to ensure the continued delivery of these commitments.

HOME OFFICE

■ Asylum: Cameroon

Alison Thewliss:

[66799]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what guidance she has issued to her Department's caseworkers on asylum applications from English-speaking regions of Cameroon.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

No country specific guidance has been issued on asylum applications from English-speaking regions of Cameroon.

However, where a particular issue is raised in an individual application and there is no published guidance caseworkers can request the latest available country information on that issue through an information request service.

■ Bail

Johnny Mercer:

[67415]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what guidelines are given to police officers on giving consideration to the existence of one or more past offences by a suspect when taking a decision on granting bail.

Brandon Lewis:

The reasons for which police may refuse, or set conditions on, bail are set out in the Bail Act 1976 and the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. The police have operational independence and are able to exercise their judgement as to whether the conditions set out in these statutes are met. The Home Office has not issued any guidance on these matters.

■ **Customs Officers****Stuart C. McDonald:****[67386]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many customs officers have been in post in each year since 2007; and how many customs officers were in post on the latest date for which figures are available.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

I am sorry but this information is not held centrally within the Home Office, and would have to be obtained on an area by area basis. The information requested could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ **Deportation****James Duddridge:****[67147]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many foreign nationals her Department has started removal proceedings against in (a) the UK, (b) Southend and (c) Rochford and Southend East constituency.

James Duddridge:**[67148]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people her Department has deported from (a) the UK, (b) Southend and (c) Rochford and Southend East constituency in each of the last five years.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

Statistics on persons returned from the UK is published in the Home Office's *Immigration Statistics*. The latest edition, *Immigration Statistics: October to December 2016* is available from GOV.UK on the statistics web pages at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-october-to-december-2016>

■ **Deportation: Appeals****James Duddridge:****[67150]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many foreign nationals from which countries are appealing against removal proceedings in (a) the UK, (b) Southend and (c) Rochford and Southend East constituency.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

Available published data on outstanding appeals can be found in Table S.4 of the Tribunals and gender recognition statistics. These cover the period up to December

2016. The most recent edition is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/tribunals-and-gender-recognition-certificate-statistics-quarterly-october-to-december-2016>

■ Direct Selling

Tom Blenkinsop: [67378]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what information her Department holds on trends in the level of doorstep crime in each of the last five years.

Brandon Lewis:

The Home Office does not hold specific information on the number of 'doorstep crimes'. These crimes will be recorded by police under the relevant offence that has been committed, for example burglary or theft.

If the crime is a fraud, then this will be recorded by Action Fraud rather than the police. Information on the number of door to door sales and bogus tradespeople frauds recorded by Action Fraud is published in the Office for National Statistics Publication 'Crime in England and Wales: year ending September 2016' at the link below (Table A5):

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/crimeinenglandandwalesappendixtables>

■ Forensic Pathology in England and Wales Review

Dr Sarah Wollaston: [67380]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish the Government's response to the Hutton review of forensic pathology in England and Wales.

Brandon Lewis:

The key strategic recommendations of the Hutton review of forensic pathology have been discussed both with Home Office ministers and at a bi-lateral meeting between Home Office and Ministry of Justice ministers.

Whilst it was recognised the longer-term resilience of both services would be best addressed through a 'combined autopsy service', it was decided that more urgent issues in coronial pathology should be addressed first. Therefore the Home Office will retain responsibility for the running of forensic pathology, whilst the Ministry of Justice will work with other relevant government departments to take forward the coronial pathology issues raised by Professor Hutton in his report.

In addition there have been a number of important changes recommendations that have been implemented, including guidance for first attenders in respect of dealing with sudden and unexpected deaths, the establishment of a national list of paediatric and organ specific pathologists willing to engage in police cases and the commencement of a number of reviews in response to detailed recommendations on training, the Code of Practice/Performance Standards implemented by the Home Office.

■ Health Services and Social Services: Migrant Workers

Dr Philippa Whitford:

[67252]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people working in the UK health and social care system are doing so on a Tier 2 visa.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

Information/data relating to the issuance of Tier 2 Certificates of Sponsorship can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-october-to-december-2016/list-of-tables#sponsorship>

■ Home Office: Work Experience

Justin Madders:

[66897]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people undertook an unpaid work placement in her Department in each of the last five years for which figures are available; and how many such placements lasted for longer than one month.

Sarah Newton:

The Department offers work placements through our recently launched Return to Work Programme to provide a bridge back to work for individuals. We also take part in the Civil Service Summer Diversity Internship scheme. Individuals participating on both these schemes are paid whilst they are working in the Department.

The Department provides a work experience programme for 15 - 18 year olds from diverse backgrounds. This is a cross Civil Service scheme working with Local Education Authorities and aimed at giving individuals practical experience of life in the Civil Service for a week. This shadowing experience is unpaid. We do not centrally hold the information on the number of people who undertook this unpaid shadowing opportunity; it could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ Immigration: EEA Nationals

Paul Blomfield:

[67397]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 9 March 2017 to Question 66201, on immigration: EEA nationals, whether confirmation of this status will be needed once the UK has left the EU.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The rights of EU nationals remain unchanged while we are a member of the European Union and they do not need any additional documents to prove their status.

The Government has been clear that securing the status of EU nationals in the UK, and that of British citizens in the EU, will be a priority as soon as negotiations begin.

There are a number of options for exactly how the Government will secure the status of EU nationals here and what they will need to do to confirm that status following the UK's exit from the EU, and it would be inappropriate to give further detail in advance of negotiations.

■ Nitrous Oxide

Mike Wood:

[67409]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she will consider reclassifying nitrous oxide as a controlled substance.

Sarah Newton:

We have no plans to reclassify nitrous oxide as a controlled substance under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. Under the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016, it is illegal to supply nitrous oxide if the drug is likely to be consumed for psychoactive effect.

In March 2015, the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) reported that it did not consider that the harmfulness of nitrous oxide warranted control under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. If there were increasing evidence about the harmfulness of nitrous oxide, we would approach the ACMD for an assessment of whether the substance should be included under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971.

■ Offenders: Foreign Nationals

James Duddridge:

[67149]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many foreign national offenders by country were (a) imprisoned, (b) released from prison and (c) deported in each of the last five years.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The Home Office does not disclose country specific information regarding deportation of foreign national offenders as its disclosure could prejudice relations between the UK and foreign governments.

The Ministry of Justice publishes data on foreign national offenders imprisoned on a quarterly basis which can be accessed at the following link:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/563256/Population_2016.xlsx

■ Police Custody

Johnny Mercer:

[67414]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, at what stage during an arrest and subsequent police custody stay police officers should review (a) the Police National Computer and (b) other information sources for previous convictions.

Brandon Lewis:

The Police National Computer is the primary source of information on convictions in the United Kingdom. Convictions of EU nationals can be obtained from the country of nationality for EU nationals via the UK Central Authority for the Exchange of Criminal Records (UKCA-ECR). Decisions on when a police officer should check the PNC and the UKCA-ECR are operational matters for the police.

■ Police Custody: Closures

Yasmin Qureshi:

[66979]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many custody suites have been closed since 2010.

Brandon Lewis:

This information is not held centrally, but is available from police forces.

Decisions about the most effective use of available resources, including the number of custody suites in a force area, are a matter for the Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable locally (the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime and the Commissioner in the case of the Metropolitan Police and the Corporation and the Commissioner in the case of the City of London Police), tailored to the operational needs of the police in their local community.

■ Prisoners: Repatriation

James Duddridge:

[67207]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many foreign nationals serving prison sentences have been deported from prisons in (a) the UK, (b) Southend and (c) Rochford and Southend East constituency in each of the last five years.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The information requested is available at

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

We are unable to provide a breakdown of the number of removals for each of the requested constituencies in the UK and therefore the figures published are for the total number of removals.

■ Social Networking: Harassment

Anna Turley:

[67255]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will bring forward legislative proposals to require operators of social media platforms to report communications sent via their service which could reasonably be interpreted as containing content which would constitute an offence under section 1 of the Malicious Communications Act 1988 or section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 to a relevant police force.

Brandon Lewis:

We expect social media companies, and internet platforms, to have robust processes in place and to act promptly when abuse is reported. The Government continues to work closely with social media companies and other relevant actors and experts to make sure they are committed to protecting those who use their platforms.

The Government is absolutely clear that harassment and abuse in whatever form and whoever the target is totally unacceptable, and that this should be reported to the police. This includes harassment committed in person, or using phones or the internet. The Crown Prosecution Service published guidance to prosecutors in October on crimes involving social media.

The Criminal Justice Act 2015 strengthened two existing communications offences: section 1 of the Malicious Communications Act 1988, and section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 which can now be used to prosecute misuse of social media. The police now have longer to investigate either offence, and the maximum penalty for the former has been increased to two years imprisonment.

In addition, the Home Office has allocated £4.6m of the Police Transformation Fund specifically to begin the critical work of setting up a comprehensive and joined up programme of digital transformation across policing. This money will help provide a step-change in digital capability, funding police led programmes that will work to equip forces with the tools to effectively police a digital age and protect victims of digital crime.

■ Social Networking: Offences against Children

Anna Turley:

[67216]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will bring forward legislative proposals to require operators of social media platforms to report communications sent via their service which are either indecent images or videos of children or messages which would lead to the sexual grooming of a child to a relevant police force.

Sarah Newton:

It is right that all social media platforms put appropriate mechanisms in place to prevent the abuse of their legitimate platforms and services by those who would do children harm. In the UK, the UK Council for Child Internet Safety brings together parents, charities, industry and government to respond to issues of online safety, including child sexual abuse. In 2015, the UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) published a practical guide for providers of social media and interactive services.

The guide has examples of good practice from leading technology companies (e.g. Twitter, Facebook, YouTube), and advice from NGOs and other online child safety experts. Its purpose is to encourage businesses to think about “safety by design” to help make their platforms safer for children and young people under 18. That guidance covers the steps to identify and deal with child sexual abuse content or illegal sexual contact. A number of social media companies are also members of the EU ICT Coalition. This is a European industry initiative to make members’ platforms safer for users. Members self-declare how they meet the guiding principles, and are subject to a review by an external auditor. These principles include child abuse and/or illegal contact.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**■ Department for International Development: Meetings****Susan Elan Jones:****[R] [67321]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how many meetings (a) Ministers and (b) officials of her Department have had with (i) businesses and (ii) registered charities in each of the last five years.

James Wharton:

DFID Ministers and officials meet regularly with businesses and registered charities in order to achieve security, end extreme poverty, and create shared prosperity. DFID does not hold information centrally on the number of such meetings across the Department.

■ EU Aid**Tom Brake:****[67102]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what plans her Department has for the reallocation of the UK's current contribution to EU development funds after the UK leaves the EU.

James Wharton:

Leaving the EU means we will want to take our own decisions about how to deliver the policy objectives previously targeted by EU funding. Over the coming months we will consult closely with stakeholders to ensure that any ongoing funding commitments best help the world's poorest and deliver value for money for UK taxpayers.

■ Lake Chad Basin: Non-governmental Organisations**Patrick Grady:****[67272]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what financial support her Department is providing to civil society organisations in the Lake Chad region.

James Wharton:

The UK is one of the largest donors to the crisis in the Lake Chad region, and has led the humanitarian response. Last year UKAid reached more than 1 million people. DFID's response provides substantial financing through international non-governmental organisations and local civil society organisations. Most of this is indirect, through multilateral partners like UNICEF. DFID also provides direct financing e.g. £41m to International Committee of the Red Cross for the Emergency Appeal for the Lake Chad region.

■ Trade Agreements**Steve McCabe:** [\[67083\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 22 February 2017 to Question 64094, if she will publish her Department's review of UK future trade policy.

Rory Stewart:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I provided on 14th March 2017 to Question number 66937.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ Department for International Trade: Staff****Barry Gardiner:** [\[67437\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many staff in his Department's Trade Policy Group have experience of working on the UN sustainable development goals.

Greg Hands:

The Department for International Trade has a strong core of trade policy officials working on various aspects of trade policy, including sustainable development. We are working closely with various other Government Departments with relevant expertise, including particularly officials from the Department for International Development, who are working alongside DIT officials, on achievement of the UN sustainable development goals.

Barry Gardiner: [\[67438\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many staff in his Department's Trade Policy Group have experience of working on human rights issues.

Greg Hands:

The Department for International Trade has a strong core of trade policy officials working on various aspects of trade policy, including human rights. We are working closely with other Government Departments with relevant expertise, in particular the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Barry Gardiner: [\[67439\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many staff in his Department's Trade Policy Group have experience of working on labour rights.

Greg Hands:

The Department for International Trade has a strong core of trade policy officials working on various aspects of trade policy, including labour rights. We are working closely with other Government Departments with relevant expertise, in particular the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and the Department for Work and Pensions.

Barry Gardiner:

[\[67440\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many staff in his Department's Trade Policy Group have experience of working on environmental protection.

Greg Hands:

The Department for International Trade has a strong core of trade policy officials working on various aspects of trade policy, including environmental protection. We are working closely with other Government Departments with relevant expertise, in particular the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

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

Justin Madders:

[\[66899\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many people undertook an unpaid work placement in his Department in each of the last five years for which figures are available; and how many such placements lasted for longer than one month.

Greg Hands:

The Department for International Trade was created in July 2016 and became a legal employer as of 9 November 2016. We do not hold information on how many people undertook an unpaid work placement in the Department and to generate this information would incur disproportionate cost.

UK Export Finance has had no unpaid work placements in each of the last five years.

■ **Overseas Trade: Nigeria**

Jim Shannon:

[\[66813\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what discussions his Department has had with the Nigerian Government on trade between the UK and Nigeria since the vote on the UK leaving the EU.

Mark Garnier:

The Department for International Trade has regular discussions with the Nigerian Government, including on trade. The Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Nigeria has visited twice since the vote on the UK leaving the EU as part of HMG's coordinated activity to promote our trade and prosperity priorities. We support British companies to export more to Nigeria, to grow the bilateral trade relationship (worth \$2.5bn in 2016). We also work with the Nigerian Government and others to make the environment easier to do business in.

JUSTICE■ **Knives: Crime****Mr Jim Cunningham:****[67064]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent assessment she has made of the effect of guidelines for tougher sentences for knife crimes on the numbers of people imprisoned for such crimes.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

After the introduction of our two strikes legislation, people caught carrying a knife a second time are now more likely than ever before to go to prison.

The government continues to monitor sentencing for bladed and offensive weapon offences. On 9 March the latest knife possession sentencing quarterly statistics bulletin was published and is available at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/knife-possession-sentencing-quarterly-brief-october-to-december-2016>.

Sentencing Guidelines are produced by the independent Sentencing Council. The Council has developed a draft guideline on sentences for knife possession and threat offences which they consulted on between 6 October 2016 and 6 January 2017. The draft guideline is available from the Sentencing Council's website:

www.sentencingcouncil.org.uk

■ **Members: Correspondence****Mr Mark Hendrick:****[64826]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when she plans to answer Question 55553, on prison sentences: Lancashire, tabled by the hon. Member for Preston on 30 November 2016; and what the reasons are for the time taken to answer that Question.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

Question 55553 was answered on Thursday 09 March 2017.

The Ministry of Justice recognises that as a result of process and system changes we have experienced a recent reduction in performance with regard to QWA responses.

The Department has assured me that they have taken steps to rectify this, including making further process improvements.

■ **Ministry of Justice: Work Experience****Justin Madders:****[66900]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people undertook an unpaid work placement in her Department in each of the last five years for which figures are available; and how many such placements lasted for longer than one month.

Dr Phillip Lee:

The Ministry of Justice participates in a variety of cross-government initiatives which allow participants to conduct short unpaid work experience.

The Civil Service Work Experience Programme, formerly known as the Whitehall Internship Programme, lasts one to three weeks. We are preparing to host forty five students this year. The scheme welcomes participants from a socially deprived background with the intent to encourage them to consider a civil service career. The following table illustrates the total number of participants since 2012.

YEAR	PARTICIPANTS – TOTAL NUMBER PER YEAR
2016	17
2015	9
2014	7
2013	7
2012	4

The Movement to Work Scheme, which lasts four to six weeks, is designed to meet the needs of 16-24 year olds not currently in education, employment or training. It helps participants in gaining valuable skills, experience in the workplace and improves their employment prospects. Details regarding the scheme are maintained by the Department for Work and Pensions.

■ **National Offender Management Service: Staff**

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[57234\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many public interest transfers for each grade of staff have been approved within NOMS since January 2012; and what the cost was of those transfers.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The total cost of public interest transfers that have been approved within NOMS since January 2012 is £13.14m. The majority of these costs have been authorised to support staff transferring from prisons that have closed since 2012. Our records do not allow us to provide the breakdown by grade of staff in responding to your question

■ **Personal Injury: Compensation**

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[67077\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent assessment she has made of trends in the level of fraudulent whiplash claims.

Sir Oliver Heald:

The number of road traffic accident related personal injury claims is over 50% higher than 10 years ago (460,000 in 2005/6 compared with 770,000 in 2015/16). This is

despite significant improvements in car safety in recent years and fewer reported road accidents.

Therefore, the Government has recently consulted on a number of measures to disincentivise not just fraudulent but also minor and exaggerated whiplash claims. An impact assessment setting out the evidence used to assess the impacts of these reforms accompanied this consultation.

The Government published the first part of its consultation response on 23 February. A revised impact assessment which considers evidence and data supplied by respondents will be published in due course.

Sir Greg Knight: [\[67096\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what progress has been made on tackling the abuse of personal injury whiplash claims relating to incidents involving motor vehicles.

Sir Oliver Heald:

On 23 February 2017 we published details of reforms to disincentivise minor, exaggerated and fraudulent personal injury whiplash claims. The Government's aim is to reduce the high number and cost of such claims.

Measures include a fixed tariff of compensation for whiplash claims with an injury duration of up to two years and a prohibition on offers to settle claims without medical evidence. These will be taken forward in the Prisons and Courts Bill

We will also, through secondary legislation, increase the small claims limit for road traffic accident related personal injury claims to £5,000 and increase the small claims limit for all other personal injury claims to £2,000.

■ Prisons: Ministers of Religion

Andrew Selous: [\[67441\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether there are vacancies for Anglican chaplains in prisons in (a) London, (b) Surrey and (c) Kent.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

There are currently vacancies for an Anglican Chaplain at HMP Brixton, (London), HMP Wandsworth (London) and HMP Stanford Hill (Kent). The vacancies at Brixton and Stanford Hill will be advertised; the vacancy at Wandsworth has been filled with a new appointee due to start on 1 April.

■ Wales Community Rehabilitation Company

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[66818\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many offenders under the supervision of the Community Rehabilitation Company in Wales missed eight appointments without good reason during 2015; and what steps were taken in each such case.

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[66822\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what instructions are given to staff of the Community Rehabilitation Company in Wales to be followed when an offender under supervision misses three or more appointments without good reason.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

Where offenders are not complying with their sentences probation providers must take swift and robust action, with offenders returned to court for breach proceedings where appropriate. All enforcement procedures are set out in Probation Instructions and both CRCs and the NPS must follow the practice specified in mandatory actions within these.

Data on missed appointments by offenders are not collected centrally and can only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[66820\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many persons sentenced to 12 months or less have been supervised by the Community Rehabilitation Company in Wales since that Company was established.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) in Wales was established on 1 June 2014. However, the statutory duty for CRCs to supervise offenders released into the community from custodial sentences of 12 months or less came into force with the Offender Rehabilitation Act on 1 February 2015. Between 1 February 2015 and 30 September 2016, 3,315 such offenders were released into supervision under Wales CRC.

■ **Wales Community Rehabilitation Company: Redundancy**

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[66817\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, for what reasons the Enhanced Voluntary Redundancy scheme was withdrawn by the Community Rehabilitation Company in Wales and replaced by a severance scheme; and what assessment she has made of the financial effects of that change on employees.

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[66823\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether the Community Rehabilitation Company in Wales has met its obligations under the terms of the Enhanced Voluntary Redundancy scheme.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

All CRCs are required by their contracts to make sure they have sufficient appropriately-qualified staff to deliver contractual services.

The Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) in Wales has given assurance that it has met its obligations under the terms of the Enhanced Voluntary Redundancy scheme, which was used between October 2015 and July 2016. A separate and

distinct Voluntary Severance Scheme has since been offered by employee agreement, allowing the CRC to offer terms to a greater number of staff.

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ Exports: Republic of Ireland

Neil Parish: [\[909182\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what proportion of exports from Northern Ireland are sold in the Republic of Ireland.

Kris Hopkins:

HM Revenue and Customs Regional Trade Statistics show exports to Ireland accounted for 33 per cent of Northern Ireland's total exports in 2015.

SCOTLAND

■ Scotland Office: Work Experience

Justin Madders: [\[66902\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, how many people undertook an unpaid work placement in his Department in each of the last five years for which figures are available; and how many such placements lasted for longer than one month.

David Mundell:

The Scotland Office has had one unpaid work placement in each of the last 5 years, as part of the Whitehall Internship Programme. None of these placements lasted more than one month.

TRANSPORT

■ Air Pollution

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[66791\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent steps his Department has taken to assist the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in reducing air pollution.

Mr John Hayes:

The Department for Transport works closely with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on measures to address air pollution. We have established a Joint Air Quality Unit, staffed by members of both Departments, to develop and coordinate policy approaches.

■ Department for Transport: Work Experience

Justin Madders:

[66903]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many people undertook an unpaid work placement in his Department in each of the last five years for which figures are available; and how many such placements lasted for longer than one month.

Mr John Hayes:

The number of unpaid work placements undertaken in the Department are as follows:

	NUMBER OF UNPAID WORK PLACEMENTS	NUMBER OF PLACEMENTS > 1 MONTH
2012-13	57	less than 5
2013-14	18	less than 5
2014-15	37	12
2015-16	45	7
2016-17	72	9

The work placements arise from a variety of different sources, for example working with local support agencies helping individuals who have had long term unemployment for various reasons, gain valuable work experience and build confidence to apply for future vacancies which may get them back into work; the Cabinet Office Whitehall internship scheme; and working with DWP and the Job Centre, on their Movement to Work programme, targeting 16-24 year olds who are unemployed and not in education.

■ Motor Vehicles: Exhaust Emissions

Sarah Olney:

[67059]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of allocating departmental funding to support the development of technology to filter toxic particles from vehicle exhausts at source to reduce air pollution.

Mr John Hayes:

No assessment has been made of funding options to meet exhaust emission requirements as the technology to filter toxic particles from vehicle exhaust systems at source has already been developed. New diesel vehicles in the UK are fitted with a Diesel Particulate Filter (DPF) and have been for several years.

■ Shipping: Lasers**Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[67160\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether provisions in the Vehicle Technology and Aviation Bill to create an offence of shining or directing a laser at a vehicle will also cover maritime vessels.

Mr John Hayes:

I can confirm that the provision in the Vehicle Technology and Aviation Bill covers Maritime vessels.

■ Speed Limits: Cameras**Jim Shannon:**[\[66800\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he has taken to stop drivers using laser jammers to confuse or prevent speed cameras working properly.

Andrew Jones:

Motorists using jammers against police speed enforcement equipment already run the risk of being charged with perverting the course of justice, and there have been successful prosecutions.

WORK AND PENSIONS**■ Department for Work and Pensions: Work Experience****Justin Madders:**[\[66906\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people undertook an unpaid work placement in his Department in each of the last five years for which figures are available; and how many such placements lasted for longer than one month.

Caroline Nokes:

The following is a breakdown of the total number of people who started an unpaid work experience placement in DWP in each of the last 5 years and of these (where known), how many had an expected duration of 5 weeks or more. Our reporting is done by week rather than month:

YEAR	TOTAL WORK EXPERIENCE	
	STARTS	DURATION 5 WEEKS +
*2012/13	1135	
*2013/14	2623	
2014/15	7457	1016
2015/16	7583	1291
2016/17	4183	63 (figures to the end of February 2017)

*Placements in 2012/13 and 2013/14 were offered for a minimum of 4 weeks but could be extended to a maximum of 8 weeks. Figures broken down by length of placement are not available for this period.

■ Housing Benefit: Young People

John Healey:

[\[66778\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of ending the automatic entitlement to housing benefit for 18 to 21 year-olds on the level of homelessness.

Caroline Nokes:

There is a wide range of exemptions from this policy which will ensure that vulnerable people are protected. As the policy will only apply to those who have no impediment to a return to the parental home I do not anticipate that there will be any impact on the levels of homelessness.

Mike Kane:

[\[67329\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the significant findings were of equalities impact assessment on the removal of housing benefit for 18 to 21 year olds.

Caroline Nokes:

This policy affects Universal Credit recipients only, not Housing Benefit recipients.

I was provided with comprehensive advice with respect to this measure which enabled me to fully comply with my Public Sector Equality Duty and am satisfied there are no significant issues that were not sufficiently mitigated by the exemptions that we have put in place.

■ Personal Independence Payment: Appeals

Nic Dakin:

[\[66783\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 2 March 2017 to Question 64658, on personal independence payments, what options his

Department is considering to better support disabled people with Motability vehicles who are waiting in excess of seven weeks for mandatory reconsiderations.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Government is always exploring new ways to support disabled people, including those making PIP appeals. We have had a range of discussions with Motability and other relevant departments, and any announcement regarding the progress of these discussions will be made publicly by the Government in due course.

Nic Dakin:

[\[66784\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, of those people appealing their personal independence payment assessment and entering an appeal to a tribunal for the standard rate mobility component, how many are being awarded (a) the standard rate, (b) the higher rate and (c) nothing.

Nic Dakin:

[\[66785\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, of those people appealing their personal independence payment assessment and entering an appeal to a tribunal for the higher rate mobility component, how many are being awarded (a) the standard rate, (b) the higher rate and (c) nothing.

Nic Dakin:

[\[66787\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average waiting time has been for a mandatory reconsideration against a decision on personal independence payments in (a) Scunthorpe and (b) England for the last four periods for which figures are available.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Department does not hold this information.

■ **Universal Credit: Housing Benefit**

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[\[67419\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many 18 to 21 year olds claim the housing costs element of universal credit in (a) the West Midlands and (b) Coventry.

Caroline Nokes:

The information requested is not currently available. On 15th March 2017 we will be publishing further statistics on Universal Credit, which will be published in accordance with the relevant protocols in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

TREASURY

■ **Publication of draft Money Laundering, Terrorist Financing and Transfer of Funds (Information on the Payer) Regulations 2017**

The Economic Secretary to The Treasury (Simon Kirby):

[\[HCWS537\]](#)

The government has today published draft Money Laundering, Terrorist Financing and Transfer of Funds (Information on the Payer) Regulations 2017 ("Money Laundering Regulations 2017"). These regulations transpose the EU Fourth Money Laundering Directive (and the Fund Transfer Regulation (FTR) which accompanies it), which seek to implement the international standards set by the Financial Action Task Force.

The government previously consulted on the transposition of the Fourth Money Laundering Directive (4MLD) and the Funds Transfer Regulation in autumn 2016 and these regulations are accompanied by the government response to that consultation.

The overall objective of transposition is to ensure that the UK's anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing (AML/CTF) regime is kept up-to-date, is effective and is proportionate. This will enable the UK to have a comprehensive AML/CTF regime and ensure that the UK's financial system is an increasingly hostile environment for ML/TF.

The Money Laundering Regulations 2017 introduce a number of new and updated requirements on relevant businesses and changes to some of the obligations found under the Third Money Laundering Directive (3MLD). The FTR updates the rules regarding information on payers and payees accompanying transfers of funds, in any currency, for the purposes of preventing, detecting and investigating ML/TF, where at least one of the payment service providers involved in the transfer of funds is established in the EU.

The Money Laundering Regulations 2017 have been informed by the responses submitted to the autumn 2016 consultation, and the call for evidence on the Anti-Money Laundering Supervisory Regime in 2016. Changes introduced by the Money Laundering Regulations 2017 include:

- Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) acting as a registering authority for all trust and company service providers (TCSPs), who are not registered by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA)
- an extension of the fit and proper test to agents of money service businesses (MSBs), which will be carried out by HMRC
- the exemption of all gambling service providers from the requirements of the directive, except remote and non-remote casinos. The National Risk Assessment found that, whilst ML/TF risks exist in the gambling sector, it is relatively lower risk than other regulated sectors, partly because risks are mitigated by licensing conditions and robust supervision. The government will regularly review its position on the ML/TF risk that gambling providers present

- a decision not to allow pooled client accounts to be automatically subject to simplified due diligence, but instead for this to be applied on a risk based approach
- clarification and enhancement of the obligations on money laundering supervisors

So as to address concern about the disproportionate application of enhanced due diligence measures (EDD) to Politically Exposed Persons, their family members and known close associates, the government is also requiring firms to take a proportionate approach to EDD. The Money Laundering Regulations 2017 make it clear that firms must assess the level of risk associated with a particular person and assess the extent of the EDD to be applied to that person. In the government's view it is not acceptable for firms to refuse to establish a business relationship or carry out a transaction based solely on anyone's status as a PEP and this was never the intention of 4MLD. Firms must form their own view of the risks associated with individual PEPs, their family members, and known close associates on a case-by-case basis, but the government would expect that PEPs entrusted with prominent public functions by the UK should generally be treated as lower-risk, and that firms should apply EDD accordingly.

This approach will complement the important provisions put forward by my Hon Friend the Member for Broxbourne (Charles Walker) and accepted by the government in the Bank of England and Financial Services Act 2016. The FCA will also shortly publish draft guidance on how firms should apply EDD to PEPs, their family members and known close associates.

Alongside the draft Money Laundering Regulations 2017, the government has also published a response to the consultation on the Anti-Money Laundering Supervisory Regime. Inconsistent supervision was highlighted by the UK's national risk assessment as a weakness. The Money Laundering Regulations 2017 impose clearer obligations on supervisors and this publication announces a new Office for Professional Body AML Supervision to work with professional body supervisors to help, and ensure, compliance with the new Money Laundering Regulations 2017. Views on the powers this new Office should have to carry out this task effectively are requested by 26 April.

The draft Money Laundering Regulations 2017 are open to consultation until 12 April. We expect the regulations to come into force on 26 June.

Both documents can be found at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications?departments%5B%5D=hm-treasury&publication_filter_option=consultations

DEFENCE

■ Baseline Profit Rate 2017-18

Secretary of State for Defence (Sir Michael Fallon):

[[HCWS535](#)]

I am today announcing that I have set the baseline profit rate for single source defence contracts at 7.46%, in line with the rate recommended by the Single Source Regulations

Office (SSRO). I have also accepted the methodology used by the SSRO to calculate this figure.

I am also announcing new Capital Servicing Rates and an SSRO funding adjustment as recommended by the SSRO, which can be found at Table 1 below. These rates have also been published in the London Gazette, as required by the Defence Reform Act 2014, and will come into effect from 1 April 2017.

Table 1: Recommended Rates agreed by the Secretary of State for Defence

ELEMENT	2016 RATES	2017 RATES
Baseline Profit Rate (BPR) (%) on contract cost)	8.95%	7.46%
Fixed Capital Servicing Rate (% on Fixed Capital employed)	5.08%	4.84%
Working Capital Servicing Rate (% on positive Working Capital employed)	1.40%	1.37%
Working Capital Servicing Rate (% on negative Working Capital employed)	0.73%	0.59%
SSRO Funding Adjustment	n/a	-0.025%

Taxpayers can be confident that we are getting value for money as our defence budget rises by 0.5% above inflation each year of this Parliament and we deliver our £178 billion equipment programme. The defence sector is important for our prosperity, supporting highly skilled jobs, and this rate provides a fair return comparable with that in other international markets

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

■ Foreign Affairs Council (Foreign and Defence Ministers): 6 March 2017

The Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Sir Alan Duncan):
[\[HCWS536\]](#)

My Right Honourable Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and My Right Honourable Friend the Secretary of State for Defence attended the joint session of the Foreign Affairs Council (Foreign and Defence Ministers) on 6 March. The Council was chaired by the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini. The meeting was held in Brussels.

Foreign Affairs Council

A provisional report of the meeting and Conclusions adopted can be found at:

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/fac/2017/03/06/>

The meeting covered a joint session with Foreign and Defence Ministers on defence. The foreign policy agenda featured Egypt, Western Balkans and the Middle East Peace Process. Ministers also touched briefly on migration.

Defence

EU Foreign and Defence Ministers held a joint session to take forward the European Council Conclusions of 15 December 2016. The discussion covered: improving the functioning of non-executive military (training) missions through the establishment of a Military Planning and Conduct Capability; Permanent Structured Cooperation for better joint capability development; and the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence. Defence Ministers also discussed the strategic outlook for the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy. The Defence Secretary emphasised the need for EU initiatives to complement NATO and to respect Member States' competence on defence issues. He underlined the UK's significant contribution and continued commitment to European security and defence, including meeting NATO's target of 2% of GDP. He stressed the need for European partners to increase national defence spending.

Egypt

Over lunch, Ministers discussed EU-Egypt relations with the Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry. They discussed political developments, economic reforms, co-operation in various sectors, including counter terrorism and migration, as well as Egypt's role in the region, with a particular focus on Libya, Syria and the Middle East Peace Process.

Western Balkans

Ms Mogherini briefed the Council on her recent visit to the region. Ministers welcomed the increased EU engagement. They also discussed the challenges facing the Western Balkans including increasing tensions, worsening political dynamics and a growing use of inter-ethnic and nationalist rhetoric, compounded by the role of third parties, socio-economic difficulties and a perception of EU and US disengagement.

MEPP

Foreign Ministers discussed issues relating to the Middle East Peace Process. The Council discussed preparations for the next EU-Israel Association Council. The HRVP suggested the Council consider holding a similar high level meeting with the Palestinians.

Ministers agreed without discussion a number of measures:

- The Council adopted Conclusions on 'Implementing the EU Global Strategy – strengthening synergies between EU climate and energy diplomacies'.
- The Council adopted Conclusions on the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
- The Council adopted the EU Guidelines for Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child (2017) – Leave No Child Behind.
- The Council took note of the 18 th annual report defining common rules governing controls of exports of military technology and equipment.

- The Council adopted the updated military list of the EU in line with the provisions of the Common Position on arms exports.
- The Council adopted the EU-Algeria Partnership Priorities to be adopted at the EU-Algeria Council, which took place on 13 March.
- The Council adopted the EU position for the Association Council with Algeria, which took place on 13 March.

The Council approved a concept note on the operation planning and conduct capabilities for CSDP missions and operations.