



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Daily Report

Tuesday, 14 March 2017

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 14 March 2017 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:32 P.M., 14 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

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ Attorney General: Policy

Philip Davies:

[\[66659\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what the Law Officers' Departments' main policy priority is for 2017; and if he will make a statement.

Robert Buckland:

The Law Officers' Departments will remain focused on supporting delivery of the Government's manifesto, legislative programme and operational priorities. The Law Officers' Departments are also working to support the delivery of a successful withdrawal from the European Union, in particular to ensure a smooth transition for public prosecutors and on legal issues arising from the existing EU relationship.

■ Lloyds Bank

Chris Elmore:

[\[67052\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, if he will make representations to the Serious Fraud Office to open an inquiry into any activity of Lloyds Bank Consumer Debt Recovery and Alder King.

Robert Buckland:

The Serious Fraud Office is an independent Government department which investigates and prosecutes serious or complex fraud, bribery and corruption. In considering whether to take on an investigation, the Director David Green CB QC applies a Statement of Principle, which includes consideration of:

- whether the apparent criminality undermines UK PLC's commercial or financial interests in general and the City of London in particular;
- whether the actual or potential financial loss involved is high;
- whether actual or potential economic harm is significant;
- whether there is a significant public interest element, and;
- whether there is a new type of fraud.

The SFO has given full and lengthy consideration to allegations against Lloyds Bank Consumer Debt Recovery and Alder King but they did not meet the threshold for the Director to open an SFO investigation.

■ Road Traffic Offences: Prosecutions

Sir Hugo Swire:

[\[66564\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, how many successful prosecutions there have been for drivers leaving their engines running when stationary in each of the last five years.

Robert Buckland:

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) does not maintain a central record of the number of successful prosecutions for drivers leaving their engines running while stationary and such information could not be obtained without disproportionate cost.

The majority of these offences are dealt with by way of fixed penalty notices or as specified proceedings (i.e. pleas of guilty which are not dealt with by the CPS).

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY■ **Business: Finance****Dr Paul Monaghan:**[\[67212\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential effect of the UK's decision to leave the EU on the level of funding available for businesses; and if he will make a statement.

Margot James:

The UK will continue to have all of the rights, obligations and benefits that membership brings, including our right to draw down European funding, up until the point we leave the EU. Furthermore, as announced by My Right Honourable Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, EU funding granted before we leave the EU will be guaranteed after the UK leaves as long as it provides strong value for money and is in line with domestic strategic priorities.

Leaving the EU allows us to make fresh choices about how we shape our economy and presents an opportunity to deliver a bold, long term Industrial Strategy that builds on our strengths and prepares us for the years ahead. We will be able to take our own decisions about how to support businesses to grow and ensure that future arrangements are aligned to UK priorities.

■ **Construction: Skilled Workers****Mr Barry Sheerman:**[\[67040\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent steps he has taken to address the national skills gap in the construction industry.

Mr Nick Hurd:

The Department works closely with the Department for Education (DfE) which is responsible for skills policy and also the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB), the body that supports training and skills in construction.

DfE is currently working with employers in the construction industry to develop new apprenticeships for the sector. While evidence suggests there are sufficient learners going through the skills system, with over 200,000 construction qualifications being taken each year, reforms set out in the skills plan (July 2016) will ensure these qualifications become more relevant and better meet the industry's needs.

In addition, the Construction Leadership Council (CLC), the business led sector council which advises Government on key strategic issues, has investigated the labour model in construction and commissioned an independent report from Mark Farmer (published in October 2016):

<http://www.constructionleadershipcouncil.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Farmer-Review.pdf>.

We will set out shortly how we are taking forward the report's recommendations with the CLC.

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Departmental Expenditure Limits

Alan Brown: [67254]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to his departmental resource DEL in Table 1.6 of Spring Budget 2017, which funds are classed as unallocated in financial years (a) 2017-18, (b) 2018-19 and (c) 2019-20.

Margot James:

The BEIS departmental resource DEL budget for the financial years (a) 2017-18, (b) 2018-19 and (c) 2019-20 will be allocated fully in line with the Department's strategic objectives, consistent with Spending Review 2015 and subsequent fiscal events.

■ Direct Selling

Tom Blenkinsop: [67300]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to combat aggressive methods of door to door selling of items worth less than £42.

Margot James:

There is legislation in place to protect consumers when buying goods and services at the door. Traders are prohibited from aggressive or misleading commercial practices, including harassment, coercion or undue influence, even where the amount sold is small. Aggressive methods of sale carry criminal penalties, such as an unlimited fine or up to two years in prison.

Consumers should report threatening or aggressive behaviour to their local police force and Citizens Advice. National Trading Standards treat doorstep crime as a matter of national strategic priority for Trading Standards Services.

■ Industry: Yorkshire and the Humber

Stuart Andrew: [909238]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the Government's industrial strategy on Yorkshire and the Humber.

Mr Nick Hurd:

Since 2010, private sector jobs have grown more quickly in Leeds than in any other core city. We will continue to invest in skills and infrastructure to build on this success, across the whole of the Yorkshire and Humber region.

Motor Vehicles: Data Protection**Chi Onwurah:**[\[67278\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the implications for competition in the motor industry of potential restrictions on access to data collected by automobiles for (a) car manufacturers and (b) independent repair providers.

Mr Nick Hurd:

Automobiles generate and process a vast and growing array of data, and this trend is set to continue as vehicle connectivity and automation increases. The way data is handled affects security, privacy and competition.

Personal data is covered by existing regulatory frameworks. We are currently assessing the framework for governance of vehicle data more broadly. We are aware that there are a range of stakeholders with different views on this matter, and there is a live debate at EU level. We are already actively engaging with industry bodies and the relevant EU forums and developing policy in this area, and welcome the views of stakeholders.

Natural Gas: Imports**Callum McCaig:**[\[67352\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect of the UK leaving the EU on the import of natural gas from the European Single Market.

Jesse Norman:

Gas is an important fuel for homes and businesses across Great Britain. Great Britain benefits from highly diverse and flexible sources of gas supply. Analysis shows GB supplies can meet gas demand even under severe weather conditions for an extended period of time, and this has always happened.

This diverse range of sources for natural gas including indigenous production, six international gas pipelines to Norway and the EU and four Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminals which import gas from a wide and growing range of global sources. We recognise the importance of having access to an affordable, secure and sustainable supply of energy for business and domestic use.

CABINET OFFICE■ **Cabinet Office: Databases****Chi Onwurah:**[\[66727\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will publish the minutes of any meetings Ministers of his Department have had with the Data Sharing Principles Group.

Ben Gummer:

No meetings with the Data Sharing Principles Group have taken place.

■ **Cabinet Office: Policy****Philip Davies:**[\[66660\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what his Department's main policy priority is for 2017; and if he will make a statement.

Ben Gummer:

The Cabinet Office is the centre of Government. The Department is responsible for delivering a democracy that works for everyone, supporting the design and delivery of Government policy and driving efficiencies and reforms to make government work better.

■ **Older People: Mortality Rates****Caroline Lucas:**[\[66595\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the changes in death rates among comparative people aged over 75 in January (a) 2016 and (b) 2017; when official data on death rates by local authority is due to be released; and if he will make a statement.

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 PQ66595 [PQ66595 v.02 (2).pdf]

Caroline Lucas:[\[66596\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of (a) general trends and (b) trends for comparative people over 75 in death rates in (i) England and Wales and (ii) internationally since 2010; and if he will make a statement.

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 PQ66596 [PQ66596 v.02 (1) (1).pdf]

■ Pancreatic Cancer**Jim Shannon:** [\[66765\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many people have been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in 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 PQ66765 [PQ66765 v.02 (2) (1) (1).pdf]

■ Respiratory System: Diseases**Mr Jim Cunningham:** [\[67368\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate his Department has made of the number of deaths associated with respiratory conditions in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement.

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 PQ67368 [PQ67368 v.02 (2) (1) (1).pdf]

■ Written Questions: Government Responses**Tom Watson:** [\[67375\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, when he plans to answer Question 62917 tabled on 2 February 2017 by the hon. Member for West Bromwich East.

Ben Gummer:

We are currently in the process of manually checking records from the last Administration and will provide a definitive answer to the Hon. Member as soon as possible.

TREASURY**■ Child Tax Credit****Stella Creasy:** [\[67358\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many claims for child tax credit, made by couples not married or in a civil partnership, were cancelled due to the death of a partner in the last five years.

Jane Ellison:

Information is not collected from tax credit claimants about whether couples are married or in a civil partnership, as opposed to cohabiting without such an arrangement.

■ **Debts****Steve McCabe:**[\[66604\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what progress has been made on identifying possible options for an England and Wales debt breathing space scheme.

Simon Kirby:

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

■ **Funerals: Children****Mr Jim Cunningham:**[\[67250\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has received representations on the creation of a children's funeral fund.

Mr David Gauke:

I can confirm that HM Treasury has received representations on this issue, and registered the contents.

■ **Inflation: Scotland****Ian Murray:**[\[67301\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect on (a) living standards and (b) household incomes in Scotland of the revised inflation forecasts in the Office for Budget Responsibility's Economic and Fiscal Outlook published alongside Spring Budget 2017.

Jane Ellison:

The OBR forecast that the sterling depreciation would put upward pressure on inflation. But, Scotland is facing this inflationary challenge from a position of strength. Median weekly household income is higher in Scotland than the UK average. Since 2010, productivity in Scotland has risen the second fastest of all the UK nations and regions - and boosting productivity is crucial for creating a sustained rise in living standards.

The Government is continuing to take action to support living standards. This includes increasing the National Living Wage, raising the personal allowance and freezing fuel duty.

■ Pensions: Misrepresentation**Alex Cunningham:** [66609]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of pension freedom reforms on the (a) current and (b) future number of complaints to the Financial Ombudsman Service about retirement product mis-selling.

Simon Kirby:

The Government has made no recent assessment of the current and future number of complaints to the Financial Ombudsman Service about retirement product mis-selling.

In July 2016 the Financial Conduct Authority launched the Retirement Outcomes Review to look at how firms and consumers have responded to the new freedoms. This will include looking at how firms engage with their customers following the pension freedom reform, and what impact this has on consumer decision-making.

■ Sovereignty: Scotland**Ian Murray:** [67297]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment the Government has made of the potential effect on Scotland's economy of referendum on Scottish independence.

Mr David Gauke:

Scotland voted decisively to remain part of our United Kingdom in a referendum which the Scottish Government defined as a 'once in a generation' vote. The evidence clearly shows that a majority of people in Scotland do not want a second independence referendum. Another referendum would be divisive and cause huge economic uncertainty at the worst possible time.

■ Treasury: Policy**Philip Davies:** [66679]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what his Department's main policy priority is for 2017; and if he will make a statement.

Simon Kirby:

HM Treasury's strategic priorities are set out in our single departmental plan, which is published online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hm-treasury-single-departmental-plan-2015-to-2020>.

■ Treasury: Staff**Jon Trickett:** [66704]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what proportion of Civil Service positions in his Department was vacant for a week or longer in each year since 2010; and what the average turnover rate for civil servants in his Department has been in each year since 2010.

Simon Kirby:

HM Treasury does not hold data in the format required to answer the question on vacant positions for a week or longer in each year since 2010. However, HM Treasury publishes recruitment data in the Annual Report and Accounts, which is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-annual-report>

Recruitment data for 2015/16 can be found on page 78.

Turnover data for HM Treasury can also be found in the Annual Report and Accounts. The information for 2015/16 can be found on page 79.

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**■ Department for Communities and Local Government: Policy****Philip Davies:****[66661]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what his Department's main policy priority is for 2017; and if he will make a statement.

Sajid Javid:

My Department has started the year with the publication of 'Fixing the Broken Housing Market', our White Paper which sets out how the Department will reform the housing market and increase housing supply. The Department is currently developing a new Single Departmental Plan that will outline our strategic priorities in 2017 and for the rest of the Parliament.

■ Department for Communities and Local Government: Staff**Jon Trickett:****[66686]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what proportion of Civil Service positions in his Department was vacant for a week or longer in each year since 2010; and what the average turnover rate for civil servants in his Department has been in each year since 2010.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The Department's average labour turnover rate is 7.3 per cent for the period April 2010 to February 2017. An average turnover rate for each of the years in question is shown below.

2010/11 - 4.8% 2011/12 - 9.3% 2012/13 - 5.8% 2013/14 - 5.7% 2014/15 - 8.8%
2015/16 - 9.7% 2016/17 - 9.4%

In relation to the proportion of Civil Service positions that were vacant for a week or longer in each year since 2010, this information is not held centrally for the time period requested and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

■ Housing Benefit: Young People

John Healey: [66599]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what discussions he has had with the Department for Work and Pensions on measures in the Universal Credit (Housing Costs Element for claimants aged 18 to 21) (Amendment) Regulations 2017 applying to homelessness hostels and other supported housing from 2019-20.

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: Construction

Julie Elliott: [66654]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that people's views are taken into account on those proposals in the chapters of the White Paper, Fixing Our Broken Housing Market, published on 7 February 2017, which are not subject to public consultation.

Gavin Barwell:

The Government's Housing White Paper should be read as a comprehensive package of reforms to fix the broken housing market which the Government will implement. On specific policy areas where we require detailed advice on policy proposals, we have set out clear deadlines for consultation and welcome feedback. Full information can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fixing-our-broken-housing-market>

In addition, our Housing White Paper roadshow has involved visits to nine locations across the country, setting out the ambitious government reforms and listening to the opinions of local housing and planning professionals and the wider public .

Mr Laurence Robertson: [67215]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the number of houses which have planning permission that are not built within (a) one, (b) two, (c) three, (d) four and (e) five years.

Gavin Barwell:

The Department does not hold this information.

The Housing White Paper includes proposed measures to improve quantity, quality and consistency of data on build out rates. This includes a proposed new requirement for developers to provide information about the delivery of new homes on sites with planning permission.

■ Housing: Environment Protection

Kelly Tolhurst: [\[66073\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to deliver nature-friendly housing developments.

Kelly Tolhurst: [\[66074\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what plans he has to exempt publicly-owned special protection and conservation areas from any future public land disposal.

Gavin Barwell:

The National Planning Policy Framework seeks to promote sustainable development. The Government encourages and supports innovative ways to deliver the homes this country needs, while protecting and enhancing the natural environment through legislation and policy. We have no plans to exempt publicly-owned special protection and conservation areas from any future public land disposal.

We announced in the Housing White Paper, published on 7 February, a new and strategic approach to the habitat management of the great crested newt. This will not only protect a rare species and its habitat, but will safeguard development from delays, costs and uncertainty. We also announced our proposal to clarify national planning policy on ancient woodland and aged or veteran trees. This reflects the need to protect these irreplaceable habitats from harmful development.

■ INTERREG Programme

Caroline Lucas: [\[49385\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what plans he has to safeguard access to the Interreg programme of interregional cooperation projects (a) until and (b) after the UK leaves the EU.

Andrew Percy:

The Chancellor's statement of 3 October 2016 explains that UK participants in European Structural and Investment Fund projects who have funding agreements signed after the Autumn Statement but before the UK leaves the EU will have their funding guaranteed, so long as they provide strong value for money and are in line with domestic strategic priorities. UK participants will not see a funding shortfall.

Leaving the EU means that we will want to decide how we deliver the policy objectives currently delivered by EU-funded programmes. We will consult closely with stakeholders to review all EU funding schemes in the round, to ensure that any on-going funding commitments best serve the UK's national interest, while ensuring appropriate investor certainty.

The source of ERDF funding is provided by the overall contributions made by each EU Member State. The United Kingdom currently makes a contribution to the EU, net of what it receives in return.

■ Non-domestic Rates: Nurseries**Yasmin Qureshi:**[\[66617\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how many local authorities require private day care nurseries to pay full business rates.

Mr Marcus Jones:

Billing authorities may apply discretionary relief to certain rate payers. This is entirely a matter for billing authorities. This information is not held centrally.

■ Public Houses: Closures**Neil Coyle:**[\[66655\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department plans to take to safeguard pubs from developers who seek to close profit-making pubs against the wishes of their owners, occupiers or tenants of the local community; and if he will make a statement.

Andrew Percy:

The Government understands the value which communities place upon their pubs and that is why we have taken steps to support pubs directly in last week's Budget and through other measures we have introduced which support the community ownership of pubs.

In recognition of the valuable role that pubs play in our community, the Government announced a new relief scheme for pubs that have a rateable value of below £100,000. Under the scheme, eligible pubs will receive a £1000 discount on rate bills. We have also introduced a £300 million fund for councils to give discretionary relief to target individual hardship cases in their area.

In 2013 we introduced the community right to bid scheme which ensures that no pub listed as an asset of community value can be sold without the community being informed, and be given a period of up to 6 months to buy the pub. Furthermore, in April 2015 we strengthened the position of pubs listed or nominated as assets of community value by requiring planning permission prior to any change of use or demolition. There are now 2,000 pubs across England listed as assets of community value.

We are also working in collaboration with Power to Change and the Plunkett Foundation through the 'More than a Pub Community Pub Business Support Programme' to provide a comprehensive package of support totalling £3.62 million to help establish 80 community owned pubs across England. The Government also continues to support the 'Pub is The Hub' initiative which helps pubs to diversify their offer to communities ensuring their long term sustainability as viable community hubs.

■ Social Services: Merseyside

Conor McGinn: [67258]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, with reference to paragraph 5.5 of Spring Budget 2017, what estimate his Department has made of how much of the £2 billion of social care funding will be allocated to (a) St Helens and (b) Merseyside.

Conor McGinn: [67264]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, with reference to paragraph 5.5 of Spring Budget 2017, what criteria his Department plans to use to determine the allocation to local authorities of the £2 billion of social care funding.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The Department published the allocations for the additional funding for adult social care announced at the Spring Budget 2017 online on 9 March, together with an Explanatory Note.

This is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-allocations-of-the-additional-funding-for-adult-social-care>.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications: Membership

Stephen Timms: [67240]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, whether Ofcom will continue to be a member of the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications after the UK leaves the EU.

Matt Hancock:

The UK's negotiations for exiting the EU are complex and the Government is focused on securing the right deal for Britain. Together with the Department for Exiting the European Union, we are analysing all the impacts of leaving the EU, including future involvement in European organisations.

■ Consumers: Data Protection

Chi Onwurah: [67203]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what her policy is on the ownership of data by consumers with respect to the control of that data by those consumers.

Matt Hancock:

Consumers' rights with regard to the collection, processing and disclosure of their personal data are governed by the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA). The DPA provides rights for consumers in respect of their personal data, including the right to have data rectified, blocked, erased or otherwise destroyed in certain circumstances.

Chi Onwurah:

[\[67205\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what steps the Government is taking to improve public trust in the private sector management of consumer data.

Matt Hancock:

The Information Commissioner is the UK's independent authority responsible for administering and enforcing information rights and provides guidance and advice to individuals and organisations on, among other things, the protection of consumer's data.

The Information Commissioner's Office has a number of tools at its disposal to take action against those that breach the legislation. These powers include the ability to conduct audits, serve enforcement notices and impose civil monetary penalties of up to £500,000.

The Government has announced it would be implementing the forthcoming General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) by May 2018. Amongst other protections offered, the GDPR provides consumers with increased control over how their personal data is processed. This, along with other measures in the GDPR, aims to boost consumer trust in the processing of their personal data.

■ **Department for Culture, Media and Sport: Policy**

Philip Davies:

[\[66662\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what her Department's main policy priority is for 2017; and if she will make a statement.

Matt Hancock:

The Department for Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) helps to drive growth, enrich lives and promote Britain abroad. We play a critical role in protecting and promoting our cultural and artistic heritage, helping businesses and communities grow by investing in innovation and highlighting Britain as a fantastic place to visit.

The Department's policy priorities include: growing the economy; connecting the UK; encouraging participation; sustaining excellence in Sport and promoting Britain, and supporting our media and ensuring social responsibility.

The Department is currently conducting a review of its objectives to better reflect the addition of the Office of Civil Society in 2016 and other emerging priorities, and will be publishing a new set of objectives in April.

■ **Department for Culture, Media and Sport: Procurement**

Jon Trickett:

[\[66742\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 2 March 2017 to Question 64995, on procurement, if she will estimate the number of work-hours spent by officials of her Department on the monitoring of contracts awarded by her Department.

Matt Hancock:

The Department has made no such assessment.

■ **Department for Culture, Media and Sport: Staff**

Jon Trickett:

[\[66687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what proportion of Civil Service positions in her Department was vacant for a week or longer in each year since 2010; and what the average turnover rate for civil servants in her Department has been in each year since 2010.

Matt Hancock:

This information is not held centrally and too obtain it would incur a disproportionate cost.

■ **Digital Technology: Recruitment**

Louise Haigh:

[\[66838\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the report of the Science and Technology Committee, Digital Skills Crisis, HC 270, published on 13 June 2016, what estimate her Department has made of the current requirement for additional workers to fill the digital skills gap.

Matt Hancock:

We have made no such estimate.

■ **Digital Technology: Training**

Louise Haigh:

[\[66826\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate her Department has made of the number of people without the basic digital skills referred to in the report of the Science and Technology Committee, Digital Skills Crisis, HC 270, published on 13 June 2016, who will be able to access the measures announced in part two of her Department's 2017 Digital Strategy.

Matt Hancock:

The UK Digital Strategy published on 1st March sets out that for the UK to be a world-leading digital economy that works for everyone, it is crucial that everyone has the digital skills they need to fully participate in society. Through the Digital Skills Entitlement we will ensure that adults who lack core digital skills can access specified basic digital skills training free of charge where it is made available as part of the publicly funded adult education offer. In the meantime the Government continues to support adults to improve their basic digital skills, both through funding through the Adult Education Budget for education providers to offer digital training as part of their education offer, and an additional programme with The Good Things Foundation that aims to educate adults with the very basic skills needed to be able to search confidently and safely online and access public services. Additionally to support the launch of the UK digital strategy, industry pledged to create more than 4 million new

free digital skills training opportunities adding to a range of existing digital skills offers some of which were set out in the UK Digital Strategy.

Louise Haigh: [\[66828\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment her Department has made of the potential geographical spread of the training referred to on page 9 of part two of her Department's Digital Strategy 2017 to be offered through the Barefoot Computing Project; and of what that training will consist.

Matt Hancock:

Barefoot offers free teaching-resources and volunteer-led training workshops, designed to help primary school teachers get more confident when teaching computer science and computing skills. Barefoot is UK wide, and more than 1 million primary school children have benefitted from this training so far, and a further 500,000 will be reached by the end of the 2017/18 academic year.

■ **Employment: Artificial Intelligence**

Dr Tania Mathias: [\[909231\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she is taking to prepare for the potential effect of the use of artificial intelligence on the workplace.

Matt Hancock:

In November 2016 the Government Office for Science published a report "Artificial intelligence: opportunities and implications for the future of decision making" which gives an overview of ways in which AI could change the nature of some areas of work. We have recently asked Jérôme Pesenti and Professor Dame Wendy Hall to undertake a review on artificial intelligence, to contribute to the development of the Government's Industrial Strategy. As set out in the Industrial Strategy green paper, published January 2017 and the Digital Strategy, published March 2017, Government recognises that the rapid pace of technological change means digital techniques and technologies will change quickly so we are looking at ways to support people throughout their working lives.

■ **Employment: Data Protection**

Chi Onwurah: [\[67204\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, whether the Government plans to retain the regulation of transparency of workplace data collection contained in the General Data Protection Regulation after the UK has left the EU.

Matt Hancock:

The Government is considering all options for the most beneficial way of ensuring that the UK's data protection regime continues to build a culture of data confidence and trust that safeguards citizens and supports businesses in a global data economy after the UK has exited the UK.

Chi Onwurah:

[67206]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what her policy is on the ownership of employee data in the workplace.

Matt Hancock:

The Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) covers the processing of personal data. The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is responsible for producing guidance for the general public, private and public sector organisations on information rights; this includes informing employees about their information rights and employers about their obligations under the DPA, when it comes to the processing of personal data. The ICO has produced guidance on the processing of employee data, on its website at:

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/employment/>

■ Public Libraries: Complaints

Kevin Brennan:

[67236]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, whether she will publish the criteria used to determine whether a complaint received by her Department regarding library services is considered a formal complaint.

Mr Rob Wilson:

Local library authorities in England have a statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 to provide a comprehensive and efficient public library service. The Department carefully considers on a case by case basis all correspondence received about library services in England before deciding whether the correspondence will be treated as a formal complaint, within the scope of section 10(1)(a) of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, and whether a library authority has failed to carry out its duties relating to the public library service under the 1964 Act.

Not every item of correspondence received by the Department concerning changes to public library services will be treated as a complaint within the scope of section 10(1)(a). For correspondence to be treated as a formal complaint it is expected that it will provide some reasoning or evidence as to why the complainant considers the library authority is in breach of its statutory duties. In addition, correspondence would not fall within the scope of section 10(1)(a) if it is considered trivial or vexatious.

■ Telecommunications: EU Action

Stephen Timms:

[67262]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, whether she plans for the UK to adopt the new European Electronic Communications Code after it is finalised in 2018.

Matt Hancock:

Until we have left the EU, the UK will remain a member of the EU with all of the rights and obligations that membership entails, including transposition of all new EU

legislation with a transposition deadline prior to Brexit. The UK is therefore fully participating in the re-negotiation of the European Electronic Communications Code to secure a good outcome for UK business and consumers.

■ Voluntary Work: Young People

Chi Onwurah: [\[66916\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what longitudinal assessment she has made of the effect of participating in the National Citizen Service on the future outcomes of participants.

Mr Rob Wilson:

In March 2017 we published an independent evaluation demonstrating that multiple positive impacts from National Citizen Service (NCS) were sustained two years after participation. Now that participants from previous NCS programmes are reaching adulthood we are exploring how to measure NCS' impact on longer term outcomes, such as employment and health.

DEFENCE

■ Armed Forces Compensation Scheme

Kirsten Oswald: [\[66776\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of permitting veterans in receipt of benefits under the War Pension Scheme, as a result of injuries received in service prior to 2005, to transfer to the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme.

Mark Lancaster:

The War Pensions Scheme (WPS) and the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) are two entirely separate schemes. The WPS provides no fault compensation to former Service personnel and their dependants for injuries and death as a result of service before 6 April 2005. The AFCS provides compensation for injury, illness or death caused by service in the UK Armed Forces on or after 6 April 2005. It is therefore not possible for a veteran in receipt of benefits under the WPS to transfer to the AFCS for injuries caused in service prior to 2005.

■ Armed Forces Covenant

Stephen Kinnock: [\[66732\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps the Government is taking to support and uphold the Military Covenant.

Mark Lancaster:

We have already done a huge amount to improve the lives of Service personnel, veterans and their families, as the 2016 Armed Forces Covenant Annual Report demonstrates. We continue to lead work across Government Departments, local

authorities, businesses and the charitable sector to embed and sustain delivery of the Covenant, to address disadvantage wherever it arises, and ensure fairness. We have shown our long term commitment to delivering the Covenant by allocating £10 million a year to continue funding projects and initiatives that support our people.

■ **Army: Young People**

Mrs Madeleine Moon:

[\[67005\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 27 February 2017 to Question 64194, which subject matter experts in defence and government departments will be invited to contribute to the Army's Junior Entry Review; how other stakeholders and interested parties can contribute to that review; and if he will make a statement.

Mike Penning:

In addition to internal Ministry of Defence subject matter experts the Army is consulting with the Departments for Education, Health and Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. It will also reflect on a range of material which has been published.

Mrs Madeleine Moon:

[\[67222\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 27 February 2017 to Question 64194, if he will consult the Defence Select Committee on the terms of reference for the Army's Junior Entry review; and if he will make a statement.

Mike Penning:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 27 February 2017 to Question 64194.

Attachments:

1. Army: Young People [Hansard Extracts- HOC 64194.docx]

■ **Cyprus: Military Bases**

Tom Brake:

[\[67108\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the UK's exit from the EU on the status of Cypriot nationals who are resident in the UK Sovereign Base Areas on Cyprus.

Mike Penning:

The Ministry of Defence is working closely with the Department for Exiting the European Union and others to fully assess the range of implication for Defence presented by the UK's departure from the EU. This includes considering any implications this may present for the UK Sovereign Base Areas, including the status of resident Cypriot nationals.

■ Iraq Historic Allegations Team**Kirsten Oswald:** [\[67009\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the Iraq Historic Allegations Team will prosecute current and former members of the armed forces under the legal system in the constituent part of the UK in which they currently reside.

Mike Penning:

Iraq Historic Allegations Team (IHAT) investigations are conducted under the statutory framework of the Armed Forces Act 2006, which applies uniformly throughout the United Kingdom. Any decision to prosecute rests with the Director of Service Prosecutions.

Kirsten Oswald: [\[67010\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the current or former members of the armed forces resident in Scotland who are being investigated by the Iraq Historic Allegations Team in respect of alleged criminal actions have access to legal advice and support.

Mike Penning:

There is a comprehensive package of support available to all Service personnel and veterans subject to Iraq Historical Allegations Team investigations. This includes legal support which is normally provided through the Armed Forces Legal Aid Scheme. It was announced last year that the Ministry of Defence will not recover any costs of such support from individuals in any cases relating to their service in Iraq and Afghanistan.

■ Iraq: Military Intervention**Johnny Mercer:** [\[67238\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the Government has made any payment to (a) Nassir Abd Al Zahra Al Zayi Al-Tamini, (b) Hussein Ali Kazhin Zabayain Al-Maliki, (c) A'la or Dhia Jabbar Al-Khazhair/Okthair, (d) Muhammad Hatu Karim Al-Garizi, (e) Musa Isma'il Al-Fartusi and (f) Nabil Al-Mawzani.

Mike Penning:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 2 March 2017 to Question 65616.

Attachments:

1. 65616 - WQnA extract on Iraq:Military Intervention [Hansard Extract 2 March 2017 HOC 65616.docx]

■ Maritime Patrol Aircraft**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[67302\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what alternative anti-submarine warfare solutions for the P-8 Poseidon his Department has explored with (a) UK and (b) international suppliers.

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[67303\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans his Department has to pay the US Department of Defence to test and evaluate UK-specific equipment for installation on the P-8 Poseidon.

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[67304\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to engineer flexibility into UK P-8 Poseidon aircraft concerning the incorporation of non-standard equipment at a later date.

Harriett Baldwin:

The decision to procure the P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft was taken following a rigorous assessment of a range of possible options, including different aircraft types. Amongst the factors considered were that it was a proven technology, and that it could be brought into service more quickly than the alternatives.

RAF P-8A Poseidon aircraft will be delivered in the same configuration as those operated by the US Navy. This was an important consideration in the investment decision as it helps to deliver economies of scale from being part of a larger programme, and ensures that configuration control and interoperability with a key ally are maintained. Moreover, the planned capability development and upgrade programme for the aircraft provides confidence that the P-8A Poseidon will meet current and future UK key user requirements. Consequently, there are no plans to introduce any UK-specific equipment onto the aircraft.

■ **Ministry of Defence: Staff**

Jon Trickett:

[\[66688\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what proportion of Civil Service positions in his Department was vacant for a week or longer in each year since 2010; and what the average turnover rate for civil servants in his Department has been in each year since 2010.

Mark Lancaster:

It is not possible to identify the proportion of civil service positions vacant for a week or longer in each year since 2010 as the information is not held in the format requested.

However, the length of time the recruitment process takes will depend on a number of factors such as whether the job is advertised within the Department, across the civil service or externally. The level of security clearance associated with the position will also impact on the length of time it takes to fill the vacancy.

The average turnover rate of Civil Servants in the Ministry of Defence is detailed below:

DEPARTMENTAL* AVERAGE TURNOVER BY FINANCIAL YEAR 2010-11 TO 1 JAN 17

2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
7.1%	18.1%	11.4%	9.1%	11.9%	10.7%	6.4%

***Notes:**

1. Includes Defence Science and Technology Laboratory and the United Kingdom Hydrographic Office but excludes personnel within the Royal Fleet Auxiliary and Locally Engaged Civilians.
2. Turnover Rates are based on total outflow by financial year divided by average strength for that financial year. Rates have been calculated on raw unrounded numbers and adjusted to one decimal point.

■ **MOD Hebrides****Angus Brendan MacNeil:**[\[67365\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what his policy is on the revision of accommodation at the MOD Hebrides Range, West Camp, and the implications for staff at that faculty.

Mark Lancaster:

West Camp, Ministry of Defence Hebrides Range, is operated by QinetiQ under a commercial contract. Accommodation will be rationalised to align it to current and projected usage rates, as part of the Air Ranges Modernisation Project. This will also see significant investment in modern equipment for the range, including new radars. The savings, together with operating cost reductions, will allow investment in essential systems, thus helping to secure the future of the range for the longer term. The implications for QinetiQ employees and other staff will be managed by the company, which has indicated that there may be a small number of redundancies.

■ **USA: Armed Forces****Kirsten Oswald:**[\[67332\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to Answer of 3 July 2014 to Question 202477, whether all deployments of US military personnel from (a) RAF Menwith Hill, (b) RAF Croughton and (c) RAF Molesworth are carried out with the full knowledge and consent of the Government.

Mike Penning:

The deployment of US military personnel from the United States Visiting Forces bases at RAF Menwith Hill, RAF Croughton and RAF Molesworth is a matter for the US military authorities; there is no requirement for the Ministry of Defence to be notified of such deployments.

EDUCATION

■ Children in Care

Margaret Hodge:

[66565]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 1 March 2017 to Question 64985, on children in care, what information her Department holds on the number of looked-after children attending each (a) primary and (b) secondary school in England in the last 12 months.

Edward Timpson:

The Department collects child-level data on looked after children in England, which is matched to the school census and attainment records in order to identify additional information on the child's characteristics and educational outcomes. However, the Department does not routinely produce or publish information on looked after children at school level. The information on the numbers of looked after children in each local authority is published in the *Children Looked After in England* statistical release at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2015-to-2016> and the latest information on the attainment of looked after children is published in the *Outcomes for Children Looked After* statistical release at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/outcomes-for-children-looked-after-by-las-31-march-2015>.

■ Children: Protection

Tim Loughton:

[R] [67371]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many children have been (a) put on a child protection plan and (b) put back on a child protection plan within two years of coming off such a plan in each of the last five years.

Edward Timpson:

The number of children who have been placed on a child protection plan in each of the last five years is available in table A2 of the annual *Children In Need* statistical publication:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/characteristics-of-children-in-need-2015-to-2016>

We do not hold information in the requested format on the number of the children who came back onto a child protection plan within 2 years of coming off one.

■ Department for Education: Policy

Philip Davies:

[66664]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what her Department's main policy priority is for 2017; and if she will make a statement.

Caroline Dinenage:

This Government is working to make this a country that works for everyone, and education is central to that ambition. The Department's priority is to ensure our education and skills system enables children, young people and adults, whether in academic or technical education, to go as far as their talents will take them.

Thanks to the Government's reforms, since 2010 the proportion of children taught in good or outstanding schools has risen from 66% to 86%, which means almost 1.8 million more pupils today have a school place that is good or better. We want to build on this and we have consulted on proposals to create even more good school places, in more parts of the country, by scrapping the ban on new selective school places and by harnessing the expertise and resources of our universities and our independent and faith schools. As well as investing in long-term capacity in the system, from early years to further and higher education, and strengthening the teaching profession, the Department is tackling geographic disadvantage by focusing effort on areas of the country with the greatest challenges and fewest opportunities, including through Opportunity Areas, which are at the vanguard of our approach.

The Department is also making sure our education system as a whole prepares young people and adults for career success, including by investing in careers education, implementing a radical overhaul of technical education backed by the £500m investment announced in Budget 2017, and continuing to improve the quality of apprenticeships, so that they meet the needs of employers.

■ **Department for Education: Staff****Jon Trickett:****[66689]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of Civil Service positions in her Department was vacant for a week or longer in each year since 2010; and what the average turnover rate for civil servants in her Department has been in each year since 2010.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Department does not hold information about the proportion of positions that were vacant for a week or longer in each year since 2010. The average turnover rate for civil servants in the Department, which includes the Government Equalities Office from when it joined the Department in September 2015, is:

	<u>2010/11</u>	<u>2011/12</u>	<u>2012/13</u>	<u>2013/14</u>	<u>2014/15</u>	<u>2015/16</u>
Turnover	18%	9%	19%	23%	12%	13%

■ Department for Education: Work Experience

Justin Madders: [66892]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, 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.

Caroline Dineneage:

The Department does not hold this information.

Requests for unpaid work experience placements are handled by individual business units and no record is kept of them.

■ Grammar Schools

Lucy Powell: [67131]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 3 March 2017 to Question 63742, on grammar schools, what proportion of the applications for expansion projects through the annual Condition Improvement Fund were from multi and single academy trusts which includes a selective school.

Nick Gibb:

We are quality assuring and finalising data for this year's Condition Improvement Fund. We expect to announce outcomes by April.

■ Higher Education: New Zealand

Mrs Anne Main: [65943]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of the implications for its policies of the Higher Education Policy Institute report, Higher Education in New Zealand: What might the UK learn, published in July 2016.

Joseph Johnson:

The Department for Education welcomes any lessons learned and insights on approaches adopted by other countries.

■ Pre-school Education

Jess Phillips: [66722]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many nursery places have been created by free schools since November 2015.

Caroline Dineneage:

The January 2016 school census shows that 520 pupils were attending nurseries within a free school.

The census is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2016>

■ Public Sector: Migrant Workers

Dr Philippa Whitford: [67253]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether any exemptions from the Immigration Skills Charge will be available to (a) NHS and (b) other public sector employers.

Dr Philippa Whitford: [67299]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate she has made of the cost of the Immigration Skills Charge to the NHS in (a) 2017-18, (b) 2018-19, (c) 2019-20 and (d) 2020-21.

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 and other public sector employers, who recruit workers through the Tier 2 skilled worker route will benefit from these exemptions.

We have not estimated the annual cost of the charge to providers. The cost will depend on employer use of the Tier 2 skilled worker route.

■ Pupil Exclusions

Louise Haigh: [66601]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when she plans to make exclusion data by ethnicity available at a local authority level for 2014-2015 on her Department's website.

Edward Timpson:

The Department has not yet published exclusion information broken down by ethnic group at local authority level for the 2014 to 2015 academic year, it will be published as part of the 'Permanent and fixed-period exclusions in England: 2015 to 2016' National statistics release in July 2017.

The information is available at national level in the 'Permanent and fixed-period exclusions in England: 2014 to 2015' National statistics release[1].

[1] <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/permanent-and-fixed-period-exclusions-in-england-2014-to-2015>

■ Schools: Buildings

Conor McGinn: [66553]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much was spent per pupil on improving the condition of school buildings in (a) St Helens North constituency and (b) the UK on average in each year since 2010.

Conor McGinn:

[66554]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much was spent in (a) St Helens North constituency and (b) the UK on average for improving the condition of school buildings in each year since 2010.

Nick Gibb:

St Helens North is part of St Helens local authority, which received condition funding (including Devolved Formula Capital provided directly to schools) of over £20 million from 2011-12 to 2016-17 financial years, an average of £3.5 million per year. Local authorities determine how allocations are distributed to schools in their area.

The Department for Education has responsibility for England and has distributed over £8 billion in school condition allocations and Devolved Formula Capital nationally from 2011-12 to 2016-17, an average of £1.4 billion per year.

These amounts do not include allocations made to academies or Multi Academy Trusts in the area. As Trusts often allocate funding across local authority boundaries, it is not possible to calculate condition funding per pupil for a local area.

The Government is spending over £10 billion on maintaining and improving the condition of the school estate from 2016-17 to 2020-21 financial years. As part of this the £4.4 billion Priority School Rebuilding Programme is rebuilding or refurbishing those school buildings in the worst condition across the country. Two schools in St Helens have been successful in their applications to this programme.

Details on current and future school condition allocations are published here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/capital-allocations>

A breakdown of Devolved Formula Capital funding by institution is available for 2016-17: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/capital-allocations>

Details on successful applications to the Priority School Building Programme Phases 1 and 2 are published here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/psbp-list-of-successful-applicants>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/priority-school-building-programme-2-list-of-successful-schools>

The following table provides a breakdown of school condition allocations and Devolved Formula Capital combined in St Helens on an annual basis. It does not include capital funding for academies, which is not channelled through the local authority.

(ALL VALUES

£M)	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Condition Allocations	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.4	3.4	3.3

The following table provides a breakdown of condition allocations in England on an annual basis:

(ALL VALUES £BN)	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Devolved Formula Capital	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
School Condition Allocations	1.1	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8
Condition Improvement Fund / Academies Capital Maintenance Fund	0.1	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
Total	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4

Notes to tables

1. The Condition Improvement Fund and its predecessor the Academies Capital Maintenance Fund provide capital funding for school condition to academies. Further details on the Fund are available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/condition-improvement-fund>

1. These tables do not include the Department's centrally delivered capital programmes, such as the Priority Schools Building Programme.
2. These tables refer to capital funding provided by the Department for Education. The actual amount spent will depend on decisions made at the local authority level.

Schools: Finance

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[66872]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to ensure that schools' increased income through the National Funding Formula will not be outweighed by real-term changes to their funding over the next three years.

Nick Gibb:

School funding is at its highest level on record at more than £40bn in 2016-17 - and that is set to rise, as pupil numbers rise over the next two years, to £42 billion by

2019-20. Analysis by the Institute for Financial Studies (IFS) has also shown that spending per pupil almost doubled in real terms between 1997 and 2016.

The recent National Audit Office report on the Financial Sustainability of Schools is clear that it is reasonable to look to schools to make efficiencies, and that – based on variations in spending across schools with similar levels of challenge and achieving similar outcomes – the necessary savings are achievable without affecting educational outcomes.

We recognise that schools are facing cost pressures, which is why we will continue to provide support to help them use their funding in cost effective ways, including improving the way they buy goods and services, so they get the best possible value.

We have produced tools, information and guidance for schools financial health and efficiency, which can be found at:

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

Stephen Timms:

[67259]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the illustrative funding allocations for 2016-17, published alongside the Stage 2 consultation on the schools national funding formula, December 2016, which local authorities were allocated funding in respect of the mobility factor; and how much such funding was allocated to each local authority.

Nick Gibb:

67 local authorities were allocated funding under the mobility factor. The funding levels for these local authorities can be found on the schools block tab of the NFF summary table published as part of the consultation, and is shown below:

LA	ILLUSTRATIVE NFF MOBILITY FACTOR FUNDING
Barking and Dagenham	£686,976
Barnet	£288,808
Bath and North East Somerset	£21,169
Birmingham	£1,360,241
Blackpool	£159,095
Bournemouth	£90,517
Bracknell Forest	£23,197
Bradford	£684,576
Brighton and Hove	£100,000
Buckinghamshire	£213,516

LA	ILLUSTRATIVE NFF MOBILITY FACTOR FUNDING
Bury	£56,146
Coventry	£185,691
Croydon	£950,087
Derby	£617,775
Dorset	£88,800
Ealing	£1,494,552
Enfield	£357,194
Gateshead	£201,200
Greenwich	£506,684
Hackney	£107,202
Hammersmith and Fulham	£121,825
Hampshire	£486,773
Haringey	£368,514
Harrow	£869,088
Hartlepool	£25,357
Havering	£66,221
Hertfordshire	£484,380
Hillingdon	£560,368
Isle of Wight	£117,042
Islington	£16,350
Kingston upon Hull City of	£34,153
Kingston upon Thames	£166,500
Lambeth	£236,168
Leeds	£247,222
LA	ILLUSTRATIVE NFF MOBILITY FACTOR FUNDING
Leicester	£1,439,023

LA	ILLUSTRATIVE NFF MOBILITY FACTOR FUNDING
Lewisham	£126,597
Liverpool	£543,652
Luton	£187,028
Manchester	£1,135,759
Medway	£423,093
Middlesbrough	£119,640
Milton Keynes	£169,919
Newcastle upon Tyne	£451,333
Newham	£2,461,165
North Lincolnshire	£259,388
North Tyneside	£15,050
North Yorkshire	£855,090
Nottingham	£144,252
Nottinghamshire	£175,587
Oldham	£19,752
Oxfordshire	£176,061
Reading	£118,163
Redbridge	£283,214
Richmond upon Thames	£31,523
Rotherham	£125,778
Rutland	£82,685
Salford	£40,079
Sheffield	£157,784
Southampton	£218,728
Southend-on-Sea	£94,357
Surrey	£160,418

LA	ILLUSTRATIVE NFF MOBILITY FACTOR FUNDING
Sutton	£2,699
Telford and Wrekin	£78,925
Waltham Forest	£386,059
Westminster	£277,082
Wokingham	£138,404
York	£38,847

■ Schools: Fire Extinguishers

Jim Fitzpatrick:

[\[66652\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions she has had with (a) the Minister in the Home Office responsible for the Fire Service, (b) the Minister in the Department for Communities and Local Government responsible for building regulations and (c) the Government's Chief Fire and Rescue advisor before the publication of the Government's revised guidance on fire sprinklers in schools.

Nick Gibb:

The Department's guidance on fire safety in schools is Building Bulletin (BB) 100. This was published in 2007 and is currently being updated. BB 100 includes advice on the use of fire sprinklers in schools as a property protection measure, but not as separate guidance.

Officials are working to update BB100, and have involved officials from the Home Office, the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser's Unit and the Department for Communities and Local Government as part of this work. The Government will publish its response to the consultation alongside revised guidance in due course.

■ University Technical Colleges: Admissions

Ian Means:

[\[66848\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, (a) what the full capacity is of and (b) how many students have been enrolled in each university technical college in each of the last five years.

Nick Gibb:

The number of students enrolled at university technical colleges (UTC) in each of the last 5 years can be found in the penultimate document of the underlying data at the following links:

2016

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/532042/SFR20_2016_Underlying_Data.zip

2015

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/434186/SFR16_2015_Underlying_Data.zip

2014

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/406916/SFR15_2014_Underlying_data_v102.zip

2013

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/207734/SFR21-2013_UD.zip

2012

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/167515/sfr10-2012ud.zip

January 2017 census data will be published in summer 2017 and will include UTCs which opened in September 2016.

Capacity data for each UTC is taken from published funding agreements and can be found in the attached spreadsheet.

Attachments:

1. Annex 1 [66848 attachment.xlsx]

■ **University Technical Colleges: Closures**

Ian Mearns: [\[66847\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many university technical colleges are due for closure.

Nick Gibb:

There are 3 university technical colleges (UTC) due to close in August 2017 – Daventry UTC, UTC Lancashire and Greater Manchester Sustainable UTC.

In addition, UTC Tottenham will cease to be a UTC and will become a 16-19 free school, London Academy of Excellence Tottenham.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ **Assistance Dogs**

Philip Davies: [\[66493\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate she has made of the number of assistance dogs that have been attacked by other dogs since

the amendment of the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 to include injury caused to assistance dogs.

George Eustice:

The Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 was amended in 2014 specifically to include a separate penalty of up to 3 years imprisonment for a dog attack on an assistance dog. This is, however, within the overall single offence of allowing a dog to be dangerously out of control. Dog attacks on assistance dogs are therefore not recorded separately. As part of their campaign to change the law Guide Dogs UK reported in June 2013 that there were around ten such attacks a month.

■ **Badgers**

Mary Glendon:

[\[67289\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the relative effectiveness of cage trapping and controlled shooting in controlling badger populations.

George Eustice:

No direct comparison between the effectiveness of cage trapping and controlled shooting has been made. A combination of cage trapping and controlled shooting is the most efficient approach to obtain the required 70% population reduction to ensure disease control benefits.

The numbers of badgers removed by cage trapping and controlled shooting in the cull areas in 2016 was published in December 2016.

■ **Bovine Tuberculosis: Disease Control**

Paul Flynn:

[\[66627\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many culled badger carcasses have been examined to date; and of those examined how many were found to have (a) been killed outright with one shot and (b) tested positive for TB.

George Eustice:

To date, 421 carcasses of badgers culled by controlled shooting in 2013 – 2016 have undergone post-mortem examination. Of these, 25 were found to have evidence of more than one hit.

Culled carcasses undergoing post-mortem examination have not been routinely tested for TB as the RBCT established that approximately one-third of badgers in areas of high incidence of TB in cattle were infected.

Mary Glendon:

[\[67288\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much her Department has spent on administering badger control measures in each of the last three years.

George Eustice:

In August 2016 the Government published its badger control costs for 2013 -2015. These can be found on the GOV.UK website under Bovine TB Government badger control costs 2015.

The costs for the 2016 badger control operations are still to be finalised and will be published later this year.

■ Bovine Tuberculosis: Dogs**Jim Fitzpatrick:****[67006]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the extent to which bovine TB is spread by dogs.

George Eustice:

Evidence indicates that dogs play an insignificant role in the persistence and spread of bovine TB in Great Britain, including transmission of the disease to cattle herds.

■ Business: Waste**Julian Sturdy:****[66920]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what support her Department provides to businesses on the process for achieving end of waste status for their products.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The Environment Agency has developed several different mechanisms to support businesses in determining whether products are waste or not. These include end of waste frameworks (Quality Protocols) for thirteen different waste streams, a self-assessment web tool 'IsItWaste', and published data on comparator non-waste materials. All support tools can be found on the '[turn your waste into a new non-waste product](#) or material' page on GOV.UK. Defra has also produced guidance on the legal definition of waste, also available on GOV.UK.

Businesses seeking support on achieving end of waste status for their products can also contact their local Environment Agency office for further advice and guidance.

■ Circuses: Animal Welfare**Mr Roger Godsiff:****[66540]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the implications for her Department's policies of the findings of the report commissioned by the Welsh Government, entitled The welfare of wild animals in travelling circuses, published in April 2016; and if she will make a statement.

George Eustice:

Defra has considered the report, 'The welfare of wild animals in travelling circuses', commissioned by the Welsh Government. It remains the position of the Department that there is insufficient evidence to justify a ban on the use of wild animals in

circuses on welfare grounds. The Government intends to introduce primary legislation to effect a ban on ethical grounds.

■ **Dangerous Dogs: Private Property**

Philip Davies: [\[66494\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate she has made of the number of people who have been (a) killed and (b) injured by dangerous dogs on private property since the amendment of the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 to include injury caused by those dogs on such property.

George Eustice:

Nine people have been killed by dogs on private property in England and Wales since the change in the law in May 2014 to extend the scope of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 to all places.

The Office of National Statistics publishes annual data on injuries by dogs, but this does not distinguish between public and private property.

■ **Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Policy**

Philip Davies: [\[66665\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what her Department's main policy priority is for 2017; and if she will make a statement.

George Eustice:

EU Exit will fundamentally affect everything we do. This is my top priority, and underpins all of our work. Within this, we want to be the first generation to leave the natural environment of England in a better state than we found it; and we want to be a world leading food, farming and fishing nation: to grow more, sell more, and export more food around the world.

■ **Dogs: Imports**

Jim Fitzpatrick: [\[66018\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, for what reasons her Department decided not to require Animal and Plant Health Advisory officers to deter illegal imports of puppies into the UK control zone in Coquelles, Calais.

George Eustice:

The Government takes the illegal importation of puppies seriously and does put in place deterrents to the illegal import of puppies into the United Kingdom Control Zone at Coquelles. The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) is responsible for ensuring there are effective controls to prevent illegal movements into the Control Zone. APHA require approved carriers, in the case of Coquelles, Eurotunnel, to check 100% of animals travelling under the Pet Travel Scheme for compliance before they are permitted to enter the Control Zone. There is a formal agreement in place which details how Eurotunnel must carry out this function.

APHA has always carried out periodic inspections in the Control Zone to ensure that the carrier company's checks are effective. Our approach to these pet animal checks and compliance monitoring has not changed. In addition APHA has also worked with carriers on specific intelligence led operations to identify and seize illegally imported puppies. APHA works with all carriers approved to transport pet animals and is currently in discussion on proposals to strengthen the effectiveness of the checks they are required to carry out.

■ Dogs: Sheep

Jim Shannon:

[66758]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what information her Department holds on the number of dog attacks on sheep flocks in each of the last four years.

George Eustice:

Information on dog attacks on sheep and other livestock is not routinely collated by Defra. However, details of the number of people prosecuted under the Dogs (Protection of Livestock) Act 1953 for each of the last four years for which details are available can be found in the attached table.

Defra and the Animal Health and Welfare Board for England (AHWBE) recently met police forces, farming and rural interests to discuss the situation. Under the auspices of the National Police Chiefs' Council, five police forces are collaborating to pilot more systematic data collection of incidents and good response practices

■ Motor Vehicles: Exhaust Emissions

Sarah Olney:

[67060]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she has made an assessment of the potential merits introducing legislative proposals on the use of signage and fines in areas of high pollution to encourage drivers to switch off their engines while stationary.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

Local authorities already 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, and are able to use signage to discourage idling. Local authorities can also voluntarily introduce Clean Air Zones should they wish to do so using their powers under the Transport Act 2000. Clean Air Zones can be used to address vehicle idling.

Given these existing powers, Defra has made no assessment of the potential merits of introducing legislative proposals on the use of signage and fines in areas of high pollution to encourage drivers to switch off their engines while stationary.

■ Shipping: Pollution

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[67172\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans her Department has to reduce marine pollution caused by shipping in UK waters.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The UK Marine Strategy sets out a comprehensive range of measures being taken by the Government to reduce marine pollution. This includes our ongoing support for the work of the International Maritime Organization, and the implementation of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL).

This Convention addresses a range of pollutants from shipping including the discharge of oil, chemicals and ship generated waste, as well as covering issues such as air pollution and energy efficiency.

Efforts to address marine pollution from ships are led by the Department for Transport in close cooperation with Defra.

■ Sky Lanterns

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[\[66864\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will bring forward legislative proposals to regulate the use of sky lanterns to protect livestock on farms; and if she will make a statement.

George Eustice:

An independent study published in 2013 to identify and assess the impacts and risks associated with sky lanterns suggested that the risks to animals or damage to the environment by sky lanterns were relatively minor, and reported that voluntary action and initiatives have been shown to be effective.

Any action we take must be proportionate to the level of risk. An outright ban would be disproportionate in the circumstances, so across government, we have been taking forward a series of non-regulatory measures aimed at minimising the risks associated with sky lanterns and driving up safety standards. Local Authorities are also using existing powers to restrict or regulate the use of lanterns on council-owned land.

■ Slaughterhouses: Animal Welfare

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[67171\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans her Department has to improve animal welfare in abattoirs.

George Eustice:

I refer the hon. Member to the reply given on 20 January 2017, PQ UIN 59926

■ Tree Planting

Dan Jarvis:

[\[67022\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether her Department is on target to meet its commitment to plant 11 million trees by 2020; and how many trees have been planted to date.

Dan Jarvis:

[\[67023\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she is taking to ensure that 11 million trees are planted by 2020.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The Government remains committed to planting 11 million trees in this parliament.

The Forestry Commission collect and publish statistics on the area of Government supported new woodland planting in England. The latest report shows that by the end of December 2016 an estimated 1.39 million trees had been planted in this parliament creating 1,032 hectares of woodland. Government's support for this woodland creation has been with funding from the Countryside Stewardship scheme and its predecessor the England Woodland Grant Scheme.

The most recent application window for the Countryside Stewardship Woodland Creation Grant closed on 1st March.

We launched the Woodland Carbon Fund, which opened on 10 November 2016 with a budget allocation of more than £19 million.

The Woodland Creation Planning Grant, drawn from the £1m Forestry Innovation Fund, is providing support to land managers to encourage the planting of larger woodlands.

We have allocated up to £3.2m over 4 years to the Trees for Schools programme. This will give hundreds of thousands of children across England a chance to plant saplings in their school grounds and communities as part of a Government-backed scheme to give free trees to schools in partnership with the Woodland Trust.

We have established an additional £5 million fund for tree and woodland measures, including woodland planting, as part of High Speed 2. This is in addition to the package of compensation already in place for ancient woodland lost during construction.

■ Waste Management

Julian Sturdy:

[\[66868\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many officials in the Environment Agency are working on end of waste policy and programmes.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The Environment Agency does not develop policy, however, operational staff throughout the Environment Agency routinely give advice and guidance to operators

on end of waste matters. The Environment Agency also has a Definition of Waste team, consisting of four staff members, with specific expertise on end of waste alongside other responsibilities in waste regulation.

There are other non-operational and legal experts in the Environment Agency who provide advice on end of waste matters as part of their wider responsibilities.

Julian Sturdy: [\[66921\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many officials in the Environment Agency have been employed by her Department to work on end of waste policy and programmes in each of the last five years.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

In the last five years, no Environment Agency staff members have been employed by Defra to work on end of waste policy and programmes.

■ Zoos: Animal Welfare

Andrew Rosindell: [\[67169\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that zoos across the UK have sufficient levels of animal welfare.

George Eustice:

The Zoo Licensing Act 1981 sets out comprehensive licensing and inspection requirements for zoos. Responsibility for administering these requirements rests with local authorities, which undertake annual inspections to ensure that zoos have sufficient levels of animal welfare.

Defra supports this by setting out minimum standards that zoos are expected to meet, via the Secretary of State's Standards of Modern Zoo Practice, and by maintaining a list of qualified zoo licensing inspectors who undertake periodical inspections of zoos for local authorities. These inspectors are competent to inspect animals in zoos and to advise on their management and on their welfare. Where there are concerns, local authorities have powers to impose conditions and to take further action where necessary.

Defra has also established a Zoos Expert Committee, which provides UK Ministers with independent technical advice, with a focus on the role of zoos in conservation, education and scientific research and on the operation and implementation of the zoo licensing system in the UK

EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION

■ Brexit

Wes Streeting:

[67357]

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, pursuant to the Answer of 27 January 2017 to Question 61497, if he will publish the estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of pursuing the appeal to the Supreme Court in the case of *R Miller and Dos Santos v the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union*.

Mr Robin Walker:

All costs related to the case have not yet been settled. Details of the total costs associated with the case, including the costs of the Supreme Court appeal, will be published in due course after they have been settled.

■ Department for Exiting the European Union: Policy

Philip Davies:

[66666]

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what his Department's main policy priority is for 2017; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Robin Walker:

The priority of the Department for Exiting the European Union is to plan for and support the PM in the negotiations on leaving the EU and establishing a future partnership between the UK and EU.

The Department is working to deliver the 12 objectives set out in the White Paper on the United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union, which is published on GOV.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-united-kingdoms-exit-from-and-new-partnership-with-the-european-union-white-paper>

■ Department for Exiting the European Union: Staff

Jon Trickett:

[66691]

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what proportion of Civil Service positions in his Department was vacant for a week or longer in each year since 2010; and what the average turnover rate for civil servants in his Department has been in each year since 2010.

Mr Robin Walker:

As a new department DExEU is not in a position to report on the number of vacancies for a week or longer over the last five years. Since July 2016 the Department has grown rapidly; it now has over 300 staff and is continuing to grow. DExEU is equipping itself with the resources it needs to get the best deal for the UK.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE■ **Bahrain: Human Rights****Tom Brake:**[\[66908\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the effect of the proposed constitutional change in Bahrain to allow military courts to try civilians on human rights in that country.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

We will be following the legislative process on the proposed constitutional amendment closely. The UK recognises the genuine threat from terrorism which Bahrain faces. We continue to work closely with the Government of Bahrain to encourage progress on human rights, which includes building effective and accountable institutions, strengthening the rule of law, and police and judicial reform. We continue to encourage Bahrain to live up to its international and domestic human rights obligations.

■ **Cameroon: Foreign Relations****Alison Thewliss:**[\[66798\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, when he last met his counterpart in Cameroon; and what issues were discussed at that meeting.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

I have not yet had the opportunity to meet my counterpart in the Cameroonian Government but hope we can meet when our diaries allow. I know that the FCO and our High Commissioner is in regular contact with President Biya and his administration.

■ **Cameroon: Internet****Alison Thewliss:**[\[66797\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to the Government of Cameroon on internet access in that country.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

We are closely following the situation in the North West and South West regions of Cameroon following on from the demonstrations and strikes by lawyers and teachers. We are engaged with the Government of Cameroon and will continue to raise the internet blackout with them.

We have called for restraint by all involved, and have petitioned the government to restore the internet as soon as possible. We have reiterated the obligation to uphold human rights standards and encouraged the use of transparent legal means to address concerns. We have regularly called for issues to be resolved through dialogue, with a range of interlocutors, and a return to normality in the two regions.

■ Colombia: Foreign Relations

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[\[67249\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, when he last met his counterpart in the Republic of Colombia; and what issues were discussed at that meeting.

Sir Alan Duncan:

I have met Foreign Minister Holguin on several occasions, most recently on 2 November 2016 during the State Visit of President Santos. We discussed progress in the Colombian peace process, likely challenges to its implementation, the Colombian Government's approach to tackling human rights issues, and opportunities for further UK/Colombia cooperation.

■ Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Grants

Tom Brake:

[\[67104\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, who will be responsible for the Empowerment Fund in his Department.

Alok Sharma:

The Empowerment Fund is currently under development. Details of the Fund, including governance and oversight arrangements will be announced to Parliament in due course.

■ Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Policy

Philip Davies:

[\[66667\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what his Department's main policy priority is for 2017; and if he will make a statement.

Sir Alan Duncan:

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has three Strategic Objectives: to protect our people; project our global influence; and promote our prosperity. Our Annual Report and Accounts, published and presented to Parliament every year in June, reports on our progress.

■ Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Staff

Jon Trickett:

[\[66692\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what proportion of Civil Service positions in his Department was vacant for a week or longer in each year since 2010; and what the average turnover rate for civil servants in his Department has been in each year since 2010.

Sir Alan Duncan:

We do not hold centrally details of the proportion of FCO UK based Civil Service positions that were vacant for a week in each year since 2010.

Since 2012/13, average turnover rates for FCO UK based Civil Servants are as follows:-

2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17*
5%	8%	9%	9%	6%

*up to 28th Feb 2017

■ **Gambia: Female Genital Mutilation**

Liz McInnes:

[\[67370\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he has taken to support the eradication of female genital mutilation in the Gambia since the election of President Adama Barrow.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The UK stands ready to support The Gambia and its new government. We are considering what assistance we can offer in support of human rights, democracy and the institutional and economic capacity of The Gambia. The UK is committed to supporting women and girls around the globe especially against the practice of female genital mutilation.

■ **Hassan Abduraheem Kodi Taour and Abulmonem Abdulmawla**

Patrick Grady:

[\[66845\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent representations he has made to the Sudanese authorities to support the appeal of the sentences of Sudanese pastor Reverend Hassan Abduraheem and Darfuri student Abulmonem Abdulmawla.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

We are concerned about the sentencing of Pastor Hassan Abduelraheem Kodi and Mr Abdulmonem Abdumawlla, who must be given the opportunity to take up their right to appeal. We regularly raise this case with the Sudanese authorities; most recently the UK Special Representative for Sudan and South Sudan did so with senior figures of the Government of Sudan during his visit to Khartoum between 6-8 March.

■ **Hong Kong: Politics and Government**

Tom Elliott:

[\[66641\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the progress made in implementing the one country, two systems policy in Hong Kong and the level of co-operation among political parties in Hong Kong on that policy.

Alok Sharma:

The six-monthly report to the House from the Foreign Secretary, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Boris Johnson), published on 24 February, sets out the Government's latest assessment on developments in Hong Kong. The report makes clear the Government's view that the 'One Country, Two Systems' framework established by the Sino-British Joint Declaration continues to function well in the vast majority of areas. The report also highlights those areas where challenges have arisen or on which we have had concerns.

The six-monthly report can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/six-monthly-report-on-hong-kong-july-to-december-2016>

Human Rights: EU Action**Ann Clwyd:****[66634]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how much funding the Government provides to the EU for (a) supporting human rights defenders in third countries, (b) other human rights programming and projects in third countries and (c) supporting women's rights.

Alok Sharma:

The UK contributes to EU instruments addressing human rights through our contributions to the EU budget.

The European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights has a budget of €132.75 million under Heading 4 of the EU's multi-annual financial framework 2014-2020. The Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) helps countries of the Western Balkans and Turkey make political and economic reforms. Under the IPA, €1770.2 million has been allocated for democracy and governance and €1281.40 million for rule of law assistance for the period 2014-20. More details of the EU's work in this area are available in the EU Annual Reports on Human Rights and Democratisation, available at: https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/8437/EU%20Annual%20Reports%20on%20Human%20Rights%20and%20Democratisation.

Iran**Jim Shannon:****[66755]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions his Department has had with his counterpart in Iran on Iran's (a) nuclear programme and (b) diplomatic relations with Israel.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The UK and Iran, as parties to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran's nuclear programme, regularly discuss Iran's nuclear programme, both bilaterally and in the Joint Commission with France, Germany, the US, China, Russia and the EU.

The upgrade to full diplomatic relations with Iran in 2016 enables us to discuss all manner of issues, including regional affairs and Iran's policy towards Israel.

■ **Iran: Politics and Government**

Jim Shannon: [\[66811\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with the Iranian Government on enabling reconciliation with the Green Movement before the presidential election in that country.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

I have not had any such discussions with the Iranian government. It is for Iran to decide the process for the Presidential election and we encourage the Iranian authorities to fulfil their obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political rights.

■ **Iraq: Kuwait**

Jim Shannon: [\[66754\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions his Department has had with the (a) Iraqi and (b) Kuwaiti Government on border disputes on the waterway that separates Iraq and Kuwait.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

Our Embassy in Kuwait have been closely monitoring the situation, particularly since late January 2017, and have been recently briefed by the Kuwaiti authorities. In February, our ambassador to Iraq raised this issue with the Foreign Minister of Iraq, the Kuwaiti ambassador to Iraq and the Deputy Chair of Basra Provincial Council. Throughout, the ambassador emphasised that Iraq and Kuwait should continue to work both bilaterally and with the UN to resolve this issue.

■ **Israel: British Nationals Abroad**

Paula Sherriff: [\[66919\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for British citizens of new legislation in Israel preventing the granting of entry permits, visas and residency rights to foreign nationals supporting a boycott of Israel and the Israeli settlements.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

We are seeking clarification from the Israeli Government on the potential impact on British nationals.

■ Israeli Settlements

Tom Brake:

[\[66721\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether the Prime Minister raised the Land Regularisation Bill during his recent discussions with Prime Minister Netanyahu.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

I issued a statement on 7 February condemning the land regularisation law. We are gravely concerned by the law, which will retroactively legalise 53 outposts and pave the way for significant growth in settlements deep in the West Bank, threatening the viability of the two-state solution. The Prime Minister, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Maidenhead (Mrs May) and the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Mr Johnson) both expressed their grave concerns about settlements and the land regularisation law when they met Prime Minister Netanyahu in London on Monday 6 February.

■ Nigeria: Asylum

Kate Osamor:

[\[66648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps the Government has taken with EU officials on the negotiations with the Nigerian Government on an agreement to allow Italy and other EU member states to return Nigerian migrants not found eligible for asylum.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The UK has exercised its right not to opt in to the EU Council Decision authorising the opening of negotiations on an agreement between the European Union and Nigeria on readmission.

The UK recognises the responsibility countries have to accept the return of their own nationals when they have no right to remain elsewhere and to control their own borders. Our High Commission in Nigeria works closely with our EU partners on this agenda including through sharing expertise on returns arrangements. In conjunction with the EU and other member states the UK is pursuing a comprehensive approach to addressing migration, including from Nigeria.

■ Nigeria: Emigration

Jim Shannon:

[\[66815\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions his Department has had with representatives of the Nigerian diaspora in the UK.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

Officials frequently engage with local diaspora groups. The Nigerian diaspora in the UK are an incredible human resource, who bring expertise, knowledge, education,

experience and entrepreneurial skills that can be deployed creatively to benefit Nigeria's future development and prosperity.

A recent example of our engagement with the Nigerian diaspora was through a roundtable discussion in Manchester on Modern Slavery with community and faith leaders in February 2017. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has previously hosted similar discussions on a variety of issues including prosperity.

■ **Nigeria: Energy Supply**

Jim Shannon:

[\[66816\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions the Government has had with the Nigerian Government on enabling Nigerian energy suppliers to supply the UK.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The Government's discussions with the Nigerian government on energy continue to focus on increasing production and transmission in-country to tackle the energy deficit which is undermining economic development.

There have not been any Government to government discussions on how to enable Nigerian energy suppliers to supply the UK.

■ **Nigeria: Environment Protection**

Jim Shannon:

[\[66812\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions the Government has had with the Nigerian Government on tackling environmental damage to the Niger Delta.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

Environmental degradation in the Niger Delta has had a devastating impact on the environment and communities of the region. I was able to see this first hand when I visited the Delta in September 2016. I have encouraged the Nigerian government to take action on tackling oil spills in the region, including by implementing the UN Environment Programme's recommendations on the Ogoniland clean-up.

Our High Commission in Abuja is in regular contact with officials from the Ministry of Environment, working to strengthen the Nigerian government's regulatory response and increase accountability for environmental damage.

■ **Nigeria: Tourism**

Jim Shannon:

[\[66814\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions his Department has had on tourism between Nigeria and the UK.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

Approximately 130,000 of the 36 million visitors to the UK in 2015 were Nigerians visiting for business and leisure purposes. The World Bank reports 600,000 total

visitors to Nigeria in 2013; there is no available data on how many of these were from the UK. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is not involved in discussions to promote tourism between Nigeria and the UK.

■ North Korea: Guided Weapons

Jim Shannon:

[R] [\[66753\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions his Department has had with the US Administration on the recent incidence of North Korean missiles landing in Japanese territorial waters.

Alok Sharma:

We are in regular contact with the United States and other international partners regarding the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK) provocative and destabilising behaviour. The Foreign Secretary's, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Boris Johnson), statement of 6 March condemned the latest missile tests as a clear violation of UN Security Council resolutions.

■ Palestinians: Terrorism

Mrs Theresa Villiers:

[R] [\[67242\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent representations he has made to the Palestinian Authority on alleged payments to convicted terrorists.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The Government has consistently raised prisoner payments at the highest levels with the Palestinian Authority and Palestine Liberation Organisation, and we continue to urge that these payments are more transparent, needs-based and affordable.

Mrs Theresa Villiers:

[R] [\[67243\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for the Middle East Peace Process of the alleged practice by the Palestinian Authority of paying salaries to convicted terrorists.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

Payments to Palestinian prisoners are made by the Palestinian Liberation Organisation, which has full administrative control for the monthly payments that are provided to prisoners' families and ex-detainees. We have not made any assessment on the implications of these payments for the Middle East Peace Process.

■ Religious Freedom

Mr Gavin Shuker:

[R] [\[67342\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to fulfil its UN Human Rights Council election pledge to protect and promote freedom of religion or belief.

Alok Sharma:

I refer the Hon. Member to my answer of 9 March 2017 (PQ 66585).

■ **Sayed Alwadaei**

Tom Brake:

[\[66907\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations the Government has made to the Bahrainian Government on the detention of members of Sayed Alwadaei's family in that country.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office and our Embassy in Bahrain are monitoring this issue closely. The Ministry of Interior Ombudsman has responsibility for investigating allegations of mistreatment in detention. We encourage all those with concerns about their treatment in detention to report these directly to the Ombudsman, and we urge the Ombudsman to carry out thorough investigations into any such allegations. We also continue to encourage the Government of Bahrain to deliver on its international and domestic human rights commitments. We continue to raise concerns about human rights with the Bahraini authorities both in private and in public.

■ **South Sudan: Peacekeeping Operations**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[66608\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he has taken to increase the number of peacekeepers in South Sudan through the UN.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The UK strongly supports the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), and we continue to work with the UN and the Department for Peacekeeping Operations to improve the capabilities of the mission to effectively carry out its mandate. As a result of our efforts on this, the UN Security Council passed resolution 2304 in August 2016, which mandated the deployment of 4000 extra troops for UNMISS as a Regional Protection Force for Juba. We continue to urge the Government of South Sudan to fulfil their commitment to accommodate this deployment, and encourage the troop contributing countries to accelerate preparations. We are also currently in the process of deploying 379 UK troops to UNMISS. They will carry out vital engineering and advisory support, and will set up a field hospital in Bentiu.

■ **Sudan: Religious Freedom**

Patrick Grady:

[\[66846\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with the Sudanese authorities on the treatment of religious minorities in Sudan.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

Senior officials in both Khartoum and London continue to raise the importance of freedom of religion or belief as part of our human rights dialogue with the Government of Sudan. We urge the government to uphold the commitment to their citizens in the Interim Constitution of 2005, within which religious freedom is enshrined.

■ USA: Intelligence Services**Mrs Theresa Villiers:**[\[67364\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to the US Administration on the effect on UK security of leaks from US intelligence agencies.

Sir Alan Duncan:

It is the longstanding policy of successive British Governments not to comment on intelligence matters. The Government deplores the leaking of any classified information, wherever it occurs. Such leaks can make the work of maintaining the security of our own country and that of our allies more difficult.

■ Visegrad Countries**Daniel Kawczynski:**[\[66740\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make it his policy to support the Three Seas Initiative of the Visegrad Group; and if he will make a statement.

Sir Alan Duncan:

We have followed with interest the Three Seas Initiative following the Summit in Dubrovnik in August 2016 and its joint declaration for co-operation on energy security, transport, digital communications and the economy. We have strong relationships with the countries of the Visegrad Group and we support their joint efforts to promote regional cooperation.

HEALTH**■ Alcoholic Drinks: Misuse****Jim Shannon:**[\[66766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to support the children of alcoholics.

Nicola Blackwood:

Alcohol addiction has a devastating impact on individuals and their families and it is unacceptable that children bear the brunt of their parents' condition.

Public Health England is undertaking a range of measures to address this issue. This includes improving the evidence base; enhancing data; ensuring local authorities are

given high quality advice and support in relation to alcohol treatment services, and any safeguarding implications; and social marketing.

The Government has also put in place a range of measures to help ensure children are provided with accurate information and the tools they need to make informed decisions about their relationship with alcohol. This includes through the FRANK drug information and advice service; Family Nurse Partnerships to help parents within potentially vulnerable families to develop their parenting capacity; and tailored and co-ordinated support via the Troubled Families programme.

The Department is also meeting with Parliamentarians and stakeholders to investigate what more can be done to reduce the harms of addiction and provide more support to children and their families.

A strategy is being developed to ensure that the children of alcoholics are given the support they need.

■ **Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust**

Rosie Cooper:

[66883]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how much Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust has spent on legal fees in each of the last three years; and how much of that amount was spent on employee relations cases.

Mr Philip Dunne:

We have been provided with the following information from Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust regarding the Trust's expenditure on legal fees in each of the last three years; and how much of that amount was spent on employee relations cases.

- In 2014/15, the Trust's spend on legal fees was £158,275 of which £35,955 was spent on employee relations cases;
- In 2015/16, the Trust's spend on legal fees was £178,261 of which £94,817 was spent on employee relations cases; and
- In 2016/17, the Trust's most recent in-year figures that are available show that the spend on legal fees is £202,558, and from this £50,946 has been spent on employee relations cases.

Legal fees figures include all solicitors' invoices coded to the 'legal/professional fees' cost centre and may include fees for training or insurance excess payments not covered by the NHS Litigation Authority following litigation.

The spend on employee relations cases includes advice on Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations regulations, pensions and the Mutually Agreed Resignation Scheme as well as individual cases.

■ Caesarean Sections

Jim Shannon:

[\[66748\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many caesarean births there have been in each of the last five years.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The information available on the number of delivery episodes with a method of delivery of caesarean section for the specified financial years is in the table below. Where there is more than one baby born in a delivery episode, the method of delivery is that of the first baby.

The information in the table only includes deliveries within National Health Service hospitals in England.

FINANCIAL YEAR	NUMBER OF CAESAREAN SECTION DELIVERIES
2015-16	172,954
2014-15	166,319
2013-14	166,081
2012-13	167,283
2011-12	163,859

Source: Hospital Episode Statistics – Annual Hospital Maternity Activity Publications

■ Care Homes: Leeds

Hilary Benn:

[\[67219\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many places there were in registered care homes in Leeds in each of the last 10 years.

David Mowat:

The information requested is not available.

The table below sets out the Care Quality Commission data which shows the following numbers of care home beds in the Leeds City Council area from August 2011 to August 2016. Data at local authority level are only available from 2011 onwards and therefore the table does not fully cover the past 10 years.

	AUGUST 2011	AUGUST 2012	AUGUST 2013	AUGUST 2014	AUGUST 2015	AUGUST 2016
Leeds local authority	5,641	5,518	5,369	5,442	5,347	5,483
England	454,896	464,126	463,909	463,887	462,153	460,642

■ **Care Homes: Standards****Diana Johnson:**[\[67256\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 2 March 2017 to Question 65063, on care homes: standards, if he will provide equivalent data from 2004-05 to 2009-10.

David Mowat:

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) did not exist before 1 April 2009, so the data supplied in this Parliamentary Question response refers to care home de-registrations under the previous legislation, the Care Standards Act, which governed the now defunct Commission for Social Care Inspection. The table shows the numbers of care home services that deregistered between 1 April 2004 and 31 March 2010. The CQC is unable to provide analysis of the reasons for closure.

NUMBER OF CARE HOME ¹ SERVICES THAT DE-REGISTERED UNDER THE CARE STANDARDS ACT BETWEEN 1 APRIL 2004 AND 31 MARCH 2010 IN ENGLAND, EAST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE AND KINGSTON UPON HULL LOCAL AUTHORITIES BY FINANCIAL YEAR.

Financial Year of De-registration	Number of care homes that De-registered		
	England	East Riding of Yorkshire	Kingston upon Hull
2004-05	1,784	23	12
2005-06	1,875	27	20
2006-07	1,651	17	8
2007-08	1,431	14	11
2008-09	1,047	10	6
2009-10	960	10	4
Total from 1 April 2004 - 31 March 2010	8,748	101	61

Note:

¹ Care homes are defined as Nursing home; Residential home; Non-medical care home.

■ Carers: Monitoring

Jim Shannon:

[66745]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that those caring for people in (a) private homes and (b) hospitals provide the correct dosage of medicines for those people.

David Mowat:

Some local authorities provide packages of care to people in private homes that include elements that either prompt and or administer medication.

The Care Quality Commission assesses every care provider against a list of 15 fundamental standards. These take into account regulations for regulation of medicines.

We are informed by NHS Improvement that the Patient Safety team supports a network of Medication Safety Officers who it works with to improve the safety of medication, including correct dosing in hospital and community settings. NHS Improvement also learns from incidents reported to the National Reporting and Learning System and issue Patient Safety Alerts that support safe medication administration.

■ Cataracts: Surgery

Emma Reynolds:

[67261]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 25 October 2016 to Question HL2227, how his Department monitors clinical commissioning groups on waiting times for cataracts surgery.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The Department uses the National Health Service performance data published on a monthly basis by NHS England in respect of waiting times for consultant-led referral to treatment waiting times to monitor compliance with waiting times targets for treatment. Referral to treatment data are collected by 18 specialties and are not condition or procedure specific. Cataract surgery is included in the ophthalmology specialty. This information is published at both provider and commissioner level and is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/rtt-waiting-times/>

■ Dementia

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[67248]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 6 March 2017 to Question 66177, on dementia, whether he plans to make an assessment of the adequacy of treatment provision for people diagnosed with early onset dementia.

David Mowat:

The Department will undertake a formal review of the Prime Minister's Challenge on Dementia 2020 Implementation Plan in 2018. This review will be informed by the views of people with dementia, carers and seldom heard groups to assess whether the actions in the Implementation Plan are making a positive difference. The views of people with early onset dementia and their carers will be sought.

■ **Dental Services: Children****Steve McCabe:**[\[66592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 7 February 2017 to Question 62250, what assessment he has made of the effect of recent trends in the cost of multiple child tooth extraction on the Government's policies on the level of investment in dental practices.

David Mowat:

NHS England commissions services based on need.

The information held by NHS Digital for primary care and secondary care cannot currently be broken down to distinguish between single and multiple extractions.

Total numbers of extractions in children are reducing. Information held by NHS Digital shows that for the latest year available the total number of extractions for children has reduced when compared to the previous year in both primary and secondary care.

The total number of primary care courses of treatment and teeth extractions from 2010/11 to 2015/16 can be found in Table 1 below.

A count of finished admission episodes (FAEs) which includes for a main operative procedure of 'tooth extraction' for children can be found in Table 2 below.

Count of the total number of courses of treatment (CoT) ¹ that contain extractions and teeth extracted, for adults aged 18+ and children aged 0-17, 2010-11 to 2015-16, England.

YEAR	CoT	TEETH
2015-16	514,576	917,346
2014-15	524,163	946,142
2013-14	539,908	976,794
2012-13	533,694	963,514
2011-12	540,626	964,856
2010-11	540,689	964,841

Notes:

1. A CoT is defined as:

- an examination of a patient, an assessment of their oral health, and the planning of any treatment to be provided to that patient as a result of that examination and assessment; and
- the provision of any planned treatment (including any treatment planned at a time other than the time of the initial examination) to that patient.

2. Processing of the clinical dataset changed in 2013-14. Historically the clinical data were grossed up to match the Courses of Treatment data. Due to a change in the data structure this is not the case for data from 2013-14 and subsequent years.

The difference between the two datasets is due to a change in the processing of FP17 forms by NHS Business Services Authority. From 2013-14 any FP17 forms received more than two months after the date of completion are processed but no Unit of Dental Activity allocated. Historical figures have not been adjusted and the change in processing may be accountable for some of the year on year changes.

Count of finished admission episodes (FAEs) ¹ by main operative procedure of 'tooth extraction' ² for 0-19 year olds from 2010-11 to 2015-16 ³

Activity in English NHS Hospitals and English NHS commissioned activity in the independent sector.

AGE (YEARS)

Year	0 to 4	5 to 9	10 to 14	15 to 17	18 to 19	Total
2010-11	7,947	21,168	9,386	2,998	1,176	42,675
2011-12	8,638	22,806	9,438	3,120	1,081	45,083
2012-13	8,706	23,521	8,744	2,990	905	44,866
2013-14	9,183	24,600	8,987	3,047	957	46,774
2014-15	9,594	25,218	9,129	3,184	923	48,048
2015-16	9,224	24,889	9,077	2,917	847	46,954

Source: Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), NHS Digital

Notes:

1. Finished admission episodes

A FAE is the first period of inpatient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider. FAEs are counted against the year in which the admission episode finishes. Admissions do not represent the number of inpatients, as a person may have more than one admission within the year.

2. Main operative procedure

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

OCPS 4 Codes used:

F10.1 – Full dental clearance

F10.2 – Upper dental clearance

F10.3 – Lower dental clearance

F10.4 – Extraction of multiple teeth NEC

F10.8 – Other specified simple extraction of tooth

F10.9 – Unspecified simple extraction of tooth

F10.9 includes, but is not limited to extraction of single tooth

3. Assessing growth through time (Admitted patient care)

HES figures are available from 1989-90 onwards. Changes to the figures over time need to be interpreted in the context of improvements in data quality and coverage (particularly in earlier years), improvements in coverage of independent sector activity (particularly from 2006-07) and changes in NHS practice. For example, apparent reductions in activity may be due to a number of procedures which may now be undertaken in outpatient settings and so no longer include in admitted patient HES data. Conversely, apparent increases in activity may be due to improved recording of diagnosis or procedure information.

Note that Hospital Episode Statistics include activity ending in the year in question and run from April to March, e.g. 2012-13 includes activity ending between 1 April 2012 and 31 March 2013.

■ Department of Health: Policy

Philip Davies:

[66669]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what his Department's main policy priority is for 2017; and if he will make a statement.

David Mowat:

The Department's key objectives and priorities are set out in its Shared Delivery Plan for 2016-17. The plan provides details of 10 high-level objectives and priorities for the period through to 2020.

The plan is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/department-of-health-shared-delivery-plan-2015-to-2020>

■ Department of Health: Staff

Jon Trickett:

[\[66694\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what proportion of Civil Service positions in his Department was vacant for a week or longer in each year since 2010; and what the average turnover rate for civil servants in his Department has been in each year since 2010.

David Mowat:

Information is not held on the proportion of civil service positions which are vacant for a week or longer.

The average turnover rate for civil servants since 2010 is detailed below:

YEAR	TURNOVER %
March-2010	6
March-2011	8
March-2012	7
March-2013	9
March-2014	9
March-2015	7
March-2016	9

■ Eating Disorders

Luciana Berger:

[\[67347\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what proportion of eating disorder (a) beds and (b) services are delivered by the private sector.

Nicola Blackwood:

The proportion of specialist eating disorder beds provided by the private sector is 44% of adult beds and 75% of children's beds, and of all specialist eating disorder beds 69% are private sector.

The proportion of services delivered by the private sector is not collected centrally.

■ Epilepsy: Drugs

Alex Chalk:

[\[66984\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether the Government is able to allocate Competition and Markets Authority fines collected from pharmaceutical manufacturers Pfizer and distributor Flynn Pharma for the purposes of research and treatment for epilepsy patients.

Nicola Blackwood:

The decision of the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) to fine Pfizer and Flynn Pharma is currently under appeal. As with other fine income, fines levied by the CMA for breaches of competition law are returned to the Consolidated Fund. Receipts from this fine will therefore help fund the £10 billion increase in National Health Service funding set out at the Spending Review. A separate process is available for the Secretary of State for Health to recover damages suffered as a result of this case through the courts. This money would flow back to the NHS for the benefit of patients, based on clinical priorities.

General Practitioners: Buildings**Julie Cooper:**[\[66615\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many GP surgery buildings currently fail to meet Care Quality Commission minimum requirements for premises.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) has provided the following information:

The CQC is unable to provide the information requested as it is not centrally collated in the format requested.

The CQC inspects the estate of a provider under the "Safe" key question. This is one of the many areas that the CQC monitors when it conducts an inspection of a service provider. Standards around premises form part of a wide variety of regulatory requirements which deal with patient safety in general.

General Practitioners: Freedom of Information**Rosie Cooper:**[\[67235\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether his Department has reviewed whether Freedom of Information legislation should apply to GP Federation Organisations awarded taxpayer funded contracts.

David Mowat:

The Department has not reviewed this issue because Freedom of Information legislation already covers information that is held on behalf of a public authority. Additionally, guidance provided by the Information Commissioner encourages public authorities to adopt a 'transparency by design' approach when they are drawing up an outsourcing contract to deliver public services.

Information that is held by a contractor or a third party organisation on behalf of a public authority will be covered by the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.

General practitioner services are normally commissioned by NHS England or by clinical commissioning groups acting on behalf of NHS England. NHS England and clinical commissioning groups are both listed as public authorities in Schedule 1 of the Freedom of Information Act and are therefore subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.

■ Haematological Cancer

Rachael Maskell: [\[66644\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many patients with myeloproliferative neoplasms are in receipt of treatment with alpha pegylated interferon.

David Mowat:

The requested information is not held centrally.

Rachael Maskell: [\[66650\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what discussions he has had with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence on ensuring that alpha pegylated interferon is made available to patients with myeloproliferative neoplasms.

Nicola Blackwood:

The Department has held no such discussions.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has not been asked to develop guidance for the National Health Service on the use of alpha pegylated interferon for the treatment of myeloproliferative neoplasms.

In the absence of guidance from NICE, it is for National Health Service commissioners to make funding decisions on individual treatments based on an assessment of the available evidence.

■ Health Professions

Rebecca Long Bailey: [\[66621\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment his Department has made of the effect that the UK leaving the EU will have on the number of (a) nurses and (b) midwives in the NHS.

Rebecca Long Bailey: [\[66728\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many (a) nurses and (b) midwives are working in the NHS.

Mr Philip Dunne:

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

As at November 2016, there are 287,440 full-time equivalent (FTE) nurses including health visitors, and 21,812 FTE midwives working in the NHS Hospital and Community Health Service workforce.

The November data is the most recent data available.

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

■ Health Professions: Training

Rebecca Long Bailey: [66620]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate his Department has made of the number of (a) nurses and (b) midwives in full-time study.

Mr Philip Dunne:

Health Education England (HEE) collects information bi-annually to show the total number of nurses and midwives in training. The information collected by HEE does not distinguish between learners on a full-time or part-time basis.

The latest information collected by HEE in September 2016 showed that there were 52,101 nurses and 6,795 midwives in training in England.

■ Health Services: Reciprocal Arrangements

Paul Blomfield: [67221]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, with which EEA countries the UK has bilateral reciprocal healthcare arrangements.

David Mowat:

The United Kingdom has bilateral reciprocal healthcare arrangements with all 31 European Economic Area countries, the list of which can be found at the following NHS Choices link:

<http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcareabroad/countryguide/Pages/EEACountries.aspx>

■ Health Services: Reorganisation

Julie Cooper: [66616]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what support is available to areas in which sustainability and transformation plans have been adopted on the range of capital sources available to develop the primary care estate.

Julie Cooper: [66623]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether implementation plans for sustainability and transformation plans are required to outline details of how the primary care estate will change and improve in order to deliver new models of care.

David Mowat:

Each Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) area is expected to set out how it will deliver key priorities, which include a focus on investment in primary care in line with The General Practice Forward View. All plans will need to deliver NHS Mandate priorities.

The General Practice Forward View sets out over 80 initiatives and increased investment of £2.4 billion a year by 2020/21 to support and transform general practice. Clinical commissioning groups, as partners within each STP, have submitted their plans to ensure the commitments in the General Practice Forward

View are delivered. NHS England teams are now in the process of reviewing these plans and will be working with local areas to agree the next steps in their development.

Specific elements within the General Practice Forward View that support primary care estate include:

- Investment through the multi-million pound Estates and Technology Transformation Fund (ETTF) to accelerate the development of infrastructure to enable the improvement and expansion of joined-up out of hospital care for patients. Additional capital will also be invested in general practice beyond the ETTF which means that the overall total investment in capital assets up to 2020/21 will be £900 million;
- Proposals to allow up to 100% reimbursement of premises developments;
- New offer for practices who are tenants of NHS Property Services for NHS England to include funding Stamp Duty Land Tax for practices until end of October 2017;
- Direct practice investment in technology to support better online tools and appointment, consultation and workload management systems;
- Better record sharing to support teamwork across practices; and
- Wi-Fi services in general practitioner practices for staff and patients. Funding will be made available to cover the hardware, implementation and service costs from April 2017.

■ Heart Diseases

Tulip Siddiq:

[66597]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the estimated cost is of (a) redundancies and recruitment and (b) capital spend on new facilities for NHS England's proposals to change the organisation of congenital heart disease services; and whether such costs will be covered through the tariff.

Mr Philip Dunne:

No decision has been made to change the organisation of congenital heart disease services. NHS England will make a decision on its proposals for changes to adult and children's congenital heart services in England following consultation, which commenced on 9 February 2017. It has worked, and will continue to work, with providers and other stakeholders to assess the impact of these proposals.

The process to date has included workforce and cost estimates where possible. It is unlikely that there will be significant redundancies under any scenario, though some are possible as with any service change. Initial work on capital implications has been undertaken and can be found at:

<https://www.engage.england.nhs.uk/consultation/chd/>

■ Hepatitis

Liz McInnes: [\[67244\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many people commenced treatment for hepatitis C in the first six months of financial year 2016-17 in each operational delivery network area.

Liz McInnes: [\[67246\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if the NHS will develop a common care pathway for the treatment of different types of hepatitis C and HIV.

Liz McInnes: [\[67247\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what funding his Department has provided to operational delivery networks for the creation of outreach services in hepatitis C since 2015.

Nicola Blackwood:

4,298 people commenced treatment for hepatitis C in the first six months of the current financial year 2016/17.

The table below breaks down this information for each operational delivery network (ODN).

HEPATITIS C OPERATIONAL DELIVERY NETWORK	TREATMENT RUN RATE ACTUAL (MONTHS 1-6)
--	--

Barts	226
Birmingham	376
Bristol and Severn Hepatitis C ODN	122
Cheshire and Merseyside	194
Eastern Hepatitis Network	273
Greater Manchester and Eastern Cheshire	328
Humberside and North Yorkshire	169
Kent Network via Kings	61
Lancashire and South Cumbria	113
Leicester	118
North Central London Viral Hepatitis Network	319
North East and Cumbria	183
Nottingham	174
South Thames Hepatitis Network	419

HEPATITIS C OPERATIONAL DELIVERY NETWORK TREATMENT RUN RATE ACTUAL (MONTHS 1-6)

South Yorkshire	174
Surrey Hepatitis Services	71
Sussex Hepatology Network	78
SW Peninsula Hepatitis C ODN	119
Thames Valley Hepatitis C ODN	163
Wessex Hepatitis C ODN	147
West London	227
West Yorkshire	244
Grand Total	4,298

Pathways of care for hepatitis C need to take account of local service needs, existing and planned infrastructure and facilities. NHS England supports ODNs in their work to determine appropriate local pathways, but does not impose national care pathways. ODNs have been incentivised and funded to develop local care pathways that are responsive to local needs.

NHS England invested in a CQUIN (contractual payment for quality) scheme in ODNs first year of operation in 2015/16 and have since expanded the funding which provides incentive based funding for providers to achieve treatment rates by working with local partners to find the best ways to identify and prioritise patients for treatment, which may include supporting outreach service development, something NHS England is supportive of where locally determined. The CQUIN scheme for Hepatitis C ODN lead providers equates to £100,000 per ODN + 0.8% of the overall contracted spend on specialised care for all services at the lead hospital, and is published on the NHS England website.

■ Hospital Beds: Lancashire

Mr Mark Hendrick:

[67260]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many delayed transfers of care were notified by (a) Lancashire Care Foundation Trust and (b) Lancashire Teaching Hospitals Trust for the monthly situation report in each month in 2016.

David Mowat:

Information on the number of delayed transfers of care in Lancashire Care Foundation Trust and Lancashire Teaching Hospitals Trust in each month in 2016 are shown in the table below.

DELAYED TRANSFERS OF CARE	LANCASHIRE CARE FOUNDATION TRUST	LANCASHIRE TEACHING HOSPITALS TRUST
January 2016	968	1,223
February 2016	1,012	1,246
March 2016	1,084	1,482
April 2016	512	1,651
May 2016	442	1,174
June 2016	287	1,163
July 2016	246	1,238
August 2016	292	1,520
September 2016	478	1,694
October 2016	541	1,818
November 2016	530	1,980
December 2016	618	2,119

Source: NHS England Delayed Transfer of Care

■ Hospitals: Fees and Charges

Philip Davies:

[66653]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether his Department has estimated the cost to the public purse of extending (a) free TV usage to patients in hospitals, (b) free hospital parking to all hospital users, including visitors and (c) free prescriptions to all.

Mr Philip Dunne:

As part of the introduction of bedside televisions and telephones into National Health Service hospitals in England, the Government specified that free access to a television should be made available to patients who, for whatever reason, did not want to pay for the use of the bedside TV and telephone system. For example, these TVs should be made available in day rooms. There has been no assessment on the cost of extending further free TV usage to patients in hospital.

Providing free car parking at NHS hospitals would result in some £200 million per year being taken from clinical care budgets to make up the shortfall. Decisions on hospital car parking are taken locally, in line with the NHS patient, visitor and staff car parking principles:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nhs-patient-visitor-and-staff-car-parking-principles>

Abolishing prescription charges in England would leave the NHS with a funding gap of over £520 million each year. This is equivalent to the average employment costs of some 12,000 nurses, or 3,500 hospital consultants.

■ Infectious Diseases

Liz McInnes:

[\[67245\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, which sustainability and transformation plans have identified (a) hepatitis C or (b) HIV as a priority.

David Mowat:

The Sustainability and Transformation Plans are intended to be strategic proposals for how areas will deliver the Five Year Forward View, and the financial; health and wellbeing; and care and quality challenges in their locality. They are, therefore, high level plans and are not designed to address the delivery of individual services.

■ Lone Parents: Surrogate Motherhood

Kirsten Oswald:

[\[67333\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 8 March 2017 to Question 66737, on surrogate motherhood and lone parents, when he plans to launch a consultation on legislative proposals to give single parents with children born through surrogacy the same rights as couples.

Nicola Blackwood:

The Government intends to lay the proposed Order before the Summer recess.

■ Long Stay Patients: Learning Disability

Luciana Berger:

[\[67346\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate he has made of the number of people with learning disabilities as of 9 March 2017 who remained in long-stay hospitals for over 12 months.

David Mowat:

Data collected by NHS Digital through the Learning Disability Services Monthly Statistics – England Commissioner Census (Assuring Transformation) - January 2017, showed that at the end of January there were 1,565 patients who had a length of stay of over a year in a specialist hospital.

Assuring Transformation is a commissioner based return of data for patients in a hospital setting with learning disabilities and/or autism. The collection covers England but includes patients whose care is commissioned in England and provided elsewhere in the United Kingdom.

■ Lung Diseases: Mortality Rates

Jim Shannon: [\[67276\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what plans his Department has to reduce mortality rates among patients with lung disease.

Jim Shannon: [\[67279\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will place the highest priority on provision of treatment for lung disease.

David Mowat:

The Government's Mandate to NHS England sets out the requirements for NHS England to improve outcomes in a range of areas, including preventing premature deaths from the biggest killers (including lung disease) and supporting people with long term physical and mental health conditions. It also requires NHS England to demonstrate progress on reducing mortality rates among patients with lung disease.

The NHS Outcomes Framework 2014/15 sets out the Department's highest priority areas for the National Health Service and includes reducing deaths from lung disease as a key indicator.

Early diagnosis of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease plays an important role in maximising the ability to manage the condition. NHS England is currently working with several pilot sites exploring different approaches to diagnosis for people with symptoms of breathlessness.

■ Maternity Services

Will Quince: [\[67079\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what recent assessment he has made of the (a) number and (b) availability of dedicated maternity bereavement rooms and facilities across the NHS.

Mr Philip Dunne:

Decisions about the provision of bereavement services are best taken locally. It is for local National Health Service organisations to ensure that appropriate facilities and services are in place to support bereaved parents following the death of a baby.

The Department has published *Health Building Note 09-02: Maternity Care Facilities* a guideline on the design and planning of maternity care facilities in new healthcare buildings and on the adaptation/extension of existing facilities. In line with the guidance, we would expect new build or redesigned maternity units to have facilities available for women and families who suffer bereavement at any stage of pregnancy.

Since 2010, we have invested £35 million in the NHS to improve birthing environments and this included better bereavement rooms and quiet area spaces at nearly 40 hospitals to support bereaved families.

In 2016, the Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Charity, Sands, published Audit of bereavement care provision in United Kingdom maternity. The audit found that of the 62 trusts and health boards that responded:

- 63% has a bereavement room in each maternity unit in the trust or health board;
- 26% has a bereavement room in at least one maternity unit but not all in the trust or health board; and
- 11% had no dedicated bereavement room in the trust or health board.

■ **Midwives: Recruitment**

Rebecca Long Bailey: [\[66730\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate his Department has made of the number of midwives who will be required in (a) Salford and (b) the UK by 2020.

Mr Philip Dunne:

Information relating to the number of midwives required in Salford is not held centrally by the Department.

In the 2016/17 Workforce Plan for England, Health Education England estimates the future demand for qualified midwives in England by 2020 will be 24,628.

■ **Midwives: Training**

Rebecca Long Bailey: [\[66731\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of removing NHS bursaries for student midwives on the number of university applications.

Mr Philip Dunne:

At this stage of the application cycle, based on the data the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service published on 2 February, Health Education England is confident that the National Health Service will be able to fill the number of midwifery places in England.

■ **Nervous System: Surgery**

Jim Shannon: [\[66756\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many people have had nerve transfer surgery for spinal damage in the last five years.

Mr Philip Dunne:

A count of Finished Admission Episodes with a primary diagnosis of Spinal Damage and a main or secondary procedure of nerve transfer, for England, for the financial years between 2011-12 and 2015-16 is shown in the following table.

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Finished Admission Episodes	6	7	4	9	4

Source: Hospital Episode Statistics, NHS Digital

Admissions do not represent the number of patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the period.

■ Neuromuscular Disorders

Jim Shannon:

[\[66746\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, when Neuromuscular Electrical Stimulation will be made available on the NHS.

David Mowat:

Electrical Stimulation can potentially be used to treat a range of conditions, including in some cases, the symptoms of neuromuscular disorders.

Where appropriate the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) will consider emerging treatments through its technology appraisal guidance. This guidance makes recommendations on whether selected drugs and treatments represent a clinically and cost-effective use of National Health Service resources. Commissioners are legally required to fund drugs and treatments recommended in NICE technology appraisal guidance within three months of its final guidance being issued. This is reflected in the NHS Constitution as a right to NICE approved drugs.

■ Neuromuscular Disorders: Salford

Rebecca Long Bailey:

[\[66622\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to ensure there is a care advisor to support adults in the neuromuscular service at Salford Royal NHS Trust.

David Mowat:

NHS England is responsible for commissioning specialised neurological services, including some services for patients with neuromuscular disorders. NHS England has published a service specification for neurological care that includes an exemplar service specification for neuromuscular conditions that sets out what providers must have in place to offer evidence-based, safe and effective services. The service specification for neurological care can be found at the following link:

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

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

■ NHS: Buildings

Dr Poulter:

[66946]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 9 February 2017 to Question 63167, what the most recently available (a) annual and (b) associated costs to the public purse are of those NHS Property Services' properties that are currently classified as (i) vacant and (ii) non-vacant.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The figure given in the Answer to Question [64600](#) on 22 February gave a budgeted figure for maintenance and associated costs for vacant properties totalling £9.4 million. The figure for non-Vacant properties is £742.3 million in 2016/17. Both are based on NHS Property Services' 2016/17 budget and billing data and remain the most recently available costings.

Buildings are classified as vacant when 90% or more of the building's area is unused.

Dr Poulter:

[66957]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 9 February 2017 to Question 63167, what the previous known usages were of those NHS Property Services' properties that are currently classified as vacant.

Mr Philip Dunne:

NHS Property Services have provided the following information relating to the previous known usage of properties currently classified as vacant in the attached table.

Attachments:

1. PQ66957 attached table [PQ66957 attached table.docx]

■ NHS: Bullying

Jonathan Ashworth:

[67360]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what recent assessment his Department has made of the level of bullying and harassment between employees in the NHS.

Mr Philip Dunne:

Results from the 2016 NHS Staff Survey show that 24% of staff reported experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from staff in the previous 12 months, the same reported in the 2015 NHS Staff Survey. Full details of the 2016 NHS Staff Survey can be found at:

<http://www.nhsstaffsurveys.com/Page/1006/Latest-Results/2016-Results/>

The Department considers that this level is far too high. As a result of Ministers' intervention, last December, the Social Partnership Forum ¹ published its "Call to Action" ² for system leaders, National Health Service organisations, unions and staff to work in partnership to tackle high levels of bullying and harassment in the NHS.

This “Call to Action” drew on evidence and frontline experiences which are being developed into a range of resources, advice and good practice to enable organisations to develop their own plans to tackle bullying.

Notes:

¹ The Social Partnership Forum brings together NHS Employers, NHS Trade Unions, NHS England, Health Education England, NHS Improvement and the Department to discuss and debate the development and implementation of the workforce implications of policy.

² <http://www.socialpartnershipforum.org/4573>

■ NHS: Disclosure of Information

Jonathan Ashworth:

[67277]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that NHS staff are encouraged to report errors and near misses.

Mr Philip Dunne:

From 1 April 2010 it became mandatory for National Health Service organisations in England to report all serious patient safety incidents to the Care Quality Commission as part of the Care Quality Commission registration process.

Alongside this requirement, healthcare organisations, patients and the public are able to report patient safety incidents to the National Reporting and Learning System (NRLS). The NRLS encourages consistent, high reporting, which provides organisations with more opportunities to learn from incidents and improve safety. To avoid duplication of reporting, the NRLS reports all incidents resulting in death or severe harm to the Care Quality Commission.

Year on year the number of incidents reported to the NRLS increases and open and honest reporting of patient safety incidents is a fundamental pillar of a good patient safety culture. The NHS Outcomes Framework therefore identifies the culture of safety reporting as an ‘improvement area’ and the Care Quality Commission uses low reporting rates of incidents as a potential concern.

The NHS is working to increase reporting from areas of healthcare that have previously had low levels of reporting to the NRLS, such as general practice. In February 2015 a new e-form was launched, specifically designed to make it quick and easy for general practice staff to report patient safety incidents to the NRLS.

■ NHS: Non-domestic Rates

Steve McCabe:

[66954]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 27 February 2017 to Question 64314, on NHS: finance, if he will make an assessment of the total cost of the business rates changes to the NHS and the effect of such changes on the delivery of patient services.

Mr Philip Dunne:

Individual National Health Service organisations are responsible for ensuring their current rating assessments are correct, challenging them if necessary and seeking transitional relief. The Department does not routinely collect data from NHS organisations on their business rate charges in order to make an overall national assessment of changes. Business rate changes will be reflected in individual organisation financial plans. We expect plans to balance within the overall NHS budget, and to continue to deliver patient services in line with the objectives of the NHS England Mandate.

■ NHS: Staff**Jonathan Ashworth:****[67361]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, with reference to the NHS Staff Survey results for 2016, published on 7 March 2017, what assessment his Department has made of the monetary value of discretionary effort provided by NHS staff.

Mr Philip Dunne:

It is not possible, with reference to the NHS Staff Survey results, to make an accurate calculation of the monetary value of discretionary efforts provided by National Health Service staff. Of those staff who completed the 2016 NHS Staff Survey, 59% reported working additional unpaid hours, of which 45% reporting up to five unpaid hours per week, 10% reporting six – 10 hours and 4% reporting 11 or more hours.

Full details of the NHS Staff Survey results for 2016 can be found at the following link:

<http://www.nhsstaffsurveys.com/Page/1006/Latest-Results/2016-Results/>

We recognise and value the considerable commitment of NHS staff in serving patients and the public.

■ Nurses: Recruitment**Rebecca Long Bailey:****[66729]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate his Department has made of the number of nurses who will be required in (a) Salford and (b) England by 2020.

Mr Philip Dunne:

Information relating to the number of nurses required in Salford is not held centrally by the Department.

In the 2016/17 Workforce Plan for England, Health Education England estimates the future demand for qualified nurses (adult, children's, mental health and learning disability nurses) in England by 2020 will be 339,338.

■ Pancreatic Cancer

Jim Shannon: [\[66764\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he is taking to reduce the prevalence of pancreatic cancer.

David Mowat:

There is little evidence on what causes most pancreatic cancers, however, we know that certain lifestyle factors are associated with increased risk. The Government is taking a range of actions to create a healthier society, supporting people to make healthier choices and lifestyle changes to improve their physical and mental health and prevent avoidable disease.

■ Paramedical Staff: Crimes of Violence

Jonathan Ashworth: [\[67359\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate his Department has made of the cost to the public purse of sickness absence in ambulance staff resulting from injuries sustained from physical violence at work from patients and members of the public.

Mr Philip Dunne:

No such estimate has been made.

■ Plastic Surgery

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[67241\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to enable the General Medical Council to display credentials in cosmetic surgery on its medical register of doctors.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The Department will soon consult on proposals for reforming professional regulation and will consider the General Medical Council proposals around credentialing as it takes forward plans for reform.

■ Prisoners: Screening

Luciana Berger: [\[67350\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will make it his policy to introduce screening for brain injury as part of the admission procedure for all adult and juvenile prisoners in England and Wales.

Nicola Blackwood:

There are no current plans to introduce specific screening for brain injury within the secure estate for adults. If as part of the general health screen, an adult presents with what is suspected to be a brain injury, a specialist neurological referral would be made.

All children and young people (under 18) within the Secure Estate for Children and Young People are screened for brain injury through part 5 of the Comprehensive Health Assessment Tool.

■ **Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care**

David Tredinnick:

[\[66810\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, when he last met the Head of the Professional Standards Authority; what was discussed at that meeting; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Philip Dunne:

My Rt hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health has not met one to one with the Chief Executive of the Professional Standards Authority.

■ **Social Services**

Teresa Pearce:

[\[67257\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what plans he has to consult with the social care sector before publishing the social care green paper as announced in paragraph 5.6 of Spring Budget 2017.

David Mowat:

The Government is committed to establishing a fairer, more sustainable basis for funding adult social care, in the face of the future demographic challenges the country faces. We will bring forward proposals in a green paper later this year to put the state funded system on a more secure long-term footing. The Secretary of State for Health, his ministerial team, and officials meet regularly with stakeholders from the social care sector. We intend to build on and continue this engagement in developing our proposals. Once published the green paper will provide further opportunity for people across the social care sector to consider and respond to our proposals.

■ **South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust**

Tim Loughton:

[\[67373\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what investigations are being carried out by the South East Coast Ambulance Service (SECAMB) on the use of approved drugs and medical equipment from East European countries; and how many members of staff of SECAMB are (a) on garden leave, (b) suspended, (c) being investigated and (d) have left employment in the last year as a result of allegations of misconduct or professional incompetence.

Mr Philip Dunne:

We are assured by NHS England and NHS Improvement that the Trust has recently taken a number of actions to ensure the safety of patients and staff. The Trust remains in special measures, which means it is receiving support and oversight from NHS Improvement. Ministers are regularly updated on progress.

The Department does not hold information on disciplinary action taken against South East Coast Ambulance Service employees. This is an internal matter for the Trust as an independent employer.

HOME OFFICE

■ Counter-terrorism

Yasmin Qureshi: [\[66618\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many referrals have been made under the Prevent strategy since 2015, by (a) age, (b) gender, (c) location by region, (d) ethnicity, (e) type of referring authority and (f) type of extremism; and what proportion of the total number of those referrals have resulted in placement in the CHANNEL programme for each of those categories.

Mr Ben Wallace:

Since 2012, over 1000 vulnerable people have received support through Channel. Around a quarter of cases receiving support are for far right extremism. The Home Office intends to publish further Prevent and Channel data in the near future.

Yasmin Qureshi: [\[66619\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she expects to publish the latest review of the Government's CONTEST strategy.

Mr Ben Wallace:

The Home Office led a cross-Government review of the CONTEST strategy in 2016. The NSC has considered and approved recommendations. We will publish the new strategy shortly.

■ Firearms: Licensing

Jim Shannon: [\[66670\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions her Department has had with shooting organisations on the provision of firearms certificates with a validity of 20 to 30 years.

Brandon Lewis:

The length of the validity of firearm certificates in England, Wales and Scotland is specified by the Firearms Act 1968 (as amended) and is currently set at five years.

Home Office Ministers and officials have regular meetings with stakeholders and others as part of the process of policy development and delivery.

■ Home Office: Policy

Philip Davies: [\[66670\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her Department's main policy priority is for 2017; and if she will make a statement.

Sarah Newton:

My Department's role is to keep citizens safe and the country secure. That includes:

- preventing terrorism
- cutting crime
- controlling immigration
- protecting the vulnerable
- promoting growth.

These are underpinned by finishing the job of police reform and transforming the Home Office.

■ Home Office: Staff**Jon Trickett:**[\[66695\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of Civil Service positions in her Department was vacant for a week or longer in each year since 2010; and what the average turnover rate for civil servants in her Department has been in each year since 2010.

Sarah Newton:

The Department records actual staffing levels, but does not centrally record the number of posts or vacancies. It is therefore not possible to provide details of vacant posts.

The level of turnover within the Department since 2010 is in the attached table.

<u>PERIOD</u>	<u>TURNOVER</u>
Apr-09 to Mar-10	5.03%
Apr-10 to Mar-11	2.46%
Apr-11 to Mar-12	2.31%
Apr-12 to Mar-13	2.39%
Apr-13 to Mar-14	3.21%
Apr-14 to Mar-15	2.78%
Apr-15 to Mar-16	4.20%
Feb-16 to Jan-17	5.09%

Note: turnover figures are based on the unmanaged exits of our permanent civil servants; managed exits such as end of contracts, dismissals, and release schemes as well as machinery of government changes have been excluded.

■ Police: Firearms**Tim Loughton:** [\[67363\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to report on the review into the protection of firearms officers on operational duties announced by the previous Prime Minister.

Brandon Lewis:

It is important that firearms officers are supported to make the difficult decisions necessary to protect the public, and are able to carry out their duties without fearing that a justified use of force will damage their careers. It is also essential that decisions by the police to use force of any kind are subject to proper scrutiny.

That was why the previous Home Secretary commissioned officials to review the legal and procedural framework governing police use of firearms and post-incident investigation. The review is ongoing.

■ Social Networking: National Security**Anna Turley:** [\[67217\]](#)

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 pertains to an imminent threat to the national security of the UK to the Metropolitan Police Counter Terrorism Command.

Anna Turley: [\[67220\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her policy is on social media platforms which operate in the UK but are based in the US reporting communications sent via their service which might pertain to an imminent threat to national security of the UK to the FBI rather than to a UK security agency.

Mr Ben Wallace:

We believe that companies such as social media platforms should proactively prevent their services from being abused by terrorists and other individuals who pose a threat to our national security by detecting and removing terrorist material. Where such material indicates there is an imminent threat to UK national security, they should report that content to our law enforcement or security and intelligence agencies. Ministers and officials continually raise these issues with social media platforms who are based abroad.

The UK Government is already doing what it can to identify and disrupt terrorist and extremist abuse of the internet. Since 2010, the police Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit (CTIRU) has worked with industry to secure the removal of over 250,000 pieces of terrorist content. Industry cooperation with CTIRU has significantly improved leading to faster and more consistent removal of referred content. CTIRU have established relationships with over 300 Communication Service Providers of differing sizes and removals at the request of CTIRU have increased from around 60

items a month in 2010, when CTIRU was first established, to on average of over 8000 a month in 2016. These arrangements mean that where companies take action this removes access to terrorist and extremist content from the whole platform, not just for users accessing it from within a particular jurisdiction, and therefore has a world-wide benefit.

However, although industry have taken some positive steps to address this issue, the internet is still being used to recruit, radicalise, incite and inspire and Governments cannot tackle this alone. Industry has both a social responsibility to tackle this threat and the technical expertise necessary to do so.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

■ Developing Countries: Education

Julie Elliott:

[\[66941\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that girls in the poorest countries can access education.

James Wharton:

Between 2011 and 2015, UKAID supported over five million girls in developing countries to gain an education. By the end of 2017, the flagship Girls' Education Challenge will enable up to one million marginalised girls to benefit from an education of sufficient quality to help transform their lives.

■ Developing Countries: Mental Health

Tom Brake:

[\[67054\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment her Department has made of the mental health needs of children fleeing conflict in (a) Syria, (b) Iraq, (c) Afghanistan and (d) Eritrea.

Rory Stewart:

The UK is committed to supporting children with mental health needs in conflict situations. We use assessments from humanitarian agencies, including the United Nations, to determine how we can best support these vulnerable children.

The assessments reinforce that psychological trauma amongst children is acute in some of the world's worst conflicts. In Syria, the annual UN Humanitarian Needs Overview states that 1 in 4 children are at risk of developing mental health disorders. In Iraq, UNICEF judges emotional distress as a critical issue for children fleeing or currently living under Daesh. Afghan children are at risk of psychological distress, particularly in urban areas. On Eritrea, the impact of conflict on children, particularly their mental health needs, continues to be assessed, with UNHCR conducting a thorough assessment of each Eritrean child arriving into Ethiopia.

■ Egypt: Cancer

Jim Shannon: [\[66744\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, if she will hold discussions with the Egyptian Government on tackling child cancer in Egypt.

Rory Stewart:

The UK Government signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2015 committing us to collaborate with the Egyptian Government on higher education and research, including health education and research and medical training. This has been built on with a number of collaborative programmes, though there has been no direct engagement on childhood cancers to date.

■ Lake Chad Basin: Corruption

Patrick Grady: [\[67034\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what support her Department is providing to countries in the Lake Chad region to (a) increase the transparency of and (b) reduce corruption in government.

James Wharton:

DFID's work in Nigeria has a major focus on combatting corruption. This includes programmes promoting greater transparency and accountability in Nigeria's oil and gas sector and work to reduce corruption in local service delivery. A new anti-corruption programme will also support the Nigerian authorities to investigate and prosecute corrupt public officials and work with civil society to raise awareness on corruption. As we step up our work in other countries in the Sahel region, efforts to combat corruption will continue across the region.

■ Lake Chad Basin: Humanitarian Aid

Patrick Grady: [\[67035\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps her Department is taking to tackle the root causes of the humanitarian crisis in the Lake Chad region.

James Wharton:

Lack of investment and ongoing conflict caused by Boko Haram has contributed to the current humanitarian crisis in the Lake Chad region. Focusing on the North East of Nigeria, DFID is investing in public services, job creation and addressing inequalities. UK support has enabled over 90,000 displaced children to return to school and restored basic health care services for 225,000 people affected by the conflict. As HMG, we are also providing a substantial and increasing package of intelligence, military and development support to the region to tackle Boko Haram.

Patrick Grady: [\[67036\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, if she will make it her policy to increase the Government's donor contributions to the Lake Chad region to match or exceed those made by other governments at the Oslo donor conference.

James Wharton:

The UK was one of the first donors to respond to the crisis in the Lake Chad Region. Last year we delivered food assistance to more than 1 million people, and treated 34,000 children at risk of death from severe under-nourishment in North East Nigeria. We have used our funding to encourage others to contribute and are pleased that at the Oslo Donor Conference a number of other countries stepped up their support. The UK is currently examining what further support we can provide in leading the way to help prevent famine in the region.

Overseas Aid**Tom Brake:**[\[67107\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, by what date she expects that all projects funded through the (a) Prosperity Fund and (b) Conflict Security and Stabilisation Fund will be listed on her Department's Development project tracker.

Rory Stewart:

The Government set out a firm commitment in the UK Aid Strategy to improve transparency of UK official development assistance. As part of this effort, both the Conflict Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) and the Prosperity Fund will publish online information on programmes during 2017-18.

Overseas Trade**Steve McCabe:**[\[66937\]](#)

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

Rory Stewart:

The Government will continue to review the UK future trade policy. The Department for International Development and the Department for International Trade will continue to work together to decide how our future trading arrangements with developing countries can support sustainable development.

Palestinian Authority: Overseas Aid**Ian Austin:**[\[67153\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, to clarify how UK aid supports the Palestinian Authority's centralised education service.

Rory Stewart:

UK direct financial assistance to the Palestinian Authority is used for the sole purpose of contributing to the salaries of West Bank public servants responsible for providing essential services in the education and health sectors, including both frontline teachers and administrative staff in the Ministry of Education.

Ian Austin:

[\[67175\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what her policy is on whether the description by the newspaper Al-Hayat Al-Jadida and official Palestinian Authority television of the perpetrator of a terrorist attack as a martyr who died for Allah constitutes a breach of her Department's Partnership Principles by the Palestinian Authority.

Ian Austin:

[\[67176\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what her policy is on whether the screening of a Palestinian television children's programme that included a poem inciting violence against Israel constitutes a breach of her Department's Partnership Principles by the Palestinian Authority.

Ian Austin:

[\[67179\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what her policy is on whether the decision of the Palestinian Authority Ministry of Education to name a school after Salah Khalaf constitutes a breach of her Department's Partnership Principles by the Palestinian Authority.

Rory Stewart:

The UK Partnership Principles that the Palestinian Authority commits to are: reducing poverty and achieving the Millennium Development Goals, respecting human rights and other international obligations, strengthening financial management and accountability, and strengthening domestic accountability. While the UK does not assess that the actions referred to constitute a breach of the Partnership Principles such action makes a culture of peace and mutual respect more difficult to achieve and the UK deplores incitement on both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. HMG has a regular dialogue with the Palestinian Authority in which we reiterate the need to prepare their population for peaceful coexistence. We consider that the track record of President Abbas and Prime Minister Hamdallah shows their commitment to non-violence.

Ian Austin:

[\[67180\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether UK direct or multilateral aid to the Palestinian Authority provides any financial or in-kind support to schools named after terrorists.

Rory Stewart:

No UK bilateral financial assistance to the Palestinian Authority is used to provide finance or in-kind support to schools. UK bilateral funding contributes to the salaries of all vetted health and education Palestinian Authority public servants on the EU PEGASE list, including Palestinian Authority teachers in the West Bank regardless of which school they are employed in. The UK does not earmark core contributions to UN agencies and other multilaterals.

■ Yemen: Ports

Tom Brake:

[\[67115\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment her Department has made of the effectiveness of the UN Verification and Inspection Mechanism in Yemen.

Rory Stewart:

The UN Verification and Inspection Mechanism (UNVIM) in Yemen is successfully verifying, and where necessary inspecting, ships in line with UNSCR 2216 (2015). UNVIM's average processing time is several hours lower than its target, and DFID has received positive feedback from commercial importers about UNVIM staff's accessibility, professionalism and responsiveness.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Adam Werritty

Liam Byrne:

[\[66989\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether, in his official capacity, he has met Mr Adam Werritty abroad in the last 12 months.

Greg Hands:

No.

■ Department for International Trade: Policy

Philip Davies:

[\[66672\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what his Department's main policy priority is for 2017; and if he will make a statement.

Greg Hands:

The Department for International Trade has overall responsibility for trade policy across government. Our priorities are to:

- Promote and support UK exports of goods and services, including through export finance and insurance, to support a growing economy that works for everyone;
- Maximise opportunities for wealth creation through Foreign Direct Investment and Outward Direct Investment;
- Deliver the best international trading framework to maximise global trade and investment opportunities; and
- Build the global appetite for British goods and services and encourage more people to visit, study, invest in and do business with the UK through the GREAT campaign.

■ Department for International Trade: Staff

Barry Gardiner: [\[66605\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many staff (a) are in the trade policy group in his Department, (b) will be joining that group and (c) will be in each civil service grade.

Greg Hands:

The Department for International Trade's (DIT) trade policy group has a strong core of trade policy officials, which has quadrupled in size since June 2016 (from 45 to around 200) and is continuing to grow. This includes policy and country specialists, as well as expert economic analysts and lawyers. Moreover, around 100 staff are working in the Export Control Joint Unit, which includes staff from DIT, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Ministry of Defence.

Recruitment for further trade policy staff is currently ongoing.

Barry Gardiner: [\[66606\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many staff in the trade policy group in his Department have experience of working on climate change policy.

Greg Hands:

The Department for International Trade has a strong core of trade policy officials working on various aspects of trade policy, including climate change.

We are working closely with various other Government Departments with relevant expertise, in particular the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy who are responsible for climate change policy.

Jon Trickett: [\[66697\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what proportion of Civil Service positions in his Department were vacant for a week or longer in each year since 2010; and what the average turnover rate for civil servants in his Department has been in each year since 2010.

Greg Hands:

The Department for International Trade and UK Export Finance do not hold information on the proportion of positions which were vacant for a week or longer, and to generate this information would incur disproportionate cost.

The Department for International Trade became a legal entity in November 2016, as such there are no annual turnover rates available. The average turnover rate for civil servants in UK Export Finance since 2010 is listed in the table below.

YEAR	AVERAGE TURNOVER RATE FOR CIVIL SERVANTS
2010	6%
2011	13%
2012	6%
2013	9%
2014	12%
2015	16%
2016	21%

■ Developing Countries: Trade Agreements

Steve McCabe:

[\[66603\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if he will guarantee non-reciprocal preferential market access for developing countries when negotiating future trade deals.

Greg Hands:

The Government is currently reviewing its trade policy as the UK prepares to leave the EU. The UK remains committed to ensuring developing countries can reduce poverty through trading opportunities. We are seeking to achieve continuity in our trade and investment relationships, including those covered by existing EU free trade agreements or EU preferential arrangements. We are exploring with our trading partners ways to achieve this.

■ Exports: Morocco

Jim Shannon:

[\[66752\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent discussions his Department has had with the Moroccan Government on UK agricultural exports to Morocco.

Mark Garnier:

The Department for International Trade has not had any recent discussions with the Moroccan Government on UK agricultural exports to Morocco.

■ Foreign Investment in UK

Jim Shannon:

[\[67280\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what discussions he has had with ministerial colleagues on the balance to be obtained between providing inward investment to the UK and the needs of home-grown businesses.

Mark Garnier:

My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade has regular discussions with Ministerial colleagues on a range of topics.

■ **Migrant Workers****Barry Gardiner:**[\[66570\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps his Department plans to take to help small and medium-sized enterprises attract and recruit overseas talent.

Mark Garnier:

We want to make it easier for people to start and expand a business, to create jobs and spread prosperity. The UK is second only to the USA for growing, retaining and attracting talent. The UK is also home to 4 of the top 10 universities in the world and has the highest number of leading MBA institutions in Europe. This provides businesses access to a large pool of highly educated work-ready graduates from the UK and abroad. The Department for International Trade is working closely with the Home Office; we are looking into a range of options for our future trade policy.

■ **Trade Agreements****Barry Gardiner:**[\[66571\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what (a) steps he has taken and (b) procedures he has put in place to consult other government departments on trade negotiations.

Greg Hands:

The Department for International Trade works closely with a wide range of departments at ministerial and official-level to ensure the UK's trade policy is coherent and consistent.

Negotiating future trade deals will require a whole of Government approach and formal procedures are being put in place to ensure departments will be actively engaged in the process.

Barry Gardiner:[\[66572\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what discussions he has had with which industry groups on the inclusion of geographical indicators in future trade agreements.

Greg Hands:

Policy for geographical indications is led by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) who are in regular contact with the UK Protected Food Name Association as well as in direct contact with owners of Protected Food Names. The UK remains committed to ensuring consistent protection for geographical indications and so the Department for International Trade policy officials have been working very closely with DEFRA to ensure these views are reflected in future trade agreements.

Angus Brendan MacNeil:

[67367]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment the Government has made of the implications of different legal frameworks in the devolved administrations for any new trade agreements after the UK leaves the EU.

Greg Hands:

As EU powers return to the UK, our guiding principle will be to ensure that no new barriers to living and doing business within our own Union are created. We will maintain the necessary standards and frameworks to empower the UK as an open, trading nation to strike the best deals around the world.

On the basis of these principles, we will work with the devolved administrations on an approach to returning powers from the EU that works for the whole of the UK and reflects the interests of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

■ Trade Agreements: Legal Opinion

Barry Gardiner:

[66607]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how much his Department has spent on external consultants for legal advice on international trade since 1 July 2016.

Greg Hands:

Since July 2016, the Department for International Trade has spent £115,210.63 on advice from legal Counsel from outside Government. This figure is inclusive of VAT.

■ UK Trade and Investment

Angus Brendan MacNeil:

[67237]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if he will publish the section of his Department's People Survey for 2016 that covers UK Trade and Investment.

Greg Hands:

UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) did not undertake an independent Employee Engagement Survey in 2016. However, the organisation previously known as UKTI, now ITI (International Trade and Investment) was included within the overall Department for International Trade People Survey in 2016. The overall results from this survey can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-people-survey-2016-results>.

JUSTICE

■ Coroners

Dr Sarah Wollaston:

[67281]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what proportion of bodies were released by coroners within the Chief Coroner's target of three days in the most recent period for which figures are available.

Dr Phillip Lee:

The information requested is not held centrally.

■ **Criminal Proceedings: Advocacy**

Richard Burgon:

[\[54715\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when her Department plans to publish its response to its consultation, Enhancing the quality of criminal advocacy which closed on 27 November 2015.

Sir Oliver Heald:

The Government believes that high quality advocacy is vital to the effective functioning of our criminal justice system. We consulted on ways to preserve and enhance the quality of advocacy, including a proposal to create a panel of publicly funded criminal defence advocates. We will respond to this consultation, confirming the way forward, in due course.

■ **Divorce**

Mr Jonathan Lord:

[\[55786\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment she has made of the efficacy of divorce law in helping divorcing parents put the needs of their children first.

Sir Oliver Heald:

Divorce law enables a court to end a marriage which has irretrievably broken down, where one party to the marriage petitions for a divorce. A number of tools and services, such as the online Parenting Plan, are available to help divorcing parents reach agreements about the needs of their children, for example covering questions about living arrangements and education. If there is a dispute, parents can choose to use mediation which can be quicker, less stressful for families and cheaper than litigation.

Where agreement is not possible, either parent can apply to the court for an order to determine with whom the child is to live or spend time, but is required first to attend a meeting to consider mediation. If the case goes before the court, the court is legally required to make the child's welfare its paramount concern in any decision regarding the child's future, while recognising the importance of parental involvement.

■ **Domestic Violence: Children**

Ruth Cadbury:

[\[66942\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps she is taking to help reduce avoidable child deaths as a result of unsafe child contact with a perpetrator of domestic abuse.

Sir Oliver Heald:

It is the family court's overriding duty to treat the welfare of the child as its paramount consideration when deciding child arrangements. We are actively working with the

judiciary to consider proposed amendments to Practice Direction 12J, which provides guidance to judges on making child arrangements in cases where domestic violence or abuse is alleged or admitted. Courts can already order that parental contact takes place only at a supervised centres, and only where contact will further the child's welfare. These supervised centres have specially trained staff who carefully manage any potential risks to the child or other parent.

■ Ministry of Justice: Policy

Philip Davies:

[\[66673\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what her Department's main policy priority is for 2017; and if she will make a statement.

Dr Phillip Lee:

The Ministry of Justice has four strategic objectives for the remainder of this parliament: delivering a modern courts and justice system; creating a prison and probation service that reforms offenders; promoting Global Britain and protecting the rule of law; and creating a transformed department that delivers excellent services.

We will publish our single departmental plan in May. This will set out how we will deliver our strategy.

■ Offences against Children

Louise Haigh:

[\[66927\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to her Answer to the Topical Question from the hon. Member for Sheffield, Heeley of 7 March 2017, Official Report, if she will provide a timescale for when she plans to commence Section 67 of the Serious Crime Act 2015.

Sir Oliver Heald:

The Government has repeatedly made clear that it is committed to commencing section 67 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 and will do so imminently.

■ Personal Independence Payment: Appeals

Nic Dakin:

[\[66786\]](#)

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

Sir Oliver Heald:

The information requested is set out below.

**AVERAGE WAITING TIME IN WEEKS FOR THE DISPOSAL OF PERSONAL INDEPENDENCE PAYMENT ¹
APPEALS FROM RECEIPT TO OUTCOME² FOR THE LAST FOUR QUARTERLY PERIODS (JANUARY –
DECEMBER 2016)**

	Doncaster ³	England
January – March 2016	21	16
April – June 2016	19	15
July – September 2016	15	15
October – December 2016	15	16

SSCS data are attributed to the hearing venue nearest to the appellant's home address. If the case goes to an oral hearing, the location of the Tribunal hearing venue is normally nearest to the appellant's home address. We cannot retrieve data based on the appellants actual address, but can produce reports detailing the numbers of cases that were dealt with at one of our Regional centres or heard at a specific venue.

¹ Personal Independence Payment (New Claim Appeals), which replaced Disability Living Allowance and was introduced on 8 April 2013, also includes Personal Independence Claims (Reassessments).

² Outcome: All appeals disposed of include those appeals disposed of with and without a tribunal hearing.

³ Covers all appeals heard at the Doncaster Venue which serves appellants living in Scunthorpe.

■ **Personal Injury: Compensation**

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[66986]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will meet the (a) Law Society and (b) Solicitors Regulation Authority to discuss trends in the number of whiplash claims.

Sir Oliver Heald:

A number of meetings relating to whiplash have already been held at both Ministerial and official level with key representative groups and regulators such as the Law Society and the Solicitors Regulation Authority. Ministers and officials will continue to engage with interested parties as the Government moves forward with its reform programme.

■ Prison Officers: Pay

Mr David Anderson:

[\[66425\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps she plans to take to ensure the independence of the Prison Officers' Pay Review Body from (a) prison service management and (b) Government.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The Government respects and values the role of the independent Prison Service Pay Review Body (PSPRB) as a compensatory mechanism for Operational staff within the Prison Service for whom the inducement to participate in industrial action is prohibited by law.

The PSPRB members are independently appointed through the Public Appointments Team and the panel makes independent recommendations having considered evidence from both NOMS, in agreement with wider Government, and trade unions.

■ Prisoner Escorts

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[\[67066\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps she is taking to review the level of compliance with prison service instructions on prisoner escort.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The instructions on the external escort of prisoners is set out in Prison Service Instruction 33/2015. This provides comprehensive security procedures to be applied when a prisoner is to be escorted outside the establishment. These procedures are subject to local monitoring and approval. In addition to this, all security compliance is monitored through a central programme of audit and assurance. All serious breaches of security during escort (including prisoner escape) are investigated, and any resulting recommendations carefully considered.

Prisoners are only moved outside the security of the prison when necessary and where the purpose of the escort cannot be met within the prison. The overwhelming majority of escorts pass without incident.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

■ Leader of the House of Commons: Policy

Philip Davies:

[\[66674\]](#)

To ask the Leader of the House, what his Office's main policy priority is for 2017; and if he will make a statement.

Mr David Lidington:

The Office of the Leader of the House of Commons is responsible for planning and supervising the government's legislative programme (including the Queen's speech),

and managing government business within the House of Commons while also upholding the rights and interests of the backbench members of the House.

The Office of the Leader of the House of Commons is a ministerial department of the Cabinet Office.

■ **Leader of the House of Commons: Staff**

Jon Trickett: [\[66699\]](#)

To ask the Leader of the House, what proportion of Civil Service positions in his Office were vacant for a week or longer in each year since 2010; and what the average turnover rate for civil servants in his Office has been in each year since 2010.

Mr David Lidington:

The Office of the Leader of the House of Commons is an integral part of the Cabinet Office.

I refer the hon. Member to the forthcoming answer from my right hon. Friend the Minister for the Cabinet Office to Question UIN [66684](#).

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ **Northern Ireland Office: Policy**

Philip Davies: [\[66675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what his Department's main policy priority is for 2017; and if he will make a statement.

Kris Hopkins:

The Department's top priority for Northern Ireland at present is to work alongside the parties to secure the resumption of devolved government. The Secretary of State and I have been clear that discussions must focus on the establishment of a partnership Executive and addressing other outstanding issues, including the implementation of past agreements and addressing the legacy of the past.

In addition, as we prepare for negotiations with the EU over the terms of the UK's Exit, the department is working with the rest of Whitehall and with the Northern Ireland Executive to secure a deal that works for Northern Ireland and the whole of the UK.

■ **Northern Ireland Office: Staff**

Jon Trickett: [\[66700\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what proportion of Civil Service positions in his Department were vacant for a week or longer in each year since 2010; and what the average turnover rate for civil servants in his Department has been in each year since 2010.

Kris Hopkins:

For positions vacant for a week or longer and average turnover rate, detailed vacancy records going back to 2010 are not held in the Department and, for the years in which records are held, providing this information would incur disproportionate costs.

PRIME MINISTER**■ Israel: Foreign Relations**

Mr Alistair Carmichael: [66610]

To ask the Prime Minister, whether in her meeting with the Prime Minister of Israel she discussed (a) freedom of expression and assembly and (b) her Government's policy on the work and civil society organisations raising human rights concerns in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Mr Alistair Carmichael: [66611]

To ask the Prime Minister, whether in her meeting with the Prime Minister of Israel on 6 February 2017 she discussed the work of Israeli and Palestinian civil society organisations that report and document human rights.

Mr Alistair Carmichael: [66612]

To ask the Prime Minister, whether she discussed UK funding of Israeli and Palestinian non-governmental organisations with the Prime Minister of Israel during his visit to the UK on 6 February 2017.

Mrs Theresa May:

I refer the right hon. Member to the statement issued on 6 February following my meeting with the Prime Minister of Israel and which is available on the gov.uk website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-meeting-with-israeli-prime-minister-netanyahu-6-february-2017>.

■ Prime Minister: Policy

Philip Davies: [66676]

To ask the Prime Minister, what 10 Downing Street's main policy priority is for 2017; and if she will make a statement.

Mrs Theresa May:

I refer the hon. Member to my New Year's message, a transcript of which can be found on the gov.uk website.

SCOTLAND■ **Local Growth Deals: Ayrshire****Alan Brown:**[\[67218\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, how many meetings he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer and officials from HM Treasury to discuss the Ayrshire Growth Deal.

David Mundell:

I meet with the Chancellor regularly to discuss a range of issues, including UK Government investment in Scotland and how we can work with the Scottish Government to deliver improved economic performance.

■ **Scotland Office: Policy****Philip Davies:**[\[66677\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what his Department's main policy priority is for 2017; and if he will make a statement.

David Mundell:

The Scotland Office's priority continues to be promoting the best interests of Scotland within a stronger United Kingdom. This includes ensuring Scottish interests are represented at the heart of the UK Government, and the UK Government's responsibilities are fully represented in Scotland.

As the Government prepares for negotiations with the EU, the Scotland Office is working with the Department for Exiting the European Union to secure a deal that works for Scotland and the whole of the UK.

■ **Scotland Office: Procurement****Jon Trickett:**[\[66743\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, pursuant to the Answer of 3 March 2017 to Question 65256, on procurement, if he will estimate the number of work-hours spent by officials of his Department on the monitoring of contracts awarded to external providers.

David Mundell:

The Scotland Office utilises existing service contracts between suppliers and the Scottish Government or the Ministry of Justice. The Scotland Office does not hold records on the number of hours spent by officials monitoring contracts awarded to external providers. It is not possible to provide an accurate estimation of work-hours as this work is done by staff members whose roles cover other functions such as accommodation and finance.

■ Scotland Office: Staff**Jon Trickett:**[\[66702\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what proportion of Civil Service positions in his Department were vacant for a week or longer in each year since 2010; and what the average turnover rate for civil servants in his Department has been in each year since 2010.

David Mundell:

The Scotland Office does not hold this information in the form requested.

TRANSPORT**■ A27****Tim Loughton:**[\[67362\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much has been budgeted for upgrades to stretches of the A27 at (a) Arundel, (b) Worthing/Lancing and (c) Lewes/Polegate.

Mr John Hayes:

In line with Highways England's commitment to commence upgrades to sections of the A27 between 2015-2020, they are currently developing options for schemes at Arundel, Worthing / Lancing and Lewes / Polegate. As stated in the Road Investment Strategy and subject to achieving value for money the funding for these projects will be within the following ranges:

A27 Arundel Bypass: £100m - £250m

A27 Worthing to Lancing: £50m - £100m

A27 East of Lewes: £50m - £100m

■ Aviation: Repairs and Maintenance**Sir Gerald Howarth:**[\[66642\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure that the network of 108 remaining licensed General Aviation airfields in the UK are maintained and enhanced.

Mr John Hayes:

The government is seeking to better define a strategic network of General Aviation airfields and is engaging with the General Aviation Strategic Forum to do this.

■ Department for Transport: Policy**Philip Davies:**[\[66678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what his Department's main policy priority is for 2017; and if he will make a statement.

Mr John Hayes:

The department has set out its strategic objectives in its Single Departmental Plan and these include boosting economic growth and opportunity, improving journeys and ensuring safe and sustainable transport. Our aim is to deliver a transport network that works for everyone and to ensure we invest in the capability we need for tomorrow. We are currently refreshing the Single Departmental Plan and will publish an updated version in due course.

■ **Department for Transport: Staff****Jon Trickett:**[\[66703\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what proportion of Civil Service positions in his Department were vacant for a week or longer in each year since 2010; and what the average turnover rate for civil servants in his Department has been in each year since 2010.

Mr John Hayes:

The Department does not hold information on the time for which positions are vacant on any reporting system.

Information on turnover for the Department and its executive agencies is presented in the following table. Data is a rolling year as at 31 December for each year and is not available on the current system prior to 2012:

YEAR	TURNOVER
2012	6.02%
2013	7.45%
2014	8.63%
2015	8.60%
2016	8.40%

Notes to data:

*Highways Agency is included in the Departmental turnover until April 2015.

■ **High Speed 2 Railway Line****Mr Graham Brady:**[\[67106\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many properties situated less than 120 metres away from the proposed line of route for phase 2b of High Speed 2 will not be eligible for compensation because they fail to meet the criterion that at least 25 per cent of the land must be within the designated Rural Support Zone.

Andrew Jones:

Any property where the dwelling is situated within the designated Rural Support Zone will meet the location eligibility criteria for this scheme. Due to the complex nature of property boundaries the Department does not hold information on the number of properties where some property, but less than 25% of the total area of the property, is within the Rural Support Zone and so don't meet the eligibility criteria for this scheme.

Motor Vehicles: Registration**Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[66724\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the number of foreign-owned vehicles on UK roads that are not registered in the UK.

Dr Matthew Offord:[\[66741\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many foreign-owned vehicles on UK roads are registered in the UK.

Andrew Jones:

No information is available on the nationality of ownership of vehicles in use in the UK, but the Department for Transport has estimated that in 2015 approximately 0.44% of traffic on GB roads was driven by foreign registered vehicles.

Railways: Fares**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[67170\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate his Department has made of the potential annual percentage increase of rail fares in the next five years.

Paul Maynard:

The Government has committed to capping regulated rail fares at RPI+0% for the term of this Parliament from 2016 to 2020. This extends the cap on rail fare increases put in place for 2014 and 2015. Regulated Fare increases are based on the July Retail Price Index (RPI) figures that are released in August each year.

The Department for Transport does not estimate future RPI figures, however I am aware that the Office of Budget Responsibility has released forecasts for RPI for the next five years.

Road Traffic Offences: Mobile Phones**Rebecca Long Bailey:**[\[66781\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of current penalties for drivers using mobile telephones.

Andrew Jones:

The current increased penalties for drivers using mobile phones only came into effect on 1 March 2017. The Department will initiate work to allow for an assessment of the effectiveness of the penalties later this year.

Rebecca Long Bailey:

[\[67050\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of the introduction of alternative penalties to fines for drivers using mobile telephones.

Andrew Jones:

The Government increased the fixed penalty notice for using a hand held phone when driving from 3 to 6 points and £100 to £200 from 1 March 2017.

We do not plan any further measures until we have evaluated the effectiveness of these new penalties.

■ Roads

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

[\[66980\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will respond to the Rees Jeffreys Road Fund report, entitled A Major Road Network for England, published in October 2016.

Andrew Jones:

We are looking carefully into the issues raised by the Rees Jeffreys Road Fund report, and recognise that its recommendations are worthy of serious consideration.

■ Roads: North West

Conor McGinn:

[\[67263\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to paragraph 4.22 of Spring Budget 2017, how much of the £690 million fund to erase road congestion will be allocated to (a) St Helens and (b) the North West.

Andrew Jones:

The National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIF) will allocate £690 million to local authorities in England for local transport networks through a competition which is due to be launched shortly. Local authorities and Combined Authorities (such as Liverpool City Region which includes St Helens) will have the opportunity to bid for funding for schemes to improve congestion on local roads.

■ Roads: Shrewsbury

Daniel Kawczynski:

[\[66651\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that development of the business case for the North West relief road starts promptly.

Andrew Jones:

The Department is providing £942,875 as requested by Shropshire Council for the development of the business case and payment will be made shortly. Departmental officials have already met Council officers and will continue to provide advice up to the submission of the business case to the Department. We will then make a decision on whether or not to provide funding for the construction of this scheme and any

others submitted at the same time. The large majors programme is competitive and not every scheme will be funded.

Daniel Kawczynski:

[\[66782\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that the business case for the North West Relief Road is conducted effectively and efficiently.

Andrew Jones:

The large majors programme is competitive and not every scheme will be funded so it is in Shropshire Council's interest to submit a well evidenced and persuasive business case. Departmental officials have already met Council officers and will continue to provide advice on the development of the business case up to the point of submission to the Department. We will then make a decision on whether or not to provide funding for the construction of this scheme and any others submitted at the same time.

■ Roads: Shropshire

Daniel Kawczynski:

[\[67087\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what funding the Government plans to provide to Shropshire Council for developing a business case on the North West Relief Road.

Andrew Jones:

The Department is providing £942,875 as requested by Shropshire Council for the development of a business case for this scheme.

■ Selby-Hull Railway Line

Diana Johnson:

[\[67369\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, for what reason Network Rail did not complete a high level review of First Hull Trains' proposal to electrify the Hull-to-Selby line; when the decision not to complete a high level review was made; and whether that decision was made by (a) his Department and (b) Network Rail.

Paul Maynard:

Network Rail completed a high level review in 2014 of the proposal by a joint venture between First Group and Amey to electrify the Hull-Selby Line.

This review highlighted a number of elements that had been omitted from the study or that needed further development work, for example impact upon level crossings, signalling and the effects of changing standards relating to electrical clearance.

The revised GRIP 2+ development work was completed by First Group/Amey in July 2015. The Department for Transport economic appraisal showed that the business case was very poor. This was due mainly to the decision to purchase new rolling stock which could deliver passenger benefits without the high cost of electrification.

Network Rail was not therefore funded to do a further technical appraisal of the proposal.

WALES

■ Wales Office: Policy

Philip Davies:

[\[66680\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what his Department's main policy priority is for 2017; and if he will make a statement.

Alun Cairns:

The Wales Office's priority continues to be promoting the best interests of Wales within a strong United Kingdom. This includes ensuring Welsh interests are fully and effectively represented at the heart of the UK Government, and the UK Government is fully and effectively represented in Wales.

As the Government prepares for negotiations with the EU, the Wales Office is working closely with the Department for Exiting the European Union to secure a deal that works for Wales and the whole of the UK.

■ Wales Office: Staff

Jon Trickett:

[\[66705\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what proportion of Civil Service positions in his Department were vacant for a week or longer in each year since 2010; and what the average turnover rate for civil servants in his Department has been in each year since 2010.

Guto Bebb:

Please see the proportion of Civil Service (CS) positions vacant for a week or longer; and the turnover rates in the Wales Office for each full financial year since 2010, shown below:

FINANCIAL YEAR	PROPORTION OF CS POSITIONS VACANT FOR ONE WEEK OR MORE		TURNOVER RATE
2010-11	2/64		23%
2011-12	15/64		28%
2012-13	11/56		41%
2013-14	10/53		36%

FINANCIAL YEAR	PROPORTION OF CS POSITIONS VACANT FOR ONE WEEK OR MORE		TURNOVER RATE
2014-15	4/53		32%
2015-16	9/53		36%

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Civil Partnerships

Tim Loughton:

[R] [\[67372\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the Appeal Court ruling in the case of Steinfeld and Keidan on opposite sex civil partnerships; and if she will make a statement.

Caroline Dinenage:

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

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

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

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

■ Government Equalities Office: Policy

Philip Davies:

[\[66668\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what the Government Equalities Office's main policy priority is for 2017; and if she will make a statement.

Caroline Dinenage:

Eliminating the gender pay gap remains a key priority for the Government Equalities Office and increasing transparency among employers is a significant step towards this. A more diverse and inclusive culture in the workplace benefits everyone.

From April 2017, large employers must publish information showing the differences in average pay and bonuses paid to women and men. We are also taking action to address the main drivers of the gender pay gap because neither families nor the economy can afford to miss out on female talent.

■ **Government Equalities Office: Staff****Jon Trickett:**[\[66693\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what proportion of Civil Service positions in the Government Equalities Office were vacant for a week or longer in each year since 2010; and what the average turnover rate for civil servants in the Government Equalities Office has been in each year since 2010.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Department does not hold information about the proportion of positions that were vacant for a week or longer in each year since 2010. The average turnover rate for civil servants in the Department, which includes the Government Equalities Office from when it joined the Department in September 2015, is:

	<u>2010/11</u>	<u>2011/12</u>	<u>2012/13</u>	<u>2013/14</u>	<u>2014/15</u>	<u>2015/16</u>
Turnover	18%	9%	19%	23%	12%	13%

WORK AND PENSIONS■ **Bereavement Allowance****Rebecca Long Bailey:**[\[66777\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of extending widower's pension allowance to widowed partners who were (a) engaged and due to be married, (b) co-habiting and (c) co-habiting with children.

Caroline Nokes:

Marriage and civil partnerships are legal contracts that are associated with certain rights, including inheritance, recognition in the tax system and entitlement to certain benefits.

A key principle of the National Insurance system is that all rights to benefits derived from another person's contributions are based on the concept of legal marriage or

civil partnership. This is a long-standing position in bereavement benefits which the Government has no plans to change.

■ **Department for Work and Pensions: Policy**

Philip Davies:

[66681]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what his Department's main policy priority is for 2017; and if he will make a statement.

Caroline Nokes:

The Single Departmental Plan sets out the Department's objectives for this Parliament and how we achieve them. DWP has five strategic objectives which reflect our wide ranging policies and priorities. The Single Departmental Plan is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dwp-single-departmental-plan-2015-to-2020/dwp-single-departmental-plan-2015-to-2020>

■ **Department for Work and Pensions: Staff**

Jon Trickett:

[66706]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what proportion of Civil Service positions in his Department were vacant for a week or longer in each year since 2010; and what the average turnover rate for civil servants in his Department has been in each year since 2010.

Caroline Nokes:

It is not possible to provide information on the number of posts that have been vacant for a week or longer for each year since 2010 as this information is not held centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

The Departmental annual average turnover rates for each year since 2010 are stated below and exclude staff who have left through Early Retirement, Redundancy (Compulsory and Voluntary), Voluntary Exit or Other reasons e.g. end of temporary fixed term appointment.

31.03.2010 4.06%

31.03.2011 6.14%

31.03.2012 5.22%

31.03.2013 4.39%

31.03.2014 5.15%

31.03.2015 6.09%

31.03.2016 6.52%

■ Housing Benefit: Young People

Alan Brown: [67018]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate he has made of the additional processing and administration costs related to the implementation of the proposed new housing benefit rules for 18 to 21 year olds.

Caroline Nokes:

We estimate these costs for the removal of the automatic entitlement to housing support for new claims in UC from 18-21 year olds who are out of work to be £3m over the 2015 Spending Review period.

Tom Blenkinsop: [67374]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many 18 to 21 year olds claim housing benefit in (a) the North East of England, (b) Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland, (c) Middlesbrough and (d) Redcar and Cleveland.

Caroline Nokes:

Information on the caseload of 18-21 year olds claiming Housing Benefit and Employment and Support Allowance in the requested areas is available on [DWP Stat-Xplore](#).

■ Occupational Pensions

Alan Brown: [67356]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when he plans for the proposed Green Paper on employer debt legislation associated with Section 75 of the 1995 Pensions Act to be published.

Richard Harrington:

The issue of Employer Debt is covered in the Security and Sustainability in Defined Benefit Pension Schemes Green Paper published on the 20th February.

This consultation runs for 12 weeks and closes at 11:45pm on Sunday 14 May 2017. We would welcome responses to the questions on Employer Debt that are discussed in this paper, available on gov.uk.

■ Universal Credit

Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg: [67354]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps he has taken as a result of the Speaker's statement of 6 March 2017, Official Report, column 622, on his Department's new policy on accessing information about constituents' universal credit claims; and if he will make a statement.

Damian Hinds:

On 13th March 2017 the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions made a statement:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2017-03-13/HCWS528/>

■ **Universal Credit (Housing Costs Element for Claimants Aged 18 to 21) (Amendment) Regulations 2017**

John Healey: [66566]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reasons no impact assessment was published for the Universal Credit (Housing Costs Element for claimants aged 18 to 21) (Amendment) Regulations 2017.

John Healey: [66600]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will place a copy of any unpublished impact assessment on the Universal Credit (Housing Costs Element for claimants aged 18 to 21) (Amendment) Regulations 2017 in the Library.

Caroline Nokes:

There is no requirement to complete an Impact Assessment in respect of these regulations because they have no direct impact on business, charities or voluntary organisations.

An Equality Impact Assessment was completed to enable me to ensure compliance with my Public Sector Equality Duty. There is no requirement for this assessment to be published and I have no plans to do so.

■ **Universal Credit: Housing**

Tom Blenkinsop: [67377]

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 North East of England, (b) Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland constituency, (c) Middlesbrough and (d) Redcar and Cleveland.

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.

■ **Widowed Parents Allowance**

Stella Creasy: [67355]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, which charities and voluntary sector organisations were consulted on proposed changes to the Widowed Parents' Allowance; and what the results of that consultation were.

Caroline Nokes:

The Government published a consultation document in December 2011 entitled *Bereavement Benefit for the 21st Century* ([link below](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/220372/bereavement-benefit.pdf)) which sought views on proposals to reform the current system ([link below](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/220372/bereavement-benefit.pdf)).

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/220372/bereavement-benefit.pdf.

We received 50 responses from a variety of organisations including charities and the voluntary sector, and these were summarised in the Government Response published in July 2012 (link below). The organisations that responded are listed in that report.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/181257/bereavement-benefit-consultation-response.pdf

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ EU-US Umbrella Agreement

Minister of State for Digital and Culture (Matt Hancock):

[\[HCWS533\]](#)

The Department for Culture, Media and Sports [DCMS] is responsible for the Government's participation in European negotiations on the EU-US Umbrella Agreement, which is a comprehensive data protection framework for criminal law enforcement cooperation. A scrutiny override occurred when the UK voted in favour of the Conclusion on the Agreement before the European Scrutiny Committee could complete the process of scrutiny on the Agreement. The proposal was:

Proposed COUNCIL DECISION on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Union, of an Agreement between the United States of America and the European Union on the protection of personal information relating to the prevention, investigation, detection and prosecution of criminal offences [8491/16].

The UK voted in favour of the Conclusion on the Umbrella Agreement. This triggered an override, which was induced by the deadline being brought forward to ensure the Conclusion was concluded in time for the EU-US Justice and Home Affairs Ministerial summit in Washington D.C. on December 6th. With the accelerated timetable and the timing of the scrutiny Committee meetings, it meant that they could not consider our update in advance of their meeting and so the appropriate Parliamentary scrutiny procedure was not possible on this occasion.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Affordable, Resilient Water Supplies: Consultation on the Government's Strategic Priorities for Ofwat

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Environment and Rural Life Opportunities (Dr Thérèse Coffey):

[\[HCWS530\]](#)

I am pleased to announce to the House that today I am consulting on a new Strategic Policy Statement for Ofwat, the economic regulator for the water sector.

Securing a fair deal for everyone is at the core of Ofwat's role. Research by the Consumer Council for Water in 2015 revealed that 12% of customers said they were struggling to pay their water bills. This Government will set a strategic objective for Ofwat to challenge the water sector to go further to identify and meet the needs of customers who are struggling to afford their charges.

The Government will also set Ofwat a strategic objective to challenge the water sector to plan and invest to meet the needs of current and future customers, in a way which offers best value for money over the long term. By the 2050s England is projected to face a

water deficit of 8-22% of total water demand. We need to take action now to ensure we can meet our future water needs in an affordable way.

I am therefore pleased to inform the House that the Government will prepare a National Policy Statement. This will facilitate development consent for water resources, which currently must be sought from a range of authorities and can involve delays and uncertainty.

The Government will also be directing water companies to quantify their level of resilience and consult on proposed future options that they are exploring to meet their long-term needs. In line with new research from Water UK, we expect the industry to take a balanced approach to meeting these needs, including new supply solutions, demand management and increased water transfers.

The consultation is available on GOV.UK and will close on 11 April.

■ FEBRUARY ENVIRONMENT COUNCIL

The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Environment and Rural Life Opportunities (Dr Thérèse Coffey):

[\[HCWS529\]](#)

I attended the EU Environment Council in Brussels on 28 February along with my Hon Friend the Minister of State for Climate Change and Industry (Nick Hurd MP).

I wish to update the House on the matters discussed.

EU Emissions Trading System (ETS) – Council Agreement

The main outcome of Council was reaching an agreed position ('General Approach') on the reform of the EU Emission Trading System (ETS) for Phase IV of the system (2021-2030). Council began with a full roundtable debate of the EU ETS where Ministers set out their respective policy positions. The UK expressed support for reaching an agreed position that achieved the right balance between incentivising change and supporting competitiveness. Following the debate, the Presidency presented a revised proposal and called for an informal vote of agreement.

The key elements of the agreement are:

- a provision to increase, if necessary, the volume of free allowances allocated to support industrial sectors at risk of carbon leakage (where production relocates outside of the EU as a result of carbon costs);
- two provisions to strengthen the carbon price – increasing the rate at which allowances are removed from the market and placed in a reserve, and, from 2024, annually cancelling allowances within the reserve above a certain threshold.

The UK Government considers this to be a balanced package that incentivises cost effective carbon reduction, while safeguarding the competitiveness of UK industry. The agreement to reform the EU Emissions Trading System is a positive step forward in collaboration with our European partners to reduce emissions across all sectors.

The European Parliament reached an agreed position on EU ETS reform on 15 February. The file will now progress to the next stage of negotiations, 'trilogues', where Member

States (represented by the Presidency), European Parliament and the Commission negotiate a final agreement on the reform package.

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Council discussed the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, following the publication of a Commission Communication in November 2016. The Commission presented its on-going work including the use of Better Regulation tools and the Regulatory Scrutiny Board to ensure coherence across policy areas within the 2030 agenda. Many Member States highlighted the need for greater co-ordination between policy areas and the need to mainstream the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda into other policy areas. The UK called on the Commission to focus on the coherence of existing mechanisms. The Presidency circulated a brief summary of the exchange of views that would serve as a contribution to a forthcoming discussion at the General Affairs Council.

EU Environmental Implementation Review

Ministers exchanged views on the 2017 Annual Growth Survey (AGS) in the context of the European Semester and how it links with the Environmental Implementation Review (EIR). Whilst most Ministers welcomed the 2017 AGS, particularly aspects including sustainable and climate related investment and the transition towards a low-carbon and circular economy, some regretted that environmental and sustainability aspects were still not given a more prominent role in the AGS. They also underlined the importance of stronger links with wider EU environment policy. Ministers broadly welcomed the Commission's new EIR as a useful tool to improve the implementation of EU and national environmental policy and as a contribution to the greening of the European Semester. Some Member States underlined the need for national reports to be based on sound scientific data.

AOB items

AOB - Emission Trading System (ETS) – Aviation

The Commission presented its proposal on the future of aviation in the EU Emission Trading System (ETS) post-2016. The proposal recommends a continuation of the reduced, intra-EEA scope of aviation in the ETS beyond 2016. This would mean that the current rules would remain unchanged. The proposal also requires the Commission to conduct a further review once there is more certainty about the rules for the Global Market Based Measure (GMBM) for aviation, and to make recommendations for Aviation EU ETS in the post-2020 period.

AOB - Paris Agreement: International Developments

The delegations from France and the Netherlands provided information on International developments regarding the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

AOB - EU Action Plan for the Circular Economy

The Commission provided an update to the Council on the EU Action Plan for a Circular Economy.

AOB - Natura 2000 in the European Solidarity Corps

The Commission provided information to Council on Natura 2000 and the European Solidarity Corps.

AOB - Luxembourg Circular Economy Hotspot (June 2017)

The delegation from Luxembourg provided information on their upcoming Circular Economy Hotspot event in June 2017.

AOB - Environmental concerns regarding Belarus nuclear power plant

The delegation from Lithuania noted their concerns regarding a nuclear power station in Belarus. The Commission highlighted the importance of compliance with international law on nuclear safety.

AOB - Scientific Conference on 'Sustainable Development and climate changes in the light of the encyclical letter of Holy Father Francis, entitled *Laudato Si'*

The delegation from Poland provided information on the Conference on Sustainable Development in light of the papal encyclical *Laudato Si'*.

AOB – Update on the Environmental Liability and Mining Waste Directives

The delegation from Hungary (supported by Poland) provided information to the Council on the Environmental Liability Directive and the Mining Waste Directive.

On 23 June, the EU referendum took place and the people of the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union. Until exit negotiations are concluded, the UK remains a full member of the European Union and all the rights and obligations of EU membership remain in force. During this period the Government will continue to negotiate, implement and apply EU legislation. The outcome of these negotiations will determine what arrangements apply in relation to EU legislation in future once the UK has left the EU.

EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION**■ General Affairs Council March 2017**

The Minister of State at the Department for Exiting the European Union (Mr David Jones): **[[HCWS532](#)]**

I attended the General Affairs Council on 7 March 2017. The meeting was held in Brussels and chaired by the Maltese Presidency.

The General Affairs Council discussed: Resolutions, decisions and opinions adopted by the European Parliament; Preparation of the European Council of 9 March 2017; the European Semester; the implementation of the Inter-Institutional Agreement on Better Law Making; and the mid term review of the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014 to 2020.

A provisional report of the meeting and the conclusions adopted can be found on the Council of the European Union's website at

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/gac/2017/03/07/>

Resolutions, decisions and opinions adopted by the European Parliament

The Council noted the resolutions adopted by the European Parliament at its plenary sessions of February and March 2017.

Preparation of the European Council of 9 March 2017

The Council examined the second draft of conclusions for the March European Council. The discussions focussed on: Jobs, Growth and Competitiveness; Security and Defence; Migration; and External Relations.

On Jobs, Growth and Competitiveness, and the European Council's discussion on the sustainability of the economic growth in the 28 member states, I welcomed the positive signs on the economy and set out our strong support for completion of the Digital Single Market. I supported the calls from other Member States for further ambition on EU trade policy.

On Security and Defence, and the European Council's assessment of the implementation of its December 2016 conclusions, I expressed my support for the balanced nature of the text and stated that any changes should be within the parameters set out at the December European Council.

On Migration, and the review of how decisions taken at the informal summit in Malta on 3 February 2017 concerning the Central Mediterranean route have been implemented, I welcomed the focus on continued engagement with source and transit countries. I also stated that there needed to be a stronger focus on breaking smugglers' business models.

The External Relations agenda item proposed a discussion on the Western Balkans. I pressed for more co-operation with the Western Balkans, including strategic communications, to tackle organised crime, third country interference and radicalisation.

European Semester 2017

The Presidency presented its synthesis report on the European Semester and suggested that it sends its recommendation on the economic policy of the euro area to the European Council for adoption.

Implementation of the Inter-Institutional Agreement on Better Law Making

The Presidency updated the Council on the implementation of the Inter-institutional Agreement on Better Law Making. Good progress had been made and would be monitored three times a year. The June General Affairs Council meeting will provide a comprehensive overview of implementation.

Mid term review of the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014 to 2020

The Council agreed to approach the European Parliament with proposed amendments to the Mid Term Review of the Multiannual Financial Framework for 2014 to 2020. The UK abstained on this point.

HOME OFFICE**■ Independent Police Complaints Commission Annual Report 2015 - 2016**

The Minister of State for Fire and Policing (Brandon Lewis): [\[HCWS534\]](#)

I am pleased to announce that today my hon. Friend the Financial Secretary to the Treasury and I are publishing the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) Annual Report and Accounts [HC 450]. Copies of the report have been laid before the House and will be available in the Vote Office.

This is the twelfth Annual Report from the IPCC, covering their work during 2015/16. In this period the IPCC have made good progress as they continue their expansion. They have started more than twice the number of investigations than in 2014/15 and completed 259 cases (139 more than in the previous year). The report also highlights some key investigations the IPCC handled, for example those involving deaths during or following police contact. It also reports on the progress made with the Hillsborough Investigations.

As well as covering the police, the Annual Report also includes a section on the discharge of their responsibilities in respect of Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ EU Informal Foreign Affairs Council 3 March 2017 - Post Council**

Minister of State for Trade and Investment (Greg Hands): [\[HCWS531\]](#)

My Noble Friend the Minister of State for Trade Policy (Lord Price) has today made the following statement.

The EU Informal Foreign Affairs Council (Trade) took place in Brussels on 3 March 2017. I represented the UK at the meeting. A summary of the discussions follows.

Anti-Dumping Methodology

The Commission (Commissioner Malmström) presented their proposal for a new anti-dumping methodology . With a WTO ruling on China's dispute likely by the end of the year, Malmström called for rapid agreement to avoid a legal vacuum in the EU. She recognised that the challenge was to find an approach that was both fully compliant with WTO rules whilst retaining effective trade defence measures.

There was broad support for the proposals as a basis for further discussion, whilst noting the importance of working to get the details right to ensure proportionality, simplicity, effectiveness and legal certainty. I called for the EU to promote openness against protectionist headwinds, and noted the need to respect the interests of consumers as well as producers.

Autonomous Trade Measures for Ukraine

The Commission urged support for its proposed extension of autonomous trade measures for Ukraine. Malmström insisted that the additional quotas would not impact EU

markets but would be valuable to Ukraine while difficult economic reforms were underway.

Multilateral Investment Court

Malmström underlined the global interest in amending investor-state dispute arrangements in general, and in the idea of a Multilateral Investment Court (MIC) in particular. Following extensive international outreach conducted jointly with the Canadians, the Commission expected to seek a mandate to launch formal negotiations over the next year. Malmström recalled that the MIC would not provide any new rights for investors but rather ensure a more legitimate means of resolving disputes.

Most Member States supported the concept of the MIC, although many emphasised the importance (and potential difficulty) of securing a critical mass of global and cross-stakeholder endorsement.