



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 31 March 2025 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:42 P.M., 31 March 2025). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

BUSINESS AND TRADE

■ Bankruptcy

Uma Kumaran:

[\[40764\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of the Person At Risk of Violence fee on victims of domestic violence; and if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of making all personal details on the Individual Insolvency Register private.

Justin Madders:

The fees applied for Persons at Risk of Violence (PARV) orders should never have the effect of denying access to the courts. The government is presently reviewing the fee framework for PARV orders.

The government is also undertaking a wider review of the personal insolvency framework, which includes whether the Individual Insolvency Register should be private.

■ Beer and Public Houses

Martin Wrigley:

[\[39707\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what steps his Department is taking to support the (a) beer and (b) pub sector to increase (i) economic growth and (ii) business investment in the context of his industrial strategy.

Gareth Thomas:

Hospitality businesses, including pubs and breweries, are at the heart of our communities and play a vital role in supporting economic growth across the UK.

The Government is creating a fairer business rate system, reducing alcohol duty on qualifying draught products and transforming the apprenticeship levy to support business and boost opportunities. This work will be supported by the publication of The Small Business Strategy Command Paper which will be published later this year. Through the Hospitality Sector Council, we are addressing strategic issues for the sector related to high street regeneration, skills, sustainability, and productivity.

Martin Wrigley:

[\[39708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what recent assessment his Department has made of the potential contribution of the (a) brewery and distillery and (b) pub sector to (i) economic growth and (ii) job creation.

Gareth Thomas:

Hospitality businesses, including pubs and breweries, are at the heart of our communities and play a vital role in supporting economic growth across the UK.

The Government is creating a fairer business rate system, reducing alcohol duty on qualifying draught products and transforming the apprenticeship levy to support business and boost opportunities. This work will be supported by the publication of The Small Business Strategy Command Paper which will be published later this year. Through the Hospitality Sector Council, we are addressing strategic issues for the sector related to high street regeneration, skills, sustainability, and productivity.

■ Business and Investment: Carbon Emissions and Sustainable Development

Dr Simon Opher: [\[40295\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what steps his Department is taking to help encourage (a) large companies and (b) investment funds to adopt sustainable net zero practices.

Sarah Jones:

Under current rules, certain large companies and investment funds are required to disclose information about the ways they are responding to the risks posed by climate change and seizing the economic opportunities that it presents.

Going forward, the Government is considering whether to require companies to report comparable information in line with international corporate sustainability reporting standards. In addition, the Government's manifesto committed to mandate listed companies and financial institutions to develop and implement credible transition plans that align with the 1.5°C goal of the Paris Agreement. The Government will consult on how to take this forward later this year.

■ Conditions of Employment

Lisa Smart: [\[40277\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of companies closing and subsequently setting up a new similar company, with the result of (a) job losses, (b) workplace bullying and (c) changes to working conditions on employees' rights.

Justin Madders:

The Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023 introduced new measures to help combat 'phoenixing' - when a director dissolves a company to avoid debts or other responsibilities, to then set up another similar company. The accompanying impact assessment provides the government's assessment of the evidence relating to this practice. Alongside this, the Employment Rights Bill is delivering the biggest upgrade to workers rights and protections in a generation, including strengthening collective redundancy rights and ending unscrupulous practices of fire and rehire.

■ **Cosmetics: Health Hazards**

Mark Pritchard:

[\[40436\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, if he will take steps to prevent the illegal (a) online sale and (b) importing of skin (i) whitening and (ii) lightening products which cause skin damage.

Justin Madders:

Cosmetics products must comply with some of the strongest safety standards in the world before they can be placed on the GB market. Government works with local enforcement authorities to take effective action when products are identified that do not meet these safety requirements, ensuring unsafe items are removed from sale.

Government has introduced the Product Regulation and Metrology Bill, which explicitly recognises the role of online marketplaces to ensure consumers are protected from unsafe products. We intend to use the powers in the Bill to introduce requirements on e-commerce models to help prevent the sale of unsafe products online.

■ **Department for Work and Pensions: Working Hours**

Lisa Smart:

[\[40832\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of four-day working weeks.

Justin Madders:

While the government continues to monitor the impact of flexible working, it has made no assessment of the four-day week specifically. Additionally, the government has no plans to mandate a four-day week, however, through the Employment Rights Bill we are giving employees better access to flexible working arrangements, where reasonably feasible. Not all businesses will be able to offer all forms of flexible working, and not all arrangements will suit all employees equally. We want to create a framework that encourages employers and employees to explore options for flexible working arrangements that suit both parties.

■ **Parental Leave: Reviews**

Lisa Smart:

[\[40368\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what progress his Department has made on the upcoming parental leave review; and if he will make a statement.

Lisa Smart:

[\[40369\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what his planned timetable for when the review of the parental leave system will report.

Lisa Smart:

[\[40825\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what progress has been made on the upcoming parental leave review; and if he will make a statement.

Justin Madders:

The government has committed to review the parental leave system to ensure it best supports working families. Planning work is underway across government. Details of the timeline of the review will be shared in due course.

■ Regulator of Community Interest Companies**Sir John Hayes:**[\[40144\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what estimate he has made of the potential savings to the public purse of abolishing the Office of the Regulator of Community Interest Companies.

Justin Madders:

The Office of the Regulator of Community Interest Companies ("CICs") ("the Regulator") plays a crucial role in maintaining the CIC model as an effective form of social enterprise. By exploiting the considerable overlap between the Regulator and Companies House, and the close working relationship that already exists between the two, the Government intends to fully integrate the Regulator's functions into Companies House as part of wider plans to streamline the UK's regulatory environment. As the Regulator is entirely funded by fees, there will be no saving to the public purse.

■ Sheep Meat: Import Controls**Josh Babarinde:**[\[40732\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of placing a ban on the import of lamb produced on farms that carry out mulesing without pain relief.

Mr Douglas Alexander:

The Government is firmly committed to upholding our animal welfare standards and to promoting robust standards internationally.

The independent Trade and Agriculture Commission considered, in the context of its report on the UK-Australia FTA, the issue of imports to the UK of lamb that has been subject to mulesing without pain relief. The Commission concluded that lambs reared for meat are not mulesed and the likelihood of mutton from mulesed sheep being imported into the UK is negligible.

■ Trade Union Recognition**Mike Wood:**[\[40544\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 8 January 2025 to Question 21053 on Trade Union Recognition, whether there are exemptions for faith-based organisations.

Justin Madders:

There are no exemptions for faith-based organisations. That has been the case since the statutory recognition scheme was set up back in 1999.

■ Trading Standards**Mark Pritchard:**[\[40437\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, if he will increase (a) criminal sanctions and (b) financial penalties for breaches of Trading Standards laws.

Justin Madders:

Local authority trading standards services oversee numerous pieces of legislation, including consumer protection, product safety, weights and measures, food standards, animal health and welfare, environmental protection, estates and lettings, and age-restricted products such as alcohol and tobacco, among other legislative responsibilities.

The Department of Business and Trade is responsible for the consumer protection function. The Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act 2024 updated and strengthened civil enforcement powers for public designated enforcers, including the ability for trading standards services to apply to the court for an enforcement order with a monetary penalty of up to 10% of turnover.

CABINET OFFICE**■ 10 Downing Street: Repairs and Maintenance****Mr Richard Holden:**[\[39120\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what (a) restoration, (b) renovation and (c) building works are currently taking place at No. (i) 10, (ii) 11 and (iii) 12 Downing Street.

Georgia Gould:

A repair project is underway to preserve the integrity of this Grade 1 listed building. This followed a survey in December 2023 which indicated that work must be completed for safety reasons, with the work commencing in January 2024. Repair of exterior window frames will be undertaken at the same time.

■ Admiralty House**Kevin Hollinrake:**[\[40494\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, at which flat number at Admiralty House is the Deputy Prime Minister resident.

Georgia Gould:

As has been the case under successive administrations, the Prime Minister allocates official residences to ministers, either on the grounds of security or to allow them to better perform their official duties.

The Deputy Prime Minister was allocated one of the Admiralty House flats by the Prime Minister. On security grounds, the government does not specify flat numbers.

■ **Alex Chisholm**

Mr Richard Holden: [40573]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, on what date Sir Alex Chisholm was given permission by the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments to take up a role with Boston Consulting Group.

Georgia Gould:

Sir Alex Chisholm was provided with his final advice from the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments on 30 October 2024. The advice was published on ACOBA's page on GOV.UK on 12 March 2025, and is available here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67b318fe7c070e71525f5801/ACOBA_advice- Alex_Chisholm- BCG.pdf

■ **Cabinet Office: Corporate Hospitality**

Mike Wood: [41103]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will make it his policy to ensure that transparency returns from his Department include an indicative value of any hospitality received.

Ms Abena Oppong-Asare:

The Ministerial Code already requires ministers to declare the estimated value, where possible, of any hospitality received above de minimus levels.

As has been the case under successive administrations, special advisers and senior officials are not required to declare the value of hospitality received.

■ **Cabinet Office: Pay**

Mr Richard Holden: [40579]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 9 January 2025 to Question 21403 on Cabinet Office: Pay, what the monetary gross paybill is, excluding pension contributions and National Insurance in aggregate for staff in the (a) Women's Equality Unit, (b) Race Disparity Unit and (c) Disability Unit.

Georgia Gould:

The salaries of the Senior Civil Servants responsible for the Women's Equality Unit, Race Disparity Unit and Disability Unit and salary cost of their reports was published in January as part of Cabinet Office transparency reporting and can be found under the Organogram for Senior staff.

<https://www.data.gov.uk/dataset/ff76be1f-4f37-4bef-beb7-32b259413be1/organogram-cabinet-office>

■ Cars: Manufacturing Industries

Mark Pritchard:

[40148]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate his Department has made of trends in the level of employment in the car manufacturing sector between July and December 2024.

Georgia Gould:

The information requested falls under the remit of the UK Statistics Authority.

A response to the Hon gentleman's Parliamentary Question of 21st March is attached.

Attachments:

1. [ONS response](#) [PQ40148.pdf]

■ Civil Servants: Recruitment

Charlie Dewhirst:

[38759]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 5 February 2025 to Question 26831 on Civil Servants: Recruitment, what assessment he has made of the compatibility of the publication of job titles in transparency data with his data protection obligations.

Georgia Gould:

The publication of job titles is compatible with data protection obligations.

It is noted that SCS organograms are published. However, the SCS data is anonymised at Deputy Director level (SCS1). Although the details are published for SCS2 and above, there are provisions within the guidance for redactions or further anonymity for data privacy and security purposes.

■ Foreign Investment in UK: National Security

Mr Richard Holden:

[40578]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps has his Department taken to improve the speed of reviews conducted under the powers of the National Security and Investment Act since 5 July 2024.

Ms Abena Oppong-Asare:

The Government always seeks to conclude reviews under the National Security and Investment (NSI) Act as swiftly as possible. Reviews under the NSI Act are subject to statutory timelines. The Act is also kept under regular review to ensure it is operating as efficiently as possible.

■ Government Departments: Aviation

Mike Wood:

[40533]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the report entitled Greening Government Commitments April 2021 to March 2024, published on 20 February 2025,

what methodologies his Department uses to (a) collect and (b) collate data on (i) TCO2e emissions on domestic flights and (ii) the distance travelled in km for international flights.

Ms Abena Oppong-Asare:

DEFRA sets these methodologies through yearly carbon indices across government, including for the Cabinet Office, in line with the [Greening Government Commitments](#).

■ Government Departments: Freedom of Information

Mike Wood:

[\[41434\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will take steps to (a) speed up the handling of Freedom of Information requests across Government and (b) reduce the number of refusals to those requests.

Ms Abena Oppong-Asare:

FOI compliance statistics for all government departments are published on a quarterly basis on GOV.UK at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/government-foi-statistics>. Between July-September 2024, across all departments, 90% of requests were responded to in time (up from 88% in Q3 2023). The outcomes of resolvable requests vary between departments and reflect the protections the legislation provides for sensitive information.

■ Government Departments: Procurement

Stuart Anderson:

[\[40588\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to ensure that Government procurement focuses on SMEs in local economies.

Georgia Gould:

The Procurement Act has introduced a number of reforms to make it easier for small businesses to access public sector supply-chains and removing unnecessary burdens and costs, including:

- a new duty on contracting authorities to have regard to their participation and consider whether they can remove barriers to entry;
- greater visibility of upcoming public sector opportunities and early market engagement to explain requirements to better help SMEs prepare to bid; and
- 30-day payment terms will apply throughout the public sector supply chain.

The National Procurement Policy Statement (NPPS) supports Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) and Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSEs), giving them greater opportunities to win public contracts by instructing contracting authorities to maximise their spend with these organisations.

To support implementation of the NPPS, I have announced new rules requiring all government departments and their executive agencies and non-departmental public bodies to set three-year targets for direct spend with SMEs from 1 April 2025, and

from 1 April 2026 for VCSEs, and publish progress annually. This will drive greater transparency and accountability for increasing numbers of SMEs and VCSEs delivering public contracts, supporting local economic growth and innovation and creating jobs in local communities up and down the country.

■ Government Departments: Social Media

Charlie Dewhirst:

[\[40911\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will update the (a) ministerial, (b) special adviser and (c) senior official transparency guidance on the definition of senior media executives to include large social media organisations.

Georgia Gould:

Details of ministers' and senior officials' official meetings with all external individuals and organisations, including with social media organisations, are already published on a quarterly basis. Under long-standing guidance, special advisers are only required to declare meetings with senior media figures. There are no current plans to change the guidance.

■ Intelligence Services: Risk Assessment and Standards

Mr Richard Holden:

[\[41511\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Security and Intelligence Agencies Financial Statement 2023-24, published on 2 December 2024, what (a) risks and (b) performance issues were identified during the Performance and Risk Reviews conducted in 2023-24 for those agencies; and what steps he is taking to tackle those risks and issues.

Ms Abena Oppong-Asare:

As has been the policy of successive governments, the government does not comment on matters relating to the intelligence agencies. The Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament scrutinises the policies, expenditure, administration and operations of the intelligence agencies on behalf of Parliament.

■ National Security

Mike Wood:

[\[41429\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many transactions have been voluntary notified to his Department under the terms of the National Security and Investment Act since 5 July 2024.

Ms Abena Oppong-Asare:

The Government publishes information on the operation of the National Security and Investment Act in the NSIA Annual Report. The most recent report, covering the 2023/24 reporting period, can be found on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk). The government received 120 voluntary notifications in this period.

Data on the number of voluntary notifications received between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025, broken down by month, will be published in the next Annual Report later this year.

■ **National Security Adviser**

Charlie Dewhirst: [\[40913\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the National Security Adviser being appointed as a special adviser on (a) the effectiveness and (b) parliamentary scrutiny of that role.

Georgia Gould:

Special Advisers are accountable to Ministers who in turn are accountable to Parliament.

■ **Prime Minister: Correspondence**

Mr Richard Holden: [\[40551\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Prime Minister has responded to correspondence from Baroness Carr following Prime Minister's Questions on 12 February 2025.

Ms Abena Oppong-Asare:

The Lord Chancellor issued a response on 19 February 2025.

■ **Prime Minister: Official Gifts**

Mr Richard Holden: [\[39123\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of (a) 26 November 2024 to Question 14635 on Prime Minister: Official Gifts and (b) 21 January 2025 to Question 24487 on Members' Interests, where the Register of Members' Financial Interests lists repaid or returned gifts and hospitality received by the Prime Minister.

Mr Richard Holden: [\[39124\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 26 November 2024 to Question 14635 on Prime Minister: Official Gifts, if he will list the gifts and hospitality received by the Prime Minister within the remit of the Ministerial Code regime that was subsequently repaid or returned, broken down by (a) the nature of each gift or hospitality donated, (b) value, (c) donor, (d) date accepted and (e) date returned or reimbursed since 4 July 2024, excluding gifts where the Prime Minister made a payment to the department to purchase the gift.

Georgia Gould:

Any hospitality or gifts received by Ministers in their ministerial capacity is declared in accordance with the Ministerial Code. The Cabinet Office publishes details of ministers' hospitality and gifts on a monthly basis. Hospitality and gifts received by ministers in a non-ministerial capacity are published on the parliamentary registers in line with the parliamentary codes of conduct.

■ Public Appointments

Mike Wood:

[\[41100\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 22 October 2023 to Question 6096 on Public Appointments, what his Department's timetable is for considering whether to implement the previous Government's commitments made in the report entitled Strengthening Ethics and Integrity in Central Government, published in July 2023, CP 900.

Ms Abena Oppong-Asare:

As set out in my previous Written Answer on 22 October 2024 (PQ 6096), we are still considering whether the commitments made by the previous administration are sufficient and appropriate for meeting the Committees' recommendations. We will provide a further update in due course.

■ Senior Civil Servants: Training

Mr Richard Holden:

[\[40582\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the answer of 30 January 2025 to Question 25456 on Senior Civil Servants: Training, how many people attended each conference.

Georgia Gould:

148 people attended the conference on 23 July 2024 and 263 people attended the conference on 10 October 2024.

■ Social Services: Arms Length Bodies

Mr Richard Holden:

[\[40552\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the document entitled The Approvals Process for the Creation of New Arm's-Length Bodies, published on 15 March 2018, and in the context of the proposed abolition of NHS England, whether his Department will consider the case for creating the National Care Service against the requirement that the creation of a new arms-length body should only be considered as a last resort.

Georgia Gould:

It is for the relevant Minister to decide if policy within their portfolio should be delivered through the creation of a new public body. Departments seeking to establish an Arm's Length Bodies must submit three business cases as part of the approval process, as outlined in 'The Approvals Process for the Creation of New Arm's-Length Bodies'. Once the the Cabinet Office receives a business case for a proposed new body there is a detailed process to ensure there is sufficient due diligence to establish a clear rationale for a proposed body.

■ Special Advisers: Workplace Pensions

Mike Wood: [\[40540\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 31 October 2024 to Question 10701 on Special Advisers: Workplace Pensions, whether special advisers have been informed of the consequences to their pensions of leaving service before two years' of tenure in the Alpha pension scheme.

Georgia Gould:

Special Advisers are provided with guidance regarding Civil Service Pension schemes during onboarding and offboarding, as well as throughout their tenure. This includes details of leaving the scheme within two years. Special Advisers are also directed to published Civil Service Pension scheme resources.

■ Statistics

Mr Richard Holden: [\[40583\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether he plans to lay a new Official Statistics Order to designate the National Data Library's statistical outputs as official statistics.

Georgia Gould:

The information requested falls under the remit of the UK Statistics Authority.

A response to the Hon. Member's Parliamentary Question of 24th March is attached.

Attachments:

1. [ONS response](#) [PQ40583 (1).pdf]

■ Trade Union Officials: Facilities Agreements

Mr Richard Holden: [\[40580\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 13 February 2025 to Question 29026 on Trade Union Officials: Facilities Agreements, what his planned timetable is for publishing facility time data for 2024-25; and what month will be used as a baseline for the data.

Georgia Gould:

Self-reported public-sector trade union facility time data, collected under the Facility Time Regulations, will be published in line with our standard timelines for this data set and the timelines under the previous administration.

[The Trade Union \(Facility Time Publication Requirements\) Regulations 2017](#) explain what is included in the published data set as well as the period this data set covers.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ Charities: Employers' Contributions****Freddie van Mierlo:**[\[40728\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, if she will make an assessment of the potential impact of changes to employer National Insurance contribution on (a) local animal shelters, (b) other small charities and (c) the whole charitable sector; and what steps she is taking to help mitigate the impact on that sector.

Stephanie Peacock:

DCMS Ministers have met with representatives from the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector to discuss this issue and are aware of their concerns about the impacts of the increase to employer National Insurance Contributions (NICs). The government recognises the need to protect the smallest businesses and charities, which is why we have more than doubled the Employment Allowance to £10,500. This means that more than half of businesses (including charities) with NICs liabilities will either gain or see no change next year.

We are also expanding eligibility of the Employment Allowance by removing the £100,000 eligibility threshold, to simplify and reform employer NICs so that all eligible employers now benefit. Businesses and charities will still be able to claim employer NICs reliefs including those for under 21s and under 25 apprentices, where eligible.

Within the tax system, we provide support to charities through a range of reliefs and exemptions, including reliefs for charitable giving. More than £6 billion in charitable reliefs was provided to charities, Community Amateur Sports Clubs and their donors in 2023 to 2024. The biggest individual reliefs provided are Gift Aid at £1.6 billion and business rates relief at nearly £2.4 billion.

■ Charities: Finance**Dan Tomlinson:**[\[39285\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, whether her Department is taking steps to (a) support the development of and (b) source external funding for the Directories Asset Mapping digital compendium of Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises.

Stephanie Peacock:

The Department is not currently working on this project but my officials would welcome more information on the scheme, if the Honorable Member would like to share that.

■ Department for Culture, Media and Sport: Equality**Mr Peter Bedford:****[38865]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, whether they have made an estimate of the potential impact of abolishing diversity, equity and inclusion roles in their Department on annual staffing costs.

Stephanie Peacock:

The [Civil Service Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Expenditure Guidance](#) was issued on the 14th May 2024. DCMS complies with the guidance, and therefore ensures that any D&I activity provides value for money and benefits both DCMS employees and enhances sound policy making.

DCMS has not undertaken an estimate of the impact of abolishing diversity, equity and inclusion roles in the department on annual staff costs. DCMS remains committed to ensuring we have the right skills in place to deliver our services effectively, efficiently and at value for money across the Civil Service.

■ Gambling Commission: Economic Growth**Jack Rankin:****[R] [40982]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what steps the Gambling Commission has taken to ensure compliance with the Growth Duty under Section 108 of the Deregulation Act 2015; and whether she has made an assessment of the potential impact of the Commission's (a) policies and (b) regulatory activities on economic growth.

Stephanie Peacock:

The Gambling Commission is required by its statutory functions to strike a balance between supporting the growth of regulated businesses and providing protection for consumers and society. The Commission's statement of principles for licensing and regulation includes ensuring that unnecessary regulatory burdens are not placed on businesses, prioritising the least intrusive regulatory tools to achieve compliance and ensuring that any regulatory action is proportionate. It also states that the Commission will have regard to promoting economic growth, insofar as it thinks it is consistent with pursuit of the licensing objectives.

■ Members: Correspondence**Freddie van Mierlo:****[39716]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, when she plans to respond to the letter of 4 February 2025 from the hon. Member for Henley and Thames on the Stop Killing Games Campaign.

Chris Bryant:

My Department has provided a response to the Hon Member. The Government has also responded to a recent petition on this issue.

■ Music: Young People

Dr Luke Evans:

[\[40672\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what (a) statutory and (b) non-statutory bodies her Department has consulted on opportunities for grassroots music collaboration as part of the national youth strategy.

Stephanie Peacock:

We are developing a new National Youth Strategy with young people and cross-sector experts, and have set up a Youth Advisory Group and Expert Advisory Group as part of this engagement. Members of our Expert Advisory Group have a range of different professional and academic expertise related to young people and work in different fields including: youth work, music, creative skills industries, funding, policy development and sport. We are also in contact with a wide range of other stakeholders working with young people across relevant sectors.

■ Television: Local Broadcasting

Sir John Whittingdale:

[\[40987\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of TV viewing transitioning to online delivery digital viewing on linear TV broadcasting on her Department's policy aims for local TV.

Stephanie Peacock:

The Government recognises the important role that local TV continues to play in the wider broadcasting ecosystem. That is why last year we brought forward legislation to enable Ofcom to renew the licences for the local TV multiplex and the 34 individual local TV services. Local TV services provide audiences with local content, including news and current affairs. This contributes to our broader policy objectives of ensuring a strong local media sector and keeping communities informed about local issues and decision making. We will consider how we can further safeguard local TV's contribution to these objectives through the Local Media Strategy.

However, at the same time we understand that there are challenges facing the local TV sector, as there are all broadcasters. The shift from broadcast to online viewing has led to audiences becoming increasingly fragmented, while increasing distribution costs.

In particular, we are aware of the local TV sector's concerns that they will not receive prominence for their internet programme services (apps) as part of the new online prominence regime established in the Media Act 2024. At the moment we are not aware of the existence of any local TV on-demand apps. However, we would strongly welcome an app being brought to market that improves the availability of local content. This would enable the Government to consider whether the app should receive prominence under the online prominence regime in the same way local TV services have enjoyed prominence on DTT, satellite and cable platforms since they began broadcasting in 2013.

We are also aware of other distribution challenges that are material to local TV's future success and sustainability, including the long term future of the DTT platform itself. We have launched a project to consider the future of TV distribution, with local TV representatives included on our stakeholder forum. As part of this work, we will also keep under review the policy framework which requires local TV services to broadcast over DTT as the market and viewer behaviour continues to evolve, subject to broader decisions about the future of DTT.

■ **Youth Services: Bedfordshire**

Blake Stephenson:

[\[40348\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to her Department's press release entitled Government partners with young people to help develop new national youth strategy, published on 5 March 2025, whether any Democracy Cafes will take place in Bedfordshire.

Stephanie Peacock:

As part of the development of the National Youth Strategy, we have conducted nine Democracy Cafes, one in every region of the country, as well as online focus groups. No Democracy Cafe was held in Bedfordshire, but one was delivered in Cambridge. There are no plans to conduct further Democracy Cafes, but we are planning larger in-person events called 'Hacks'. Details of these will be on our website for the Strategy in due course. We also encourage as many young people across the country as possible to respond to the National Youth Strategy survey or to complete the 'digital postcards'.

■ **Youth Services: Wolverhampton**

Mrs Sureena Brackenridge:

[\[41321\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to ensure adequate funding of youth services in Wolverhampton.

Stephanie Peacock:

Local authorities hold the statutory duty to secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient provision of educational and recreational leisure-time activities for young people. Local Authorities fund youth services from their Local Government Settlement in line with local need, and this was increased to more than £69 billion in 2025/26 - a 6.8% increase in cash terms compared to 2024/25. We will be launching the Local Youth Transformation pilot this year, which will support local authorities to build back capability to improve local youth offers.

This government has also committed to co-producing a new National Youth Strategy. As part of the Strategy, we will be consulting closely with young people and the youth sector. The Strategy will be published this summer.

DEFENCE**■ Annington Homes: Contracts****James Cartlidge:**[\[41492\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Oral Statement on 26 March 2025 entitled Spring Statement, Official Report and his Department's press release entitled Government buys back 36,347 military homes to improve housing for forces families and save taxpayers billions, published on 17 December 2024, how much of the additional funding for defence will be spent on the agreement with Annington Homes in 2025-26.

AI Carns:

The Annington agreement was partially funded through eliminating liabilities associated with the leases to create budgetary headroom. The remaining £1.7 billion required in 2024-25 was funded by His Majesty's Treasury at the time of purchase.

None of the additional funding for Defence as announced in the Spring Statement will be used to fund the Annington agreement.

■ Armed Forces: Housing**James Cartlidge:**[\[40518\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the annual maintenance cost is for all homes on the defence estate in the most recent period for which figures are available.

AI Carns:

The annual cost for responsive and planned maintenance for Service Family Accommodation from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, for the Future Defence Infrastructure Services Regional Accommodation Maintenance Services contracts, is £39,066,509.

James Cartlidge:[\[40519\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the annual maintenance cost is of homes on the defence estate as a result of (a) responsive repairs and (b) planned maintenance in the most recent period for which figures are available.

AI Carns:

The annual cost of responsive repairs for Service Family Accommodation (SFA) from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, for the Future Defence Infrastructure Services (FDIS) Regional Accommodation Maintenance Services (RAMS) contracts, is £33,163,334.

The annual cost of planned maintenance for SFA for the same period for the FDIS RAMS contracts, is £5,903,175.

Dr Scott Arthur:[\[40756\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of service family accommodation in Scotland.

AI Carns:

Circa 97% of Service Family Accommodation (SFA) in Scotland meets or exceeds the Government's Decent Homes Standard.

This Government continues to invest significant sums to improve the quality of SFA in the United Kingdom. For Financial Year 2024-25, circa £445 million is forecast to be spent on maintaining and improving SFA.

Work is now underway with the Defence Housing Strategy Review which started following the completion of the Annington Deal in January 2025. The Military Housing Strategy planned for publication in Summer 2025 will set out a roadmap to deliver a generational renewal of military accommodation.

Dr Scott Arthur: [\[40757\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the extent of any black mould problem in service family accommodation in Scotland.

Dr Scott Arthur: [\[40758\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the press notice entitled Awaab's Law to force landlords to fix dangerous homes, published 6 February 2025, if he will take steps to extend Awaab's law to include all Service Family Accommodation provided by his Department.

Dr Scott Arthur: [\[40759\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Service Family Accommodation units were available in Scotland between 2010 and 2014; and how many and what proportion of those were reported to have (a) black mould and (b) damp in the same period.

AI Carns:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) acknowledges serious concerns regarding damp and mould in Service Family Accommodation (SFA). A Damp and Mould Taskforce was established in 2023 to address reported cases of damp and mould in SFA and since then, over 9,000 Service personnel and their families have benefitted from the delivery of damp and mould packages of works. The severity of damp and mould cases now being raised, has reduced significantly since the Taskforce was first established, with circa 3% of reported cases now being at the most severe level.

The Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) will continue with its current approach to ensure cases of damp and mould are addressed on a priority basis.

The table below shows the number of SFA properties available in Scotland, as at 1 April, from 2010 to 2014. This includes occupied and empty SFA available for allocation.

YEAR	NUMBER OF SFA
April 2010	3,237

YEAR	NUMBER OF SFA
April 2011	2,969
April 2012	2,897
April 2013	2,981
April 2014	3,033

The number of SFA properties in Scotland between 2010 and 2014 with reported cases of damp and mould, is not held centrally. Information requested prior to April 2022, can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Due to the way in which Defence accommodation is managed, Awaab's Law cannot be applied directly. However, the MOD has agreed to mirror or exceed any regulations set out in Awaab's Law, in its own policies and procedures and this will continue to be a priority.

The MOD will continue to move families to alternative accommodation in the most serious cases of damp and mould or if a family member has a known vulnerability.

James Cartlidge: [\[41221\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many service personnel live in Substitute Service Single Accommodation as of 25 March 2025.

James Cartlidge: [\[41222\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Substitute Service Single Accommodation properties are in use.

AI Carns:

As at 25 March 2025, 4,551 Service personnel live in Substitute Service Single Accommodation (SSSA). This figure is based on Regular and Reserve Personnel.

2,792 properties are used as SSSA to house Service personnel.

James Cartlidge: [\[41231\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the annual cost to the public purse is of substitute service single accommodation broken down by region.

AI Carns:

The information is not held in the format requested. The total number of Substitute Service Single Accommodation is not held by region.

■ Armed Forces: Protective Clothing

Ben Obese-Jecty: [\[40746\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the definition is of a (a) basic and (b) specialist user in the context of the tactical hearing protection system.

Maria Eagle:

The Tactical Hearing Protection System programme defines the Basic User (BU) requirement as those British Army, Royal Navy, Royal Marine and Royal Air Force personnel who need hearing protection for the full range of military tasks, including basic weapon handling and firing, but have a lesser requirement for situational awareness. They are unlikely to be in close proximity to the firing of support weaponry. The BU requirement applies to most Combat Support and Combat Service Support personnel and is used as a backup for the Dismounted Close Combat (DCC) user.

The DCC user is defined as those combat arms personnel who are or could be routinely exposed to high rates of fire, at close range, from a variety of weapons, such as small arms, medium- or heavy-calibre weapons including grenades, hand-held missiles and missile launchers. They have a requirement for continuous situational awareness in all environments.

The Specialist User (SU) is also a combat arms soldier, but differs from the DCC user in that the weapon systems they use, such as mortars, heavy machine guns, snipers, and anti-structures munitions, are so loud that single-layer protection will not suffice. The SU requires dual-layer protection and accepts that situational awareness may have to be reduced.

Ben Obese-Jecty:**[40748]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 20 March 2025 to Question 38440 on Armed Forces: Protective Clothing, which of those are included within the tactical hearing protection system.

Maria Eagle:

The Tactical Hearing Protection System includes the following equipment sets:

- Surefire EP4
- ComTac XP/XPI
- Invisio S10/X5

■ Army: Termination of Employment**Sir John Hayes:****[40143]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many British Army full-time personnel (a) retired and (b) left the profession for other reasons in each of the last ten years.

Al Carns:

The requested information is published in the Quarterly Service Personnel Statistics, the latest edition of which (1 January 2025) can be found at the following address:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/quarterly-service-personnel-statistics-2025>

Table 5d - Row 43 to 60 shows the Army Outflow numbers.

■ Boeing E-7: Procurement

Ben Obese-Jecty:

[\[40923\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the benefits of purchasing Boeing E7 Wedgetail aircraft.

Maria Eagle:

The E-7 Wedgetail is the most capable airborne early warning and control platform in operation today and has the growth path to match the expected threat over the next 20 years. The Wedgetail is capable of providing situational awareness of the battlespace and this cutting-edge aircraft will be a force enabler for the UK Armed Forces, our allies and NATO.

■ British Indian Ocean Territory: Sovereignty

Mr Mark Francois:

[\[41391\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether Parliament will be provided with an updated briefing on the Chagos deal's implications, in the context of the reported U.S. military build-up at Diego Garcia and its potential to extend operations.

Luke Pollard:

Details of the Treaty agreed between the UK and Mauritius will come before Parliament for scrutiny in the usual manner following its signature. The joint UK-US military base on Diego Garcia plays a crucial role in regional and international security. The Treaty will secure the long-term, effective operation of the base.

■ Cybersecurity: Finance

Gordon McKee:

[\[40763\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much and what proportion of the increased defence budget will be spent on developing the UK's cyber offensive capabilities.

Maria Eagle:

His Majesty's Treasury is currently undertaking the second phase of the Spending Review, which will be announced on 11 June 2025. This will set Departmental budgets for three years from 2026-27 for RDEL and four years for CDEL, including for the Ministry of Defence.

The increase in defence spending will fund critical investments in areas like autonomous systems, AI, cyber, rebuilding stockpiles and munition reserves. The full details will be set out in the Strategic Defence Review.

■ Defence: Industry

Ben Obese-Jecty:

[\[40752\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 20 March 2025 to Question 38195 on NATO: Industry, what his Department's planned timetable is for delivering the new Defence Industrial Strategy.

Maria Eagle:

This Government is committed to bringing forward a Defence Industrial Strategy which ensures the imperatives of national security, and a high-growth economy are aligned.

The Statement of Intent outlined that the new Defence Industrial Strategy will be published in late-Spring 2025.

■ Defence: Investment**Mike Wood:**[\[40535\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of (a) Environmental, Social and Governance, (b) green finance and (c) net zero on levels of (i) divestment and (ii) debanking of (A) defence companies and (B) weapons manufacturers; and whether he has held discussions with his NATO counterparts on this matter.

Maria Eagle:

This Government is clear that we see no conflict between sustainable investment and investment in our world-leading defence sector. The Defence Industrial Strategy Statement of Intent, published in December 2024, identified the mobilisation of additional private sector investment as essential to the Government's agenda to strengthen our nation's defences and grow our economy. We welcome the forward-leaning approach taken by industry in this area. The Trade Association ADS recently released their first defence Environment, Social and Governance Charter Report, highlighting the positive contribution that the defence industry is making to supporting our environment and our communities.

We recognise that access to finance, including being able to open a bank account or secure a loan, can be a problem for smaller Defence suppliers. We continue to consult widely with defence and financial services stakeholders on tackling barriers such as these, so that we can meet our ambitions for a better, more integrated, more innovative and more resilient defence sector.

We continue to work closely with our partners in NATO across the full range of issues relevant to our collective security.

■ Defence: Space Technology**Dr Neil Shastri-Hurst:**[\[40310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the additional resources that will be available for the development of space capabilities in the 2027-28 financial year, in the context of increases in defence spending.

Luke Pollard:

The hon. Member and I share a passion for space, and he will know that the Ministry of Defence has invested £6.5 billion over ten years in space, including £5 billion in satellite communications through the SKYNET programme and £1.5 billion in innovative Defence space technologies. Through the Strategic Defence Review, we

are assessing the strategic landscape and threat picture to inform long-term decisions on investment in future capabilities.

■ **F-35 Aircraft: Procurement**

Ben Obese-Jecty: [40926]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 20 March 2025 to Question 37763, whether he has had recent discussions with Cabinet colleagues on the potential purchase of F-35B aircraft.

Maria Eagle:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to Question 37763 on 20 March 2025.

Attachments:

1. [F-35 Aircraft: Procurement](#) [37763 - F-35 Aircraft Procurement.docx]

■ **Forces Help to Buy Scheme**

James Cartlidge: [40525]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the cost of the Forces Help to Buy Scheme was since 5 July 2024.

James Cartlidge: [40526]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the cost of the Forces Help to Buy Scheme was in each financial year since its introduction.

James Cartlidge: [40527]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the allocated budget is for funding the Forces Help to Buy Scheme for financial year 2025-2026.

Al Carns:

The Ministry of Defence's (MOD) Forces Help to Buy (FHTB) scheme is an enduring policy which enables Service personnel to borrow up to 50 per cent of their salary, up to a maximum of £25,000 interest-free towards the purchase of a property.

As FHTB is a loan scheme, it is essentially self-funding, meaning that payments are funded from repayments. For that reason, specific allocations of funds are not provided to the Front Line Commands for this purpose. The costs of administering the scheme could not be disaggregated from wider budgets without incurring disproportionate cost.

The MOD publishes summary statistics on applications, payments and purchases made under the FHTB scheme. These statistics are published quarterly and can be found on gov.uk: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/forces-help-to-buy-scheme-quarterly-statistics-index>

James Cartlidge: [40528]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the total number of serving personnel using the Forces Help to Buy Scheme is as of 24 March 2025.

James Cartlidge: [\[40529\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many and what proportion of serving personnel in the (a) Army, (b) RAF, (c) Royal Navy and (d) Royal Marines were using the Forces Help to Buy Scheme as of 24 March 2025.

James Cartlidge: [\[40530\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will provide a breakdown by rank of the number of service personnel using the Forces Help to Buy Scheme as of 24 March 2025.

James Cartlidge: [\[40531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will provide a breakdown by marital status of the number of service personnel using the Forces Help to Buy Scheme as of 24 March 2025.

James Cartlidge: [\[40532\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will provide a breakdown by age of the number of service personnel using the Forces Help to Buy Scheme as of 24 March 2025.

AI Carns:

Data on the Forces Help to Buy (FHTB) scheme is routinely published by the Ministry of Defence, with the next release scheduled for May 2025. The latest published data as at 31 December 2024 can be found at the following gov.uk link:

www.gov.uk/government/statistics/forces-help-to-buy-scheme-quarterly-statistics-202425/forces-help-to-buy-quarterly-statistics-quarter-3-202425

Figures in this response relate to active accounts as at 31 December 2024. Therefore, figures will differ from published statistics, which relate to all accounts since the beginning of the FHTB scheme.

As at 31 December 2024, 14,333 regular Serving personnel were using the FHTB scheme.

The following table shows engagement with the Forces Help to Buy scheme by Service as at 31 December 2024.

SERVICE	FORCES HELP TO BUY TOTAL	
	ENGAGEMENT BY SERVICE (REGULAR PERSONNEL ONLY)	% OF SERVICE
Navy	3,294	12.95
Royal Marines	829	12.79
Army	6,790	8.65
RAF	3,420	11.26

The following table shows the number of service personnel using the Forces Help to Buy Scheme by rank as at 31 December 2024.

NATO RANK	NUMBER OF SERVICE PERSONNEL
OF1	158
OF2	2,001
OF3	1,252
OF4	325
OF5	61
OF6	15
OF7	2
OR2	752
OR3	663
OR4	3,251
OR6	2,949
OR7	1,769
OR8	765
OR9	370
Total	14,333

The following table shows the number of service personnel using the Forces Help to Buy Scheme by marital status as at 31 December 2024.

MARITAL STATUS CATEGORY	NUMBER OF SERVICE PERSONNEL
Married or in a registered Civil Partnership	6,455
Married or in a registered Civil Partnership to a Service Person who is Category 1S*	288
Married or in a registered Civil Partnership to a Civil Servant	81
Married or in a registered Civil Partnership to a Service Person who is Category 5S*	377
Prime carer and provider for child	401

MARITAL STATUS CATEGORY	NUMBER OF SERVICE PERSONNEL
Separated providing support as a result of court order	24
Separated providing voluntary support	914
All other members of Armed Forces	5,793
Total	14,333

* Personal Status Categories (PStat Cats) are used to denote the entitlement to allowances and accommodation based on marital and service status. Specifically:

- PStat Cat 1S : This category refers to personnel who are married or in a registered civil partnership with a service person who is designated as PStat Cat 5S.
- PStat Cat 5S : This category refers to personnel who are married or in a registered civil partnership with a service person who is designated as PStat Cat 1S.

These categories are important for administrative purposes within the Armed Forces as they affect the allocation of Service Family Accommodation (SFA) and Single Living Accommodation (SLA), as well as other allowances and entitlements.

The following two tables show the number of service personnel using the Forces Help to Buy Scheme by age as at 31 December 2024.

AGE RANGE	AGE AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2024	NUMBER OF SERVICE PERSONNEL	NUMBER OF SERVICE PERSONNEL BY AGE RANGE
18 - 25	18	[c]	777
	19	[c]	
	20	18	
	21	352	
	22	59	
	23	133	
	24	210	
	25	322	
26 - 40	26	445	10,380
	27	520	

AGE RANGE	AGE AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2024	NUMBER OF SERVICE PERSONNEL	NUMBER OF SERVICE PERSONNEL BY AGE RANGE
	28	590	
	29	700	
	30	755	
	31	749	
	32	731	
	33	782	
	34	837	
	35	790	
	36	730	
	37	707	
	38	740	
	39	722	
	40	582	
41 - 55	41	555	3,143
	42	431	
	43	404	
	44	333	
	45	323	
	46	250	
	47	175	
	48	145	
	49	120	
	50	103	
	51	87	

AGE RANGE	AGE AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2024	NUMBER OF SERVICE PERSONNEL	NUMBER OF SERVICE PERSONNEL BY AGE RANGE
	52	84	
	53	67	
	54	39	
	55	27	
56 - 65	56	15	33
	57	8	
	58	[c]	
	59	[c]	
	60	3	
	61	[c]	
	62	[c]	
	63	-	
	64	-	
	65	[c]	

Figures fewer than 3 have been replaced with [c] to limit inadvertent disclosure of personal data.

■ Guided Weapons: Procurement

Alex Burghart:

[\[39938\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to his Department's press release on the award of a £1.6 billion contract to Thales in Belfast for the manufacture of lightweight-multirole missiles, published on 2 March 2025, whether specific contractual provisions allow for the potential extension of the contract.

Maria Eagle:

The contract does not include executable options to extend its duration. The scope will be awarded in a phased manner, and the contract does include provisions to extend specific delivery dates in certain circumstances.

Alex Burghart:

[40321]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to his Department's press release on the award of a £1.6 billion contract to Thales in Belfast for the manufacture of lightweight-multirole missiles, published on 2 March 2025, whether procurement thresholds were considered when awarding the contract.

Alex Burghart:

[40324]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to his Department's press release on the award of a £1.6 billion contract to Thales in Belfast for the manufacture of lightweight-multirole missiles, published on 2 March 2025, whether regulatory compliance audits were undertaken on the contract.

Alex Burghart:

[40325]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to his Department's press release on the award of a £1.6 billion contract to Thales in Belfast for the manufacture of lightweight-multirole missiles, published on 2 March 2025, what (a) transparency reporting obligations and (b) performance milestones have been placed on Thales Northern Ireland.

Alex Burghart:

[40327]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to his Department's press release entitled Historic £1.6bn deal provides thousands of air defence missiles for Ukraine and boosts UK jobs and growth, published 2 March 2025, whether an assessment was conducted under the Public Contract Regulations 2015 to determine whether a direct award was justifiable based on (a) extreme urgency and (b) operational necessity.

Maria Eagle:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him to Question 40323 on 28 March 2025.

Attachments:

1. [Guided Weapons: Procurement](#) [40323 - Guided Weapons Procurement.docx]

Alex Burghart:

[40326]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to his Department's press release on the award of a £1.6 billion contract to Thales in Belfast for the manufacture of lightweight-multirole missiles, published on 2 March 2025, whether the contract was awarded via (a) the Dynamic Purchasing System and (b) a Crown Commercial Service framework.

Maria Eagle:

No. Procurement of this type of capability is not available through the Dynamic Purchasing System or a Crown Commercial Service framework.

■ Income Tax: Scotland

Dr Scott Arthur:

[40760]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, is he will make an estimate of the cost to the public purse of the Scottish Income Tax Mitigation scheme in each financial year between 2018-19 and 2024-25.

Al Carns:

The Ministry of Defence's Scottish income tax mitigation payment scheme is unique within the public sector and has been agreed by wider Government for use only where Service personnel are compelled to serve at one location over another. The scheme aims to support retention of those serving in Scotland by removing the disadvantage of higher taxes applying on those required to serve there who might not choose to do so if not compelled.

The estimated cost to the public purse of the Scottish Income Tax Mitigation scheme is set out below. Figures commence from Financial Year 2019-20, covering payments for those affected in Tax Year 2018-19.

FINANCIAL YEAR	ESTIMATED COST (£MILLION)
2019-20	4.69
2020-21	7.36
2021-22	8.11
2022-23	8.27
2023-24	9.31
2024-25	12.74

■ Military Aircraft: Training

Ben Obese-Jecty:

[40753]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the earliest date is for when a new fast-jet trainer will be brought into service by the Royal Air Force.

Maria Eagle:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to him on 3 December 2024 to Question 15292.

Attachments:

1. [Global Combat Air Programme](#) [15292 - Global Combat Air Programme.docx]

■ Military Decorations

Jim Shannon: [\[34845\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of awarding the Victoria Cross to Robert Blair 'Paddy' Mayne.

Jim Shannon: [\[34846\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has a procedure for awarding gallantry awards previously refused because of an administrative error.

Jim Shannon: [\[34847\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of reviewing the process by which gallantry awards can be awarded posthumously.

Jim Shannon: [\[34848\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of reviewing the process by which gallantry awards can be awarded retrospectively.

Jim Shannon: [\[34849\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will take steps to review any evidence relating to the process through which a decision was made not to award Robert Blair Paddy Mayne a Victoria Cross.

Jim Shannon: [\[34850\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will take steps to review the adequacy of his Department's policy on the timescale within which a Victoria Cross can be awarded.

Al Carns:

Lieutenant Colonel Robert Blair Mayne's brave actions and leadership in command of 1 SAS Regiment on Operation HOWARD in April 1945 were recognised with the award of a third bar to the Distinguished Service Order (DSO). Whilst he was originally recommended for the Victoria Cross (VC), it is clear from the associated recommendation form that, at some point during the process, it was considered more appropriate to award him a third bar to the DSO. There is nothing on the form to explain why this change was made, but it is clear that the change was the result of the rigorous review of contemporaneous accounts by his chain of command, rather than an administrative error.

Gallantry awards can be awarded posthumously, as has been the case since 1931 and, in all the years of WWII, in 1945 more were awarded posthumously than in any other. However, it is the long-standing policy of the Government that gallantry awards and other state honours cannot be awarded retrospectively more than five years after the service or actions in question. Revisiting decisions which were made in the past, with the benefit of hindsight, and applying contemporary views and sensitivities, is inappropriate, and we cannot know or understand all the circumstances that may have been taken into consideration at the time.

This policy has been in place since the end of World War Two and was approved by King George VI. It has also been examined and approved by the Cabinet Office Honours and Decorations Committee on numerous occasions since and successive governments have seen fit not to change it. The Ministry of Defence has no reason to recommend that the Government should review this longstanding policy now, neither is there an intention, nor is it possible, to reconsider the award of a VC to Lt Col Mayne.

■ Ministry of Defence: Computers

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[40585\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the median age is of computers issued to officials in their Department.

Maria Eagle:

The median age of computers issued to officials in the Department is four years.

■ Ministry of Defence: Public Appointments

Ian Roome: [\[41549\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what process his Department used to determine the advertised prospective salary of the new National Armaments Director.

Maria Eagle:

The salary for the National Armaments Director was benchmarked against Defence industry best practice and standards to offer a competitive remuneration package to attract the right candidate with the right skills.

■ NATO: Industry

Ben Obese-Jecty: [\[40747\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to meet the NATO industrial capacity expansion pledge.

Maria Eagle:

The UK strongly supports the NATO Industrial Capacity Expansion Pledge, which commits Allies to strengthening transatlantic defence industrial cooperation, and accelerating the growth of our defence industry.

The Ministry of Defence is taking steps to meet the Pledge, including promoting greater joint procurement among NATO Allies through our NATO Multinational Procurement Initiatives.

■ Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations

James Cartlidge: [\[40173\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 2.8a of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations

2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40174\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 2.10a of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40175\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 3.1a of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40176\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 3.1b of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40177\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 3.1c of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40178\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 3.2a of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40179\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 3.2b of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40180\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 3.2c of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40181\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 3.3a of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40182\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 3.3b of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40183\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 3.3c of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40184\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 3.3d of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40185\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 3.4a of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40186\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 3.4b of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40187\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 3.5a of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40188\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 3.5b of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations

2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40189\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 3.6a of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40205\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 3.7a of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40206\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 3.8a of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40207\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 3.8b of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40208\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 3.8a of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40209\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 3.8d of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40210\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 3.8e of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40211\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 3.8f of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40212\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 3.8g of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40213\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 4.1a of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40214\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 4.1b of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40215\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 4.2a of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40216\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 4.2b of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40217\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 4.2c of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40218\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 4.2d of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations

2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40219\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 4.3a of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40220\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 4.3b of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40221\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 4.4a of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40222\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 4.4b of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40223\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 4.5a of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40224\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 4.5b of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40225\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 4.5c of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40226\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 4.5d of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40227\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 4.6a of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40228\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 4.6b of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40229\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 4.6c of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40230\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 4.6d of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40231\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 4.6e of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40232\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 4.7a of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40233\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 5.1a of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations

2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40234\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 5.2a of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40235\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 5.2b of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40236\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 5.2c of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40237\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 5.3a of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40238\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 5.3b of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40239\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 5.3c of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40240\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 5.3d of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40241\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 5.3e of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40242\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 5.3f of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40243\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 5.4a of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40244\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 5.5a of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40245\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 5.5b of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40246\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 5.5c of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40247\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 5.6a of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40248\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 5.6b of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations

2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40249\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 5.6c of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40250\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 5.6d of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40251\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 5.6e of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40252\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 5.6f of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40253\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 5.6g of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40254\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 5.7a of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40255\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 5.8a of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40256\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 5.8b of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40257\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 5.9a of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40258\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 5.10a of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40259\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 5.10b of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40260\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 5.11a of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40261\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 5.11b of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40262\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 5.11c of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40263\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 5.11d of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations

2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40264\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 5.12a of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40265\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 6.1a of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40266\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 6.1b of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

James Cartlidge: [\[40267\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recommendation 6.1c of the report by his Department entitled the Review of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations 2019, published on 24 March 2020, (a) has been (i) implemented, (ii) paused, (iii) not pursued, (iv) transferred and (b) is in progress.

Al Carns:

It is taking time to collate the information needed to answer the hon. Member's questions. I will write to him very shortly and will place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

■ **Ukraine: Unmanned Air Systems**

Dr Neil Shastri-Hurst: [\[40307\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what progress his Department has made on delivering the Ukraine-UK uncrewed systems initiative.

Luke Pollard:

Since February 2022, the UK has provided over 10,000 drones to Ukraine covering a broad range of capabilities including intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, logistical and strike drones for both the land and maritime domain. This includes 400 drones funded via the UK-led International Fund for Ukraine, and 5,000 via the Drone Capability Coalition which the UK co-leads with Latvia.

This Government is steadfast in our commitment to support Ukraine for as long as it takes. On 10 July 2024, the Prime Minister announced that the UK will provide

Ukraine with £3 billion a year of military support for as long as needed. This year support totals £4.5 billion.

■ **USA: Intelligence Services**

Helen Maguire: [\[41672\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if his Department will undertake a review of intelligence-sharing structures with the US.

Luke Pollard:

The US and the UK have the closest of relationships; our defence, security and intelligence are completely intertwined. No two countries are as close as our two countries, and at a time like this, it would be a mistake to suggest that any weakening of that link is the way forward for security and defence in Europe. As such, the Department has no plans to undertake a review of our intelligence sharing arrangements with the US.

EDUCATION

■ **Academies: Admissions**

Claire Young: [\[36905\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that unlawful academy trust admissions policies are amended for future admissions rounds.

Catherine McKinnell:

Once a school's admission arrangements have been determined, anyone who believes they are unfair or unlawful may submit an objection to the Schools Adjudicator.

Where the Adjudicator determines that a school's admission arrangements are unlawful, the admission authority has a statutory duty to revise its admission arrangements within two months of the decision, or by 28 February following the decision, whichever is sooner, unless an alternative timescale is specified by the Adjudicator.

An Adjudicator's determination is binding and enforceable by my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education.

■ **Adoption**

Sojan Joseph: [\[37457\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what data her Department hold on the number of cases of adoption (a) disruption and (b) breakdown for each of the last five years; and if she will publish that data.

Sojan Joseph:

[37458]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will take steps to ensure that (a) regional adoption agencies and (b) local authorities meet with representatives of parents affected by adoption (a) disruption and (b) breakdown to help prevent further cases.

Janet Daby:

The department does not collect information centrally on the number of adoptions that have been disrupted or adoptions that breakdown. We only publish information on whether children starting to be looked after in any given year were known to have been previously adopted. This information is in table C1 of the 'Children looked after in England' statistical release, which can be found at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/92f77d0d-7e95-45a1-f1db-08dd5cc661f7>.

The department is providing funding of £3 million in this financial year to Adoption England to improve adoption support services in Regional Adoption Agencies. This includes developing more multi-disciplinary teams across the country to provide specialist and therapeutic support to families, and the development of national standards for adoption support. It also includes a new framework for an early support core offer, 'Becoming a Family', for the first twelve to eighteen months of placement, and an Adoption Support Plan to guide assessments of a family's support needs. All are designed to improve support and reduce the risk of an adoption breakdown.

Adoption England are also planning work to develop a national protocol on how children's services, front door services and adoption support teams work together to better support families at risk of adoption disruption.

Adoption England and Regional Adoption Agencies work closely with adopters on all of their projects to improve adoption support services. This includes considering the latest evidence of why adoption disruptions have occurred in their agencies and across the country.

■ Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund

Richard Foord:

[38694]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will take steps to make the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund a permanent initiative.

Janet Daby:

An announcement on funding for the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund will be made shortly. All future decisions will be considered as part of the next spending review.

Dr Luke Evans:

[39569]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions she is having with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the future of the Adoption and Special Guardian Support Fund.

Dr Luke Evans: [\[39570\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she is taking steps to ensure the continuance of the funding for the Adoption and Special Guardian Support Fund after March 2025.

Dr Luke Evans: [\[39571\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the level of (a) importance of the Adoption and Special Guardian Support Fund to families with adopted children and (b) funding provided to families out of the Fund in the last reported financial year.

Janet Daby:

As part of spending review discussions, there are regular conversations between the department and His Majesty's Treasury. We will shortly be finalising business planning decisions on how we will allocate the department's budget for the next financial year. All decisions regarding the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund (ASGSF) are being made as part of these discussions.

The ASGSF has provided valuable support to both adoptive and special guardianship families during 2024/25, helping them to thrive and enabling children and young people to make the best start in life. In 2023/24, the last full financial year, the Fund supported a total of 19,495 children and families with funding of £49,191,908.

Sir Julian Smith: [\[39824\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund (ASGSF) on the (a) well-being and (b) development of (i) adopted children and (ii) those with Special Guardianship Orders; and if she will consider making the ASGSF permanent.

Sir Julian Smith: [\[39825\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to support families using the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund; and if she will make an announcement on the future of that fund.

Janet Daby:

The impact of the adoption and special guardianship support fund (ASGSF) on both adopted children and those with Special Guardianship Orders is currently being assessed from multiple angles. The National Institute for Health Research is currently conducting a randomised control trial into dyadic developmental psychotherapy, one of the main therapies the ASGSF funds. Moreover, the department now collects data from outcomes measurement tools for ASGSF-funded therapies. As therapy treatment comes to an end, these data will give an overall picture of the impact and adequacy of individual ASGSF-funded therapies.

The Institute of Public Care (IPC) at Oxford Brookes University carried out a three year evaluation from 2018 to 2021 on behalf of the department. The report found that a high proportion, 83%, of parents and guardians participating in the longitudinal

survey found the funded support helpful or very helpful overall. The IPC report also found a 'statistically significant (substantial, with large effect size) improvement in parent and guardian estimates of the extent to which the main aim of the funded support had been met by the end of the intervention'. The report also states that parents and guardians scored on average '7 out of 10 in relation to a question about the extent to which positive change(s) for their child and/or family had been sustained six months since the conclusion of adult skills fundASF-funded support.' The full report can be accessed at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6391c41a8fa8f53ba783e8ad/Evaluation_of_the_Adoption_Support_Fund_2018_to_2022_-_summary.pdf.

Announcements on funding for the ASGSF from April 2025 will be made shortly. However, ASGSF applications are generally permitted to extend up to 12 months, allowing children and families to receive continuing therapy across financial years. Where applications are agreed, therapy which starts before March 2025 may therefore continue into the next financial year, under previously agreed transitional funding arrangements. Families may access the helpline operated by the department's ASGSF delivery partner for questions about the ASGSF's operation.

■ Apprentices

Damian Hinds:

[36060]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what information her Department holds on the average (a) length of (b) time off the job in apprenticeships in (i) England (ii) Germany.

Janet Daby:

The average expected duration of an apprenticeship in England is published in the apprenticeships statistics publication, which is available here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/e4c10266-a793-4c29-0de2-08dd5ccbf23a>.

The 'Apprenticeship evaluation 2023: learner, non-completer and employer surveys' contains survey-based information on apprenticeship duration and off-the-job training hours undertaken, noting that proportions are given rather than averages:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-evaluation-2023-learner-non-completer-and-employer-surveys>.

The last published estimate of average off-the-job training hours in England covers the 2018/19 academic year. See Table 3 in the 'Further education and skills: November 2019 statistics' publication here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5ddd3bbd40f0b650d9ba9b15/FE_and_Skills_commentary_November_2019.pdf.

The publication of off-the-job training hours estimates was stopped from the 2019/20 academic year onwards after a review of their quality, particularly regarding the robustness of comparisons over time.

Equivalent information for Germany is not held by the department.

■ Breakfast Clubs: Finance

Damian Hinds: [\[34815\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the evidential basis is for her Department's funding allocations to schools for the National School Breakfast programme.

Damian Hinds: [\[34816\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to measure the actual costs for the schools participating in the existing National School Breakfast programme.

Stephen Morgan:

The national school breakfast programme (NSBP) is a demand-led programme, established under the previous government. It is a food-only programme which does not include staffing costs. Eligible schools place breakfast food orders with the department's supplier, Family Action, via their portal, rather than being allocated funding directly. Schools are charged 25% of food and delivery costs by the supplier, with the department covering the remaining 75% of the costs. Schools can therefore order as much food as they need on the system.

The department works closely with Family Action to monitor take-up of the programme by eligible schools, alongside monitoring school-level food and delivery costs. The number of schools on the scheme is relatively stable.

■ Childcare

Maya Ellis: [\[36959\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of opportunities for childcare providers to feedback on plans for the sector.

Stephen Morgan:

The department is working with the sector to create an integrated early years and childcare system that works for parents and gives every child the best start in life.

Childcare providers' feedback, intelligence and engagement are at the heart of the department's way of working.

Departmental officials and ministers meet regularly with sector representatives including the National Partnership in Early Learning and Childcare (NPELC), the London Early Years Foundation (LEAF), the Early Education and Childcare Coalition (EECC) and the Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY) to gather feedback and inform policy development and delivery.

Departmental officials meet regularly with each local authority and ministers visit settings across England to gather feedback from managers, staff, childminders and parents.

Since January 2024, we have been running provider roadshows across England to support the expansion of childcare entitlements, giving hundreds of providers the opportunity to speak directly to policy officials on a range of early years topics.

Zöe Franklin:

[\[38303\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, for what reason eligibility dates for free childcare provision are set from 1 April rather than aligning with the tax year ending on 5 April; and if she will make an assessment of the potential impact of the eligibility date on families.

Stephen Morgan:

The entitlements work on a termly basis, so children become eligible from the term after they reach the relevant age and/or after they or their parents meet the eligibility criteria. Terms begin on 1 September, 1 January or 1 April. Therefore, depending on when a child is born and when the eligibility criteria are met, there will be differing periods to wait until the relevant termly date.

Termly deadlines enable local authorities and childcare providers to better plan and ensure sufficient early years places are available for parents each term by delineating when children are likely to enter into a place.

■ Childcare: Costs

Robin Swann:

[\[38304\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to support parents with recent trends in the cost of daycare facilities.

Stephen Morgan:

Education is a devolved matter, and the response outlines the information for England only.

It is the department's ambition that parents have access to high quality, affordable and flexible early education and childcare.

Next year alone, the department plans to provide over £8 billion for the early years entitlements, which is a more than 30% increase compared to 2024/25, as we roll out the expansion of the entitlements, so eligible working parents of children aged from nine months can access 30 hours of funded childcare.

From the start of September 2024, eligible working parents have been entitled to 15 hours a week of early education and care from the term after their child turns nine months. So far, over 320,000 additional parents are now accessing a place. Going further, from September 2025, eligible working parents will be able to access 30 hours of early education and childcare a week, over 38 weeks of the year, from the term after their child turns nine months until they start school. The department has also taken action to protect parents from reported instances of very high additional charges on top of their entitlement, ensuring the funded hours remain accessible and affordable for parents. We have updated our statutory guidance, confirming that whilst providers can charge for some extras, these charges must not be mandatory.

Parents may also be eligible for childcare support through Tax-Free Childcare or Universal Credit Childcare.

The department also wants to ensure that parents are aware of and accessing all government funded childcare support they are eligible for. We are raising awareness of the government-funded childcare support available via the Childcare Choices website to stimulate increased take-up by eligible families, because this could make a significant financial difference to families.

Neil Duncan-Jordan: [\[38276\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she plans to take to ensure that childcare is affordable for working parents.

Neil Duncan-Jordan: [\[38277\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she plans to take to ensure that all families have access to (a) affordable and (b) quality childcare.

Stephen Morgan:

As part of our Plan for Change, this government is committed to giving every child the best start in life. The department has set a milestone of a record proportion – 75% – of children to be starting school ready to learn. We will measure our progress through the percentage of children reaching a good level of development in the early years foundation stage profile assessment by 2028.

To help deliver this ambition, from the start of September 2024, eligible working parents have been entitled to 15 hours a week of early education and care from the term after their child turns nine months old. The department is expanding the childcare entitlements so that, from September 2025, eligible working parents can access 30 hours of early education and childcare a week.

Parents may also be eligible for childcare support through Tax-Free Childcare or Universal Credit childcare.

Next year alone, the department plans to provide over £8 billion for the early years entitlements, which represents a more than 30% increase compared to the 2024/25 financial year.

The early years pupil premium rate has increased by over 45% compared to the 2024/25 financial year, equivalent to up to £570 per eligible child per year. We are also providing further supplementary funding of £75 million for the early years expansion grant and £25 million through the forthcoming National Insurance contributions grant for public sector employers in early years.

The government is also rolling out plans for the first phase of school based nurseries, ensuring families across the country have access to high quality childcare and early education. The first wave of up to 300 schools to be allocated nursery funding will be announced in spring.

As we grow the childcare system, it must remain fair and accessible to all parents. The department has taken action to protect parents from reported instances of very

high additional charges or 'top-up fees' on top of their entitlement, ensuring the funded hours remain accessible and affordable for families.

The department is determined to create change in the approach to early years, focusing on high quality early education, celebrating and supporting early years careers, and embedding the sector into the wider education system. We are delivering programmes to support the sector to attract talented staff and childminders by creating conditions for improved recruitment, alongside programmes to better utilise the skills of the existing workforce.

■ **Childcare: Fees and Charges**

Dr Caroline Johnson:

[R] [\[41472\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the impact of the £100k cut off for free childcare provision on (a) overall workforce productivity, (b) willingness of impacted employees to take on additional hours and responsibilities and (c) willingness of impacted NHS clinical staff to take on additional hours of work and responsibilities.

Stephen Morgan:

All families are eligible for universal 15 hours of free childcare for three and four year-olds, including those who earn over £100,000.

The £100,000 level was chosen to correspond with income tax thresholds and to be easily understandable for parents. Only a very small proportion of parents, 3.8% of parents of three and four year-olds in 2023/24, earn over the £100,000 threshold.

The government needs to use public funds in a way that provides value for money and considers it reasonable to target this funding at those individuals earning under £100,000 adjusted net income.

■ **Childcare: Finance**

Neil Duncan-Jordan:

[\[38275\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she plans to take to increase funding for the early years childcare sector.

Stephen Morgan:

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education has been clear in her commitment to early years. Despite tough decisions to get our public finances back on track, this government has increased investment in the early years sector to drive forward progress towards our plan for change target of a record number of children starting school ready to learn.

In the 2025/26 financial year alone, this government plans to spend over £8 billion on early years entitlements. We have also announced the largest ever uplift to the early years pupil premium, increasing the rate by over 45% compared to the 2024/25 financial year, raising it to the equivalent of up to £570 per eligible child per year.

On top of this we are providing further supplementary funding of £75 million for the early years expansion grant to support the sector to provide the additional places and workforce needed by September 2025.

We are also providing £25 million through the forthcoming Employer National Insurance Contributions Grant for public sector employers in the early years.

Future spending decisions beyond the 2025/26 financial year will be announced at the next spending review.

Steff Aquarone:

[R] [\[38323\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to support early years childcare providers with their funding arrangements.

Stephen Morgan:

The government has been clear in our commitment to the early years. It is our ambition that all families have access to high-quality, affordable and flexible early education and care, improving the life chances for every child and the work choices for every parent. That also means ensuring the sector is financially sustainable and confident as it continues to deliver the entitlements and high-quality early years provision going forward.

That is why, despite tough decisions to get our public finances back on track, this government has increased investment in the early years to drive forward progress towards our Plan for Change target of a record number of children starting school ready to learn. This government will continue to prioritise and invest, supporting early education and childcare providers with the costs they face.

In the 2025/26 financial year alone, the department plans to spend over £8 billion on early years entitlements. We announced the largest ever uplift to the early years pupil premium, increasing the rate by over 45% compared to 2024/25 financial year, equivalent to up to £570 per eligible child per year. On top of this we are providing further supplementary funding of £75 million for the early years expansion grant to support the sector as they prepare to deliver the final phase of expanded childcare entitlements from September 2025, recognising the significant level of expansion needed and the effort and planning this will require.

The department is also providing £25 million through the forthcoming National Insurance Contributions Grant for public sector employers in the early years.

Martin Wrigley:

[\[38750\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 18 February 2025 to Question 30796 on Childcare: Finance, if she will collect data from councils on (a) how childcare providers deliver entitlements and (b) how many and what proportion of childcare providers allow parents to stretch the 38 weeks of paid childcare to cover 52 weeks.

Stephen Morgan:

The department collects data directly from childcare providers on how many deliver early years entitlements, and how these can be used by families.

For example, Table 7.5 of the most recent survey report, published in 2024, shows the proportion of providers where parents can use funded hours throughout the year, by entitlement. This can be found in the additional supporting files section at:

<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/childcare-and-early-years-provider-survey/2024>.

■ Childcare: Rural Areas**Stuart Anderson:****[35757]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to tackle childcare deserts in rural areas.

Stephen Morgan:

It is the department's ambition that all families have access to high quality, affordable and flexible early education and care, improving the life chances for every child and the work choices for every parent.

In the 2025/26 financial year alone, the department plans to provide over £8 billion for early years entitlements, a more than 30% increase compared to the 2024/25 financial year, so eligible working parents of children aged from nine months can access 30 hours of funded childcare from September this year. To support the sector during this period of expansion, the government is providing further supplementary funding of £75 million for the early years expansion grant. We also announced the largest ever uplift to the early years pupil premium, increasing the rate by over 45% compared to the 2024/25 financial year, equivalent to up to £570 per eligible child per year. On top of this, providers will receive £25 million through the forthcoming National Insurance Contributions grant for public sector employers in the early years.

The government's plan to deliver 3,000 school-based nurseries and will help deliver on our commitment to ensure families right across the country have access to high quality childcare and early education. Funding will be allocated to the first wave of nursery projects in spring 2025 to support delivery for the first cohort of places from September. We know that families in some areas are struggling to find childcare places which meet their needs, so we will be working with schools and local childcare providers to deliver much-needed places across all our communities.

Under Section 6 of the Childcare Act 2006, local authorities are responsible for ensuring that the provision of childcare is sufficient to meet the requirements of parents in their area. Part B of the 'Early education and childcare' statutory guidance for local authorities highlights that local authorities are required to report annually to elected council members on how they are meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare, and to make this report available and accessible to parents. The department has regular contact with local authorities in England about the sufficiency of childcare and any issues being faced. Where local authorities report sufficiency

challenges, we discuss what action the local authority is taking to address those issues and, where needed, support the local authority with any specific requirements through our childcare sufficiency support contract. We do not currently have any reports of sufficiency issues in any local authority.

■ Children in Care: Mental Health Services

Pippa Heylings: [\[39991\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of the impact of the adoption and special guardianship and support fund on looked after children's access to mental health (a) diagnosis and (b) treatment in South Cambridgeshire.

Pippa Heylings: [\[39992\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what her planned timetable is for an announcement on future funding for the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund.

Janet Daby:

The adoption and special guardianship support fund (ASGSF) provides trauma- and attachment-related therapy and specialist assessments for children and families, where the child has previously been in local authority care and has been adopted or is under a special guardianship order (SGO) or child arrangements order (CAO). The ASGSF has given adopted and SGO/CAO children and families in South Cambridgeshire access to a variety of therapeutic interventions designed to help them with the impact of their early life trauma. Although the department continues to assess the impact of the ASGSF on children, it does not collect information centrally to assess the impact of the ASGSF on wider mental health diagnosis or treatment.

Announcements on funding for the ASGSF will be made as soon as possible.

■ Children: Domestic Abuse

Daisy Cooper: [\[36779\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of making tutoring available to children who are temporarily out of school as a result of moving out of area to seek refuge from domestic violence.

Catherine McKinnell:

Under section 19 of the Education Act 1996, local authorities must arrange suitable full-time education for children of compulsory school age who would not receive suitable education without such provision. This applies whether the child is on the admission register of a school or not and to whatever type of school they attend.

It is for the local authority, as commissioner, to determine the type of educational provision that is put in place. However, all placements should be suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude, and any special educational needs they may have.

Provision should be of good quality and delivered by high quality staff with suitable training, experience and safeguarding checks.

Remote education should not be viewed as an equal alternative to face-to-face learning, and as such the department would only expect it to be used as a last resort when the alternative would be no education. In such cases, remote education can have the benefit of allowing children without a school place to keep on track with their education.

■ Children: Education and Mental Health Services

Alex Brewer:

[\[34145\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that children in kinship care receive adequate (a) education and (b) mental health support.

Janet Daby:

The department is committed to ensuring that children in kinship care get the support that they need to thrive. There are a number of ways in which we support their educational and mental health needs.

From September 2024, the department expanded the role of virtual school heads on a non-statutory basis to include championing the education, attendance, and attainment of children in kinship care, ensuring that more children in kinship care receive the help they need to thrive at school. The department is now mandating this through the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill. This will ensure that all children in kinship care, regardless of whether they spent time in local authority care, will ensure they receive consistent support to improve their educational outcomes. This will also give kinship carers better access to and understanding of educational resources and support, which will increase visibility of these children in education and ensure they are not overlooked.

In addition, the department is providing over £2.9 billion of pupil premium funding to improve the educational outcomes of disadvantaged pupils in England, including looked after and previously looked after children. Schools can direct pupil premium spending where the need is greatest, including to pupils with other identified needs, such as children in kinship care. Schools can also use pupil premium on whole class approaches that will benefit all pupils, such as on high quality teaching.

This government is committed to improving mental health support for all children and young people. This is critical to high and rising standards in schools and breaking down barriers to opportunity, helping pupils to achieve and thrive in education. The government will deliver on this commitment through providing access to specialist mental health professionals in every school, so every young person has access to early support to address problems before they escalate.

As of April 2024, NHS-funded mental health support teams covered 44% of pupils in schools and learners in further education in England, and are expected to cover at least 50% by the end of March 2025. The department will also be putting in place

new young futures hubs, including access to mental health support workers, and will recruit an additional 8,500 new mental health staff to treat children and adults.

To support education staff, the department provides a range of guidance and practical resources on promoting and supporting pupils' mental health and wellbeing. For example, a resources hub for mental health leads, and a toolkit to help schools choose evidence-based early support for pupils.

The Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund also helps adoptive and special guardianship order children and their families access therapeutic interventions related to trauma and attachment.

■ Classroom Assistants: Recruitment

Freddie van Mierlo:

[39717]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to help support the recruitment of qualified learning support assistants.

Catherine McKinnell:

The government values and recognises the professionalism of the entire school workforce. School support staff, including learning support assistants, play a vital role in children's education. They are crucial to ensuring we give children the best possible life chances.

The School Support Staff Negotiating Body (SSSNB) will mean that employers and employee representatives come together to negotiate terms and conditions and pay for school support staff, to ensure that support staff are properly recognised and rewarded for the work they do. The body will also be tasked with establishing a national terms and conditions handbook and advising on suitable training and career progression routes that recognise the varied and vital roles support staff undertake.

The SSSNB will help address recruitment and retention challenges state-funded schools are facing for support staff. This, in turn, will support work to drive high and rising standards in schools and ensure we give children the best possible life chances.

■ Defence: Training

Ben Obese-Jecty:

[38193]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether her Department is taking steps to help tackle the skills shortage in the defence workforce.

Janet Daby:

This government recognises the critical role that a skilled workforce plays in supporting national defence, including meeting the needs of the armed forces and of a vibrant, innovative and competitive defence industry.

The department funds a range of high quality qualifications and apprenticeships that support learners wishing to pursue a career in technical occupations in areas such as defence. These include, for example:

- A number of apprenticeships in the defence sector to support the development of skilled workforces, including level 2 HM forces serviceperson and level 4 intelligence analyst, with the armed forces offering a range of apprenticeships across the frontline commands.
- 20 T Levels, including a range of science, technology, engineering and mathematics subjects such as engineering, science, and digital, which can open up great career opportunities in the defence sector.
- Higher technical qualifications (HTQs), which are occupation-focused level 4-5 qualifications, approved and quality marked as providing the skills demanded in the workplace by employers. To date, 263 have been approved across thirteen occupational routes, covering occupations relevant to defence, such as engineering manufacturing technician, space engineering technician and cybersecurity technologist.

More generally, higher education contributes to defence through technical fields such as aerospace engineering and cybersecurity, as well as social science fields such as politics, military strategy, and international relations.

■ Department for Education: Equality

Mr Peter Bedford:

[38858]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether they have made an estimate of the potential impact of abolishing diversity, equity and inclusion roles in their Department on annual staffing costs.

Janet Daby:

The department has not made an estimate on the potential impact of abolishing diversity, equity and inclusion roles on our annual staffing costs.

More information on the Civil Service Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Expenditure guidance, published in May 2024, can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-equality-diversity-and-inclusion-expenditure-guidance>.

■ Department for Education: Written Questions

Mr Peter Bedford:

[33800]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether her Department is using AI software in responding to written parliamentary questions.

Janet Daby:

The department sometimes uses Artificial Intelligence software tools to support the drafting process for responding to written parliamentary questions. All responses are reviewed by policy officials to ensure accuracy and consistency with government policy and are signed off by Ministers.

■ Dorset Studio School: Finance**Edward Morello:****[40408]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will meet with the hon. Member for West Dorset to discuss funding for Dorset studio School.

Catherine McKinnell:

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education and Ministers meet with a wide range of parliamentary colleagues to discuss schools in their constituencies. Should a specific meeting be required, the hon. Member for West Dorset may contact the Secretary of State's office.

The schools national funding formula (NFF) allocates funding primarily based on pupil numbers and pupil characteristics, including additional funding for deprived pupils and pupils with low prior attainment. Schools also receive funding which does not change with pupil numbers, such as lump sum contributions to fixed costs.

The NFF is used to calculate funding allocations at local authority level. Local authorities' own funding formulae determine the actual allocations for individual schools and academies, including studio schools, in their area.

Dorset Studio School is attracting nearly £2.9 million in the 2025/26 financial year, or £7,950 per pupil, through the schools NFF. However, as schools' final allocations are determined by local authority funding formulae and based on updated pupil numbers, the final funding allocation may differ from this. The academy general allocation guide for the 2025/26 academic year provides further guidance on understanding studio school funding allocations for the next academic year, and can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academies-general-annual-grant-allocation-guides-2025-to-2026>.

With regards to capital funding, ensuring schools and colleges have the resources and buildings they need is a key part of our mission to break down barriers to opportunity and give every young person the best start in life. The feasibility and project costs for Dorset Studio School are currently being reviewed and the relevant approvals will then be sought.

■ Educational Institutions and Nurseries: Concrete**Munira Wilson:****[37313]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many (a) nurseries, (b) primary schools, (c) secondary schools and (d) 16-18 colleges identified as containing reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete and listed on the Schools Rebuilding Programme (i) were scheduled to be and (ii) were (A) complete and (B) in progress by 1 March 2025.

Stephen Morgan:

The department is committed to improving the condition of the school and college estate through the department's annual funding for the School Rebuilding Programme (SRP) and by fixing the problem of reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC). The government is funding the removal of RAAC from schools and

colleges in England, permanently removing RAAC either through grant funding or the SRP. All schools and colleges confirmed to have RAAC are providing full-time, face-to-face education for all pupils and have suitable mitigations in place.

For schools and colleges receiving grants to permanently remove RAAC, it is for responsible bodies to develop project plans that suit their individual circumstances, drawing on support from the department as needed. The department is encouraging responsible bodies to plan their projects for completion as soon as realistically possible, although settings will need sufficient time in school holidays for works to take place. The department is continuing to support responsible bodies as they take this forward.

All schools in the SRP are prioritised for delivery according to the condition of their buildings, their readiness to proceed and the efficiency of delivery. This includes schools who will have RAAC permanently removed through the SRP. The department also takes into account the suitability and longevity of any temporary accommodation schools may have in place. Expected delivery timeframes have been communicated to all responsible bodies and specific start dates are communicated at least a month in advance of the project entering delivery. Once a school enters delivery, a project team carries out a feasibility study which determines the scope of the works. All schools with confirmed RAAC in SRP are progressing as planned.

■ Educational Institutions: Discipline

Mr Peter Bedford:

[\[39360\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill on student discipline in educational settings.

Stephen Morgan:

Good behaviour in schools is essential to ensure that all pupils, no matter their background, can achieve and thrive.

Every pupil deserves to learn in a safe, calm classroom and the government will always support our hard-working and dedicated teachers to make this happen.

A Child Rights Impact Assessment has been published assessing the impact of all measures in the Bill on children and young people, including any impact on pupil behaviour in schools.

■ English Language and Mathematics: GCSE

Neil O'Brien:

[\[36124\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the average proportion of students was obtaining the equivalent of (a) Grade 5 or better and (b) Grade 4 or better in GCSE (i) English and (ii) Maths in each Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index decile in each year since 2010.

Catherine McKinnell:

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

However, the department publishes the percentage of pupils achieving grades 4/5 or above in English and mathematics GCSEs by Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) deciles.

Data back to 2014/15 is published in the annual key stage 4/GCSE and equivalent statistical releases, which are available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-gcses-key-stage-4>. To find data by IDACI, see 'pupil residency and school location tables'.

Reformed GCSEs using the 9-1 grading scale were first introduced in 2016/17 with most GCSEs exams using the scale by 2018/19.

English Language: Assessments**Jonathan Davies:****[37034]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of the impact of recent changes to the Functional Skills Level 2 English exam on students with autism and other learning disabilities.

Catherine McKinnell:

Reformed mathematics and English Functional Skills qualifications (FSQs) were introduced for first teaching from September 2019. As is standard practice, the department worked alongside Ofqual to evaluate the reforms in 2023. The department's evaluation of FSQs found that the content of the qualifications is continuing to meet the needs of employers and learners. Ofqual's concurrent evaluation found that the assessments are appropriate against this content but that awarding organisations need to make improvements in some areas, which the regulator is acting on.

Ofqual's evaluation did hear reports of a lack of understanding around the availability and application of reasonable adjustments, and in some cases providers reported that students were not able to access appropriate reasonable adjustments. The regulator has considered this stakeholder feedback as part of a wider review of awarding organisations' application of reasonable adjustments in vocational and technical qualifications, with a view to improving their practice.

Foster Care: Registration and Regulation**Lisa Smart:****[38412]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether her Department has considered alternative models for the (a) oversight and (b) registration of foster carers; and if she will make an assessment of the potential impact of alternative models on the adequacy of (i) safeguarding and (ii) consistency.

Janet Daby:

The department is considering the merits of a national register of foster carers. We will continue to review the costs and benefits of a national register versus our other investments into foster care.

We recognise that some stakeholders are in favour of a register, but we are also mindful of increasing any burden on local authorities and social workers, given our wider drive to reduce workload and unnecessary bureaucracy in the system.

Hearing Impairment: Children**Mr James Frith:**[\[40298\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she has made an assessment of the potential impact of the Early Language Support for Every Child pilot programme on improved outcomes for deaf babies and children.

Catherine McKinnell:

The department knows that children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities frequently require access to additional support from a broad specialist workforce across education, health and care.

Early Language Support for Every Child (ELSEC) is a pilot programme operating in the department's nine Change Programme Partnerships. It seeks to improve capacity and knowledge of the workforce that supports children with emerging, mild to moderate speech, language and communication needs in early years and school settings.

ELSEC does not directly support deaf babies and children. However, the intention is that needs will be identified earlier and those who require specialist support will receive this in a more timely fashion, which could include children with hearing impairments.

The department recognises the importance of teachers of the deaf and is continuing to support the pipeline of these teachers. There are currently seven providers of the Mandatory Qualification in Sensory Impairment (MQSI). Teachers who teach a class of pupils with sensory impairment are required to hold MQSI. Teachers working in an advisory or peripatetic role are also strongly advised to complete MQSI.

The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) has developed a sensory impairment apprenticeship. IfATE worked with universities, local authorities and sector representatives, including the National Deaf Children's Society, the Royal National Institute of Blind People and the British Association of Teachers of Deaf Children and Young People to develop the qualification. The apprenticeship is expected to be available from September 2025 and will open up a paid, work-based route into teaching children and young people with sensory impairments. This will improve the supply of those qualified to teach this important cohort and further help to improve their outcomes.

■ Holiday Activities and Food Programme

Rachael Maskell:

[33930]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to provide continuity of the Holiday and Activities Fund after 31 March 2025.

Stephen Morgan:

The government announced over £200 million funding for the holiday activities and food (HAF) programme for 2025/26, as part of the 2024 spending review and set out in the Autumn Budget 2024. The future of the HAF programme beyond 31 March 2026 is subject to the next governmental spending review, which is due to take place later this year.

■ Music: Education

Mr Andrew Snowden:

[36182]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to help encourage young people to learn to play a musical instrument.

Catherine McKinnell:

This government believes that music is an essential part of the well-rounded and enriching education that every child deserves. That is why music is included in the national curriculum for all students aged 5 to 14 who attend maintained schools.

To support the delivery of music education, the government provides annual funding of £79 million for the Music Hubs programme. Music Hubs offer a range of services, including musical instrument tuition, instrument loaning, and whole-class ensemble teaching.

To widen access to musical instruments, the government has invested £25 million in capital funding for musical instruments, equipment and technology. This funding enables Music Hubs to better cater to the needs of the children and young people they work with.

Additionally, the government has invested £2 million to support the Music Opportunities Pilot. This pilot programme aims to help disadvantaged children and young people, as well as those with special educational needs and disabilities, learn how to play an instrument of their choice or learn to sing to a high standard.

■ Overseas Students: Oppression

Helen Maguire:

[39364]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to safeguard students from (a) Hong Kong, (b) Tibet, (c) Taiwan and (d) Xinjiang, who are persecuted by the Chinese authorities on UK campuses.

Janet Daby:

The first duty of the government is to keep the country safe and this government is committed to responding to foreign interference, including those actions which

amount to transnational repression. The government takes protection of individuals' rights, freedoms and safety very seriously, and any attempt by any foreign state to intimidate, harass or harm individuals in the UK will not be tolerated. Anyone who thinks they might be a victim should report incidents or suspicious activity to the Police via 101, a local police station or 999 in emergencies. As autonomous institutions, the department also expects universities to have robust processes in place to prevent and tackle incidents of harassment and abuse on campuses.

The department is taking specific steps to ensure our world-leading universities remain free from foreign interference. This includes the implementation of the new complaints scheme in the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023, which will offer a focussed route for concerns, including relating to foreign interference in academic freedom and free speech, to be escalated. The government is also working at pace on the implementation of the Foreign Influence Registration Scheme, which will require registration of foreign directed activity involving specific governments and entities where it is necessary to protect the safety or interests of the UK. The department expects the scheme to commence summer this year.

The department continues to work closely with the sector to increase their understanding of the risks and their ability to respond. We are conducting an internal review, informed by engagement with the regulator, sector, academics impacted by foreign interference, as well as international partners, to assess existing approaches to managing the risk of foreign interference and what more support they might need.

■ Period Poverty: Greater London

Jas Athwal:

[36952]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to address period poverty in East London.

Stephen Morgan:

Nobody should have to miss out on education because of their period, which is why the department provides free period products to girls and women in their place of study, through the period products scheme. The scheme aims to remove periods as a barrier to accessing education, addresses pupils being unable to afford period products and aims to destigmatise menstruation.

Since its launch in January 2020, 99% of secondary schools and 87% of post-16 organisations in England have used the scheme to order period products.

The department publishes statistics regarding the scheme's operation, which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/period-products-scheme-management-information>.

■ Planning: Apprentices**Blake Stephenson:** [\[39183\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether her Department has made an assessment of the potential impact of apprenticeship levy reforms on Chartered Town Planner Level 7 Apprenticeships.

Janet Daby:

I refer the hon. Member for Mid Bedfordshire to the answer of 20 January 2025 to Question [23140](#).

■ Pre-school Education: Employers' Contributions**Samantha Niblett:** [\[37421\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether her Department is taking steps to support early years providers with increases in employer National Insurance contributions.

Stephen Morgan:

This government has had to take some tough decisions to get public finances back on track, but we are continuing to invest in the early years sector, supporting the delivery of expanded childcare entitlements and recognising the vital role the sector plays in giving children the best start in life.

In the 2025/26 financial year alone, this government plans to spend over £8 billion on early years entitlements, with an additional £75 million provided in an expansion grant to ensure there are sufficient places and staff for eligible working families to access their 30 hours entitlement from September 2025. Further, we announced the largest ever uplift to the early years pupil premium, increasing the rate by over 45% compared to 2024/25 financial year, which is equivalent to up to £570 per eligible child per year. On top of this, we are providing £25 million through the forthcoming National Insurance Contributions grant for public sector employers in early years.

■ Primary Education: Children's Play**Oliver Ryan:** [\[40386\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to ensure children in (a) key stage 1 and (b) key stage 2 have sufficient access to (i) high-quality play provision and (ii) adequate time for play at school.

Catherine McKinnell:

Play is essential to development and learning for young children. This is recognised in the early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework, and schools, governing bodies and academy trusts are responsible for ensuring the school day includes opportunities for social interaction, physical activity and enrichment activities.

Government guidance sets out the expectation that a school week is a minimum of 32.5 hours inclusive of breaks, providing lots of opportunity for schools to incorporate time for play and other activities.

■ Private Education: Employers' Contributions

Stuart Anderson:

[\[40363\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of increases to employer's National Insurance Contributions on independent specialist schools.

Stephen Morgan:

The government has taken the decision to increase the rate of employer National Insurance contributions (NIC) from 6 April 2025 by 1.2 percentage points, from 13.8% to 15%, to ensure it can deliver the investment that public services need.

From April 2025, the government is also increasing the Employment Allowance to £10,500 and expanding this to all eligible employers by removing the £100,000 eligibility threshold. Over half of employers with NIC liabilities will see no change or gain overall from this measure.

The department is allocating an additional £125 million to local authorities for them to pass on to special schools for the extra costs they will incur as a result of the NIC increase. Non-maintained special schools will get this funding directly from the department. These NIC funding allocations will be published in May 2025, for payment later in the year.

■ Private Education: VAT

Dr Neil Shastri-Hurst:

[\[38492\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 11 March 2025 to Question 35073 on Private Education: VAT, whether her Department has made an assessment of the potential impact of the additional independent school closures over the next three years on trends in the number of (a) teaching and (b) non-teaching staff job losses.

Stephen Morgan:

As made clear in the HM Treasury impact assessment, the introduction of VAT is anticipated to have extremely limited impact on the number of pupils in private schools. The department has not seen any evidence that contradicts the expectations set out in the government's impact assessment.

It is a commercial decision for individual schools to decide how they will fund the additional costs around the VAT policy. There are a variety of ways in which a school may choose to do this, including reducing their surpluses or reserves, cutting back on non-essential expenditure and increasing fees.

Wendy Morton:

[38596]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of the application of VAT on private school fees on the (a) accessibility and (b) quality of state education.

Wendy Morton:

[38597]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to help support state schools with trends in the level of demand for state school places following the application of VAT to private school fees.

Stephen Morgan:

As set out in HM Treasury's tax information and impact note published on GOV.UK, the introduction of VAT is anticipated to have a very limited impact on the number of pupils in state and private schools. The department has not seen any evidence that contradicts the expectations set out in the government's impact assessment.

Ending tax breaks on private schools will help raise around £1.8 billion per year by the 2029/30 financial year for investment in public services, including state-funded education which serves 94% of children. This will help break down barriers to opportunity, ensuring every child has access to high-quality education.

Local authorities are responsible for securing school places for children in their area. Pupil numbers in schools fluctuate for a number of reasons, and the school funding system is already set up to manage that. The department provides capital funding through the basic need grant to support the provision of mainstream school places, based on local authorities' own pupil forecasts and school capacity data.

■ Pupil Exclusions: South Holland and the Deepings

Sir John Hayes:

[36581]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what information her Department holds on the number of exclusions from schools in South Holland and the Deepings constituency in the (a) 2022-23 and (b) 2023-24 academic years.

Stephen Morgan:

Information on suspensions and permanent exclusions is published at local authority level in the 'Suspension and permanent exclusion in England' statistics publication.

The publication is available here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/suspensions-and-permanent-exclusions-in-england/2022-23>.

The number and rates of suspensions and permanent exclusions in Lincolnshire for the 2022/23 academic year can be found here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/f3101754-5b43-45c4-f1c2-08dd5cc661f7>.

The number and rates of suspensions and permanent exclusions in Lincolnshire for the autumn term 2023/24 can be found here: <https://explore-education->

statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/3293a161-d7dd-414d-0e59-08dd5ccbf23a. Data for the full 2023/24 academic year will be published in July 2025.

Suspensions and permanent exclusions data is also published at school level. This can be combined with information from 'Get Information About School' (GIAS) to identify Parliamentary constituency. GIAS currently reflects the changes made following the general election parliamentary constituency changes. GIAS is available at the following link: <https://get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/>.

■ Pupils: Arthritis

Mrs Sharon Hodgson: [36053]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to support children living with Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis in schools.

Mrs Sharon Hodgson: [36054]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to (a) promote and (b) monitor the use of individual healthcare plans in schools to support young people living with arthritis.

Catherine McKinnell:

Section 100 of the Children and Families Act 2014 places a duty on maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units to make arrangements for supporting pupils with medical conditions. Some children with medical conditions may be considered to be disabled under the definition set out in the Equality Act 2010. Where this is the case, governing bodies must comply with their duties under that Act.

Governing bodies should ensure that all schools develop a policy for supporting pupils with medical conditions that is reviewed regularly and is readily accessible to parents and school staff. They must ensure that the arrangements they put in place are sufficient to meet their statutory responsibilities and should ensure that policies, plans, procedures and systems are properly and effectively implemented.

The statutory guidance 'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions' recommends the use of individual healthcare plans as good practice. They can help schools support pupils with medical conditions, providing clarity about what needs to be done, when and by whom. The school, healthcare professionals and parents should agree, based on evidence, when a healthcare plan would be appropriate. The guidance can be found here:

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5ce6a72e40f0b620a103bd53/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions.pdf>.

■ Reading: Teaching Methods

Ms Julie Minns: [36216]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the validation process for new phonics programmes is.

Ms Julie Minns:

[36217]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the potential implications for her policies of the University of Florida's phonics programme.

Catherine McKinnell:

High and rising school standards, with excellent foundations in reading, writing and mathematics, are at the heart of the government's mission to break down barriers to opportunity and give every child the best start in life. The last Labour government's promotion of phonics greatly improved the reading and writing abilities of a generation of children.

The department has not made an assessment of the University of Florida's phonics programme, but the government has published a list of 45 validated phonics programmes. The full list can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/choosing-a-phonics-teaching-programme/list-of-phonics-teaching-programmes>.

The department's list of validated, high quality phonics programmes aims to help schools to select programmes that provide the support, guidance, resources and training needed to teach systematic synthetic phonics (SSP) well.

There is no statutory requirement for schools to choose one of the SPP programmes on the department's validated list. However, validation indicates that a programme has been assessed by a small panel with relevant expertise that considers it meets all the department's criteria for an effective SSP programme.

There are currently no further validation rounds planned.

■ **Russell Scott Primary School: Repairs and Maintenance**

Andrew Gwynne:

[38009]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what her planned timetable is for the rebuilding of Russell Scott Primary School in Denton.

Andrew Gwynne:

[38010]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will share the latest project schedule for the rebuilding of Russell Scott Primary School in Denton with the hon. Member for Gorton and Denton.

Stephen Morgan:

The project is in the procurement stage and a contractor is expected to be appointed later this year.

The department currently anticipates that the new school will be ready from September 2027.

■ Schools

Neil O'Brien:

[36123]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will list the (a) name and (b) URN of all currently open state schools alongside the (i) URN, (ii) Establishment number and (iii) name of the predecessor institutions for each.

Catherine McKinnell:

Information on all open and closed establishments in England is published on the Get Information about Schools (GIAS) service, which can be accessed here: <https://get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/>. Files available to download include information for all establishments (including name, URN and type of school) as well as a file with links to any predecessor or successor establishment. The files can be found here: <https://get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/Downloads>.

■ Schools: Admissions

Cameron Thomas:

[36571]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will take steps to ensure that teachers are given priority to enrol their children at schools they teach at.

Catherine McKinnell:

All mainstream state funded schools must have clear admission arrangements, set by the school's admission authority, which include the oversubscription criteria they will use to give priority for places where there are more applicants than places available. The School Admissions Code allows admission authorities to give priority in their oversubscription criteria for children of staff who have been employed at the school for two or more years at the time when their application for a school place is made. The priority may also be applied for children of staff who have been recruited to fill a vacant post at the school for which there is a demonstrable skills shortage.

It is for individual admission authorities to decide whether to include such a priority in their admissions criteria, provided the arrangements comply with the School Admissions Code.

■ Schools: Admissions and Pupil Numbers

Blake Stephenson:

[R] [37779]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 31 January 2025 to Question 26151 on Schools: Admissions, what estimate she has made of the (a) number of pupils and (b) school capacity for (i) Central Bedfordshire, (ii) Bedford Borough and (iii) Luton Borough for each of the next five years.

Catherine McKinnell:

Data on state-funded school places is published at local authority level in the annual 'School capacity' publication. The full release can be found here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-capacity>.

The latest available data for the number of pupils and school capacity, as at 1 May 2023, for Central Bedfordshire, Bedford borough and Luton borough can be found here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/190afba3-869e-4ef0-f219-08dd5cc661f7>.

Local authority pupil number forecasts for Central Bedfordshire, Bedford borough and Luton borough for the five academic years from 2023/24 to 2027/28 can be found here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/9631024d-157e-4b93-0eb3-08dd5ccbf23a>.

The linked table also includes numbers on roll for 2022/23 as at January 2023, which differs to the numbers on roll in the capacity table that relate to May 2023. Forecasts were submitted to the department through the School Capacity survey 2023.

School capacity estimates are made for three academic years ahead, in this case 2023/24 to 2025/26, as part of the department's estimate of future school place shortfalls and surpluses. These estimates can be found here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-catalogue/data-set/b12c3f30-c22c-4b88-b5b2-2c1848981b4e>. These estimates reflect the position reported by local authorities at May 2023 through the School Capacity survey, supplemented with the department's internal data on central programmes.

■ Schools: Mobile Phones

Sir John Hayes: [\[40152\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make a comparative assessment of trends in the levels of academic attainment from children in schools that (a) have and (b) have not banned smartphones in the last 12 months.

Stephen Morgan:

Schools should prohibit the use of mobile phones and other smart technology with similar functionality to mobile phones throughout the school day, including during lessons, the time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime, as set out in the 'Mobile phones in schools' guidance 2024. The department expects all schools to take steps in line with this guidance to ensure mobile phones do not disrupt pupils' learning.

■ Schools: Rural Areas

Joe Robertson: [\[40394\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether her Department has made an assessment of the potential impact of the closure of small village schools on the sustainability of rural communities.

Catherine McKinnell:

The government recognises the essential role that small schools play in their communities, many of which are in rural areas. The schools national funding formula (NFF) accounts for the particular challenges faced by small schools in rural areas through the lump sum and sparsity factor. This recognises that some schools are

necessarily small because they are remote and do not have the same opportunities to grow or make efficiency savings as other schools, and that such schools often play a significant role in the rural communities they serve.

There is a presumption against the closure of all rural maintained schools and departmental guidance states that both the department and the local authority need to agree the closure of a rural academy. Rural schools are at the heart of their communities, and we expect all proposers to have regard to alternatives to closure first.

The presumption against closure does not mean that rural schools will never close, but it does ensure that the case for closure is strong and that the proposals are clearly in the best interests of educational provision in the area. Even in a rural authority, there will be cases where redeploying resources currently allocated to a small school is judged appropriate to provide a richer educational experience for all young people in the area. Nevertheless, the case must be clearly in the best interests of educational provision in the area.

■ **Schools: Teaching Aids**

Zöe Franklin:

[37075]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will take steps to increase access to audio-based learning resources in schools.

Catherine McKinnell:

The department respects the autonomy of teachers in terms of what resources they choose to use or recommend to their individual pupils, based on individual need in their own educational context and circumstances.

■ **Special Educational Needs: Berkshire**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[40272]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent estimate she has made of the average waiting time for a child to receive an education, health and care plan in (a) England, (b) Berkshire and (c) Slough constituency.

Catherine McKinnell:

The department publishes official statistics on education, health and care (EHC) plans annually and these can be accessed here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/education-health-and-care-plans>. This includes data at local authority level on the rate of EHC plans issued within the statutory deadline of twenty weeks.

The table linked below shows the number of plans issued within the statutory 20-week deadline for each of the 6 unitary authorities in Berkshire, and the overall figure for England, for the 2023 calendar year:

<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/929ca39b-d31e-43d9-ce9b-08dd66bfee22>.

Information at constituency level is not available.

■ **Special Educational Needs: Central Suffolk and North Ipswich**

Patrick Spencer: [\[37003\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of the Early Language and Support for Every Child pathfinders programme on attainment for pupils in Central Suffolk and North Ipswich; and what the cost is per child of the programme.

Stephen Morgan:

Early Language Support for Every Child (ELSEC) is a pilot 'test and learn' programme being delivered across nine pathfinder sites, one in each English region, covering 12 local authorities. Central Suffolk and North Ipswich are not part of the pilot programme.

According to the programme's reporting data, therapy support teams have helped 13,000 children so far, and just over 1000 setting staff have been upskilled in delivering interventions. The interim programme evaluation is allowing the department to explore insights into the effectiveness of ELSEC delivery at a local level. A final evaluation will take place following the end of the summer term 2025.

■ **Special Educational Needs: Dyslexia**

Manuela Perteghella: [\[40829\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of late dyslexia diagnosis on children's (a) confidence, (b) literacy skills and (c) long-term educational outcomes.

Manuela Perteghella: [\[40830\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what lessons her Department has learned from international best practice on implementing early dyslexia screening.

Catherine McKinnell:

The department is committed to improving support for all children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including those with dyslexia and other neurodiverse conditions. As part of this, the department is considering evidence on international best practice in its policymaking on special educational needs (SEN).

The department is providing £1 billion more for high needs budgets in the 2025/26 financial year, bringing total high needs funding to £11.9 billion. This funding will help local authorities and schools with the increasing costs of supporting children and young people with complex SEND.

Early identification of need and support is critical to improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND, including those with dyslexia. There are already a number of measures to help teachers do this, including the phonics screening check and statutory assessments at the end of key stage 2.

Schools should apply a 'graduated approach' to identify a child's needs, plan appropriate support, implement that support, and review it regularly to ensure it continues to meet their identified needs. Through this, schools should develop personalised approaches to supporting the unique needs of individual pupils. Schools should involve pupils and their parents in this process, taking their views into consideration.

The core content framework and early career framework, for trainee and early career teachers (ECTs) respectively, covers the first three years or more at the start of a teacher's career. They set out the core body of knowledge skills and behaviours that define great teaching, and from September 2025 will be superseded by the combined Initial Teacher Training and Early Career Framework (ITTECF), which sets out a minimum entitlement to training and must be used by providers of initial teacher training and those delivering training to ECTs to create their curricula. The ITTECF contains significantly more content related to adaptive teaching and supporting pupils with SEND.

Measures have also been introduced to support the effective teaching of reading, including for those at risk of falling behind. This includes the English Hubs programme, the publication of the reading framework and an updated list of high quality systematic synthetic phonics programmes for schools.

The English Hubs programme is dedicated to improving the teaching of reading, with a focus on supporting children making the slowest progress in reading. As part of the continuous professional development provided by the English Hubs, the Reading Ambition for All programme has been launched to improve outcomes for children who need additional support with reading, including those with SEND.

■ Special Educational Needs: Dysphagia

Laura Kyrke-Smith:

[\[35186\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of ensuring all (a) teachers and (b) support staff in SEND settings receive training on dysphagia.

Laura Kyrke-Smith:

[\[35187\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment she has made of the prevalence of incidents relating to dysphagia in SEND settings; and what steps she is taking to manage dysphagia safely in those settings.

Catherine McKinnell:

Section 100 of the Children and Families Act 2014 places a duty on maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units to make arrangements for supporting pupils with medical conditions. Some children with medical conditions may be considered to be disabled under the definition set out in the Equality Act 2010. Where this is the case, governing bodies must comply with their duties under that Act.

Governing bodies should ensure that all schools develop a policy for supporting pupils with medical conditions that is reviewed regularly and is readily accessible to parents and school staff. They must ensure that the arrangements they put in place are sufficient to meet their statutory responsibilities and should ensure that policies, plans, procedures and systems are properly and effectively implemented.

■ Special Educational Needs: Private Education

Lee Anderson:

[\[38135\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to help support children with SEND whose parents cannot afford to pay for a private education following the application of VAT to private school fees.

Stephen Morgan:

This government is committed to breaking down barriers to opportunity and ensuring every child has access to high quality education. The government's ambition is that all children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities receive the right support to succeed in their education and as they move into adult life. We are committed to improving inclusivity and expertise in mainstream schools, as well as ensuring special schools cater for those with the most complex needs.

Local authorities fund pupils' places in private schools where their needs can only be met in a private school. For example, in England, where attendance at that private school is required by a child's education, health and care (EHC) plan, local authorities will be able to reclaim the VAT on the fees from HMRC.

The decision to move a child from a private to a state-funded school, or vice versa, is a matter for parents. The majority of children with special educational needs (SEN), including most with EHC plans, are already educated in mainstream state-funded schools where their needs are met. All children of compulsory age are entitled to a state-funded school place that is free for parents. Schools are required to identify and address the SEN of the pupils they support and to use their best endeavours to make sure that a child or young person with SEN gets the support they require.

The government works to support local authorities to ensure that every local area has sufficient places for children of compulsory school age who need them and works to provide appropriate support where pupils with SEN require places at state-funded schools.

■ Students: Finance

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[34303\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent discussions she has had with Student Finance England on potential accommodations for students who have to pause studies for medical reasons.

Janet Daby:

Students who are absent from their course for more than 60 days due to illness and have agreed with their higher education (HE) provider to suspend their studies can

apply to Student Finance England (SFE) to continue their cost of living support payments.

The HE provider must notify SFE that the student is suspending their studies, giving the reasons for suspending and providing an agreed date of return, generally up to a maximum of one year’s absence or up to two years in exceptional circumstances. SFE will consider each case on its own merits, including the reasons for the absence, whether the student will face financial hardship during their absence, whether the student has dependants and the prospect of the student returning to the course.

If a student needs to repeat a year of study due to compelling personal reasons (CPR), they may be entitled to an additional year of tuition fee funding in addition to their standard entitlement. SFE will request evidence to support a claim that the repeat year was for CPR. For instance, the student might be able to provide medical evidence from their GP. Ultimately, the decision is for SFE to make based on the evidence provided and the individual merits of each case.

■ **Students: Loans**

Rupert Lowe: [\[34086\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the value was of student loans that were written off in 2024; and what this was as a proportion of all outstanding student loans.

Janet Daby:

The table below shows the amount that has been cancelled or written off during the most recent financial year, (2023/24) and the proportion that write offs or cancellations make out of the starting balance.

	2023/24 FINANCIAL YEAR
Amount cancelled or written off during the financial year (£ million)	101.1
Percentage of those written off out of total amount outstanding	0.05%

The reasons for cancelled or written off loans are the following: death of borrower, age of borrower, disability, trivial balances, losses through fraud, including phishing, and other.

Write-offs do not include trivial balance write-offs. Trivial balance write-offs occur if there is a +/- balance on an account of £25 or less and no contact can be established with the borrower. Customers can request for this to be reversed. In the context of these figures, these borrowers are considered fully repaid and are therefore not included. Cancellations involve the clearance of the remaining debt in line with the terms of the loan, for example, when reaching a specific age or becoming permanently disabled. Write-offs for bankruptcy, Individual Voluntary Arrangement or

a trust deed, are no longer allowed against Student Loans balances. Any figures arise from retrospective clear up exercises.

These figures have been taken from Student Loans Company's Student loans in England publication, which is updated in June each year. The publication, 'Student loans in England: 2023 to 2024' can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/student-loans-in-england-2023-to-2024>.

Information on the 2024/25 financial year will be available in the June 2025 publication.

■ Teachers: Career Development

Alex Baker:

[35061]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to provide (a) clear routes for progression and (b) development in different subject areas to encourage recruitment and retention of teachers.

Catherine McKinnell:

The within school factor that makes the biggest difference to a young person's educational outcome is high-quality teaching. Recruiting and retaining more qualified, expert teachers is therefore critical to the government's mission to break down barriers to opportunity and boost the life chances for every child. Our measures will include getting more teachers into shortage subjects, supporting areas that face recruitment challenges and tackling retention issues.

The department wants to ensure all teachers have access to and stay up to date with best practice in continuing professional development at every stage of their career, giving them the expertise and support needed to deliver high-quality teaching.

Through the revised initial teacher training and early career framework (ITTECF), new teachers will benefit from at least three years of evidence-based training, across initial teacher training (ITT) and into their induction.

Beyond the first few years of teaching, our priority is to help all teachers and school leaders to continuously develop their expertise throughout their careers so every child in every classroom in every school gets the best start in life.

The department has launched a new and updated suite of national professional qualifications (NPQs) for teachers and school leaders at all levels, from those who want to lead the development of staff to those leading multiple schools across trusts.

The department has established a network of 87 Teaching School Hubs serving schools across the country. The Hubs provide approved high-quality professional development to teachers at all stages of their careers and play a significant role in delivering ITT, the early career framework and NPQs. These measures will ensure teacher and leader training and development are rooted in the best available evidence.

The department currently offers Subject Knowledge Enhancement (SKE) support in five secondary subjects: chemistry, computing, mathematics, modern languages and

physics. The department will continue to explore its options for delivery of SKE training in future academic years to ensure that its funding supports courses in the subjects where these courses are most needed

The department has also expanded the department's 'School Teacher Recruitment' marketing campaign which inspires and attracts candidates to consider a career in teaching, including shortage subjects. It promotes the profession and directs people to the 'Get Into Teaching' service, which exists to make teaching a career of choice and supports candidates to apply for teacher training in the most effective and efficient way possible.

■ Teachers: Disability

Dr Danny Chambers:

[41687]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what progress her Department has made on introducing mandatory training on hidden disabilities for all (a) school, (b) further education and (c) higher education staff.

Catherine McKinnell:

High quality teaching is the most important in-school factor for improving outcomes for all children, particularly those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

The Initial Teacher Training (ITT) Core Content Framework and Early Career Framework, for trainees and early career teachers (ECTs) respectively, cover the first three years or more at the start of a teacher's career. They set out the core body of knowledge, skills and behaviours that define great teaching, and are underpinned by the most up-to-date evidence. From September 2025 they will be superseded by the combined Initial Teacher Training and Early Career Framework (ITTECF), which sets out a minimum entitlement to training and must be used by ITT providers to create their curricula. All ECTs will be entitled to a two-year induction underpinned by the ITTECF which will be known as the Early Career Teacher Entitlement (ECTE).

During the department's review which led to the development of the ITTECF, particular attention was paid to the evidence base and needs of trainees and ECTs when supporting pupils with SEND. There is now significantly more content related to adaptive teaching and supporting pupils with SEND, including those with neurodiversity.

The department recognises that continuous improvement is essential and have recently committed to a full review of the ECTE in 2027, including the ITTECF, to ensure it continues to provide the best possible support for ECTs. This review will include a focus on the support we provide new teachers in teaching pupils with SEND.

School support staff play a vital role in children's education. They are crucial to ensuring we give children the best possible life chances. The availability of training and career progression opportunities for school support staff helps ensure schools have the skilled staff they need to deliver high quality education. For example, in

September 2024 the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) approved a new Level 5 Specialist Teaching Assistant apprenticeship, allowing teaching assistants to specialise in one of three areas: SEND, Social and Emotional Wellbeing, or Curriculum provision. The apprenticeship will be available for candidates to undertake in 2025.

We recognise the importance of supporting further education (FE) students with complex needs, and the valuable role colleges play in SEND education. We are currently supporting the recruitment and training of SEND specific teachers in FE through:

1. Enabling providers through the Taking Teaching Further (TTF) programme, to support new teachers with relevant knowledge and industry experience to undertake a teaching qualification and receive wrap-around early career support. Funding is also available to support recruits who will provide support to students with SEND.
2. Supporting recruitment and retention with teacher training bursaries worth up to £30,000 tax-free in certain key subject areas, including SEND.

The department also runs a Universal SEND Services contract to provide SEND-specific professional development and support for the school and FE workforce. The programme helps professionals to identify and meet the needs of children and young people with SEND, earlier and more effectively. Since the programme commenced, school and college staff have completed over 20,000 online training modules.

All education and training providers, including universities and other related service providers, have a duty to ensure reasonable adjustments for disabled people, so they are not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to non-disabled students. This includes people with a learning difficulty. This duty is set out under Section 20 of the Equality Act 2010.

■ Teachers: Rural Areas

Cameron Thomas:

[\[34561\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department are taking to increase +teacher retention rates in rural areas.

Catherine McKinnell:

High quality teaching is the in-school factor that makes the biggest difference to a child's education which is why sufficient high-quality teachers is key to delivering the government's agenda to break down the barriers to opportunity. Measures will include getting more teachers into shortage subjects, supporting areas that face recruitment challenges and tackling retention issues. This will help ensure that children across the country, including rural areas, have the expert qualified teachers they need in order to achieve and thrive.

There are now 468,693 full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers in state-funded schools in England, but numbers have not kept pace with demand. This is why the department

is committed to recruiting an additional 6,500 new expert teachers across our schools, both mainstream and specialist, and our colleges over the course of this Parliament.

A successful recruitment strategy starts with a strong retention strategy. For 2024/25 and 2025/26, the department is offering a Targeted Retention Incentive worth up to £6,000 after tax for mathematics, physics, chemistry and computing teachers in the first five years of their careers who choose to work in disadvantaged schools, many of which are in rural areas. This will support recruitment and retention of specialist teachers in these subjects and in the schools and areas that need them most.

The department is also working closely with teachers and school leaders to improve workload and wellbeing, which are key drivers of retention. We are also promoting flexible working, such as allowing planning, preparation and assessment time to be taken from home, and have made key resources to support wellbeing, developed with school leaders, available to teachers.

This includes ensuring there is a compelling financial offer to attract and keep high-quality teachers in these areas. The minimum starting salary for teachers, including those in rural areas, increased to £30,000 from the start of the 2023/24 academic year, and following the 5.5% pay award for teachers and leaders in maintained schools from September, this has further increased to £31,650.

The department has announced an initial teacher training (ITT) financial incentives package for the 2025/26 recruitment cycle worth £233 million, a £37 million increase on the last cycle. This includes a range of measures, including bursaries worth £29,000 tax-free and scholarships worth £31,000 tax-free, to encourage talented trainees to key subjects such as mathematics, physics, chemistry and computing.

The department has established a network of 87 Teaching School Hubs serving schools across the country. The Hubs provide approved high-quality professional development to teachers at all stages of their careers and play a significant role in delivering ITT, the Early Career Framework, National Professional Qualifications and Appropriate Body services. Odyssey Teaching School Hub is a centre of excellence supporting teacher training and development across Tewkesbury, Forest of Dean, and Gloucester.

■ Training: Employers' Contributions

Navendu Mishra:

[39110]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make an assessment of the potential impact of the proposed increase to employer's National Insurance contributions on the ability of independent training providers to provide skills development and workforce training.

Janet Daby:

On 5 March 2025 the department gave details of 16 to 19 funding which meant that it will be spending over £400 million more on 16 to 19 education in the 2025/26 financial year. This represents over £100 million more than the £300 million

announced at the Autumn Budget 2024 and aims to ensure enough funding is available given the very significant increase in student numbers and other pressures on the system. Further guidance on how 16 to 19 funding will work in the 2025/26 academic year can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-funding-information-for-2025-to-2026>.

The government has agreed that public sector employers will receive support in recognition of the increase in their National Insurance contributions from April 2025. This does not include support for the private sector, including private sector firms contracted by public sector entities.

Independent training providers will benefit from the 3.78% increase to all the national funding rates for students on 16 to 19 study programmes and T Levels in the 2025/26 academic year.

■ Visas: Fees and Charges

Luke Taylor: [36229]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will consider reducing the British National Overseas visa holders' requirement for home fee status to three years of continuous residence.

Luke Taylor: [36234]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment her Department has made of the number of British National Overseas Hong Kongers aged 14 to 21 who are unable to afford the cost of paying international tuition fees at UK universities without access to student loans.

Janet Daby:

To qualify for home fee status in the UK, a person must have settled status or 'a recognised connection' to the UK, and in the case of persons with settled status, be ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands (Channel Islands and Isle of Man) for three years prior to the first day of the first academic year of the course.

Subject to meeting the other relevant eligibility requirements, persons with the status of British Nationals Overseas (BN(O)) will be able to qualify for home fee status and student finance once they have acquired settled status in the UK (usually after five years). Most persons who acquire settled status will automatically meet the three-year ordinary residence requirement. There are no plans to exempt Hong Kong BN(O)s from the requirement that applies to other British Nationals that they must be settled in the UK before becoming eligible for student funding.

The department has not made an assessment of the number of persons with BN(O) status, or persons of any other nationality, who are unable to afford the cost of paying international tuition fees at UK universities.

ENERGY SECURITY AND NET ZERO**■ Carbon Emissions: South Yorkshire****Sally Jameson:**[\[41272\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what data his Department holds on the number of jobs (a) related and (b) dependent on the net zero transition in South Yorkshire; and if he will make an estimate of how much private investment this work attracts to South Yorkshire.

Kerry McCarthy:

The net zero transition is the economic opportunity of the century—supporting hundreds of thousands of good quality jobs across the UK, including in South Yorkshire. The UK has made significant progress in attracting investment into green sectors. According to analysis by the CBI, the net zero sector is growing three times faster than the overall UK economy and the GVA of the net zero economy grew by 10% in 2024. Around the 2024 International Investment Summit £34.8bn of private investment into low carbon sectors was announced. Government also supports local areas to attract investment – including funding the North East and Yorkshire Net Zero Hub.

■ Energy Supply: Radio Frequencies**Fabian Hamilton:**[\[41000\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what steps he is taking to support the rollout of enhanced operational communications enabled by dedicated radio spectrum access for the UK's energy distribution and transmission networks.

Michael Shanks:

Ofcom is responsible for the management of spectrum in the UK, including allocating spectrum. Officials are working with those in the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology and with regulators to help establish the evidence base for the future telecommunications requirements of the energy, water and transport sectors.

■ Energy: Carbon Emissions**Dr Simon Opher:**[\[40284\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what steps he is taking to decarbonise the power system.

Michael Shanks:

The Government published the Clean Power 2030 Action Plan 'a new era of clean electricity' on 13 December 2024 detailing our plan to achieve deliver clean power by 2030.

More recently, we have introduced the Planning and Infrastructure Bill, reinforcing our commitment to ensuring that billpayers and communities hosting energy

infrastructure see meaningful benefits through lower energy bills and local project investment.

■ Energy: Infrastructure

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[40304\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what steps he is taking to ensure the resilience of (a) energy supplies and (b) energy infrastructure that provide power to (i) critical infrastructure and (ii) sites of national strategic importance.

Michael Shanks:

Resilience of critical national infrastructure is paramount, and that includes having resilient power.

There are high levels of resilience in the national electricity system, and I would like to reassure my hon Friend that the Government works closely with industry to continually improve and maintain the resilience of energy infrastructure.

Alongside Ofgem, the Secretary of State has commissioned the National Energy System Operator to carry out a review to investigate the power disruption to Heathrow on Friday 21 March, and to understand any wider lessons to be learned on energy resilience for critical national infrastructure.

■ Energy: Meters

Andy McDonald:

[\[40164\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, when he expects OFGEM will publish findings of its investigation into British Gas and the forced installation of prepayment meters.

Andy McDonald:

[\[40165\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, whether his Department has set a deadline for OFGEM to publish findings of its investigation into British Gas and the forced installation of prepayment meters.

Andy McDonald:

[\[40166\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, whether his Department has received interim findings from OFGEM's investigation into British Gas on the forced installation of prepayment meters.

Miatta Fahnbulleh:

Ofgem's investigation into the involuntary installation of prepayment meters (PPMs) by British Gas is ongoing. This is a matter for Ofgem as the independent regulator, and it would not be appropriate for the government to comment on an ongoing investigation.

Andy McDonald:

[\[40167\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what data his Department holds on (a) the number of prepayment meters forcibly installed by British

Gas between 1 January 2022 and 31 January 2023 and (b) the number of those subject to forced installation that have since received compensation.

Miatta Fahnbulleh:

In March 2023, British Gas previously confirmed that it installed 25,000 PPMs under warrant in 2022. If any of these installations were completed wrongfully then it is vital that affected customers are appropriately compensated.

■ **Listed Buildings: Double Glazing**

Jayne Kirkham:

[41656]

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of allowing listed building owners to install uPVC double glazing to improve energy efficiency.

Miatta Fahnbulleh:

Changes to improve the energy efficiency of a listed building need to be sensitive to the character, appearance and specific characteristics of the building depending on individual circumstances. Listed buildings are generally exempt from energy efficiency requirements where compliance would unacceptably alter the character or appearance of the existing building.

Further guidance on improving the energy efficiency of windows of listed buildings can be found on the Historic England website.

Accompanying link: <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/retrofit-and-energy-efficiency-in-historic-buildings/modifying-windows-and-doors-in-historic-buildings/>

■ **Nuclear Power: Regulation**

Luke Myer:

[40900]

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, whether he plans to bring forward a revised regulatory framework for the nuclear sector.

Michael Shanks:

As the Prime Minister announced, the Nuclear Regulatory Taskforce will be undertaking a review of nuclear regulation, and it would be inappropriate to comment further until that review has concluded.

■ **Power Failures**

Damian Hinds:

[41405]

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what the average length of time was in which households were without power due to outage in (a) the (i) Basingstoke & Deane: Oakley and The Candovers, (ii) East Hampshire: Bentworth & Froyle, (iii) East Hampshire: Binsted Bentley & Selborne, (iv) East Hampshire: Four Marks & Medstead, (v) East Hampshire: Ropley Hawkley & Hangers, (vi) East Hampshire: Froxfield Sheep & Steep, (vii) East Hampshire: Buriton & East Meon local

authority wards and (b) (A) Hampshire, (B) the South East and (C) England in each of the last five years.

Michael Shanks:

The Department does not hold information on all historic power outages. The UK has one of the most reliable energy systems in the world and maintaining a secure electricity supply is a key priority for Government.

■ **Renewable Energy: Low Incomes**

Dr Simon Opher:

[40290]

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what steps he is taking to help low income households access renewable energy solutions.

Miatta Fahnbulleh:

We are decarbonising the energy system with utility-scale solar, rooftop solar, and offshore wind allowing households to benefit from reduced electricity bills and cleaner energy.

For homes, we have kickstarted delivery of the Government's ambitious Warm Homes Plan, which will transform homes across the country by making them cleaner and cheaper to run. This includes grant support through the Boiler Upgrade Scheme (BUS), and targeted support for low income and fuel poor households, namely GBIS, ECO. The Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund, and Warm Homes: Local Grant will also begin delivery this year.

■ **Warm Homes Plan**

Martin Wrigley:

[41580]

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, if he will take steps to provide adequate funding for the warm homes local grant.

Miatta Fahnbulleh:

£500 million has been allocated as part of the Autumn Budget for the Warm Homes: Local Grant to be delivered from 2025 to 2028 by eligible local authorities in England. Allocations of this funding to local authorities that expressed an interest in participating in delivering the scheme were announced on 11th March. Details are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/warm-homes-local-grant-successful-local-authorities/warm-homes-local-grant-successful-local-authorities>

Future funding towards decarbonisation and to tackle fuel poverty will be considered as part of Phase 2 of the Spending Review, which will conclude in late Spring 2025.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS**■ Agriculture: Finance****Aphra Brandreth:**[\[39262\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to (a) monitor agricultural spend against the budget and (b) reduce the time taken to make financial decisions.

Daniel Zeichner:

We monitor forecasts of scheme uptake and spend against the current year budget on an ongoing basis and respond accordingly to maximise the amount that can be delivered.

Furthermore, we have a full understanding of commitments into future years arising from multi-annual agreements. We monitor the uptake of our demand led schemes which have a budgetary impact on future years (such as SFI) on a regular basis, increasing the frequency of this as the level of commitment approaches the budget available in future years.

■ Agriculture: Pollution Control**Edward Morello:**[\[32849\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what funding is available for farmers to implement (a) buffer zones and (b) other measures aimed at preventing agricultural pollutants from entering rivers.

Daniel Zeichner:

Levels of water pollution are unacceptable, and water pollution is a crime. We are working with farmers through a suite of measures to reduce agricultural pollution.

Defra's Environmental Land Management schemes pay farmers for the delivery of environmental benefits, including improved water quality. The Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) pays farmers for actions that will improve the water environment by reducing runoff and erosion, maintaining soil cover and creating buffer strips and margins. There are 35,000 active SFI agreements in England. Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier (CSHT) pays farmers, land managers and foresters for more locally-targeted actions relating to specific locations, features and habitats. In December we published details of the improved CSHT offer, which includes several new actions to improve water quality. We will be opening up CSHT for new applications in the summer.

■ Animal Welfare: Crime**Dr Al Pinkerton:**[\[40882\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to help reduce animal (a) theft and (b) cruelty in Surrey Heath constituency.

Daniel Zeichner:

The Pet Abduction Act makes pet abduction a criminal offence. In England, the maximum term of imprisonment in the Pet Abduction Act is five years and/or an unlimited fine.

Causing unnecessary suffering to an animal is an offence under Section 4 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006, subject to a maximum sentence of five years imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine. Those convicted of an offence may also be disqualified from owning or keeping animals.

■ Animal Welfare: Standards**Josh Babarinde:**[\[40731\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will take steps to produce an animal protection strategy detailing steps to (a) increase animal welfare standards and (b) end the use of cages for farm animals.

Daniel Zeichner:

This Government was elected on a mandate to introduce the most ambitious plans to improve animal welfare in a generation. The Department has initiated a series of meetings with key stakeholders as part of the development of an overarching approach to animal welfare. We will be outlining more detail in due course.

The use of cages and other close confinement systems for farmed animals is an issue which we are currently considering very carefully.

■ Bathing Water Regulations 2013**Luke Myer:**[\[40917\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential impact of proposed changes to the Bathing Water Regulations on (a) fish spawning sites, (b) riparian rights and (c) the rights of (i) angling clubs and (ii) fishery owners; and if he will undertake a full consultation before making changes.

Emma Hardy:

The consultation on the Bathing Water Regulations 2013 closed on 23 December 2024. Many organisations have called for the Regulations to be updated to reflect the modern ways in which the public uses bathing waters so that they continue to support public health outcomes.

This Government published our formal response on 12 March 2025. The consultation results show a large majority in favour of the two wider reforms to expand the definition of a 'bather' and introducing the use of multiple monitoring points at designated bathing sites.

We are now progressing policy development and research to determine how best to implement the wider reforms. We will consider any potential environmental, societal,

and access impacts. We will work closely with local and national stakeholders, seeking their views on these reforms.

■ **Beaches: Recycling**

Jim Shannon:

[40472]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to encourage recycling at beaches.

Mary Creagh:

The Government has introduced Simpler Recycling, which from 31 March 2025 will require small, medium and large workplaces in England to recycle the core waste streams (plastic, metal, glass, paper and card) and food waste. This will include cafés, shops, and other establishments that are located across England's seafronts and beaches.

We have been proud to support and endorse national clean-up initiatives such as the Great British Spring Clean, and the Great British Beach Clean, and we will continue to use our influence to encourage as many people and businesses as possible to participate in these types of events.

■ **Beavers: Conservation**

Anna Gelderd:

[38818]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential impact of beaver reintroductions on flood resilience in areas where they have been trialled.

Mary Creagh:

This is a devolved matter, and the information provided therefore relates to England only. Yes, the Government has assessed the impact of reintroducing beavers on flood resilience. This includes an evidence review of the impacts of beavers on the natural and human environment in England, which shows beavers can reduce the risk of flooding.

Beavers can bring a range of benefits including contributing to flood risk mitigation, by using their dams and creating complex wetland habitats to slow the flow of water and to store water (a form of natural flood management). Appropriately managing the reintroduction of beavers in England helps to mitigate the impact they can have.

Building on the approach that we have already developed for wild release and management; we will collaboratively develop a management plan for the long-term reintroduction and recovery of beaver populations in England.

■ Environmental Land Management Schemes

Aphra Brandreth: [\[39272\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much his Department has distributed from its Environmental Land Management budget this financial year to date; and how much remains.

Daniel Zeichner:

In line with its obligations under the Agriculture Act 2020, Defra regularly publishes an annual report setting out commitments in the previous financial year. Defra intends to publish the annual report for the financial year 2024/25 later this year.

■ Flood Control: Dorset

Edward Morello: [\[40380\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what flood prevention measures are in place for (a) Bothenhampton, (b) Bridport, (c) Maiden Newton, (d) Ryme Intrinseca, (e) Yetminster and (f) Chilfrome.

Edward Morello: [\[40384\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how often maintenance of flood defences is conducted in (a) Bothenhampton, (b) Bridport, (c) Maiden Newton, (d) Ryme Intrinseca, (e) Yetminster and (f) Chilfrome.

Emma Hardy:

As part of the Government's Plan for Change, a record £2.65 billion will be invested over two years in building, maintaining and repairing flood defences, better protecting 52,000 properties by March 2026. Around 1,000 projects will receive funding in 24/25 and 25/26.

The Environment Agency (EA) maintains a variety of flood defence assets which require differing levels of maintenance. These defences are maintained to ensure the standard of protection specified by the flood alleviation scheme. They are regularly inspected for signs of defects, with appropriate remedial action undertaken when necessary.

The EA maintains a flood alleviation scheme throughout Bridport and Maiden Newton to protect properties at risk of flooding. Yetminster has its own flood alleviation scheme, comprising of an embankment and walls with a series of flapped outfalls to manage surface water drainage.

Since 2016, the EA has invested in Property Flood Resilience measures that better prevent flooding to 12 properties.

■ Flood Control: Publicity

Navendu Mishra:

[40652]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to improve (a) public awareness and (b) accessibility of the flood warning service.

Emma Hardy:

The Environment Agency (EA) provides the [Check for flooding](#) service, giving information on flood alerts and warnings as well as a 5-day forecast. It also uses its [flood warning system](#) to directly alert 1.6 million properties in England who are registered to receive flood warnings. Where there is danger to life there is also the ability to issue an [Emergency Alert](#).

The flood warning service is continuously enhanced to improve public awareness and accessibility. In 2023 it was extended to 110,000 additional homes and businesses, particularly those that were previously hard to reach. This expansion uses innovative monitoring solutions, including solar-powered devices which provide flood warnings in challenging locations. A new flood warning system is being developed and is expected to launch in late 2025. This system aims to be more secure, resilient, and user-friendly.

Flood Action Week is the EA's annual public awareness week, typically taking place in October. It aims to raise awareness amongst the public of their flood risk, actions they should take to respond, and work the EA does to prepare and respond during a flood.

These efforts are part of a broader strategy to ensure that communities are better informed and prepared for flood risks.

■ Floods Resilience Taskforce

Blake Stephenson:

[40335]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of extending the Flood Resilience Taskforce Model to consider wider resilience challenges.

Emma Hardy:

Protecting communities around the country from flooding is one of the Secretary of State's five priorities. That's why we set up a Floods Resilience Taskforce which is a new approach to preparing for flooding. It brings together representatives from national, regional and local Government, the Devolved Governments, emergency services, businesses and environmental interest groups. The Floods Resilience Taskforce is working on a range of actions including warning and informing and vulnerable groups.

The Government has robust governance in place for improving the UK's national resilience. The Prime Minister established a dedicated Cabinet Committee on resilience, chaired by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and the Cabinet

Office is responsible for the coordination of resilience, civil contingencies planning, and crisis management working with Lead Government Departments like Defra and the Devolved Governments.

Defra is responsible for a range of resilience challenges including flooding, water supply, animal and plant health, and food supply. There is frequent sharing of experience across Defra including on the model of the Floods Resilience Taskforce.

■ Food Supply

Wendy Morton:

[40498]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to help ensure UK food security.

Daniel Zeichner:

Food security is national security. We need a resilient and healthy food system, that works with nature and supports British farmers, fishers and food producers.

That is why this Government will introduce a new deal for farmers to boost rural economic growth and strengthen Britain's food security.

The UK has a resilient food supply chain and is equipped to deal with situations with the potential to cause disruption.

We produce 62% of all the food we need, and 75% of food which we can grow or rear in the UK for all or part of the year.

Food security is built on supply from diverse sources, strong domestic production as well as imports through stable trade routes.

UK consumers have access through international trade to food products that cannot be produced here, or at least not on a year-round basis. This supplements domestic production and also ensures that any disruption from risks such as adverse weather or disease does not affect the UK's overall security of supply.

Defra works with industry and across Government to monitor risks that may arise. This includes extensive, regular and ongoing engagement in preparedness for, and response to, issues with the potential to cause disruption to food supply chains.

The UK Agriculture Market Monitoring Group monitors UK agricultural markets including price, supply, inputs, trade, and recent developments.

Damien Egan:

[40788]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what contingency plans are in place to ensure the continuity of food supply chains in the event of a natural disaster or armed conflict.

Daniel Zeichner:

Defra assesses the potential impacts of natural disasters and conflicts along with other risks to the food supply chain, as outlined in the National Risk Register (NRR). Defra works with Cabinet Office, as leads for the NRR, and the wider resilience and

Critical National Infrastructure community across the Government to ensure impacts to food supply are considered in risk assessments and contingency planning.

■ **Local Government: Ecology**

Blake Stephenson:

[R] [\[40340\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to support the recruitment of additional ecologists in local government.

Mary Creagh:

Since November 2021, the Government has committed over £35 million to Local planning authorities (LPAs) to help them prepare for and implement biodiversity net gain. Defra has confirmed funding up to the end of 2024/25 and will confirm for 2025/26 shortly. Information on funding beyond 2025/26 will be provided following the spending review. Individual LPAs are best placed to decide how to use the funds in the most effective way, but recruitment of ecologists is one of the areas they could choose to allocate money to.

■ **Low Alcohol Drinks: Labelling and Marketing**

Kevin Hollinrake:

[\[41063\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 17 March 2025 to Question 37074 on Low Alcohol Drinks, if he will have discussions with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on the potential merits of amending the marketing and labelling rules for the alcohol-free drinks to increase it from 0.05% to 0.5% ABV.

Daniel Zeichner:

The Government is committed to prioritising preventative public health measures to support people to live longer, healthier lives.

While the Government has not made a specific assessment of changing the alcohol-free threshold, both Defra and DHSC will continue to work together to understand the opportunities presented by alcohol-free and low-alcohol drinks. This will support the government's Growth and Health missions by both encouraging growth in the alcohol-free and low-alcohol drinks sector and also as a potential way to address alcohol related harms.

■ **Meat: Ritual Slaughter**

Rupert Lowe:

[\[40683\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will introduce mandatory labelling on meat products to indicate whether animals were stunned prior to slaughter.

Rupert Lowe: [\[40684\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he has had recent discussions with the Food Standards Agency on the labelling of (a) halal and (b) kosher meat products in food outlets.

Rupert Lowe: [\[40686\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to encourage (a) public institutions and (b) restaurants to label halal meat to consumers.

Daniel Zeichner:

The Government encourages the highest standards of animal welfare at slaughter and would prefer all animals to be stunned before slaughter, but we respect the rights of Jews and Muslims to eat meat prepared in accordance with their religious beliefs.

It is for religious authorities to decide if meat is halal or kosher. A significant proportion of halal meat comes from animals that are stunned before slaughter. There are no regulations that require labelling of meat to include the method of slaughter, but where any information of this nature is provided it must be accurate and must not be misleading to the consumer. The Government respects religious freedoms and expects the industry, whether food producer or food outlet, to provide consumers with all the information they need to make informed choices.

A consultation on proposals to improve and extend current mandatory method of production labelling was undertaken last year by the previous government. The consultation sought views on options for the production standards behind the label. We are now carefully considering all responses before deciding on next steps.

The Department engages regularly with the Food Standards Agency on a range of topics.

Rupert Lowe: [\[40685\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of abattoirs in enforcing welfare standards during the production of halal meat.

Daniel Zeichner:

The Government encourages the highest standards of animal welfare at slaughter and would prefer all animals to be stunned before slaughter, but we respect the rights of Jews and Muslims to eat meat prepared in accordance with their religious beliefs. A significant proportion of halal meat comes from animals that are stunned before slaughter.

Legislation sets out strict requirements to protect the welfare of animals when slaughtered and there are additional rules that apply when animals are slaughtered by either the Jewish or Muslim method to ensure that animals are spared avoidable pain, suffering, or distress during the slaughter process. Official Veterinarians of the Food Standards Agency (FSA) are present in all approved slaughterhouses in

England and Wales to monitor and enforce animal welfare requirements. The FSA has a zero-tolerance policy to animal welfare breaches and will take appropriate action where these occur.

In addition to the Official Veterinarian presence, the FSA conduct regular audits to ensure that the animal welfare controls in slaughterhouses are effective. The frequency of these audits are risk based and the results are communicated to Defra. The Department engages regularly with FSA officials on a range of animal welfare topics.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Warinder Juss: [\[39277\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 27 February 2025 to Question 33266 on Members: Correspondence, when he plans to respond to that correspondence.

Daniel Zeichner:

The Department apologises once more to the hon. Member for the delay in responding. We will endeavour to provide a response to the hon. Member shortly.

Freddie van Mierlo: [\[40118\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to respond to the letter of 17 February 2025 from the hon. Member for Henley and Thame on the closure of the Thames Path National Trail at the Marsh Lock Horsebridge in Henley on Thames.

Freddie van Mierlo: [\[40120\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to respond to the letter of 12th February 2025 from the Hon. Member for Henley and Thame on a meeting to discuss the ongoing closure of the Thames Path National Trail at the Marsh Lock Horsebridge in Henley-on-Thames.

Mary Creagh:

The Department has not received the hon. Member's aforementioned letter of 12 February 2025; however, it did respond on 3 March 2025 to the hon. Member's letter of 6 February 2025 regarding the Thames Path National Trail at the Marsh Lock Horsebridge. The Department was also transferred the hon Member's letter of 17 February to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care regarding the same topic, which was closed in light of the 3 March response. A further letter from the hon Member dated 10 March has been received and will receive a response as soon as possible.

■ Packaging: Recycling**Greg Smith:** [\[39093\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the extended producer responsibility scheme on (a) brewers and (b) other businesses.

Greg Smith: [\[39099\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he has made an assessment of the potential impact of extended producer responsibility fees on brewers using glass bottles.

Mary Creagh:

Following the passage of the legislation introducing extended producer responsibility for packaging (pEPR) through parliament, the government has been working closely with industry, including the glass sector, to understand the impact of the upcoming fees on business as the scheme is implemented. To date we have had little evidence presented that pEPR fees cannot be afforded.

We are encouraging the glass industry to seek to reduce the cost impacts of pEPR through a transition to reuse and refill, something that used to be commonplace in the UK and continues to be in many other countries. The use of reusable/refillable packaging is encouraged under pEPR, as producers are only required to report and pay disposal cost fees for household packaging the first time it is placed on the market, and can then offset these fees when they recycle this packaging at the end of its life, thereby avoiding the vast majority of pEPR fees.

A full assessment of the impact of Extended Producer Responsibility was completed in 2024 and is published on legislation.gov.uk.

■ River Severn: Sewage**Dr Simon Opher:** [\[40288\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to reduce sewage discharges into the river Severn.

Emma Hardy:

For too long, water companies have discharged unacceptable levels of sewage into our rivers, lakes and seas.

That is why we are placing water companies under special measures through the Water (Special Measures) Act. The Act will drive meaningful improvements in the performance and culture of the water industry as a first important step in enabling wider, transformative change across the water sector.

The Environment Agency (EA) has strengthened its regulation of the water industry by expanding its specialised workforce, increasing compliance checks, and using new data and intelligence tools. The strengthening of the regulatory system has seen

a significant increase in the inspections at Severn Trent sewage assets, from 707 in 2024/25 to 1,742 in 2025/26.

All storm overflows are now monitored to ensure that sites are compliant with their permits. For high spilling sites, Severn Trent Water must produce a spill reduction plan as required by the Environment Act 2021. Where the EA identifies non-compliance, it will not hesitate in taking enforcement action.

For Price Review 24, which runs from 2025-2030, Severn Trent Water will be investing £1.7 billion to reduce the use of storm overflows. This investment will reduce storm overflow spills by 26% over the five-year period, a reduction down to an average of 14 spills per overflow.

■ Sugar Beet

Lee Barron:

[\[40931\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he plans to take to support sugar beet growers.

Daniel Zeichner:

contribution to UK sugar production. Also, that sugar beet itself, used in crop rotations, is beneficial to soil and crop health and allows arable farms a season of “rest” from cereal production.

We are committed to promoting fairness across the food supply chain. Government uses the UK Agricultural Market Monitoring Group to understand economic relationships in the sugar sector and maintains a regular dialogue with key stakeholders in the industry to remain up to date on concerns of sugar beet growers. These allow Government to collect both data and industry intelligence on the agricultural sectors, including sugar, to understand any challenges being faced.

To date the Farming Innovation Programme (FIP) has awarded over £64 million in funding to support 105 wider broadacre sector projects. These include a project focused on developing a long-term solution to combat virus yellows, a disease transmitted by aphids that threatens English sugar beet crops. A range of the other FIP projects could have outcomes that can be applied to sugar beet production, as may projects supported by the £47 million available for Farming Equipment and Technology Fund (FETF).

■ Sustainable Farming Incentive

Aphra Brandreth:

[\[39244\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much funding has been allocated to the Sustainable Farming Incentive for the 2025-26 financial year; and for what reason new applications have been paused since 11 March 2025.

Daniel Zeichner:

The farming blog published on Wednesday 12 March set out Defra's spend over the next two years (24/25 and 25/26). These are not ring-fenced figures and have the potential to change.

This showed that as of 11 March, £1.05 billion had been paid to farmers or committed for payment through existing agreements or submitted applications for the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI).

The high uptake of the SFI scheme means it is fully subscribed. The decision to close the scheme to new applications was taken at that point.

Aphra Brandreth:[\[39247\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will reopen the Sustainable Farming Incentive to new applications.

Daniel Zeichner:

We have closed the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) for new applications because the current SFI budget has been successfully allocated, with large-scale uptake of the scheme and 37,000 live SFI agreements delivering towards our environmental targets.

Now is the right time for a reset: supporting farmers, delivering for nature and targeting public funds fairly and effectively towards our priorities for food, farming and nature.

We will be reforming the SFI offer to direct funding towards SFI actions which are most appropriate for the least productive land and have the strongest case for enduring public investment. This will allow us to align SFI with our work on the Land Use Framework and the 25-year farming roadmap to protect the most productive land and boost food security, whilst delivering for nature.

We expect to publish more information about the reformed SFI offer in summer 2025. This will include an indication of when we expect to re-open SFI for applications.

Aphra Brandreth:[\[39265\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, for what reason his Department did not provide six weeks' notice when closing the Sustainable Farming Incentive scheme for new applications.

Daniel Zeichner:

The high uptake of the scheme means it is fully subscribed. The decision to close the scheme to new applications was taken at that point.

We could not give any advance notice because we needed to ensure fair access to the scheme and avoid creating a sudden increase in the level of demand.

Mr James Cleverly:

[40542]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department plans to take to support farmers to remain (a) competitive, (b) resilient, and (c) sustainable after the end of the Sustainable Farming Incentive.

Daniel Zeichner:

The primary responsibility for being competitive, resilient and sustainable rests with farm businesses themselves. The Sustainable Farming Incentive is an important offer, but it is part of a wider package. We remain committed to investing in environmental land management schemes. We plan to launch the new Higher Tier scheme later this year; Capital Grants will re-open in summer 2025; we continue to move forward with Landscape Recovery; and we are increasing payment rates for Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) agreement holders to recognise their ongoing commitment to delivering environmental outcome.

Funding from the farming budget also supports the provision of advice within the sector. The Farming Advice Service can assist farmers to review what advice and guidance is available to meet their business needs.

Tom Rutland:

[41382]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to (a) support farmers who have been unable to access funding through the Sustainable Farming Initiative, (b) seek an extension or extra funding for the SFI for those who are eligible but have not yet been able to claim and (c) ensure that future communications provide clarity and assurances on funding application deadlines.

Daniel Zeichner:

We remain committed to investing £5 billion of funding in the farming budget this year and next (£2.6 billion for 24/25 and the £2.4 billion for 25/26, as previously announced).

The Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) is an important offer, but it is part of a wider package. We remain committed to investing in Environmental Land Management schemes. We plan to launch the new Higher Tier scheme later this year; Capital Grants will re-open in summer 2025; we continue to move forward with Landscape Recovery; and we are increasing payment rates for Higher Level Stewardship agreement holders to recognise their ongoing commitment to delivering environmental outcome.

Whilst we aim to give notice where possible, to ensure fair access, and to avoid the risk of overspend, we could not give any advance notice of the closure of SFI, to avoid creating a sudden increase in the level of demand.

We expect to publish more information about the reformed SFI offer in summer 2025. This will include an indication of when we expect to re-open SFI for applications.

■ Sustainable Farming Incentive: Reviews

Aphra Brandreth: [\[39248\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how he plans to consult farmers on the review of the Sustainable Farming Incentive in a transparent way.

Daniel Zeichner:

Since we launched the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) in 2022 we have worked closely with the farming sector to develop and improve the offer to make sure it worked for as many different farmers and land types as possible. We will continue to do this in order to develop the reformed SFI offer.

■ Trout: Animal Welfare

Neil Duncan-Jordan: [\[40969\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to ensure oversight of the welfare of trout on farms in England.

Daniel Zeichner:

Current legislation provides protection for farmed fish. The Animal Welfare Act 2006 makes it an offence to cause unnecessary suffering to any protected animal, including fish, or to fail to provide for the welfare needs of a protected animal, for which that person is responsible.

Any allegations of welfare issues on trout farms in England will be investigated by the Animal and Plant Health Agency and where there are non-compliances with the regulations, appropriate action will be taken.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ British Overseas Territories: Companies

Kate Osborne: [\[38669\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the levels of compliance by overseas territories on providing public registers of beneficial ownership.

Stephen Doughty:

At the Joint Ministerial Council (JMC) in November 2024, the Falkland Islands and Saint Helena committed to join Montserrat and Gibraltar in implementing fully public registers by April 2025. The British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Bermuda, Anguilla and Turks and Caicos Islands agreed to implement registers of beneficial ownership, accessible to those with a legitimate interest by June 2025, with the necessary safeguards to protect the right to privacy in line with respective constitutions.

Every Territory is making progress towards these commitments and FCDO officials are in regular contact with counterparts in the Overseas Territories on their proposals

for registers to ensure they meet JMC agreements. I have and will continue to raise this directly with elected leaders across the Overseas Territories, and have discussed with the leaders of a number of OTs including Bermuda and the British Virgin Islands in recent weeks.

Kate Osborne:

[\[38670\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he plans to take to ensure that Overseas Territories adopt open and public registers of beneficial ownership.

Stephen Doughty:

Work is ongoing to improve beneficial ownership transparency in the Overseas Territories. At the Joint Ministerial Council (JMC) in November 2024, the Falkland Islands and Saint Helena committed to join Montserrat and Gibraltar in implementing fully public registers by April 2025. The British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Bermuda, Anguilla and Turks and Caicos Islands agreed to implement registers of beneficial ownership, accessible to those with a legitimate interest, by June 2025. It remains our expectation that the Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies will ultimately implement fully public registers.

Every Territory is making progress towards these commitments and FCDO officials are in regular contact with counterparts in the Overseas Territories on their proposals for registers to ensure they meet the agreement made at JMC. I have and will continue to raise this directly with elected leaders across the Overseas Territories, and have discussed with the leaders of a number of OTs including Bermuda and the British Virgin Islands in recent weeks.

■ **Hamas: UNRWA**

Priti Patel:

[\[38985\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer given on 11 February 2025 to Question 28011 on Hamas: UNRWA, what assessment he has made of UNRWA's implementation of the Colonna review; and what steps he has taken to investigate the alleged use of UNRWA facilities by Hamas.

Mr Hamish Falconer:

The United Nations Relief and Work Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) have committed to fully investigate any allegations against their employees and to continue implementation of the Colonna Report's recommendations. UNRWA must meet the highest standards of neutrality as laid out in the report. £1 million of our funding to UNRWA this year is supporting the implementation of its agreed Action Plan to ensure UNRWA commits to these neutrality obligations. We welcome the fact that UNRWA has said there should be an investigation into any misuse of its facilities. We have encouraged the Government of Israel to share any evidence of misuse of UNRWA facilities with the UN.

■ Israel and Occupied Territories: Development Aid**Wendy Morton:**[\[39447\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he made of the potential impact of the reduction in Official Development Assistance funding on programmes in (a) Israel and the (b) Occupied Palestinian Territories in the 2025-26 financial year.

Mr Hamish Falconer:

The Prime Minister made clear in the House on 25 February that this Government is proud of the UK's pioneering record on overseas development, and we will continue to play a key humanitarian role in Gaza. The reduction in Official Development Assistance will come into effect from 2027. This will provide time for planning and adapting plans to ensure the smoothest transition possible. We cannot yet confirm funding allocations for the region in financial year 2025-26 but continue to assess all overseas development assistance.

■ Japan: Economic Cooperation**Bobby Dean:**[\[40888\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the Government has plans to take steps to help facilitate closer economic cooperation with Japan.

Catherine West:

The Government has already taken action to strengthen UK-Japan economic cooperation. In early March 2025, the Foreign Secretary and Secretary of State for Business and Trade travelled to Japan, meeting their Japanese counterparts for the UK's first 'Economic 2+2'. As likeminded nations, we agreed new areas of collaboration in support of rules-based international trade, economic security, energy security, and engagement with Global South countries. The Government is taking forward work on a new Industrial Strategy Partnership and furthering our economic security partnership with Japan in support of growth, jobs and access to essential goods and services needed for the UK's future prosperity. The Government also plans to work closely with Japan to shape the future of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership and ensure it remains a modern, high-standards agreement.

■ Kashmir: Human Rights**Andrew Gwynne:**[\[39392\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions his Department has had with representatives from (a) the UN, (b) India, (c) Pakistan and (d) the Kashmiri people on the political situation in Jammu and Kashmir.

Andrew Gwynne:

[39393]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential implications for his policies of reports of human rights abuses in Jammu and Kashmir.

Andrew Gwynne:

[39394]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has made recent representations to his (a) Indian and (b) Pakistani counterpart on reported human rights abuses in Kashmir.

Andrew Gwynne:

[39395]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking with his international counterparts to help implement the recent United Nations resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir.

Catherine West:

I recognise there are human rights issues in both India Administered Kashmir and Pakistan Administered Kashmir. We raise issues, where we have them, directly with the governments of India and Pakistan. India and Pakistan are important friends of the UK, and we have strong and deep bilateral relationships with both. It is for India and Pakistan to find a lasting political resolution on Kashmir, taking into account the wishes of the Kashmiri people.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Accident and Emergency Departments and Urgent Treatment Centres

Blake Stephenson:

[40810]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of increasing the level of geographic detail available on the number of (a) A&E and (b) Urgent Care Centre admissions.

Karin Smyth:

NHS England publishes accident and emergency admission data for a range of different geographical footprints. This includes at an integrated care board, regional, and provider level. We will continue to keep the range of data available to support the improvement of National Health Services under review. Further information is available at the following link:

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

■ Accident and Emergency Departments: Standards

Joe Robertson:

[40777]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of publishing year-round data on the number of patients treated in temporary care environments.

Karin Smyth:

We continue to keep the data which is available and published to support improvements to urgent and emergency care services under review.

NHS England has been working with trusts since last year to put in place new reporting arrangements related to the use of temporary escalation spaces, like corridors, in order to drive improvement. Subject to a review of data quality, this information will be published later this year, and we will consider how this data could be published on a more regular basis.

Joe Robertson:

[40778]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to reduce the use of temporary care environments in patient care.

Karin Smyth:

The Government recognises that long waits in accident and emergency departments are unacceptable and lead to worse patient outcomes. Patients should expect and receive the highest standard of service, and we are determined to tackle the issue of corridor care.

NHS England published guidance in September 2024 regarding the use of temporary escalation spaces, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/principles-for-providing-safe-and-good-quality-care-in-temporary-escalation-spaces/>

In January 2025, the NHS England mandate and operational planning guidance for 2025/26 were published. These set out the priorities and actions to be taken to reform and improve urgent and emergency care services. This includes increasing the proportion of patients admitted, discharged, and transferred from emergency departments within 12 hours across 2025/26 compared to 2024/25.

We will shortly set out the further improvements and actions to be taken to support urgent and emergency care services this year.

■ Antidepressants: Prescriptions

Dr Simon Opher:

[40286]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to stop the overprescription of antidepressants.

Stephen Kinnock:

Antidepressants can be an effective treatment option for depression when prescribed safely and in alignment with patient preferences. They are also used in anxiety and chronic pain.

It is for the responsible clinician to work with their patient to decide on the best course of treatment, with the provision of the most clinically appropriate care for the patient always being the primary consideration. It is important for patients to be able to make informed choices about whether to take antidepressants, and NHS England has recently published a Patient Decision Aid on this topic, produced by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE).

It is also important for clinicians to recognise that, while antidepressants may be helpful for some patients, non-drug options are likely to be a better option for most people who present with less severe mental health conditions. These include NHS Talking Therapies for anxiety and depression, and social prescribing.

To ensure antidepressant drugs are made available to patients only where the benefits outweigh the potential harms, NHS England is encouraging the integrated care boards to address inappropriate antidepressant prescribing and to consider commissioning services for patients wishing to reduce or stop using antidepressants.

■ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: Girls**Blake Stephenson:****[40350]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the adequacy of ADHD assessments in identifying that condition in girls.

Stephen Kinnock:

It is the responsibility of the integrated care boards (ICBs) in England to make available appropriate provision to meet the health and care needs of their local population, including attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) services, in line with relevant National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines.

NICE guidelines on ADHD, published and updated in September 2019, aim to improve the diagnosis of ADHD, recognising that ADHD may be under-diagnosed in women and girls, and to improve the quality of care and support that people of all ages who are diagnosed with ADHD receive.

NHS England has established an ADHD taskforce which is working to bring together those with lived experience with experts from the National Health Service, education, charity, and justice sectors. The taskforce is working to get a better understanding of the challenges affecting those with ADHD, including timely and equitable access to services and support, with the final report expected in the summer.

In conjunction with the taskforce, NHS England has carried out detailed work to develop an ADHD data improvement plan to inform future service planning. NHS England has also captured examples from ICBs who are trialling innovative ways of

delivering ADHD services and is using this information to support systems to tackle ADHD waiting lists and provide support to address people's needs.

■ **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: Health Services**

Imran Hussain:

[\[41051\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of the abolition of NHS England on the Right to Choose pathway for ADHD patients; and what steps he is taking to ensure that patients' access to (a) assessments and (b) treatment is maintained after NHS England is abolished.

Stephen Kinnock:

Ministers will work with the new transformation team at the top of NHS England, led by Sir Jim Mackey, to lead this transformation. As we work to return many of NHS England's current functions to the Department, we will ensure that we continue to evaluate impacts of all kinds.

The abolition of NHS England will strip out the unnecessary bureaucracy and cut the duplication that comes from having two organisations doing the same job. We will empower staff to focus on delivering better care for patients, driving productivity up and getting waiting times down.

■ **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: Patient Choice Schemes**

Michael Wheeler:

[\[38797\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an assessment of the potential impact of the abolition of NHS England on the (a) consultation on NHS Right to Choose ADHD changes and (b) use of feedback from that consultation.

Karin Smyth:

Ministers will work with the new transformation team at the top of NHS England, led by Sir Jim Mackey, to lead this transformation. As we work to return many of NHS England's current functions to the Department, we will ensure that we continue to evaluate impacts of all kinds.

The abolition of NHS England will strip out the unnecessary bureaucracy and cut the duplication that comes from having two organisations doing the same job; we will empower staff to focus on delivering better care for patients, driving productivity up and getting waiting times down.

■ **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: South Suffolk**

James Cartlidge:

[\[41208\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to avoid potential late diagnosis of ADHD for patients in South Suffolk.

Stephen Kinnock:

It is the responsibility of the integrated care boards (ICBs) in England to make available appropriate provision to meet the health and care needs of their local population, including assessments for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), in line with relevant National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidelines.

NHS England has established an ADHD taskforce which is working to bring together those with lived experience with experts from the National Health Service, education, charity, and justice sectors. The taskforce is working to get a better understanding of the challenges affecting those with ADHD, including timely and equitable access to services and support, with the final report expected in the summer of 2025.

In conjunction with the taskforce, NHS England has carried out detailed work to develop an ADHD data improvement plan to inform future service planning. NHS England has also captured examples from ICBs who are trialling innovative ways of delivering ADHD services, and is using this information to support systems to tackle ADHD waiting lists and provide support to address people's needs.

■ Cardiovascular Diseases: South East**Gregory Stafford:**[\[41354\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to decrease waiting times for (a) urgent and (b) routine cardiology appointments in Surrey and Hampshire.

Karin Smyth:

Too many people have been left in limbo waiting for National Health Service appointments. The Government has committed to returning to the constitutional standard that 92% of patients wait no longer than 18 weeks from referral to treatment. Performance is currently at 58.9% for cardiology services in the Surrey Heartlands Integrated Care Board (ICB), and 59.3% for cardiology services in the Hampshire and Isle of Wight ICB. As a first step, we have already delivered on our pledge of an additional two million operations, scans, and appointments across elective services, nationally, between July and November 2024, compared to the same period in 2023, seven months ahead of schedule.

Cardiology has been identified as one of five national priority specialties which will undergo clinically driven pathway transformation in the Elective Reform Plan, published in January 2025. Planned reforms to cardiology care will include increasing specialist input earlier in care pathways, in turn reducing the number of unnecessary diagnostics undertaken, by developing standard pathways for common outpatient presentations, such as palpitations, and increasing timely access to cardiac diagnostic tests.

In addition to national efforts, the Department and NHS England are supporting a range of local actions in the South East region to reduce the time patients spend waiting for specialist cardiology care, both for urgent and routine appointments. For example, delays for echocardiography (ECG) are a key challenge in the Hampshire

and Isle of Wight ICB. Local action is focussed on improving ECG access by standardising pathways, to remove unwarranted variation for patients, and rolling out wider direct access to diagnostic tests through community diagnostic centre provision, rather than in hospitals. We are also supporting local general practices and trusts, through their ICBs, to increase volumes of Advice and Guidance for cardiology, which significantly reduces the time patients spend waiting for care.

■ Care Homes: Construction

James McMurdock: [40974]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to increase the number of new care home developments.

James McMurdock: [40977]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to support care homes operating at full capacity.

Stephen Kinnock:

Local authorities are best placed to understand and plan for the needs of their population. That is why, under the Care Act 2014, local authorities are tasked with the duty to shape their care market and to commission a range of high-quality, sustainable, and person-centred care and support services to meet the diverse needs of all local people. In performing that duty, a local authority must have regard to current and likely future demand for such services and consider how providers might meet that demand.

The Department publishes occupancy rates monthly on the GOV.UK website at a national, regional, and local authority level.

■ Continuing Care: Finance

Julia Buckley: [40871]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether there are mandatory timescales for (a) nursing homes requesting an assessment for (i) continuing healthcare funding and (ii) funded nursing care and a checklist referral being completed and (b) checklist referrals for (A) continuing healthcare funding and (B) funded nursing care being completed and full assessments being completed.

Stephen Kinnock:

The statutory guidance, National framework for NHS continuing healthcare and NHS-funded nursing care, sets out the principles and processes for NHS Continuing Healthcare (CHC) and National Health Service-funded nursing care (FNC), so that people are assessed and receive care in a timely way. Further information on the statutory guidance is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-framework-for-nhs-continuing-healthcare-and-nhs-funded-nursing-care>

The national framework sets the expectation that the overall assessment and eligibility decision-making process for CHC should, in most cases, not exceed 28 calendar days, from the date that the integrated care board receives the positive checklist, to the eligibility decision being made. There are no mandatory timescales for the completion of a CHC checklist referral when requested by a nursing home. There are no mandatory timescales for a decision to be made about FNC eligibility.

■ Cystic Fibrosis: Drugs

Jim Shannon:

[\[40475\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has had discussions with the National Institute for Health and Social Care on the accessibility of new medicines to treat cystic fibrosis.

Karin Smyth:

The Department has regular discussions with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) about access to various new medicines.

The NICE develops its recommendations for the National Health Service in England based on the clinical and cost effectiveness of medicines independently, based on a thorough assessment of the available evidence and in line with its published methods and processes.

In July 2024, the NICE approved three disease modifying treatments, orkambi, symkevi, and kaftrio, as treatment options for eligible NHS patients with cystic fibrosis, under the terms of a commercial agreement reached between NHS England and the manufacturer, Vertex. These treatments are now routinely funded by the NHS in England for eligible patients.

The NICE is also currently developing guidance for the NHS on whether vanzacaftor-tezacaftor-deutivacaftor can be recommended for routine funding for the treatment of cystic fibrosis. The NICE is expecting to publish final guidance in August 2025.

■ Dementia: Leigh and Atherton

Jo Platt:

[\[40554\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has plans to help increase dementia diagnosis rates to pre-Covid-19 levels in Leigh and Atherton constituency.

Stephen Kinnock:

We are committed to recovering the dementia diagnosis rate (DDR) to the national ambition of 66.7%, which in England, at the end of February 2025, was 65.4%.

To support recovery of the DDR and implementation of the Dementia Care Pathway, we have developed a dashboard to provide appropriate data and enable targeted support where needed.

To reduce variation in diagnosis rates, the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities' Dementia Intelligence Network has developed a tool for local systems,

which includes an assessment of population characteristics such as rurality and socio-economic deprivation. This enables systems to investigate local variation in diagnosis and take informed action to enhance their diagnosis rates. The tool has been released and is available via the NHS Futures Collaboration platform.

■ **Dental Services: Finance**

Helen Morgan: [41129]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 12 January 2022 to Question 102658, how much money NHS England clawed back from primary care NHS dental practices in England that had not met their contractual targets in each year since the 2020-21 financial year.

Stephen Kinnock:

The NHS Business Services Authority publishes the details of each National Health Service dental contract with the associated contract delivery data annually. This information includes additional NHS dental payments and deductions each year since 2015. Deductions to this amount include where a dentist does not deliver the contracted amount of NHS dental care. Performance adjustments each year relate to the performance in the previous financial year, for example, performance adjustments in 2023/24 relate to contract performance in 2022/23.

The publications are available at the following link: <https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/dental-data/nhs-payments-dentists>

■ **Department of Health and Social Care: Computers**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [40640]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the median age is of computers issued to officials in their Department.

Karin Smyth:

The median age of laptops issued to officials in the Department is four years.

■ **Department of Health and Social Care: Redundancy Pay**

Dr Neil Shastri-Hurst: [40737]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the potential cost of redundancy payments to staff in (a) the Department of Health and Social Care, (b) NHS England and (c) Integrated Care Boards.

Karin Smyth:

We recognise there may be some short-term upfront costs as we undertake the integration of NHS England and the Department, but these costs and more will be recouped in future years as a result of a smaller, leaner centre. By the end of the process, we estimate that these changes will save hundreds of millions of pounds a year, which will be reinvested in frontline services.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Written Questions

Helen Morgan:

[\[35780\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will respond to Question 32211 on NHS: Finance tabled by the hon. Member for North Shropshire on 21 February 2025.

Stephen Kinnock:

[Holding answer 11 March 2025]: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to Question 32211 on 24 March 2025.

■ General Practitioners

Julia Buckley:

[\[40869\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to increase the availability of GP appointments.

Stephen Kinnock:

The Government is determined to fix the front door of our National Health Service, making it easier for everyone to see a general practitioner (GP) when they need to.

In October 2024, we injected £82 million into the Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme to enabling the recruitment of 1,000 newly qualified GPs across England, which will increase the number of appointments delivered and care for thousands of patients.

We've just delivered the biggest boost to GP funding in years, an £889 million uplift, with GPs now receiving a growing share of NHS resources. For the first time in four years, the General Practitioners Committee England backed the new 2025/26 contract, which includes key reforms to improve access, for instance by making sure that patients can request appointments online throughout core hours.

Julia Buckley:

[\[40870\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of trends in the level of regional inequalities of access to GP appointments.

Stephen Kinnock:

We are committed to improving capacity and access to local services across the country. Integrated care boards (ICBs) and general practices (GPs) have a statutory duty to ensure sufficient provision of medical services, tailored to the needs of their local populations, accounting for factors like population growth, deprivation, and demographic change.

While GPs operate as independent contractors, they are held to nationally agreed standards under the GP Contract, which is reviewed and improved annually. The 2024/25 contract is backed by the largest increase in GP funding in years, specifically an £889 million uplift. This investment supports key reforms to improve access across

the country, including a new requirement for practices to offer online appointment requests throughout core opening hours.

We will continue working closely with ICBs to monitor and address variations in access, so that every patient can get the care they need, when they need it.

■ General Practitioners: Carbon Emissions

Ellie Chowns: [\[40299\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to support primary care to reduce carbon emissions from prescribing.

Ellie Chowns: [\[40300\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential implications for his policies of the Royal College of General Practitioners' report entitled Towards Greener Prescribing in General Practice, published in March 2025; and whether he plans to implement the recommendations of that report.

Ellie Chowns: [\[40301\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Royal College of General Practitioners' report entitled Towards Greener Prescribing in General Practice, published in March 2025, what plans his Department has to expand medicines recycling and re-use schemes.

Ellie Chowns: [\[40677\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the environmental impact of prescribing (a) inhalers and (b) other medicines.

Karin Smyth:

In October 2020, the National Health Service published its Net Zero Strategy, in order to become the world's first health system to commit to reaching net zero emissions, and NHS England is working collaboratively with a range of partners on implementation.

Recognising the importance of decarbonising general practices (GPs), NHS England collaborated with the Royal College of General Practitioners and the authors of the report Towards Greener Prescribing in General Practice, to develop a net zero hub, which includes three eLearning modules and a practice decarbonisation guide. These resources support and educate GPs in reducing carbon emissions from prescribing. The Department will work with NHS England to consider the recommendations and findings of the Royal College of General Practitioners' report.

Greener prescribing and recycling are key enablers to support the NHS' transition towards a more sustainable healthcare system. One key aspect of this is tackling overprescribing, including through improving repeat prescribing processes and delivering Structured Medication Reviews. Further information can be found in the updated Green Plan Guidance at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/green-plan-guidance/>

The NHS has already made progress in reducing medicine emissions. For example, optimising inhaler use by addressing Short Acting Beta Agonists overprescribing, improving inhaler technique, and working to ensure patients are on the appropriate treatment regimen and are using their inhaler at the right time. NHS England is also committed to exploring inhaler recycling and its potential benefits, and is currently supporting the implementation of an inhaler recycling pilot to assess a national scheme's feasibility and potential benefits.

In 2021, NHS England set out its NHS Net Zero Supplier Roadmap. Alongside and since this announcement, many pharmaceutical companies have made commitments to decarbonise. The NHS and the Government continue to collaborate with industry across a range of actions, such as the Sustainable Medicines Manufacturing programme, and the Voluntary Pricing, Access and Growth Investment Programme.

■ General Practitioners: Finance

Blake Stephenson:

[40812]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the press notice entitled New deal for GPs will fix the front door of the NHS, published on 28 February 2025, whether the funding announced in that notice is in addition to funding allocated to his Department at the Autumn Budget 2024.

Stephen Kinnock:

We have made necessary decisions to fix the foundations of the public finances in the Autumn Budget. Resource spending for the Department will be £22.6 billion more in 2025/26 than in 2023/24, as part of the Spending Review settlement.

As a part of this allocation, we are investing £889 million in core general practice (GP) funding, and up to £80 million for the use of Advice and Guidance between GPs and consultants. This brings the total spend on the GP Contract to £13.2 billion in 2025/26, the biggest increase in over a decade. We are pleased that the General Practitioners Committee England is supportive of the contract changes.

Mr Joshua Reynolds:

[40955]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to increase core funding for GP practices.

Stephen Kinnock:

We are investing an additional £889 million into core funding for general practice (GP) to reinforce the front door of the National Health Service, bringing total spend on the GP Contract to £13.2 billion in 2025/26. This is the biggest increase in over a decade, and we are pleased that the General Practitioners Committee England is supportive of the contract changes.

■ General Practitioners: Internet**James McMurdock:** [\[40963\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that online services provided by GPs are (a) accessible and (b) user friendly.

Stephen Kinnock:

As part of the 2025/26 GP Contract, a new requirement has been introduced for general practices (GPs) to offer online appointment requests throughout their core opening hours. This aims to improve accessibility by ensuring that digital services are consistently available whenever practices are open. However, the GP Contract is also clear that patients should always have the option of telephoning or visiting their practice in person, and all online tools must always be provided in addition to, rather than as a replacement for, other channels for accessing a GP.

Additionally, all digital tools used in primary care must meet the minimum functionality standards set by NHS England, helping to ensure a consistent and high-quality user experience. Primary care providers are also required to comply with the Accessible Information Standard. This ensures that online services are both accessible and user-friendly, supported by standardised, intuitive digital platforms that meet patients' diverse needs.

James McMurdock: [\[40964\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that (a) elderly and (b) vulnerable patients can telephone their GP surgery for assistance rather than using online or digital services.

Stephen Kinnock:

We understand that not all patients can or want to use online services. The GP Contract is clear that patients should always have the option of telephoning or visiting their practice in person, and all online tools must always be provided in addition to, rather than as a replacement for, other channels for accessing a general practitioner.

The 2025/26 GP Contract includes a new requirement for practices to enable online appointment requests throughout the duration of core opening hours, which will ease pressure on phone lines for people who prefer to telephone.

■ General Practitioners: North Cornwall**Ben Maguire:** [\[40934\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department plans to take to help increase the availability of GP appointments in North Cornwall constituency.

Stephen Kinnock:

We are committed to improving capacity and access to local services across the country, including in the North Cornwall constituency. North Cornwall sits within the NHS Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Integrated Care Board. Since June 2024, there has

been an 18.2% increase in appointments delivered, higher than the national average increase of 17.8% in the same period.

In October 2024, we injected £82 million into the Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme to enable the recruitment of 1,000 newly qualified general practitioners (GPs) across England, which will increase the number of appointments delivered, and care for thousands of patients

The Government has delivered the biggest boost to GP funding in years, an £889 million uplift, with GPs now receiving a growing share of National Health Service resources. For the first time in four years, the General Practitioners Committee England backed the new 2025/26 contract, which includes key reforms to improve access, for instance by making sure patients can request appointments online throughout core hours.

■ General Practitioners: Recruitment

Ben Obese-Jecty:

[\[40750\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 21 March 2025 to Question 38428 on General Practitioners, how many full-time equivalent (a) doctors in general practice and (b) other clinical staff have been recruited since 4 July 2024.

Stephen Kinnock:

Between 31 July 2024 and 28 February 2025, the latest period for which data is available, there were 586 more fully qualified full time equivalent (FTE) general practitioners (GPs), and nine fewer FTE nurses. Between 30 September 2024 and 31 December 2024, there were an additional 302 FTE direct patient care staff. This data does not include fully qualified GPs recruited through the Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme.

■ GP Practice Lists

Ben Obese-Jecty:

[\[40751\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 20 March 2025 to Question 37767 on GP Practice Lists, what weighting does the Carr-Hill Formula give to patient deprivation.

Stephen Kinnock:

The Carr-Hill formula does not include a weighting for patient deprivation. Amongst the range of factors included in the formula, the proportion of the population with a limiting long-term illness (LLTI) and the standardised mortality ratio (SMR) for those aged under 65 years old (SMR<65) are correlated with higher deprivation. The weightings for these factors are the practice list multiplied by (48.1198 + (0.26115 multiplied by the practice's LLTI) + (0.23676 multiplied by the practice's SMR<65)).

■ GP Surgeries: Wixams**Blake Stephenson:****[40349]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions his Department has had with the NHS Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes Integrated Care Board on the proposed Wixams GP surgery.

Stephen Kinnock:

Integrated care boards (ICBs) are responsible for commissioning, which includes planning, securing, and monitoring, general practice (GP) services within their health systems through delegated responsibility from NHS England. The Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes ICB has advised that they updated the Central Bedfordshire Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee about the ICB's intention to deliver a permanent healthcare facility in Wixams, with a further update to follow in the spring. The ICB has committed to undertaking further analysis with the new developers of Wixams town centre, to understand the dependencies, such as roads and power connections, and to assess the facility's delivery timeline against the likely costs and affordability. Further information about the Central Bedfordshire Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee is available at the following link:

https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/31/meetings/231/social_care_health_and_housing_overview_and_scrutiny_committee_-_meetings_and_agendas

We know that there is pressure on primary care estates and service provision in areas of high population growth. At a national level, we continue to work closely with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to ensure that all new and existing developments have an adequate level of healthcare infrastructure for the community.

■ Health Services**Sir John Hayes:****[40145]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, following the abolition of NHS England, where ultimate commissioning accountability will sit for (a) Cystic Fibrosis and (b) other specialised NHS services.

Karin Smyth:

Ministers will work with the new transformation team at the top of NHS England, led by Sir Jim Mackey, to lead this transformation. Work has begun immediately to start bringing teams in NHS England and the Department together, and over the next two years, NHS England and the Department will combine to form a new joint centre.

NHS England will continue to carry out its statutory duties until Parliamentary time allows for legislation to be brought forward to amend the Department's responsibilities.

The abolition of NHS England will strip out the unnecessary bureaucracy and cut the duplication that comes from having two organisations doing the same job. We will

empower staff to focus on delivering better care for patients, driving productivity up, and getting waiting times down.

■ Health Services: Public Consultation

Dr Neil Shastri-Hurst:

[40741]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much his Department has spent on (a) consultation and (b) all forms of engagement for the 10-Year Health Plan since 4 July 2024.

Karin Smyth:

Following an invitation to tender a competition process, we appointed Thinks Insight, Kaleidoscope Health and Care, and the Institute For Public Policy Research to support us to run this engagement exercise. The awarded value of the contract is up to £2,961,595.50, with an option to vary to £3,500,000 in the event that the scope of the contract evolves. This includes running the regional deliberative events with members of the public and health and care staff, further online and in-person engagement activities, the Change NHS online portal, and analysis of the insight received.

Dr Neil Shastri-Hurst:

[40743]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the cost to the public purse has been of the 11 working groups supporting the development of the 10-Year Health Plan to date.

Karin Smyth:

Most members of working groups, including the chairs, were not compensated for their participation in the groups, and took on group membership as part of, or alongside, their usual role. In a small number of cases, where members of the groups brought their lived experience as a patient or carer to the group, they were compensated for their time in line with usual NHS England practice. Many of the working group meetings took place virtually. Some in-person working group meetings incurred minimal catering costs. Travel and accommodation costs were reimbursed in a small number of cases by exception, and with the prior agreement of the Department or NHS England.

■ Health: Questionnaires

Freddie van Mierlo:

[41683]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence on the suitability of the EQ-5D questionnaire as tool for measuring caregiver quality of life improvements.

Karin Smyth:

I regularly meet with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) to discuss a range of issues. The NICE is responsible for the methods and processes that it uses in its health technology evaluations. The NICE's health technology evaluations manual, which was last updated in 2022 following extensive stakeholder

engagement, states that its preferred measure for capturing health-related quality of life data in its health technology evaluations, whether for patients or caregivers, is the EQ-5D. The NICE can accept data using other measures, if evidence is provided that the EQ-5D is inappropriate. The NICE is aware of external work exploring how to better account for caregiver effects in health economic evaluations, for example through the work of the SHEER Task Force, and will continue to monitor and actively encourage further work in this area to potentially inform its methods in the future.

■ Hospices: Employers' Contributions

Wendy Morton:

[40482]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the upcoming increase to employers National Insurance contributions on hospices.

Stephen Kinnock:

We have taken necessary decisions to fix the foundations in the public finances at the Autumn Budget, enabling the Spending Review settlement of a £22.6 billion increase in resource spending for the Department from 2023/24 outturn to 2025/26.

The employer National Insurance contribution rise will be implemented in April 2025, and planning guidance published on 30 January 2025 sets out the funding available to integrated care boards, and the overall approach to funding providers in the next financial year. It takes into account a variety of pay and non-pay factors and pressures on providers of secondary healthcare, including charitable hospices. Further information on the planning guidance is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/2025-26-priorities-and-operational-planning-guidance/> We are supporting the hospice sector with a £100 million capital funding boost for adult and children's hospices in England, to ensure they have the best physical environment for care. We are pleased to confirm that the Government has released the first £25 million tranche of that funding, with Hospice UK kindly allocating and distributing the money to hospices throughout England. An additional £75 million will be available from April 2025.

We are also providing £26 million of revenue funding to support children and young people's hospices for 2025/26.

■ Hospices: Finance

Jim Shannon:

[41065]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to provide funding for all hospice care.

Stephen Kinnock:

Whilst the majority of palliative and end of life care is provided by National Health Service staff and services, we recognise the vital part that voluntary sector organisations, including hospices, also play in providing support to people at the end of life and their loved ones.

Most hospices are charitable, independent organisations which receive some statutory funding for providing NHS services. The amount of funding each charitable hospice receives varies both within and between integrated care board (ICB) areas. This will vary depending on demand in that ICB area, but will also be dependent on the totality and type of palliative and end of life care provided from both NHS and non-NHS services, including charitable hospices, within each ICB area.

We are supporting the hospice sector with a £100 million capital funding boost for adult and children's hospices in England to ensure they have the best physical environment for care. We are pleased to confirm that the Government has released the first £25 million tranche of the £100 million of capital funding, with Hospice UK kindly allocating and distributing the money to hospices throughout England. An additional £75 million will be available from April 2025.

We are also providing £26 million of revenue funding to support children and young people's hospices for 2025/26. This is a continuation of the funding which until recently was known as the children and young people's hospice grant.

In February, I met with key palliative and end of life care and hospice stakeholders, and long-term sector sustainability, within the context of our 10-Year Health Plan, was discussed at length.

■ Innovative Medicines Fund

Freddie van Mierlo:

[41684]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will make an assessment of the (a) adequacy of the entry criteria for the Innovative Medicines Fund and (b) whether these present barriers to patients accessing medicines in areas of high unmet need.

Karin Smyth:

The Innovative Medicines Fund (IMF) was launched in June 2022, building on the successful Cancer Drugs Fund and supporting patient access to the most promising new medicines while further evidence is collected on their use to address clinical uncertainty.

The IMF's principles ensure that patients can access promising but still clinically uncertain medicines while supplementary data is collected over a time limited period, to allow for more informed decision making about patient access and long-term National Health Service funding.

Since the IMF was established in June 2022, over 1,050 patients have been registered to receive treatment with 16 products, treating 16 different conditions. NHS England has made interim funding available via the IMF for 14 products, and two products have been recommended for managed access across three indications in the IMF.

■ Maternity Services: Anaesthetics

Helen Maguire: [\[40949\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the number of anaesthetists on maternity care.

Karin Smyth:

There has been no such assessment. Decisions about recruitment are matters for individual National Health Service employers. NHS trusts manage their recruitment at a local level, ensuring they have the right number of staff in place, with the right skill mix, to deliver safe and effective care.

We are committed to training the staff we need, including anaesthetists and all other medical specialities, to ensure patients are cared for by the right professional, when and where they need it.

We have launched the 10-Year Health Plan which will set out a bold agenda to reform and repair the NHS. A central part of the 10-Year Health Plan will be our workforce and how we ensure we train and provide the staff, technology, and infrastructure the NHS needs to care for patients across our communities.

We will publish a refreshed Long Term Workforce Plan to deliver the transformed health service we will build over the next decade, and treat patients on time again.

■ Maternity Services: Ethnic Groups

Bell Ribeiro-Addy: [\[40656\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to reduce disparities in maternity care outcomes for Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic women.

Bell Ribeiro-Addy: [\[40663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help tackle racial disparities in maternal mortality rates.

Karin Smyth:

It is unacceptable that there are stark inequalities for women and babies, and it is a priority for the Government to make sure all women and babies receive the high-quality care they deserve, regardless of their background, location, or ethnicity. This includes taking action before women reach maternity care, as well as after they go home, with action focusing on improving both women's experiences and outcomes.

The Government is committed to setting an explicit target to close the maternal mortality gap. We are ensuring that we take an evidence-based approach to determining what targets are set, and that any targets set are women and baby-centred.

The National Health Service's Three-Year Delivery Plan for Maternity and Neonatal Services sets national measures to improve maternity and neonatal services by making care more personalised and equitable. A key objective within the plan is to

reduce inequalities for all in maternity access, experience, and outcomes, seeking to improve equity for mothers and babies.

As part of the plan, all local areas have published Equity and Equality Action Plans, which set out tailored interventions that will tackle inequalities for women and babies from ethnic backgrounds and those living in the most deprived areas. Trusts are also implementing Version 3 of the Saving Babies Lives Care Bundle, which provides maternity units with guidance and interventions to reduce stillbirths, neonatal brain injury, neonatal death, and preterm birth. The Department continues to work closely with the NHS as it delivers these initiatives.

Maternal Medicine Networks have also been established across England, which provide expert care to women with complex medical conditions before, during, and after pregnancy. To address inequalities in maternal outcomes, networks should put pathways in place to ensure equal access to specialised care for all women, and that referral criteria reflect the increased vulnerability of women from ethnic minorities and those who are socially deprived.

The Department is considering what longer term action can be taken to tackle disparities in outcomes and experience for black, Asian, and minority ethnic women. This includes working closely with NHS England, and the wider sector, to identify the right actions and interventions that will deliver the required change, both immediately, and in the future.

Bell Ribeiro-Addy:

[40659]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of racial disparities in maternity care on the mental health and wellbeing of women from ethnic minority communities.

Karin Smyth:

The Government recognises that women from ethnic minority backgrounds may face unique challenges when it comes to maternal mental health, and that perinatal mental health difficulties commonly affect both women and men, and can adversely impact parent-infant relationships.

Significant progress has been made to ensure that women experiencing moderate to severe and complex perinatal mental health problems can access specialist perinatal mental health services. For example, mental health services are now available for women who have pre-existing mental health needs prior to their pregnancy, as well as for those who experience mental health difficulties during or as a result of their pregnancy or labour. This is delivered through specialist perinatal mental health services, maternal mental health services, and Mother and Baby Units. Work is also ongoing to modernise the Mental Health Act so that it is fit for the 21st century, redressing the balance of power from the system to the patient, and ensuring that people with the most severe mental health conditions get better, more personalised care.

No overall assessment has been made on the potential impact of racial disparities in maternity care on the mental health and wellbeing of women from ethnic minority communities.

Bell Ribeiro-Addy:

[\[40665\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what information his Department holds on the (a) number and proportion of maternity services that use tailored interventions to address the specific needs of ethnic minority groups and (b) effectiveness of tailored interventions in reducing racial disparities in maternal health outcomes.

Karin Smyth:

No national data is collected on the number, proportion, and effectiveness of maternity services that use tailored interventions to address the specific needs of ethnic minority groups. It is, however, expected that all local areas fully implement their Equity and Equality Action Plans, which set out tailored interventions for tackling inequalities for women and babies from ethnic backgrounds and for those living in the most deprived areas.

■ **Medical Records: Babies**

Gregor Poynton:

[\[38280\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department is taking steps to ensure that NHS services (a) engage with new fathers and (b) record their details alongside mothers in their baby's health records.

Karin Smyth:

The National Health Service's three-year plan for maternity and neonatal services recognises that listening and responding to all women and families, including fathers, is an essential part of safe and high-quality care.

Maternity and neonatal voices partnerships are forums that are in place to ensure that service user voices, including fathers, are at the heart of decision-making in maternity and neonatal services. They bring together the staff who commission and provide maternity services with those who use those services. All members of the partnership take responsibility for the development and delivery of agreed workplans.

Specialist Perinatal Mental Health Services also offer mental health assessments and signposting to support as required for fathers/partners of women accessing services. Many NHS trusts have also implemented Family Integrated Care, a model of neonatal care which encourages the involvement of parents, including fathers, which in turn can benefit infant health outcomes.

Once a child is registered with the General Registry Office of Births and Deaths (GRO), the NHS receives information showing the parents listed on the birth certificate. Due to a period where not all GRO relationships were added to the NHS record, the NHS is currently working to ensure this happens going forward, and this work should be complete by Autumn 2025.

■ Medical Records: Disability

Catherine Atkinson:

[37415]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will make an estimate of the number of NHS patients who have registered to have adjustments made to their patient record under the Accessible Information Standard.

Stephen Kinnock:

Under the Equality Act 2010, public sector organisations are required to make changes in their approach or provision to ensure that services are accessible to disabled people, as well as to everybody else, by making reasonable adjustments.

National Health Service organisations and publicly funded social care providers must meet the Accessible Information Standard, to meet the communication needs of patients and carers with a disability, impairment, or sensory loss.

The Reasonable Adjustment Digital Flag was developed to enable health and care workers to record, share, and view details of reasonable adjustments, across the NHS and social care, wherever the person is seen or treated. Following the launch of the Reasonable Adjustment Digital Flag Information Standard (2023) DAPB4019, published September 2023, the flag went live in the National Care Record Service and is being rolled out across England.

■ Mental Health Services: Waiting Lists

Helen Morgan:

[38693]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps action he is taking to help reduce waiting times for mental health treatment in (a) Shropshire and (b) England.

Stephen Kinnock:

[Holding answer 21 March 2025]: The latest NHS Talking Therapies data for England show that as of December 2024, 91.2% of people completing treatment waited less than six weeks for their first appointment, against a target of 75%. Additionally, 98.4% of people completing treatment waited less than 18 weeks, against a target of 95%.

Waiting times data for NHS Talking Therapies are not held at constituency or county level but are available at integrated care board (ICB) level through the NHS Mental Health Dashboard, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/nhs-mental-health-dashboard/>

Despite the challenging fiscal environment, the Government has chosen to prioritise the funding to deliver expansions of NHS Talking Therapies and Individual Placement & Support schemes, demonstrating our commitment to addressing the root cause of mental health issues and providing support for people with severe mental illness to contribute to the economy by remaining in or returning to work.

■ NHS England**Dr Luke Evans:** [\[40671\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has plans to use external consultants to support the transfer of NHS England responsibilities to his Department.

Karin Smyth:

Ministers and senior Department officials will work with the new transformation team at the top of NHS England, led by Sir Jim Mackey, to determine the structure and requirements of the team required to support the creation of a new centre for health and care.

■ NHS England: Recruitment**Dr Neil Shastri-Hurst:** [\[40736\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he expects a new Chief Digital Officer to be appointed in NHS England.

Karin Smyth:

Ministers and senior Department officials will work with the new transformation team at the top of NHS England, led by Sir Jim Mackey, to determine the structure and requirements of the team required to support the creation of a new centre for health and care.

■ NHS: Private Sector**James Naish:** [\[41119\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has had discussions with Independent Sector Providers on ensuring that staff (a) who deliver NHS services and (b) whose contracts do not include automatic pay uplifts receive any agreed pay uplifts as soon as possible.

Karin Smyth:

My Rt Hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care has not held any discussions with independent providers on this topic.

Independent organisations, such as social enterprises and general practices, are free to develop and adapt their own terms and conditions of employment. This includes the pay scales that they use, the extent to which pay awards are made, and when those awards are paid.

■ Ophthalmic Services**Sam Carling:** [\[41379\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the ability of the ophthalmology sector to deliver timely care in (a) Cambridgeshire and Peterborough ICB and (b) in England in the context of the proposed changes to the 2025/26 NHS Standard Contract and Payment Scheme.

Karin Smyth:

Whilst no specific assessment has been made of the proposed 2025/26 NHS Standard Contract and Payment Scheme for ophthalmology services in England, or specifically for the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care Board, we are committed to ensuring that timely treatment is available across all specialties and all areas. As set out in the Plan for Change, we will ensure a return to the National Health Service constitutional standard that 92% of patients wait no longer than 18 weeks from Referral to Treatment, by March 2029. We have already made progress, delivering on our commitment to provide two million extra appointments as a first step to achieving this.

We have also published our Elective Reform Plan, which sets out an expectation that performance against the 18 week standard will increase from 58% in December 2024 to 65% by March 2026, with every trust expected to deliver a minimum 5% improvement by March 2026.

Planning guidance for 2025/26 also sets clear targets, including reducing the elective waiting list, but gives local systems greater control and flexibility over how local funding is deployed to best meet the needs of the people they serve.

■ Palliative Care: Finance**Harpreet Uppal:**[\[40770\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to provide a long-term sustainable funding model for palliative and end of life care providers in the 10 Year Health Plan.

Stephen Kinnock:

The Government is determined to shift more healthcare out of hospitals and into the community, to ensure patients and their families receive personalised care in the most appropriate setting, and palliative and end of life care services will have a big role to play in that shift.

As part of the work to develop the 10-Year Health Plan, we will be carefully considering policies, including those that impact people with palliative and end of life care needs, with input from the public, patients, health staff, and our partners, including those in the hospice sector.

In February 2025, I met with key palliative and end of life care and hospice stakeholders, and long-term sector sustainability, within the context of our 10-Year Health Plan, was discussed at length.

■ Prescription Drugs: Shortages**James McMurdock:**[\[40965\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to (a) ensure patients have timely access to and (b) prevent shortages in prescription medication.

Karin Smyth:

There are approximately 14,000 licensed medicines, and the overwhelming majority are in good supply. Where supply issues do arise, we know how frustrating and distressing these can be for patients, and we work closely with industry, the National Health Service, and the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency to resolve issues as quickly as possible, to make sure patients can access the medicines they need.

Medicine supply chains are complex, global, and highly regulated, and there are a number of reasons why supply can be disrupted, many of which are not specific to the United Kingdom and outside of Government control, including manufacturing difficulties, access to raw materials, sudden demand spikes or distribution issues, and regulatory issues.

While we can't always prevent supply issues from occurring, we have a range of well-established processes and tools to manage them when they arise, to mitigate risks to patients. These include close and regular engagement with suppliers, use of alternative strengths or forms of a medicine to allow patients to remain on the same product, expediting regulatory procedures, sourcing unlicensed imports from abroad, adding products to the restricted exports and hoarding list, use of Serious Shortage Protocols, and issuing NHS communications to provide management advice and information on the issue to healthcare professionals, including pharmacists, so they can advise and support their patients.

The resilience of UK supply chains is a key priority, and we are committed to helping to build long term supply chain resilience for medicines. We are continually learning and seeking to improve the way we work to both manage and help prevent supply issues and avoid shortages. The Department, working closely with NHS England, is taking forward a range of actions to improve our ability to mitigate and manage shortages, and to strengthen our resilience.

■ Prescriptions**James Naish:**[\[41125\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he is taking steps to ensure that the Community Pharmacy Independent Prescribing Pathfinder Programme and independent prescribing generally will continue to be supported to maximise direct prescribing capability in England.

Stephen Kinnock:

The NHS England Pathfinder programme is running across England with the aim of developing a commissioning framework for community pharmacy clinical services with independent prescribing (IP) for National Health Service patients. We are working with integrated care boards and pathfinder sites, community pharmacies, to understand the key enablers for IP to be incorporated into community pharmacy. The programme learning will be across five key domains: clinical; digital; governance and safety; people; and funding and contracts. We hope to complete our evaluation by

Autumn 2025, and to use this to inform planning for the incorporation of prescribing into community pharmacy clinical services. Further information on the NHS England Pathfinder programme is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/primary-care/pharmacy/pharmacy-integration-fund/independent-prescribing/>

■ Primary Care: Transgender People

Zöe Franklin:

[40124]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of treatment of trans patients in primary care; and whether those patients receive adequate treatment for biological health needs.

Karin Smyth:

It is important that all patients, including transgender patients, feel comfortable and confident in accessing primary care services.

The Government is committed to ensuring that transgender patients receive the care and support they need when accessing National Health Services. This includes where care is sex specific, such as the Cervical Screening Management System launched in June 2024, which will allow people to register their sex at birth as well as their gender identity, which should allow for better call/recall for transgender and non-binary people who have a cervix.

In line with the recommendations of the Cass Review, NHS England is currently undertaking a review of adult gender services. The review will examine the model of care and operating procedures of each service, with the aim of producing an updated service specification.

■ Radiotherapy: Artificial Intelligence

Tessa Munt:

[41018]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what guidance he has provided to NHS England on maximising the the potential utilisation of artificial intelligence for radiotherapy treatment for cancer patients.

Ashley Dalton:

No specific guidance has been provided to the National Health Service, however we expect that radiotherapy treatment centres will use all appropriate technology for treating patients, to ensure that they receive the best possible care. This includes the use of artificial intelligence where available.

■ Radiotherapy: Medical Equipment

Tessa Munt:

[41042]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to allow radiotherapy machines purchased by charities for hospitals to stop treating patients if charitable funds are not available to renew those machines.

Ashley Dalton:

Only radiotherapy machines purchased with Government funds are eligible for replacement through Government funding. There are no plans to change this position.

Radiotherapy: Waiting Lists**Tessa Munt:**[\[41017\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average waiting time for cancer patients requiring radiotherapy treatment is before they commence that treatment in each region in England.

Ashley Dalton:

The Department does not hold the data in this format. Data on cancer waiting times for specific treatments can be found on NHS England's website, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/cancer-waiting-times/monthly-data-and-summaries/2024-25-monthly-cancer-waiting-times-statistics/>

Social Services: Employers' Contributions**Dame Caroline Dinenage:**[\[41027\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the National Insurance Contributions (Secondary Class 1 Contributions) Bill on the number of local authority funded adult social care beds.

Stephen Kinnock:

The Government did consider the cost pressures facing adult social care as part of the wider consideration of local government spending within the Spending Review process in 2024. To enable local authorities to deliver key services such as adult social care, the Government is making available up to £3.7 billion of additional funding for social care authorities in 2025/26, which includes an £880 million increase in the Social Care Grant.

Speech and Language Therapy: Labour Turnover and Recruitment**Dr Luke Evans:**[\[40612\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to increase the (a) recruitment and (b) retention of speech and language therapists.

Karin Smyth:

Decisions about recruitment are matters for individual National Health Service employers. NHS trusts manage their recruitment at a local level, ensuring they have the right number of staff in place, with the right skill mix, to deliver safe and effective care.

NHS England is leading the National Retention Programme to drive a consistent, system-wide approach to staff retention across NHS trusts. This ensures trusts have

access to proven retention strategies, data-driven monitoring, and can foster a more stable, engaged, productive, and supported workforce.

HOME OFFICE

■ Asylum: Hotels

Jack Rankin:

[\[41380\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the oral contribution of the Minister for Border Security and Asylum of 13 January 2025 on Asylum Hotels, Official Report, column 13, what progress his Department has made on closing nine asylum hotels by end of March 2025.

Dame Angela Eagle:

It remains our absolute commitment to end the use of hotels over time, as part of our reduction in overall asylum accommodation costs. We do not provide a running commentary on hotel numbers, but by the end of March there will be fewer hotels open than when this Government took office.

■ Batteries: Storage

Nick Timothy:

[\[40798\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what contingency plans are emergency services required to provide in the event of a fire at a battery energy storage systems site.

Dame Diana Johnson:

It is the responsibility of fire and rescue authorities to ensure that firefighters receive the appropriate equipment and training they need to safely respond to the wide range of incidents which they attend.

The National Fire Chiefs Council also provide guidance to fire and rescue services to help keep firefighters and the public safe. In 2023, the NFCC published [guidance](#) on Battery Energy Storage System sites.

■ Demonstrations

Dr Simon Opher:

[\[40292\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of the Public Order Act 2023 on the right to peaceful protest and assembly.

Dame Diana Johnson:

The right to peacefully protest is a fundamental part of our democratic society.

We have committed to carry out post-legislative scrutiny of the Public Order Act 2023 beginning in May 2025. This process will review how the legislation has operated since it came into force.

■ Domestic Abuse: Gloucester**Alex McIntyre:****[40397]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what funding her Department provides to children and young people's domestic abuse services in Gloucester.

Jess Phillips:

This Government has set out an ambition to halve violence against women and girls (VAWG) within a decade and will treat it as the national emergency that it is.

Supporting children and young people who are victims of domestic abuse within their families and in their own relationships must be a key part of that through the forthcoming VAWG strategy. The Home Office currently funds specialist support to children who have been impacted by domestic abuse through the Children Affected by Domestic Abuse (CADA) Fund, which supported eight organisations across England and Wales with £10.3 million between 2022 and 2025.

The Government has increased funding to all local authorities to £160 million for 2025-26, an uplift of £30 million from the previous year, to provide further support in safe accommodation for domestic abuse survivors, including children. We will deliver a cross-government, transformative approach, underpinned by a new VAWG Strategy published later this year. This will take into account the needs of all victims, including children.

■ Fire and Rescue Services**Edward Morello:****[40415]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the potential impact of ageing fire stations on fire and rescue service operations.

Dame Diana Johnson:

Decisions about how Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) are run, and how their resources are allocated are a matter for Chief Fire Officers and their democratically elected Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs). They are responsible for meeting the needs of local communities in accordance their Community Risk Management Plans (CRMPs).

His Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) carries out inspections for each FRS in England to give the public a clear, independent and impartial assessment of performance in each service.

■ Fire and Rescue Services: Equality**Kevin Hollinrake:****[40161]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the answer of 6 March 2025, to Question 33937, on Fire and Rescue Services, what her policy is on protected characteristic diversity targets for the recruitment of firefighters.

Dame Diana Johnson:

Responsibility for recruitment of firefighters in pursuit rests with individual fire and rescue authorities in England.

■ Fire and Rescue Services: Finance**Edward Morello:**[\[40409\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the adequacy of the financial settlements for fire and rescue services.

Edward Morello:[\[40411\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of removing the three grant income streams on the financial sustainability of fire and rescue services in West Dorset constituency.

Edward Morello:[\[40412\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to ensure fire and rescue services have sustainable funding to maintain emergency response capabilities and prevention services.

Edward Morello:[\[40414\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has plans to introduce dedicated capital funding for fire and rescue services to allow them to invest in (a) training facilities, (b) fleet, and (c) estate maintenance.

Dame Diana Johnson:

Government funding for fire and rescue services is provided by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) through the Local Government Finance Settlement.

Overall, fire and rescue authorities will receive around £2.87 billion in 2024/25. In 2025/26, Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority has a core spending power of £74.9m, an increase of £2.4m or 3.3% compared to 2024/25.

The Final Local Government Finance Settlement for 2025/26, (published on 3 February 2025) sets out that standalone Fire and Rescue Authorities, such as Dorset and Wiltshire, will see an increase in core spending power of up to £65.5 million in 2025/26. Including the National Insurance Contribution Grant, this is an increase of 3.6 per cent in cash terms compared to 2024/25.

It is the responsibility of each Fire and Rescue Authority to determine how to allocate the funding that they receive based on its analysis of risk and local circumstances. Officials in the Home Office and MHCLG are working with the National Fire Chiefs Council to collate evidence on the fire and rescue sector's funding needs to HM Treasury. Decisions on any capital funding will be subject to an assessment at the next Spending Review.

■ Fire Stations: Dorset and Wiltshire

Edward Morello:

[\[40413\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the potential impact of fire station closures on public safety in (a) Dorset and (b) Wiltshire.

Dame Diana Johnson:

Decisions about how Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) are run, and how their resources are allocated are a matter for Chief Fire Officers and their democratically elected Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs). They are responsible for meeting the needs of local communities in accordance with their Community Risk Management Plans (CRMPs)

His Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) carries out inspections for each FRS in England to give the public a clear, independent and impartial assessment of performance in each service. Overall, fire and rescue authorities will receive around £2.87 billion in 2024/25. In 2025/26, Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority has a core spending power of £74.9m, an increase of £2.4m or 3.3% compared to 2024/25.

The Final Local Government Finance Settlement for 2025/26, (published on 3 February 2025) sets out that standalone Fire and Rescue Authorities, such as Dorset and Wiltshire, will see an increase in core spending power of up to £65.5 million in 2025/26. Including the National Insurance Contribution Grant, this is an increase of 3.6 per cent in cash terms compared to 2024/25.

■ Firearms: Licensing

Joe Morris:

[\[40356\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the total number of firearms certificate holders is, what the percentage of licensing applications completed within four months is; and how many temporary permits were issued by the firearms licensing department of Northumbria Constabulary, last notified to her department.

Dame Diana Johnson:

As at 31 March 2024, there were a total of 643,162 firearms certificates on issue in England and Wales. This was made up of 147,364 firearms certificates and 495,798 shotgun certificates on issue respectively.

The issuing of firearms certificates and the efficiency of police forces is a matter for individual Chief Officers of Police and they are held to account by Police and Crime Commissioners. However, the performance of forces is actively being monitored by the National Police Chiefs' Council lead for firearms licensing, Deputy Chief Constable David Gardner, and he is developing a new performance framework for firearms licensing teams, which it is intended will be published soon, to provide greater transparency on application turnaround times.

Stuart Anderson:

[\[40365\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the affordability of firearms licences and renewals for (a) game keepers and (b) veterinarians.

Dame Diana Johnson:

On 5 February 2025, increased fees came into effect for firearms licensing applications processed by police forces. This gave effect to a commitment in the Government's manifesto.

A full impact assessment was published alongside the Firearms (Variation of Fees) Order 2025, the Statutory Instrument that brought the new fees into effect.

The impact assessment covers the impact of increased fees on game keepers and veterinarians. Any future changes to firearms licensing will be subject to further impact assessments in the normal way.

■ Immigration

Sarah Bool:

[\[903521\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of introducing a statutory cap on levels of migration.

Seema Malhotra:

This Government recognises and values the contribution that legal migration makes to the UK.

This Government is clear that net migration must come down from the record highs that were reached under the previous government.

Under the previous Government, between 2019 and 2024, net migration almost quadrupled, heavily driven by a big increase in overseas recruitment.

This Government is clear that net migration must come down and whilst we will always benefit from international skills and talent, immigration must not be used as an alternative to tackling skills shortages and labour market failures here in the UK.

The work to restore order to our immigration system is already underway, and we will be setting out our approach in detail in the upcoming Immigration White Paper.

■ Immigration: ICT

Afzal Khan:

[\[39554\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her Department's planned timetable is for the completion of the migration of casework operations to the new ATLAS system.

Seema Malhotra:

Since mid-2024, Atlas has been the primary caseworking system for operational teams across Migration & Borders with the legacy CID (Case Information Database) caseworking system only being used for very small volume case types. Work to

migrate legacy CID 'work in progress' cases across to Atlas has been in progress since late 2024, and the capability to handle those small volume case types is due to be completed by the end of April 2025, when it is currently scheduled to decommission CID.

■ Knives: Sales

Mr Clive Betts: [\[40991\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will ensure there is full consultation with established knife manufacturers and distributors before rules are changed about the design of kitchen knives that can be sold online.

Dame Diana Johnson:

We will certainly engage with knife manufacturers and distributors as part of these considerations.

■ Migrant Workers: Hospitality Industry

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[41190\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the potential merits of including hospitality workers on the immigration salary list.

Seema Malhotra:

The Migration Advisory Committee last reviewed hospitality roles with respect of the Immigration Salary List in 2023 and did not recommend any for inclusion on the list.

Any future changes to the ISL will be considered in the context of the Immigration White Paper which will be published in due course.

■ Neighbourhood Policing

Claire Young: [\[903517\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to help improve community policing.

Dame Diana Johnson:

In December the Prime Minister set out his Plan for Change, including the delivery of a Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee. That means putting bobbies back on the beat in every corner of the country and ensuring that people have a named, contactable officer to turn to when things go wrong.

In January's Police Settlement we announced £200 million of funding to kickstart the increase of 13,000 neighbourhood officers and PCSOs and we are currently finalising the figures with individual forces for year 1.

■ Passports: Gender Recognition

Dr Caroline Johnson:

[41234]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether an individual without a Gender Recognition Certificate can change the sex displayed on their passport to be different from their sex recorded at birth.

Seema Malhotra:

HM Passport's Office policy can be found at [Gender recognition policy - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/gender-recognition-policy). The policy was last updated under the previous government in April 2024, and has not been changed since.

■ Police: Cost Effectiveness

Stuart Anderson:

[40360]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an estimate of the projected savings that will be raised via the police collaboration and efficiency programme.

Dame Diana Johnson:

In her Written Ministerial statement of 19 November (Statement UIN HCWS232) the Home Secretary set out her intention to work with policing on a package of reforms to ensure it can operate efficiently and effectively, deliver the Safer Streets Mission and support the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee. In particular, she announced a new Police Efficiencies and Collaboration Programme to deliver commercial efficiencies and make cashable savings.

We continue to work with policing to further develop this programme, identify and unlock immediate cost savings and lay the foundations to deliver hundreds of millions of pounds of efficiency savings by the end of this Parliament.

■ Police: Gloucester

Alex McIntyre:

[40398]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to increase public confidence in policing in Gloucester.

Dame Diana Johnson:

As part of the Safer Street's Mission, the Government has set out an ambition to halve violence against women and girls, halve knife crime and restore public confidence in policing, including through the delivery of a Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee.

Provision has been made for £1,527,344 of funding to Gloucestershire Constabulary to kickstart the increase of neighbourhood policing personnel in 2025/26.

■ Retail Trade: Crime**Jodie Gosling:****[903520]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to tackle retail crime.

Dame Diana Johnson:

Tackling retail crime, in partnership with police and retailers, is a top priority for this government.

In the last year of the previous government, shop theft reached a record high, and violence and abuse towards retail workers increased at an unacceptable level.

This Government will not tolerate these crimes. Through our Crime and Policing Bill, we have introduced a new offence of assaulting a retail worker and we will end the effective immunity for shop theft of goods under £200.

■ Undocumented Migrants: English Channel**Matthew Patrick:****[40898]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, on how many days Border Force implemented a red rating for expected numbers of small boat crossings in the Channel in the (a) 2021-22, (b) 2022-23 and (c) 2023-24 financial years; and in the 2024-25 financial year to date.

Dame Angela Eagle:

The Home Office has interpreted the question to mean the periods 6 April – 5 April for the years quoted. The following reflect the numbers of days in each financial year where crossing attempts were considered likely given forecast weather and sea conditions.

(a) 2021-22 – 109

(b) 2022-23 – 104

(c) 2023-24 – 102

(d) 2024-27/03/2025 – 182

Matthew Patrick:**[40901]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, on how many occasions a small boat was recorded as entering UK waters with more than (a) 50, (b) 60, (c) 70 and (d) 80 people on board in (i) 2021-22, (ii) 2022-23, (iii) 2023-24 and (iv) 2024-25.

Dame Angela Eagle:

The Home Office has interpreted the question to mean boats carrying a) 51 – 60 people; b) 61 – 70 people, and so on. The Home Office does not record this information in terms of boats 'entering UK waters' but as numbers of people who arrived in the UK for each individual boat.

51 - 60	61 - 70	71 - 80	80+	
2021-22	38	12	2	6
2022-23	241	40	4	1
2023-24	201	100	31	4
2024-25 (to 27 Mar)	169	176	102	26

■ Undocumented Migrants: International Cooperation

Douglas McAllister:

[\[903518\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent progress her Department has made on increasing levels of international cooperation to help tackle organised illegal immigration.

Dame Angela Eagle:

We are leading the international fight against organised immigration crime, and have delivered new agreements with a range of partners, including with Iraq, Germany and Italy; as well as deepening our cooperation with France

Today's landmark Summit on Organised Immigration Crime features delegations from over 45 countries and agencies, and will strengthen our partnerships across the globe; increase intelligence-sharing, and enable targeted disruptions to the criminal networks whose operations cross over multiple borders.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Agriculture: Land

Ben Obese-Jecty:

[\[41613\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to her oral contribution in the Second Reading of the Planning and Infrastructure Bill on 24 March 2025, Official Report, column 659, what steps she is taking to protect high-quality agricultural land.

Matthew Pennycook:

The government places great importance upon our agricultural land and food production.

We are maintaining the existing strong protection for the best and most versatile agricultural land.

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out how the best and most versatile agricultural land should be reflected in planning policies and decisions. The Framework is clear that where significant development of agricultural land is

demonstrated to be necessary, areas of poorer quality land should be preferred to those of a higher quality.

■ Asylum: Expenditure

Kevin Hollinrake: [40159]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 3 March 2025 to Question 30616, on Asylum: Health services, what the (a) forecast and (b) budgeted aggregate spend on refugees and asylum seekers by local government in England was in the most recent year for which figures are available.

Kevin Hollinrake: [40193]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 3 March 2025 to Question 30616 on Asylum: Health services, what the outturn aggregate spend was on refugees and asylum seekers by local government in England in the most recent year for which figures are available.

Jim McMahon:

The most recent data collected by the department regarding budgeted spending on refugees and asylum seekers by local government in England is from 2024-25 and can be found [here](#). The relevant lines are: RA326 Children's social care – Asylum seekers; and RA349 Social support – Asylum seeker support.

The most recent data collected by the department regarding outturn spending on refugees and asylum seekers by local government in England is from 2023-24 and can be found [here](#). The relevant lines are: RO3 Line 18 Children looked after – asylum seeking children who are looked after; RO3 Line 26 Children's social care – Asylum Seekers; and RO3 Line 49 Social support – Asylum seeker support.

■ Chinese Embassy: Planning Permission

Kevin Hollinrake: [40199]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the letter to her department from Innovate UK on the Chinese Embassy call-in request, disclosed under EIR reference EIR2024/31081 on 3 March 2025, whether Innovate UK re-submitted their 2022 call-in request when the current planning application was re-submitted by the Chinese Government.

Kevin Hollinrake: [40487]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 9 December 2024 to Question 16572 on Chinese Embassy: Planning Permission, if she will publish the information disclosed under the Environmental Information Regulations with reference EIR2024/31081 of 3 March 2025.

Matthew Pennycook:

A further call-in request was received from Innovate UK on 16 October 2024, after the planning application had been called in on 14 October 2024.

We do not routinely publish planning representations seeking call in of applications.

■ Council Tax: Second Homes

Kevin Hollinrake:

[\[40191\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of the second homes council premium on recent trends in the number of properties being switched to hereditaments paying business rates.

Jim McMahon:

The government annually publishes data on properties liable for business rates and intends to publish the next set of data in June. The current data does not show a trend of second homes switching to business rates however the government will continue to monitor this.

This government has maintained the previous government's position that a property must meet a minimum lettings threshold before being assessed as a short-term let for business rates purposes. Where a property does not meet these criteria, it would usually be liable for council tax. The government will keep this policy under review.

■ Derelict Land: Regeneration

Blake Stephenson:

[\[36495\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to her Department's press release entitled Government unveils plans for next generation of new towns, published 13 February 2025, whether the £51.5m funding to increase regeneration and brownfield delivery is additional to funding outlined at the Autumn Budget 2024.

Matthew Pennycook:

The £51.5 million package announced on 13 February 2025 is additional to the funding outlined at the Autumn Budget 2024.

■ Devolution: Finance

Kevin Hollinrake:

[\[40194\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what (a) capital and (b) resource funding was allocated to devolution deals in 2024-25 in (i) May 2024 and (ii) March 2025.

Jim McMahon:

Three devolution agreements were implemented across 2024-25 in the North East; York and North Yorkshire; and East Midlands. Full details of the funding allocated to each area can be found in their individual devolution deals, published on gov.uk. Funding specifically allocated in the months of May 24 and March 25 from MHCLG is listed in the table below.

MCA	RDEL/CDEL	PAYMENT NOTE	MAY 24	MARCH 25
East Midlands	RDEL	Capacity funding	£1,000,000	£500,000
East Midlands	RDEL	Local Enterprise Partnership Funding	£234,285	
North East	RDEL	Capacity Funding	£1,000,000	£1,750,000
North East	RDEL	Local Enterprise Partnership Funding	£234,285	
North East	RDEL & CDEL	Investment Zones	£2,450,000 (RDEL) £4,650,000 (CDEL)	
North East	CDEL	Investment funds	£20,000,000	
York and North Yorkshire	RDEL	Capacity Funding	£1,000,000	£500,000
York and North Yorkshire	RDEL	Local Enterprise Partnership Funding	£234,285	

■ Environmental Delivery Plans

Dr Simon Opher:

[\[41115\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that the Environmental Delivery Plans proposed in the Planning and Infrastructure Bill are compatible with section 17(5) of the Environment Act 2021.

Matthew Pennycook:

The government is clear that the Planning and Infrastructure Bill will not lead to a reduction in environmental protections.

The Secretary of State, when considering a policy decision to make an Environmental Delivery Plan for an area, will have due regard to the policy statement on environmental principles.

■ Fire and Rescue Services: West Dorset

Edward Morello:

[\[40410\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of the Local Government Finance Settlement 2025-26 on fire and rescue services provision in West Dorset constituency.

Jim McMahon:

For Dorset and Wiltshire Fire Authority, the final Settlement makes available a total of up to £74.9 million in 2025-26, representing an increase in Core Spending Power of up to £2.4 million.

The government will continue to work closely with stakeholders across the sector to ensure Fire and Rescue services have the resources they need to protect communities. Decisions on how their resources are best deployed to meet their core functions are a matter for each fire and rescue authority.

■ Floods and Temperature

Blake Stephenson:

[\[40336\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether she has made an assessment of the potential implications for her policies of AXA's report entitled Extreme weather risks: An analysis of England's vulnerability to flooding and heat.

Alex Norris:

Under the Third National Adaptation Plan, MHCLG has shared responsibility with Defra and DESNZ for addressing risks to buildings from extreme heat and flooding.

On overheating, MHCLG introduced Part O of the Building Regulations in 2021, which requires that new buildings are built to mitigate the risk of overheating. Part O came into force in June 2022.

On flooding, statutory guidance to the Building Regulations in Approved Document C, already promotes the use of flood resilient and resistant construction in flood prone areas.

The revised National Planning Policy Framework published on 12 December 2024 also sets out that the planning system should take full account of all climate impacts, including overheating, storm and flood risk. Planning should help to ensure that development minimises vulnerability and improves resilience to the effects of climate change.

■ Future High Streets Fund

Kevin Hollinrake:

[\[40198\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what (a) capital and (b) resource funding was allocated to the Future High Streets Fund in 2024-25 by the previous Government; and what funding is now allocated.

Alex Norris:

The Future High Streets Fund was originally intended to run up until the end of financial year 23/24. In August 2023 MHCLG was granted approval from the HM Treasury to extend the Future High Streets Fund and rollover any remaining payments into financial year 24/25. The below allocation was forecast in March 2024 under the previous government based on remaining payments due. This has now been paid in full.

	FY 24/25: (PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT FORECAST)	FY 24/25 (CURRENT GOVERNMENT ACTUAL)
Capital	£78,750,470	£78,750,470
Resource	£0	£0

■ **Homelessness****Kanishka Narayan:**[\[41191\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps her Department is taking to work with (a) Vale of Glamorgan Council and (b) other local authorities to (i) prevent homelessness and (ii) provide sustainable housing solutions for people at risk.

Rushanara Ali:

Homelessness levels are far too high. This can have a devastating impact on those affected.

We must address this and deliver long term solutions. The Government is looking at these issues carefully and will develop a new cross government strategy, working with mayors and councils across the country to get us back on track to ending homelessness.

We are already taking the first steps to get back on track to ending homelessness. As announced at the Budget, grant funding for homelessness services is increasing next year by £233 million compared to this year (FY2024-25). This increased spending will help to prevent rises in the number of families in temporary accommodation and help to prevent rough sleeping. This brings total spend to nearly £1 billion in 2025-26.

More widely, we are taking action to tackle the root causes of homelessness, including delivering the biggest increase in social and affordable housebuilding in a generation and building 1.5 million new homes over the next parliament. We are also Abolishing Section 21 'no fault' evictions, preventing private renters being exploited and discriminated against, and empowering people to challenge unreasonable rent increases.

Homelessness legislation is a devolved matter in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

MHCLG is always keen to learn from other countries' approaches. Ministers and officials engage regularly with their counterparts in the devolved administrations to discuss a range of issues, including tackling homelessness.

■ Homelessness: Young People

Gareth Snell:

[40669]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps her Department is taking to identify young people at risk of homelessness and provide them with appropriate support.

Rushanara Ali:

Homelessness levels are far too high and this can have a devastating impact on those affected, including young people. We will look at these issues carefully and will consider youth homelessness as we develop our long-term, cross-government strategy working with Mayors and councils across the country, to get us back on track to ending homelessness.

As announced at the Budget in October, funding for homelessness services is increasing next year by £233 million compared to this year (2024/25). This brings total spend to nearly £1 billion in 2025/26.

The £200 million Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (SHAP) is delivering up to 2,000 homes and accompanying support services for people with long or cyclical histories of sleeping rough. Of these, up to 650 homes will be specifically for young people sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough, alongside accompanying support services.

Local authorities are expected to have regard to the homelessness code of guidance when exercising their functions relating to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, which includes young people.

■ Homes England: Consultants

Kevin Hollinrake:

[40203]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 21 March 2025 to Question 32217 on Homes England: Consultants, what the consultancy spend is as a percentage of the total funding provided by her Department to Homes England since the 5 July 2024.

Alex Norris:

Full details of Homes England's expenditure will be published in the annual report and accounts in due course.

■ Housing and Nature Conservation

Blake Stephenson:

[R] [\[40339\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if she will provide guidance to councils on balancing the needs for (a) new housing and (b) nature recovery.

Matthew Pennycook:

As set out in Paragraph 7 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, including the provision of homes, commercial development and supporting infrastructure in a sustainable manner. Sustainable development should be pursued both through the preparation and implementation of local development plans, and the application of policies in the framework.

Paragraph 187 of the Framework also makes clear that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. The revised NPPF published on 12 December 2024 included several changes designed to enhance and protect the environment. For example, it expects developments to provide net gains for biodiversity, including through incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats, and hedgehogs.

Local Nature Recovery Strategies are being prepared across England to set out priorities for nature recovery, map important habitats and identify opportunities for improvements. The government recently updated its Planning Practice Guidance to explain the role of Local Nature Recovery Strategies in the planning system and made clear as part of that update that these strategies will form an evidence base which may be a material consideration when making planning decisions.

When it comes to development and the environment, we know we can do better than the status quo, which too often sees both sustainable housebuilding and nature recovery stall. Instead of environmental protections being seen as a barrier to growth, we want to unlock a win-win for the economy and for nature. The Planning and Infrastructure Bill will introduce a new Nature Restoration Fund that will unlock and accelerate development while going beyond simply offsetting harm to unlock the positive impact development can have in driving nature recovery.

■ Housing Estates: Fees and Charges

Mr Peter Bedford:

[\[41679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether she plans to review legislation on new home developers selling land in and around new housing estates to maintenance companies which then charge back to homeowners.

Matthew Pennycook:

I refer the hon. Member to the Written Ministerial Statement made on 21 November 2024 ([HCWS244](#)).

■ Housing: Construction

Blake Stephenson:

[\[40337\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps she plans to take to increase the number of new homes built to high standards of environmental resilience by 2030; and what proportion of existing housebuilding projects are meeting these standards.

Alex Norris:

MHCLG has already taken a number of steps to deliver climate resilient homes, including:

Revising the National Planning Policy Framework (published on 12 December 2024) to set out that the planning system should take full account of all climate impacts, including overheating, storm and flood risk. Planning should help to shape places in a way that minimises vulnerability and improves resilience to the effects of climate change through suitable adaptation measures, including through incorporating green infrastructure and sustainable drainagesystems.

Building regulations are intended to protect people's safety, health and welfare through setting a minimum acceptable standard for the design and construction of properties. Introducing Part O of the Building Regulations, which came into force in June 2022, to require that new homes are built to mitigate the risk of overheating. Whilst Approved Document C promotes the use of flood resilient and resistant construction in flood prone areas.

Ben Maguire:

[\[40935\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if her Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of requiring housing developers to consult with water companies at every stage when building new homes, in the context of establishing sewage infrastructure.

Matthew Pennycook:

As set out in Paragraph 7 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, including the provision of homes, commercial development and supporting infrastructure in a sustainable manner. Sustainable development should be pursued both through the preparation and implementation of local development plans, and the application of policies in the framework.

The government is clear that housing must come with appropriate infrastructure, including appropriate water infrastructure. We believe that strategic issues such as water capacity are best dealt with at a strategic level through the plan-making process, rather than through individual planning applications.

A key function of local development plans is to guide development to the most suitable and sustainable locations and to ensure that the associated infrastructure requirements are addressed. Effective co-operation early in the plan-making process is essential to ensuring not only that housing and infrastructure need is appropriately

planned for, but that they are aligned with each other. The NPPF makes it clear that local planning authorities should collaborate with each other and with other public bodies, including infrastructure providers, to identify relevant strategic matters to be addressed, including providing for sustainable water supplies.

Water companies are under a statutory duty to provide new water and sewerage connections to residential properties, as well as planning to meet the needs of growth as part of water resource management plans, and drainage and wastewater management plans. The water resources planning guidance published by the government set out how those companies should forecast demand for water based on existing customers and planned levels of household and non-household growth, with the number of planned developments being based on published local plans.

Relevant planning practice guidance sets out that good design and mitigation measures should be secured during development, both through site-specific and non-site-specific policies on water infrastructure. The revised NPPF published on 12 December 2024 makes clear that developments of all sizes should use sustainable drainage techniques when the development could have drainage impacts and should have appropriate maintenance arrangements in place. We continue to explore whether more needs to be done to ensure sustainable drainage technologies are taken up more widely in new development, either through planning policy or by commencing schedule 3 to the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, and a decision on the best way forward will be made in the coming months.

Ensuring that we take a strategic spatial planning approach to the management of water, including tackling pollution and managing pressures on the water environment at a catchment, regional and national scale, is a core objective of the ongoing independent review into the regulatory system of the water sector, launched in October 2024 by the UK and Welsh Governments. The review is expected to report next year, and we will carefully consider its findings.

Ben Obese-Jecty: [\[41527\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 25 March 2025 to Question 39650 on Housing: Construction, what types of property qualify as a dwelling.

Ben Obese-Jecty: [\[41528\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 25 March 2025 to Question 39650 on Housing: Construction, whether a bedsit qualifies as a dwelling.

Ben Obese-Jecty: [\[41614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 25 March 2025 to Question 39650 on Housing: Construction, whether the conversion of houses into houses in multiple occupation counts as an increase in the number of new dwellings.

Matthew Pennycook:

The definition of a dwelling is published on gov.uk [here](#) under “Dwelling (Housing supply; net additional dwellings)”.

The conversion of an existing residential property into a house of multiple occupancy does not count as a net additional dwelling in the official statistics on housing supply or dwelling stock estimates.

Housing: Lincolnshire**Sir John Hayes:****[40151]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps she is taking to help support young people to get onto the housing ladder in (a) South Holland and the Deepings constituency and (b) Lincolnshire.

Matthew Pennycook:

The affordability challenges facing prospective first-time buyers mean that too many people are now locked out of homeownership. This government is determined to change that, ensuring that young families and hardworking renters can buy a home of their own.

Boosting the supply of homes of all tenures must be at the heart of any strategy to improve housing affordability which is why the government’s Plan for Change includes a hugely ambitious milestone of building 1.5 million safe and decent homes in England in this Parliament.

In addition to increasing the supply of homes of all tenures, we are committed to introducing a permanent, comprehensive mortgage guarantee scheme, to support first-time buyers, including those in South Holland and the Deepings constituency and Lincolnshire, who struggle to save for a large deposit, with lower mortgage costs.

Housing: Mid Leicestershire**Mr Peter Bedford:****[41676]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many housing developments have been approved in Mid Leicestershire in the last ten years.

Mr Peter Bedford:**[41677]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many major housing developments have been completed in Mid Leicestershire constituency in the last ten years.

Matthew Pennycook:

Numbers of major and minor residential applications granted permission each quarter for each local planning authority are available [here](#). As more than one planning application is often associated with a single residential development, the published figures should not be regarded as numbers of residential developments granted permission.

Figures are not collected at parliamentary constituency level.

The Department does not collect or publish numbers of completed major housing developments.

■ Housing: Older People

Pippa Heylings:

[\[40276\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what discussions she has had with the Centre for Ageing Better on its Good Home Hubs initiative.

Matthew Pennycook:

My Department and I engage in regular discussions with a wide range of housing stakeholders.

Baroness Taylor of Stevenage met with the Centre for Ageing Better in September last year and discussed a range of topics, including its Good Homes Hubs initiative.

■ Housing: Surrey Heath

Dr Al Pinkerton:

[\[40067\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps she is taking to increase the availability of (a) affordable and (b) energy-efficient housing in Surrey Heath constituency.

Matthew Pennycook:

At Spring statement, the government announced an immediate injection of £2 billion to support delivery of the biggest boost in social and affordable housebuilding in a generation and contribute to our ambitious Plan for Change milestone of building 1.5 million safe and decent homes in this Parliament. Further detail can be found in the Written Ministerial Statement made on 25 November 2025 ([HCWS549](#)).

The investment made at Spring statement follows the £800 million in new in-year funding which has been made available for the 2021-26 Affordable Homes Programme and that will support the delivery of up to 7,800 new homes, with more than half of them being Social Rent homes.

We will set out set details of new investment to succeed the 2021-26 Affordable Homes Programme at the Spending Review. This new investment will deliver a mix of homes for sub-market rent and homeownership, with a particular focus on delivering homes for social rent.

The government has also announced the £450m third round of the Local Authority Housing Fund, followed by an uplift of £50m, enabling councils to grow their housing stock.

We also confirmed a range of new flexibilities for councils and housing associations, both within the Affordable Homes Programme and in relation to how councils can use their Right to Buy receipts. Having reduced Right to Buy discounts to their pre-2012

regional levels, we have allowed councils to retain 100% of the receipts generated by Right to Buy sales.

The government recognise that Registered Providers need support to build their capacity and make a greater contribution to affordable housing supply. Between 30 October 2024 and 23 December 2024, the government consulted on a new 5-year social housing rent settlement, to give Registered Providers the certainty they need to invest in new social and affordable housing.

The revised National Planning Policy Framework published on 12 December 2024 includes a number of changes that make the planning system more supportive of affordable housing, in particular Social Rent homes. These include new Golden Rules for development on the Green Belt. Prior to development plan policies for affordable housing being updated in accordance with the revised NPPF, the affordable housing contribution required to satisfy the 'Golden Rules' is 15 percentage points above the highest existing affordable housing requirement that would otherwise apply to the development, subject to a cap of 50%. We estimate that under this model, the median Green Belt local planning authority affordable housing requirement will be 50%.

The Government already intend to amend building regulations later this year as part of the introduction of future standards that will set more ambitious energy efficiency and carbon emissions requirements for new homes. The new standards will ensure that all new homes are future-proof, with low-carbon heating and very high-quality building fabric. Not only will they help us to deliver our commitment to reach net-zero emissions by 2050, but they will reduce bills, tackle fuel poverty, grow skills, foster diverse job markets and make Britain energy secure.

■ Land: Compulsory Purchase

Ben Obese-Jecty:

[\[39644\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many land transactions for nationally significant infrastructure projects were via compulsory purchase order since 4 July 2024.

Matthew Pennycook:

Since July 2024, 13 Development Consent Orders (DCOs) have been determined by the government. The number of land transactions relating to compulsory purchase will depend on the relevant DCOs, the relevant agreement between parties, and the extent of powers granted that was necessary for the project. The number of transactions may also change over the lifetime of a project. This information is not collected by the government.

■ Levelling Up Fund

Kevin Hollinrake: [\[40195\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what (a) capital and (b) resource funding was allocated to the Levelling Up Fund in 2024-25 in (i) May 2024 and (ii) March 2025.

Alex Norris:

In 2024-25, the Levelling Up Fund received £797 million in Capital DEL funding. Additionally, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government allocated £20 million in Resource DEL funding for the same period. These allocations were consistent for both May 2024 and March 2025.

■ Local Government: Devolution

Daisy Cooper: [\[40389\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the English Devolution White Paper, published on 16 December 2024, whether she plans to publish guidance for parish and town councils on how to engage with her Department on shaping the parish council role in local government devolution.

Jim McMahon:

Town and parish councils are the first tier of local government and play a crucial role in community engagement and provide key local services.

The English Devolution White Paper emphasises the value of governance on a community scale and that the government wants to see stronger community arrangements during reorganisation, enhancing how councils engage at a neighbourhood level. At present, there are no plans to publish specific guidance for parish and town councils on how to engage with the Department on shaping their role in local government devolution.

■ Neighbourhood Plans

Kevin Hollinrake: [\[40160\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the Plan for Neighbourhoods: prospectus, published on 4 March 2025, for what reason the programme is restricted to the 75 selected places.

Kevin Hollinrake: [\[40196\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to her Department's guidance entitled Plan for Neighbourhoods: prospectus, published on 4 March 2025, for what reasons the programme operates on a bidding fund basis.

Alex Norris:

The Long-Term Plan for Towns programme was launched during the previous administration. It was an unfunded commitment for which the previous administration

had no funded plan as to how that promise would be delivered. All 75 towns across the UK that were originally selected to receive Long-Term Plan for Towns funding will receive the Plan for Neighbourhoods package. We are making good on those commitments, giving each of the 75 places the certainty that they will receive up to £20 million of funding and support over the next decade.

There are no plans to expand the programme at this time, this would be a decision for the upcoming Spending Review.

The Plan for Neighbourhoods represents a break from the competitive bidding process and micromanaging of previous regeneration funds.

■ **Planning Permission: Listed Buildings**

Stuart Andrew:

[\[40478\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the Government response to the proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system consultation, last updated on 27 February 2025, whether she plans to provide local authorities with powers to charge a fee for Listed Building Consent planning applications.

Matthew Pennycook:

Planning fees in England are set by the Secretary of State. Local planning authorities cannot charge a fee for listed building consent applications.

Under the government's proposals for localised fee setting in the Planning and Infrastructure Bill, government may continue to prescribe where a fee should not be charged for a particular type of application.

The government intends to consult on the details of localised fee setting later this year .

■ **Planning: Environmental Protection**

Blake Stephenson:

[\[40338\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether she has made an assessment of the potential implications for her policies of the Institute for Public Policy Research's report entitled Strategic planning for green prosperity, published on 14 February 2025.

Matthew Pennycook:

The government has not made an assessment of the potential implications of the Institute for Public Policy Research's report in question.

■ **Playing Fields: Planning**

Dr Luke Evans:

[\[40670\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether she has made an assessment of the contribution of statutory planning consultees in protecting the role of playing fields for sports and exercise.

Matthew Pennycook:

I refer the hon. Member to the Written Ministerial Statement made on 10 March 2025 ([HCWS510](#)).

■ **Property Development: Environment Protection****Freddie van Mierlo:****[39718]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether she plans to make provision for grampian conditions to apply to any housing development planning applications where Ofwat has opened enforcement cases on the delayed delivery of environmental improvement schemes.

Matthew Pennycook:

My Department is working closely with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) to ensure necessary water infrastructure is in place to support the housing the country needs.

If there are firm infrastructure plans in place, our planning practice guidance is clear that local planning authorities can grant planning permission with Grampian conditions linked to those plans to help developers bring forward the development.

Strategic planning for water infrastructure is being considered as part of the [independent commission on the water sector regulatory system](#), as announced by the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on 23 October 2024.

■ **Property Development: Green Belt****Mr Clive Betts:****[40988]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what guidance her Department has issued to local authorities on how they can ensure the enforcement of the golden rules around the development on green belt sites, particularly with regard to the provision of appropriate infrastructure.

Matthew Pennycook:

The National Planning Policy Framework sets clear expectations on when development should comply with the Golden Rules.

Ahead of further updates, the relevant planning practice guidance on viability also makes clear that, where development takes place on land situated in, or released from, the Green Belt and is subject to the Golden Rules, site-specific viability assessment should not be undertaken or taken into account for the purpose of reducing developer contributions, including affordable housing and appropriate infrastructure.

As set out in the Framework and supporting guidance, local authorities should, where appropriate, consider the use of conditions or planning obligations. Authorities may take enforcement action against the breach of planning obligations contained in a section 106 agreement. Through our wider reforms to planning fees, including the relevant provisions in the Planning and Infrastructure Bill, local planning authorities

will be better resourced to deliver their responsibilities, including enforcement activities where relevant.

■ **Property: Ownership**

Andrew Cooper:

[40762]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of requiring the Land Registry to (a) record and (b) publish a property owner's Company Registration Number on title register documents.

Matthew Pennycook:

HM Land Registry (HMLR) requires that the registration number of a company is supplied when a UK company is being registered. Company registration numbers are recorded in the proprietorship entry of the title register.

Copies of title registers are normally available from HMLR's Search for land and property information page on gov.uk [here](#).

HMLR publishes information about registered land and property in England and Wales owned by UK companies on gov.uk [here](#).

■ **Public Houses: Change of Use**

Kevin Hollinrake:

[40192]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether pubs which are reclassified by their owners as restaurants are deemed to be pubs for change of use applications.

Matthew Pennycook:

Planning permission is always required for the material change of use of a pub, including to a restaurant. It is for the local planning authority to determine whether there has been a material change of use for which a planning application was required.

■ **Regeneration: Urban Areas**

Kevin Hollinrake:

[40200]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to (a) paragraph 5.140 of the Spring Budget 2024 and (b) her Department's press release entitled £1.5 billion to restore pride in Britain's neighbourhoods, published on 4 March 2025, whether the funding awarded on 4 March 2025 differs from that announced in the Spring Budget; and whether there has been changes to (a) locations covered and (b) the total endowment funding.

Alex Norris:

The Long-Term Plan for Towns programme was launched in 55 towns in September 2023 by the previous administration and expanded to an additional 20 places in March 2024, as confirmed in paragraph 5.410 of the Spring Budget 2024.

This programme was an unfunded commitment for which the previous administration had no plan as to how that promise would be delivered.

All 75 towns across the UK that were originally selected to receive Long-Term Plan for Towns funding will receive the funding under the Plan for Neighbourhoods package, the funding for which was announced at Autumn Budget 2024, and further policy detail published on 4 March. We are making good on those commitments, giving each of the 75 places the certainty that they will receive up to £20 million of funding and support over the next decade.

The Long-Term Plan for Towns: Technical Q&A, published 28 March 2024, outlined that the total funding and support offered to local authorities would be up to £20 million. The Plan for Neighbourhoods prospectus, published 4 March, outlines that the total funding and support offered to local authorities will be up to £20 million.

■ **Rented Housing: Standards**

Pippa Heylings:

[\[40986\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of strengthening the Decent Homes Standard for all forms of tenure.

Matthew Pennycook:

The government will consult this year on a reformed Decent Homes Standard for the social and private rented sectors.

■ **Retail Trade: Empty Property**

Alex McIntyre:

[\[40399\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps she is taking to support the (a) implementation and (b) effectiveness of high street rental auctions in Gloucester.

Alex Norris:

The Government is fully committed to revitalising our high streets and supporting businesses to make our towns and cities, including Gloucester, successful. High Street Rental Auctions (HSRAs) are supported by a fund of over £1 million, a new burdens payment and a suite of detailed guidance and practical templates to support implementation. My department are working closely with 11 local authority early adopters, who will be amongst the first to deliver, and will help shape future guidance and champion these powers.

■ **Social Rented Housing: Forest of Dean**

Matt Bishop:

[\[40137\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps she is taking to increase available social housing in the Forest of Dean.

Matthew Pennycook:

At Spring statement, the government announced an immediate injection of £2 billion to support delivery of the biggest boost in social and affordable housebuilding in a generation and contribute to our ambitious Plan for Change milestone of building 1.5 million safe and decent homes in this Parliament. Further detail can be found in the Written Ministerial Statement made on 25 November 2025 ([HCWS549](#)).

The investment made at Spring statement follows the £800 million in new in-year funding which has been made available for the 2021-26 Affordable Homes Programme and that will support the delivery of up to 7,800 new homes, with more than half of them being Social Rent homes.

We will set out set details of new investment to succeed the 2021-26 Affordable Homes Programme at the Spending Review. This new investment will deliver a mix of homes for sub-market rent and homeownership, with a particular focus on delivering homes for social rent.

The government has also announced the £450m third round of the Local Authority Housing Fund, followed by an uplift of £50m, enabling councils to grow their housing stock.

We also confirmed a range of new flexibilities for councils and housing associations, both within the Affordable Homes Programme and in relation to how councils can use their Right to Buy receipts. Having reduced Right to Buy discounts to their pre-2012 regional levels, we have allowed councils to retain 100% of the receipts generated by Right to Buy sales.

The government recognise that Registered Providers need support to build their capacity and make a greater contribution to affordable housing supply. Between 30 October 2024 and 23 December 2024, the government consulted on a new 5-year social housing rent settlement, to give Registered Providers the certainty they need to invest in new social and affordable housing.

The revised National Planning Policy Framework published on 12 December 2024 includes a number of changes that make the planning system more supportive of affordable housing, in particular Social Rent homes. These include new Golden Rules for development on the Green Belt. Prior to development plan policies for affordable housing being updated in accordance with the revised NPPF, the affordable housing contribution required to satisfy the 'Golden Rules' is 15 percentage points above the highest existing affordable housing requirement that would otherwise apply to the development, subject to a cap of 50%. We estimate that under this model, the median Green Belt local planning authority affordable housing requirement will be 50%.

■ Social Rented Housing: Furniture

Lisa Smart: [\[40317\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if she will make it her policy to update the Decent Homes Standard to provide for at least 10 per cent of homes for social rent to be offered furnished.

Lisa Smart: [\[40318\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether she has had discussions with the Child Poverty Taskforce on (a) furnished tenancies and (b) the potential impact of the Decent Homes Standard on trends in the levels of furniture poverty.

Matthew Pennycook:

The government will consult this year on a reformed Decent Homes Standard for the social and private rented sectors.

The Deputy Prime Minister is part of the ministerial Child Poverty Taskforce, which is aiming to publish a Child Poverty Strategy. As part of the development of the strategy, the Taskforce is considering the impacts of living in poor quality housing.

People in need may be able to get help for essential furniture from their local council through the 'Household Support Fund' and other services available locally.

■ Temporary Accommodation: Construction

Kevin Hollinrake: [\[40485\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 3 March 2025 to Question 31949 on Temporary Accommodation: Construction, what proportion of new homes built under that scheme will be for social rent.

Matthew Pennycook:

All homes delivered through the Local Authority Housing Fund must be affordable/low-cost. It is up to local planning authorities to determine the precise rent level and tenure of homes delivered in line with the scheme objectives. This could include social rent, affordable rent, or a temporary accommodation rent.

■ Temporary Accommodation: Standards

Uma Kumaran: [\[40766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if she will bring forward legislative proposals to ensure that families in all forms of temporary accommodation have access to adequate cooking facilities.

Rushanara Ali:

Our Homelessness Code of Guidance provides a summary of the homelessness legislation duties, powers and obligations on local housing authorities, including the quality standards of temporary accommodation.

Legislation is clear that temporary accommodation must be suitable for the needs of the household and that suitability of accommodation should be kept under review. Households may ask for a review of their accommodation if they feel it is unsuitable.

The Government will consult this year on a reformed Decent Homes Standard for the social and private rented sectors. It is the government's intention that the Decent Homes Standard should apply to as much of the temporary accommodation sector as possible. We will consult on the detail of the new standard in due course.

■ Towns Fund

Kevin Hollinrake:

[\[40197\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what (a) capital and (b) resource funding was allocated to town deals in (i) 2024 and (ii) 2025.

Alex Norris:

Like all other departmental expenditure, Town Deal programme allocations are broken down by financial year (FY) rather than by calendar year. The forecast allocation for future financial years is subject to change due to the way that Town Deal payments are determined, however we do not expect this shift to be significant. Please see financial year allocations covering the scope of your query set out below.

FY 23/24 (ACTUAL)	FY 24/25 (ACTUAL)	FY 25/26 (FORECAST)	
Capital	£553,852,309	£422,756,803	£327,710,196
Resource	£18,530,415	£13,051,511	£7,885,992

JUSTICE

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Josh Babarinde:

[\[903510\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether the Government plans to support the Domestic Abuse (Aggravated Offences) Bill.

Alex Davies-Jones:

This Government was elected on a landmark pledge to halve violence against women and girls over the next decade. Tackling domestic abuse is a core part of this mission.

As discussed during the recent Adjournment Debate on Domestic Abuse Offences, the Government is actively considering various approaches to address the challenges posed by domestic abuse. However, there is a risk that proposals set out in the Domestic Abuse (Aggravated Offences) Bill could unwittingly create a system in which some offences are deemed serious enough to constitute offences that could be aggravated by domestic abuse, whereas other offences in which domestic abuse

could play a part are not. For example, we should not return to the outdated view that domestic abuse only involves physical violence.

We recognise the importance of ensuring that the harm caused by offences typically committed against women and girls is appropriately and proportionally reflected in the sentencing framework. The Sentencing Review, chaired by former Lord Chancellor David Gauke, is currently examining the sentencing of offences primarily committed against women and girls. We are committed to engaging with the review to ensure the best outcomes for survivors of domestic abuse.

We agree with the Honourable Member for Eastbourne that it is crucial that we are able to better protect victims of domestic abuse, and I have committed to discuss this with him in more detail.

■ Housing

Pippa Heylings:

[\[40985\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will take steps to amend the Human Rights Act 1998 to provide a legal right to access adequate housing.

Alex Davies-Jones:

The Human Rights Act (HRA) is an important part of our constitutional arrangements and fundamental to human rights protections in the UK. The Government has no plans to amend the rights protected by the HRA, which are drawn from those in the European Convention on Human Rights.

The Government will develop a new cross-government strategy, working with mayors and councils across the country to get us back on track to ending homelessness. We are taking action to tackle the root causes of homelessness including delivering the biggest increase in social and affordable housebuilding in a generation and building 1.5 million new homes over the next parliament, as well as abolishing section 21 'no fault' evictions, preventing private renters being exploited and discriminated against, and empowering people to challenge unreasonable rent increases.

■ Intimate Image Abuse

Kirith Entwistle:

[\[41266\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of harmonising the time within which an offence can be tried in court after it has been committed for (a) taking and (b) creating intimate images without consent.

Kirith Entwistle:

[\[41267\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent assessment she has made of the potential merits of extending time limits for prosecuting summary-only offences involving the taking of intimate images without consent to be brought into line with those for prosecuting the creation and solicitation of intimate images.

Kirith Entwistle:[\[41316\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether she plans to equalise the statutory limitation periods for prosecution in (a) section 66B(1) of the Sexual Offences Act 2003, (b) clause 141 of the Data (Use and Access) Bill and (c) section 127(1) of the Communications Act 2003.

Alex Davies-Jones:

We have tabled a Government amendment to the offence of creating a purported intimate image at clause 135 of the Data (Use and Access) Bill. This will extend the time limit in a similar way to the offence at section 127(1) of the Communications Act 2003, ensuring that perpetrators can be prosecuted for creating an intimate image deepfake without consent, even if it only comes to light more than six months after its creation.

The Women and Equalities Committee has recommended an extension of the time limit for the prosecution of other existing and proposed intimate image offences, and we are carefully reviewing their recommendations.

Juries: Compensation**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[40387\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will make an assessment of trends in the level of compensation provided for (a) childcare, (b) other care, (c) food and drink, (d) travel and (e) parking costs to people on jury duty in real terms in the last five years.

Sarah Sackman:

The jury process is a cornerstone of the justice system in England and Wales. Jury service is an important civic duty and jurors play a vital role in upholding justice. The Government will keep under review all support provided to jurors throughout their period of service. This will include, but not be limited to, assessing any significant trends in compensation applications or payments, as well as other participation-related data.

Legal Aid Scheme: Standards**Ben Maguire:**[\[40403\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether she has made a recent assessment of the adequacy of legal aid provision.

Alex Davies-Jones:

This Government has inherited a justice system in crisis, and the previous administration left the legal aid sector in significant strain. We are committed to restoring our justice system and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the legal aid sector.

We recently concluded a consultation on uplifts to some areas of civil legal aid fees. Once fully implemented, this would inject an additional £20 million into the sector each year. We are currently reviewing consultation responses and will publish the

Government response in due course. We will continue to consider the fees paid in other categories of civil legal aid, and the wider themes from the Review, in order to support the long-term sustainability of the civil legal aid sector.

On criminal legal aid, in November 2024 we announced our response to the Crime Lower consultation, confirming an uplift to the lowest police station fees, introducing a new Youth Court fee scheme, and paying for travel time in certain circumstances. Together, these changes amount to a £24 million investment for criminal legal aid providers.

In addition, in December 2024, we announced that criminal legal aid solicitors will receive up to £92 million more a year to help address the ongoing challenges in the criminal justice system, subject to consultation. We are also committed to continuing to work with the criminal legal aid profession, including the Bar, on further opportunities for reform this Parliament and to support the overall sustainability, diversity, and efficiency of the system.

■ Prisons: Overcrowding

James McMurdock:

[\[39729\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether she plans to release more criminals from prison early due to prison overcrowding.

Sir Nicholas Dakin:

This Government inherited a prison system on the point of collapse and we were forced to take the necessary action to stop the criminal justice system from total gridlock.

Whilst the SDS change provided the intended medium-term relief to the system, this was never expected to be a long-term solution. To ensure we are never in a position where we run out of prison places again, the Lord Chancellor announced the Independent Review into Sentencing, alongside a series of prison capacity measures. This included reforming our recall practices to target the unsustainable growth in the recall population since the pandemic and an extension of the maximum period offenders can spend on Home Detention Curfew from 6 to 12 months.

The Independent Sentencing Review published its Part 1 report on 18 February. The Review's final report is expected to be published in the spring of this year and will set out the immediate and longer-term recommendations for reform.

The 10-year Prison Capacity Strategy published on 11 December set out our plans to deliver more prisons places. By 2031, we aim to have delivered a further 14,000 prison places, with all places expected to be operational by 2032. To help achieve this, we are investing £2.3 billion in prison building across the estate this year and next year, which will provide modern accommodation that helps to improve safety, security, and decency in prison and to reduce reoffending.

We are also investing approximately £500 million over two years in prison and probation service maintenance to improve conditions across the estate. Beyond

existing plans, work is underway to identify land that would be suitable for potential new prisons, should these be required in the future. This Government will also implement a new Crown Development Route later this Spring to allow faster planning decisions on new prisons.

■ **Telecommunications: Civil Proceedings**

Stuart Andrew:

[\[40476\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will make an estimate of the number of mobile infrastructure litigation cases that have been processed via the Upper Tribunal Lands Chamber following changes to the Electronic Communications Code 2017; and if she will make an assessment of the potential impact on caseloads of changes to be introduced via the Product Security and Telecommunications Infrastructure Act 2022.

Alex Davies-Jones:

The information relating to the number of mobile infrastructure litigation cases that have been processed via the Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber) is not centrally recorded and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

We continue to monitor and review demand and work closely with the judiciary and the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology in respect of the impact of caseloads under the Product Security and telecommunications Infrastructure Act 2022.

■ **Wills: Older People and Vulnerable Adults**

Warinder Juss:

[\[40319\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what safeguards exist for (a) vulnerable and (b) elderly people when (i) wills and (ii) codicils are prepared for them.

Alex Davies-Jones:

There are various safeguards in statute (principally the Wills Act 1837) and the common law in relation to the making of wills and codicils. The law requires that a testator must have the necessary testamentary capacity to make a will, and for that will to be valid a testator must also know and approve of the contents of his or her will (or codicil).

Where a will is executed as a result of fraud or undue influence, the will is void and therefore has no effect, and where there are concerns on these grounds there is a legal basis for challenging a will's validity.

The Law Commission is currently reviewing the law of wills and one of the issues it has particularly focused on is the protection of vulnerable testators. The Commission will be publishing its final report shortly and the Government will consider its recommendations with care.

SCIENCE, INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY**■ Artificial Intelligence: Children****Dan Aldridge:****[R] [40359]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what steps his Department is taking to prevent children from receiving (a) harmful content and (b) misinformation from chatbots.

Feryal Clark:

AI generated content is regulated by the Online Safety Act where it is shared on an in-scope user-to-user or search service and constitutes illegal content or content which is harmful to children. This includes mis- and dis- information where it is assessed to present material harm to a significant number of children. Providers of pornographic content must also prevent children from accessing that content.

Chatbots with functionalities that bring them into scope of the Online Safety Act will be required to comply with the relevant duties including preventing children from encountering harmful content – whether that is real or synthetic.

■ Artificial Intelligence: Conditions of Employment and Economic Growth**Imran Hussain:****[41097]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, whether he has had discussions with the Secretary of State for Business and Trade on the potential for artificial intelligence policy to support inclusive economic growth and safeguard good work.

Feryal Clark:

AI is at the heart of the Government's plans to kickstart economic growth and improve public services.

Earlier this year the Prime Minister announced the AI Opportunities Action Plan - a roadmap setting out how we will achieve our AI ambitions by laying the foundations for AI growth, driving adoption and building UK capability at the frontier.

The Secretary of State has had discussions with Cabinet ministers, including with the Secretary of State for the Department for Business and Trade, regarding how the Government can maximise the potential of AI.

■ Artificial Intelligence: Regulation**Imran Hussain:****[41098]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of granting regulatory powers to the UK Artificial Intelligence Safety Institute; and whether such powers could include oversight of frontier AI models, safety testing, and enforcement mechanisms.

Feryal Clark:

The government is clear in its ambition to bring forward legislation which allows us to safely realise the enormous benefits and opportunities of the most powerful AI systems for years to come. The government is continuing to refine its proposals and will launch a public consultation in due course.

As part of its plans to boost AI security, the government is committed to supporting and growing the AI Security Institute.

■ Broadband: Access**Manuela Perteghella:**[\[41626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology if he will ensure that (a) digital access is classified as a basic utility and (b) suppliers connect broadband in a timely manner.

Chris Bryant:

The Government recognises that access to the internet is essential for participation in society. There is no single definition of a utility; gas, water, electricity and telecoms are regulated differently. Unlike other sectors, the UK telecoms market is competitive at wholesale and retail levels.

The broadband Universal Service Obligation provides consumers with the right to request a decent broadband service. The government continues to work closely with Ofcom on the affordability of telecoms services, including on social tariffs.

The Department continues to consider ways to remove barriers and speed up deployment; for example, exploring more flexible permitting for street works.

■ Databases: Sex**Dr Caroline Johnson:**[\[41468\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what meetings (a) he has and (b) his Ministers have had with (i) the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and (ii) other Ministers in the Department for Health and Social Care on the potential impact of the Data (Use and Access) Bill on the (A) quality of, (B) use of and (C) safety considerations for data on a person's sex.

Chris Bryant:

The Secretary of State and Ministers meet with health Ministers regularly to discuss a range of topics. The Secretary of State and Ministers have not met with health Ministers specifically to discuss the Data (Use and Access) Bill and sex data. Official level engagement has taken place to share information regarding the ways the NHS handles medical records in the process of an individual changing gender, and ensures individuals are correctly registered for relevant screenings and other sex/specific treatment. We have used the insights from this engagement to inform our approach to the Bill.

■ Internet: Children**Manuela Perteghella:** [\[41627\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what steps he is taking to prevent children from being exposed to (a) violent and (b) sexual content online.

Feryal Clark:

Under the Online Safety Act, all in-scope services need to tackle illegal content and criminal behaviour, including illegal violent and sexual offences. These duties are in force now.

From Summer, in-scope user-to-user services likely to be accessed by children have a duty to prevent all children from encountering the most harmful content, which includes pornography. Additionally, services will need to provide age-appropriate access for other types of harmful content, including content which encourages, promotes or provides instructions for an act of serious violence against a person.

■ Internet: Offences against Children**Dan Aldridge:** [\[R\] \[40358\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what steps his Department is taking to ensure Ofcom requires all user-to-user services to remove child sexual abuse content from their platforms.

Feryal Clark:

The Online Safety Act creates new duties on online services to tackle illegal content and activity. The strongest duties are to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation (CSEA) and to stop child sexual abuse material (CSAM) from being shared. The illegal content duties have been in effect from 17 March. Ofcom is the regulator for the regime and has set out steps providers can take including strong automated content moderation and takedown measures. Ofcom will continue to develop their codes iteratively, including additional measures to detect, prevent and remove CSAM.

■ Ofcom**Mr Peter Bedford:** [\[41260\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what estimate he has made of the potential savings to the public purse of abolishing the Office of Communications.

Chris Bryant:

The Office of Communications plays a key role as the regulator and competition authority for the UK communications industries. Ofcom regulates the TV and radio sectors, spectrum, fixed line telecoms, mobiles, online safety, and postal services. There are no plans to abolish Ofcom, and the government has not made any assessment of the savings or costs that such a decision would entail.

■ Project Gigabit: South Holland and the Deepings

Sir John Hayes:

[\[40149\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what progress his department has made on the rollout of Project Gigabit in South Holland and the Deepings constituency.

Chris Bryant:

According to the independent website Thinkbroadband.com, over 94% premises in the South Holland and The Deepings constituency can access superfast broadband speeds (≥ 30 Mbps) and 81% have access to a gigabit-capable broadband connection (> 1000 Mbps).

To improve this coverage further, Quickline is delivering a Project Gigabit contract across Lincolnshire and East Riding, and CityFibre is delivering a contract across Cambridgeshire and adjacent areas. Both contracts are targeted at bringing gigabit-capable broadband to premises in hard-to-reach areas that are unlikely to be otherwise reached by suppliers' commercial rollout. Work has already commenced in parts of South Holland and The Deepings.

■ Semiconductors

Ruth Jones:

[\[41474\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what the expected (a) timescale, (b) operating budget and (c) scale of the proposed National Semiconductor Institute are.

Feryal Clark:

This government recognises the strategic importance of semiconductors as a critical technology for the future of the UK and a significant enabler of the government's growth and clean energy missions. The Department recognises a number of challenges to growth of the UK semiconductor sector, including industry fragmentation and a lack of long-term innovation strategy. We are currently reviewing a range of options to address this, including a national semiconductor body that can bring together the industry and unlock growth in the sector. We will announce further details in due course.

■ Semiconductors: Manufacturing Industries

Ruth Jones:

[\[41473\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what steps his Department is taking to help increase levels of innovation in the semiconductor industry in south Wales.

Feryal Clark:

The Department for Science, Innovation and Technology is actively driving innovation in South Wales' semiconductor industry through strategic investments, collaborative research funding, and robust international partnerships. Recent initiatives include

Vishay Intertechnology's £250 million investment in Newport, supported by the government's Automotive Transformation Fund, creating over 500 high-skilled jobs focused on advanced semiconductors critical to electric vehicle production. Additionally, UK businesses, including those in South Wales, can now participate in the EU Chips Joint Undertaking, gaining access to €1.3 billion of collaborative R&D funding. Other UK wide schemes, such as the government backed ChipStart scheme also offer extensive opportunities for start-ups, further boosting innovation in the semiconductor sector. This government remains firmly committed to working closely with the Welsh Government and industry partners, ensuring investments deliver sustained growth and strengthen economic resilience across South Wales and beyond.

■ Software: Fees and Charges

Mike Martin:

[\[41355\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what discussions he has had with (a) Google and (b) Apple on in-app purchase fees; and whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of bringing forward legislative proposals to regulate in-app fees.

Feryal Clark:

The Competition and Markets Authority launched a Strategic Market Status designation investigation in January on both Apple and Google's position in mobile ecosystems. This investigation is independent to Government and will also include the consideration of in-app purchase fees and conditions. The CMA have consulted on the scope of this investigation and is gathering evidence before publishing a provisional Strategic Market Status designation decision in July.

TRANSPORT

■ Aviation: Fuels

Euan Stainbank:

[\[40370\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Project Willow report, published on 19 March 2025, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of removing the Hydrotreated Esters and Fatty Acids cap in the Sustainable Aviation Fuel mandate.

Mike Kane:

We welcome the Project Willow Report and are pleased that nine potential business models have been identified to be taken forward at Grangemouth. To help make these models a reality, the Prime Minister recently announced a commitment of at least £200m through the National Wealth Fund for co-investment with the private sector once an investable proposition comes to the forefront. We will also consider Project Willow's recommendations in due course.

We recognise that Hydrotreated Esters and Fatty Acids (HEFA) will play an important role in the global Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) sector, particularly in the early years of the Mandate. We want to encourage UK production of HEFA in this global market and have not placed a cap on the amount of SAF produced in the UK.

However, certain feedstocks, such as used cooking oil, from which HEFA is made, are limited in volume and will not be able to provide the amounts of SAF we expect to need to in the long term. We therefore need to create space for a range of SAF technologies and feedstocks to develop.

The HEFA cap, which from 2027 will decrease the allowed contribution from HEFA as a proportion of total SAF supply annually, aims to create this space and encourage investment in alternative pathways. The cap would still allow around 1 million tonnes of HEFA SAF to be supplied in the UK each year from 2035 onwards.

Euan Stainbank:

[\[40371\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what her planned timetable is for the introduction of legislation to enable the Revenue Certainty Mechanism.

Euan Stainbank:

[\[40372\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of fast-tracking legislation to enable the Revenue Certainty Mechanism.

Mike Kane:

The government is working at pace to deliver a revenue certainty mechanism for the UK Sustainable Aviation Fuel industry. The government has confirmed that it will introduce the SAF Revenue Support Bill in the first session of Parliament and we expect the legislation for a revenue certainty mechanism to be in place by the end of 2026. We will continue to monitor the estimated delivery date and work with industry to deliver an effective revenue certainty mechanism as soon as possible.

■ Charging Points: Prices

Ellie Chowns:

[\[41661\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of taking steps to help prevent price differentials for different types of users of EV charging points.

Lilian Greenwood:

The Government is committed to accelerating the roll-out of charging infrastructure so that everyone, no matter where they live or work, can make the transition to an electric vehicle.

The Government are aware of the cost differential between those who can and cannot install a dedicated EV charger at home and continue to work with Ofgem and others on measures to keep the cost of EV charging affordable for consumers.

■ Driving Tests

Sojan Joseph: [41704]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions she has had with the DVSA on the adequacy of its online booking system for booking practical driving tests.

Lilian Greenwood:

As set out in the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency's (DVSA) 2024/25 business plan, DVSA is beginning the process of replacing its booking system.

DVSA also launched a [call for evidence](#) on 18 December 2024, seeking views on the current rules to book tests. This closed on 11 February 2025 and will lead to consultation on improving processes, with potential future legislative changes.

■ Large Goods Vehicles: Concrete

Joani Reid: [41583]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when her Department plans to publish its findings on weight limits for Volumetric Concrete Mixers; and whether the review considers the need (a) for competition in the market and (b) to reduce emissions across the sector.

Lilian Greenwood:

The outcome of my Department's review into volumetric concrete mixers was published on 18 March. This can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/calls-for-evidence/volumetric-concrete-mixers-review>

The implications for road safety, infrastructure, the environment, and maintaining fair competition in the market have all been considered as part of the review.

■ Motor Insurance Taskforce

Sammy Wilson: [40153]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when the Motor Insurance Taskforce (a) last met and (b) is next scheduled to meet.

Lilian Greenwood:

The cross-Government Motor Insurance Taskforce met for the first time on 16 October 2024 and the Secretary of State is keen to reconvene again soon. We will provide updates on the Taskforce in due course.

■ Motor Vehicles: Dangerous Driving and Noise

Blake Stephenson: [41375]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 10 March 2025 to Question 35021 on Motor Vehicles: Dangerous Driving and Noise, if she will make an assessment of the potential connection between excessively noisy vehicles and dangerous driving.

Lilian Greenwood:

The Department does not have plans to carry out an assessment of the potential connection between excessively noisy vehicles and dangerous driving.

The Department takes the impact of excessive noise on health, wellbeing and the natural environment seriously and conducted roadside trials of noise camera technology between October 2022-February 2023. Reports of these trials, including detailed assessment of the technology's performance and potential merits, were published on 17 March 2024. Overall, the trials demonstrated that noise cameras currently have the potential to be used for enforcement, but only when accompanied by human review of the recorded evidence, which is likely to lower the cost effectiveness of deploying the technology in many circumstances.

Roads: Surrey Heath**Dr Al Pinkerton:**[\[40879\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps she is taking to improve road safety near schools in Surrey Heath constituency.

Lilian Greenwood:

My Department is developing our Road Safety Strategy and will set out more details in due course.

Active Travel England and my Department published joint School Streets Guidance in November 2024. School Streets schemes restrict motor traffic outside schools during pick-up and drop-off times; reducing congestion, improving safety and enabling more pupils to walk, wheel or cycle.

West Coast Main Line**Laurence Turner:**[\[41754\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps her Department is taking to increase capacity on the West Coast Main Line north of Birmingham.

Simon Lightwood:

The Department recognises concerns about capacity on the West Coast Main Line north of Birmingham and are considering advice before setting out detailed plans in due course. The Department is evaluating possible interventions to improve capacity north of Birmingham, such as changes to timetabling and service patterns, as well as incremental improvements to infrastructure and rolling stock that could help to alleviate capacity shortfalls.

TREASURY■ **Agriculture and Business: Inheritance Tax**

Blake Stephenson: [\[40346\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a clawback option for agricultural property relief and business property relief where 100% relief is reinstated but inheritance tax is applied where assets are disposed of and the resulting wealth is not re-invested in the business.

James Murray:

I refer the Honourable Member to the answer given to UIN 32918.

■ **Bank of England**

Nick Timothy: [\[40811\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of introducing a tiered reserve system on public finances.

Nick Timothy: [\[40813\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether she has had discussions with the Bank of England on a tiered reserve system.

Nick Timothy: [\[40814\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of amending the Bank of England's mandate to maintain fiscal stability.

Emma Reynolds:

The Bank of England has operational independence from the government to carry out its statutory responsibilities for monetary policy and financial stability. Monetary policy, including quantitative easing, is the responsibility of the independent Monetary Policy Committee at the Bank of England. The separation of fiscal and monetary policy is a key feature of the UK's economic framework, and essential for the effective delivery of monetary policy, so the government does not comment on the conduct or effectiveness of monetary policy.

There are no plans to change the way reserves are remunerated at the Bank of England. The government continues to support the Bank to bring inflation in line with its target, including by managing the public finances responsibly.

■ **Claims Management Services: Northern Ireland**

Sammy Wilson: [\[40154\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of extending the Financial Conduct Authority's powers to regulate claims management companies in Northern Ireland.

Emma Reynolds:

The Government has no plans to extend the Financial Conduct Authority's powers to regulate claims management activity in Northern Ireland, but continues to keep the territorial scope of the Financial Conduct Authority's powers under review.

Hospitality Industry: South Shropshire**Stuart Anderson:**[\[40589\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps she is taking to support the hospitality sector in South Shropshire constituency.

James Murray:

The Government is committed to supporting the hospitality sector and we recognise the significant contribution they have on the UK economy. Delivering on our manifesto pledge, we will introduce permanently lower tax rates for high street retail, hospitality, and leisure (RHL) properties, with rateable values below £500,000, from 2026-27. In the meantime, we have prevented RHL relief from ending in April 2025 by extending it for one year at 40 per cent up to a cash cap of £110,000 per business and frozen the small business multiplier. The Chancellor also announced a duty cut on qualifying draught products – approximately 60% of the alcoholic drinks sold in pubs. This represents an overall reduction in duty bills of over £85m a year. This reduction increased the relief available on draught products to 13.9%. The Government has protected the smallest businesses from the impact of the increase to employer National Insurance by increasing the Employment Allowance from £5,000 to £10,500, which means that 865,000 employers will pay no employer NICs at all next year. More than half of employers will see no change or will gain overall from this package and eligible employers will be able to employ up to four full-time workers on the National Living Wage and pay no employer NICs.

The Government has funded a wide range of community assets, including pubs, through the Community Ownership Fund. On 23 December 2024, this Government announced the outcome of Round 4 of the Community Ownership Fund, the largest ever round to date, where we awarded £36.2m to 85 projects across the UK, including projects in Shropshire.

Income Tax: Tax Allowances**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[40569\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if she will make an estimate of the impact of changing the tax free personal allowance to £20,000 on tax receipts.

James Murray:

The Government is committed to keeping taxes for working people as low as possible while ensuring fiscal responsibility and so, at our first Budget, we decided not to extend the freeze on personal tax thresholds.

The Government has no plans to increase the Personal Allowance to £20,000. Increasing the Personal Allowance to £20,000 would come at a significant fiscal cost

of many billions of pounds per annum. This would reduce tax receipts substantially, decreasing funds available for the UK's hospitals, schools, and other essential public services that we all rely on. It would also undermine the work the Chancellor has done to restore fiscal responsibility and economic stability, which are critical to getting our economy growing and keeping taxes, inflation, and mortgages as low as possible.

The Government keeps all taxes under review as part of the policy making process. The Chancellor will announce any changes to the tax system at fiscal events in the usual way.

■ Individual Savings Accounts

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[40302]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether she plans to alter her policies on the (a) eligibility (b) use (c) thresholds for London house prices and (d) withdrawal penalties criteria for the Lifetime ISA.

Emma Reynolds:

The Lifetime ISA remains narrowly focused on supporting people to achieve the aspiration of home ownership, or to build up savings for later life.

The property price cap supports most first-time buyers across the UK while targeting households that may find it most difficult to get onto the property ladder. Data from the latest [UK House Price Index](#) shows that while the average price paid by first-time buyers has increased since the introduction of the Lifetime ISA, it is still below the LISA property price cap in all regions of the UK except for London, where the average price paid is affected by boroughs with very high property values

Any unauthorised withdrawals are subject to a 25% withdrawal charge. This recoups the Government bonus, any interest or growth arising from it, and a proportion of the individual's initial savings.

The Government keeps all aspects of savings tax policy under review.

■ Packaging: Tax Allowances

Dr Simon Opher:

[40291]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether she has made an assessment of the potential merits of introducing (a) tax incentives to help reduce packaging waste.

James Murray:

There are a several tax incentives already in place to reduce plastic waste. These include the Plastic Packaging Tax, which encourages use of more recycled plastic in packaging and Landfill Tax, which encourages waste to be diverted from landfill to more sustainable options, such as recycling.

■ Tax Evasion: Businesses

Freddie van Mierlo:

[41682]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps her Department is taking to (a) reduce the levels of tax evasion by of cash-only high street businesses and (b) support small businesses to adopt card payment systems.

James Murray:

HMRC is committed to ensuring the tax system operates fairly and efficiently, creating a level playing field for compliant businesses. Most businesses pay what they owe, but a minority fail to register or only declare a portion of their earnings for tax. This minority deprives our vital public services of funding, affects fair competition between businesses, and places unfair burdens on everyone else.

Cash is a legitimate means of paying for goods and services and continues to be used by many people across the UK. The Government's position is that individuals and businesses can choose whether to accept or decline any form of payment, and this choice can be based on factors such as customer preference and cost. If a person or business receives cash payments, it is their responsibility to ensure they meet their tax obligations, including registering for and paying the right taxes.

At the autumn budget in October 2024 the government introduced the most ambitious package ever to close the tax gap, raising £6.5 billion in additional tax revenue per year by 2029-30. The government built on this at Spring Statement in March 2025, announcing a package of measures to further close the tax gap and raise over £1 billion in additional gross tax revenue per year by 2029-30.

HMRC's approach to tax compliance includes a range of activities that aim to both detect and tackle current non-compliance and change future behaviours. We aim to help and support customers to understand their tax obligations and promoting compliance by simplifying policies and procedures, providing clear guidance to make it easy for them to get things right, providing accessible digital services to make it easier to register to pay the appropriate taxes, providing targeted support and guidance, and intervening early to reduce mistakes.

HMRC are making it increasingly difficult for people and businesses to hide their income, using improved targeting with new data sources, third-party data and focused compliance activity. We will not hesitate to use stronger sanctions against those who deliberately choose not to comply. This includes potential criminal prosecutions for the most serious cases involving tax evasion.

■ Taxation

Richard Burgon:

[41488]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Autumn Budget 2024, what estimate she has made of how much revenue will be raised by changes to the rules for (a) non-domiciled tax status, (b) capital gains tax and (c) inheritance tax in the 2025-26 financial year.

James Murray:

Estimates of the exchequer impact of measures announced at Autumn Budget 2024 can be found in table 5.1 here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-budget-2024>. This includes the revenue raised in each year of the forecast period.

■ **Trusts: Assets**

Lloyd Hatton: [40841]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many of the trusts registered with the Trusts Registration Service hold UK land or property.

Lloyd Hatton: [40843]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many trusts registered with the Trusts Registration Service hold UK land or property via a type (a) A, (b) B and (c) C trust.

Lloyd Hatton: [40845]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many (a) land and (b) property assets are held through UK trusts registered with the Trust Registration Services; and what the aggregate value is of (i) land and (ii) property assets held via trusts.

Emma Reynolds:

I can only provide a partial answer to these questions, as the information held on the Trust Registration Service in relation to land and property holdings varies depending on the category of registration. Additionally, the Trust Registration Service does not record information on indirect holdings of land by trustees.

From May 2021 (when the Trust Registration Service was expanded to accept registrations from non-taxable trusts) to 5 April 2024 (the end of the last tax year), c.56,000 trusts notified the Trust Registration Service that the trustees have acquired a direct interest in UK land or property on or after 6 October 2020. Of this figure, c.55,000 are UK resident trusts (including trusts categorised as 'Type A') and c.1,000 are non-UK resident trusts (including trusts categorised as 'Type B' or 'Type C').

Taxable trusts, including those registered before May 2021, are required to provide a statement of assets held at the time of registration, including UK land or property. However, analysing this information to arrive at a total number and value of land and property assets held by these trusts would carry a disproportionate cost.

WALES■ **Productivity: Wales**

David Chadwick: [41333]

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what steps she is taking to improve productivity rates in Wales.

Jo Stevens:

Growth is the number one mission of the government. Our new Industrial Strategy is central to that Growth Mission and our Plan for Change. The Industrial Strategy will channel support to eight growth-driving sectors – those in which the UK excels today and will excel tomorrow. The Strategy will play to Wales's sectoral strengths, including Advanced Manufacturing, Clean Energy, Life Sciences and Creative Industries.

My department has been working closely across UK Government and the Welsh Government on the Industrial Strategy. I have also established the Welsh Economic Growth Advisory Group, a group that brings together business, industry, university and trade unions to discuss key economic issues across Wales.

■ Unemployment: Wales**David Chadwick:**[\[41332\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what steps she is taking to reduce economic inactivity in Wales.

Jo Stevens:

As set out in the Get Britain Working White Paper, we have committed £240m of investment towards sixteen trailblazers to test new and innovative ways to support people into work and tackle the root causes of inactivity, including one in Wales. My department has been working in close partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions and the Welsh Government to co-develop and deliver the trailblazer in Wales.

Since coming into government, I have worked with UK and Welsh Government colleagues to drive over £1.5 billion in private investment from Eren Holding and Kellogg's, creating and sustaining over 400 jobs. Wales is also set to benefit from a £250 million investment from one of the world's largest semiconductor manufacturers which is expected to support over 500 high value jobs and hundreds more through the wider supply chain. In addition, we will support tens of thousands of new jobs through our Welsh Investment Zones and Freeports.

■ Wales Office: Computers**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[40651\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what the median age is of computers issued to officials in their Department.

Jo Stevens:

The Wales Office does not hold this information. The Department's computers are provided by the Ministry of Justice.

WORK AND PENSIONS**■ Access to Work Programme: Reform****Mr Peter Bedford:****[40976]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working Green Paper, published on 18 March 2025, what criteria she plans to use to assess the effectiveness of a reformed Access to Work scheme.

Sir Stephen Timms:

As set out in the Pathways to Work Green Paper published on 18 March 2025, we want to improve accessibility and support more disabled people into work. This includes helping employers increase productivity by supporting their employees with disabilities and health conditions. We want to do this through, in part, a reformed Access to Work. We are keen to ensure that, through future evaluation, we can demonstrate the value for money delivered through a new model as well as the positive impact it is having.

We will determine the nature of the evaluation as part of further policy development, reflecting on consultation responses.

■ Armed Forces Compensation Scheme**Yasmin Qureshi:****[40442]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will exempt payments from the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme as income when calculating means-tested benefits.

Sir Stephen Timms:

I refer the honourable member to the answer given on 5 December 2024 to question UIN [16635](#).

■ Disability and Employment**Fabian Hamilton:****[40999]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she plans to take to (a) reform (i) employment support and (ii) disability services and (b) support more people into work.

Sir Stephen Timms:

We announced in the Pathways to Work Green Paper that we would establish a new guarantee of support for all disabled people and people with health conditions claiming out of work benefits who want help to get into or return to work, backed up by £1 billion of new funding.

As the Green Paper notes, we are keen to engage widely on the design of this guarantee and the components needed to deliver it. To get this right, we will be seeking input from a wide range of stakeholders including devolved governments,

local health systems, local government and Mayoral Strategic Authorities, private and voluntary sector providers, employers and potential users. We will confirm further details in due course after we have completed our consultation process.

■ **Disability: Equal Pay**

Mr Peter Bedford:

[\[40978\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working Green Paper, published on 18 March 2025, what discussions she has had with employers on mandatory reporting of the disability pay gap.

Sir Stephen Timms:

On 18 March 2025, the Government launched a consultation on mandatory pay gap reporting for both disability and ethnicity. Responses to the consultation will help to shape proposals which will be included in the upcoming Equality (Race and Disability) Bill, which was announced in the King's Speech in July 2024.

Our engagement with stakeholders has included discussions with employers and employer representative bodies, for example the CBI and the Institute of Directors. We will continue to engage with a wide range of stakeholders including businesses as we develop the legislation.

■ **Employment and Support Allowance: Unemployment Insurance**

Mr Peter Bedford:

[\[40975\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working Green Paper, published on 18 March 2025, what estimate she has made of number of claimants receiving contributory Employment and Support Allowance who will be affected by the proposed replacement with Unemployment Insurance.

Sir Stephen Timms:

Information on the impacts of the Pathways to Work Green Paper will be published in due course, with some information published [here](#) alongside the Spring Statement.

A further programme of analysis to support development of the proposals in the Green Paper will be developed and undertaken in the coming months.

■ **Employment Schemes: Finance**

Helen Whately:

[\[40507\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working Green Paper, published on 18 March 2025, how much and what proportion of the additional funding for employment, health and skills support will be allocated to each region.

Sir Stephen Timms:

As the Pathways to Work Green Paper sets out, we are keen to engage widely on the design of our proposals for new employment support for disabled people and those with health conditions. We will be seeking input from a wide range of stakeholders including devolved governments, local health systems, local government and Mayoral Strategic Authorities, private and voluntary sector providers, employers and potential users. Therefore, at this stage no decisions have been taken or estimates made of how spending may vary across regions.

Helen Whately:[\[40508\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working Green Paper, published on 18 March 2025, what measures her Department will use to assess the effectiveness of the additional funding for employment, health and skills support.

Sir Stephen Timms:

We anticipate that we will assess effectiveness of Pathways to Work measures in the usual way, including through evaluation of their implementation and the impacts that they have on employment, incomes, benefit receipt and other indicators. We will publish more information on our evaluation strategy in due course.

Helen Whately:[\[40509\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working Green Paper, published on 18 March 2025, what estimate her Department has made of the potential impact of the additional funding for employment, health and skills support on the number of people who will return to work.

Sir Stephen Timms:

Information on the impacts of the Pathways to Work Green Paper will be published in due course, with some information already published alongside the Spring Statement. A further programme of analysis to support development of the proposals in the Green Paper will be developed and undertaken in the coming months.

Helen Whately:[\[40510\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working Green Paper, published on 18 March 2025, which organisations will be responsible for spending the additional funding for employment, health and skills support.

Sir Stephen Timms:

We announced in the Pathways to Work Green Paper that we would establish a new guarantee of support for all disabled people and people with health conditions claiming out of work benefits who want help to get into or return to work, backed up by £1 billion of new funding.

As the Green Paper notes, we are keen to engage widely on the design of this guarantee and the components needed to deliver it. To get this right, we will be

seeking input from a wide range of stakeholders including devolved governments, local health systems, local government and Mayoral Strategic Authorities, private and voluntary sector providers, employers and potential users. We will confirm further details in due course after we have completed our consultation process.

■ **Employment: Chronic Illnesses and Disability**

Danny Kruger:

[\[40690\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Green Paper entitled Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working, published on 18 March 2025, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of her proposed reforms on labour market participation by people with (a) disabilities and (b) long term health conditions.

Sir Stephen Timms:

Information on the impacts of the Pathways to Work Green Paper will be published in due course, with some information already published alongside the Spring Statement. A further programme of analysis to support development of the proposals in the Green Paper will be developed and undertaken in the coming months.

■ **Employment: Disability**

Danny Kruger:

[\[40691\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Green Paper entitled Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working, published on 18 March 2025, if she will make it her policy to publish an evaluation of the effectiveness of her proposed reforms once implemented in increasing long-term employment outcomes for disabled people.

Sir Stephen Timms:

We anticipate that we will assess effectiveness of Pathways to Work measures in the usual way, including through evaluation of their implementation and the impacts that they have on employment, incomes, benefit receipt and other indicators. We will publish more information on our evaluation strategy in due course.

Graeme Downie:

[\[40711\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the Disability Confident Scheme.

Graeme Downie:

[\[40712\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people have used the Disability Confident Scheme.

Graeme Downie:

[\[40713\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the impact of the Disability Confident Scheme on the ability of disabled people to find work.

Sir Stephen Timms:

In 2022, the department commissioned a survey to understand from members' perspectives the impact that signing up to the scheme has had on their recruitment and retention attitudes and practices towards disabled people. The survey can be accessed on gov.uk using the following link: [Disability Confident: survey of participating employers, May 2022 - GOV.UK](#)

There are currently over 19,000 employers signed up to the Disability Confident scheme. Collectively, these employers estimate over 12 million employees work in their organisations. It is not known how many of these employees are disabled, have a health condition, or are direct users of the scheme.

No assessment has been made of the impact of the scheme on the ability of disabled people to find work. I have been discussing with stakeholders in Disability Confident ideas for making the scheme criteria more robust, and plan to bring forward proposals for this in due course.

Mr Peter Bedford:[\[40979\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make a comparative assessment of the Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working Green Paper, published on 18 March 2025, and the Chance to Work Guarantee.

Sir Stephen Timms:

Information on the impacts of the Pathways to Work Green Paper will be published in due course, with some information published alongside the Spring Statement.

A further programme of analysis to support development of the proposals in the Green Paper will be developed and undertaken in the coming months alongside the consultation.

Seamus Logan:[\[41665\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department has made an assessment of the potential impact of proposed reforms to the personal independence payment on the employment (a) rights of and (b) obligations of employers to disabled employees.

Sir Stephen Timms:

PIP is a non-means tested benefit that can be paid to those in or out of work, it therefore does not directly link with employment rights.

■ Employment: Social Security Benefits**Fabian Hamilton:**[\[40989\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to ensure that changes to (a) Universal Credit taper rates and (b) other benefits (i) encourage more people into work and (ii) support people in work.

Sir Stephen Timms:

As the Chancellor has set out, this Government is reforming the social security system to support people into work, while protecting people who will never be able to – making the system sustainable so that it is there to help those of us that need it now and long into the future.

These changes come on top of our Get Britain Working White Paper which set out the biggest reforms to employment support for a generation, and the increase in the Universal Credit work allowance to £684 per month for those without housing costs or £411 per month for those with housing costs.

In addition, Universal Credit withdraws financial support at a steady rate allowing those on low incomes to keep more of what they earn. It does this by applying a single taper rate of 55% to net earnings before reducing the amount of Universal Credit someone is eligible for. This means claimants still benefit from their income as 45 pence in every pound earned would be kept. In some cases, claimants may also benefit from a work allowance, which is the amount someone can earn before the 55% taper is applied to their net earnings.

These policies are kept under regular review to ensure they continue to make work pay and provide the correct incentives to allow those receiving Universal Credit to move into and progress in work.

■ Jobcentres: Birmingham Edgbaston**Preet Kaur Gill:****[39544]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to modernise Job Centres in Birmingham, Edgbaston constituency.

Alison McGovern:

This Government's number one mission is to grow the economy and drive up living standards right across the country as part of its Plan for Change. Building a thriving and inclusive labour market – which spreads the benefits of good work to as many people as possible – is central to achieving that goal.

Linking to the government's missions of Kickstarting Economic Growth and Breaking Down Barriers to Opportunities, the Department is working to ensure that the DWP estate is more flexible and responsive and can react to the changing demands for services and economic changes. As set out in the 'Get Britain Working White Paper', the Department is transforming the Jobcentre Plus network across Great Britain to create a new national jobs and careers service that will enable everyone to access tailored support through an enhanced focus on people's skills and careers, rather than merely monitoring and managing benefit claims.

■ Local Housing Allowance: Rents

Joe Robertson:

[\[40883\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she plans to amend local housing allowance rates to reflect actual rental market costs (a) on the Isle of Wight and (b) in other areas.

Sir Stephen Timms:

Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates are reviewed annually, usually at an Autumn fiscal event. Rates are set based on the area of the country a person lives and their bedroom entitlement

The Secretary of State's decision at last year's Autumn Budget to maintain LHA rates at current levels for 2025/26 considered a range of factors including: rental data in areas across the country, the impacts of LHA rates, the challenging fiscal environment and the rate increases the previous April which cost an additional £7bn over 5 years.

Any future decisions on the LHA policy will be taken in the context of the Government's missions, goals on housing and the fiscal context.

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) are available from local authorities to those who face a shortfall in meeting their housing costs.

■ Motability

Lee Anderson:

[\[40613\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans she has for future eligibility criteria for the Motability Scheme.

Lee Anderson:

[\[40614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many claimants are registered under the Motability Scheme.

Sir Stephen Timms:

The Motability Scheme operates throughout the UK and is open to recipients of enhanced mobility Personal Independence Payment, higher rate mobility Disability Living Allowance, War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement and Armed Forces Independence Payment (including equivalent Scottish benefits).

We recently announced plans to make changes to eligibility for the Daily Living component of PIP.

In our Green Paper: Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working we also set out our intention to carry out a longer-term review of the whole PIP assessment, working closely with stakeholders and those with lived experience.

Motability's latest annual report shows that there are approximately 815,000 individuals participating in the Scheme.

Joe Robertson:

[\[40698\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if his Department will conduct a value for money assessment of the funding provided as part of the Motability Scheme.

Graeme Downie:

[\[40704\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she plans to continue her Department's relationship with Motability.

Graeme Downie:

[\[40705\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of her Department's work with Motability.

Graeme Downie:

[\[40706\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when she last met with Motability; and what she had discussions on.

Sir Stephen Timms:

The Motability Scheme is open to claimants who are in receipt of an eligible benefit. If a claimant elects to join the Scheme, the Department directly transfers the mobility allowance to Motability Operations on behalf of the eligible claimant. The Motability Scheme does not receive any direct funding from the Department for Work and Pensions.

A range of external bodies scrutinised the Scheme between 2018 and 2020, and the Government responded to each of the reports.

The Motability Foundation is independent of government, and regulated by the Charity Commission, so is wholly responsible for the terms and the administration of the Scheme. The department does however work closely with Motability and is responsible for the disability benefits that provide a passport to the Motability Scheme. Department officials have regular meetings with Motability and will continue to do so.

As the Minister for Social Security and Disability, I met with Motability Foundation in November 2024 to discuss the Scheme and its strategic objectives.

Nick Timothy:

[\[41167\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people leased a Motability vehicle in each year since 2010 by (a) benefit claim and (b) health condition.

Sir Stephen Timms:

The Motability Scheme operates throughout the UK and is open to recipients of enhanced mobility Personal Independence Payment, higher rate mobility Disability Living Allowance, War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement and Armed Forces Independence Payment (including equivalent Scottish benefits). Whilst the Government facilitates the transfer of benefits for claimants who choose to join the Scheme, we do not collate data on benefit type or health condition for those who chose to join the Scheme.

Nick Timothy: [\[41169\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many Motability vehicles have been (a) sold, (b) scrapped and (c) stolen in each year since 2010.

Nick Timothy: [\[41170\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many Motability vehicles have been taken away due to (a) lapsed eligibility and (b) misuse in each year since 2010.

Sir Stephen Timms:

Whilst the Department works closely with Motability Foundation and is responsible for the disability benefits that provide a passport to the Motability Scheme, Motability Foundation is an independent charitable organisation that is wholly responsible for the terms and the administration of the Scheme, along with oversight of Motability Operations. Any questions relating to the administration of the Scheme should be directed to Motability Foundation.

Nick Timothy: [\[41548\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many Motability vehicles were purchased in each year since 2010 by (a) manufacturer, (b) annual cost and (c) age.

Nick Timothy: [\[41550\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many (a) petrol, (b) diesel, (c) hydrogen, (d) hybrid, (e) plug-in hybrid and (f) fully electric vehicles were purchased through Motability in each year since 2010.

Nick Timothy: [\[41552\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many Motability vehicles by (a) manufacturer, (b) annual cost and (c) age were leased in each year since 2010.

Nick Timothy: [\[41553\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many (a) petrol, (b) diesel, (c) hydrogen, (d) hybrid, (e) plug-in hybrid and (f) fully electric vehicles were leased by Motability in each year since 2010.

Joe Robertson: [\[41637\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reason her Department funds electric vehicles through the Motability scheme.

Sir Stephen Timms:

The Department works closely with Motability Foundation and whilst we are responsible for the disability benefits that provide a passport to the Motability Scheme, we do not fund vehicles, be they electric or otherwise.

Motability Foundation is an independent charitable organisation that is wholly responsible for the terms and the administration of the Scheme, along with oversight of Motability Operations.

The Department does not hold data on the Motability fleet of cars.

Questions about the operations of the Motability Foundation should be addressed to the Foundation.

Joe Robertson:

[\[41638\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what criteria her Department uses to assess the value for money of the Motability scheme's investments in electric vehicles.

Sir Stephen Timms:

The Motability Foundation is independent of government, and regulated by the Charity Commission, so is wholly responsible for the terms and the administration of the Scheme, including assessing the value for money of its investments and charitable donations.

Questions about the operations of the Motability Foundation should be addressed to the Foundation.

■ Older People: Advocacy

Dr Al Pinkerton:

[\[40373\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of establishing a Commissioner for Older People to amplify the voices of older demographics in policy-making.

Alison McGovern:

DWP offers employment support for eligible older people through the network of Jobcentres across the UK.

The White Paper published on 26 November focuses on support for people who are economically inactive, people who are looking for work or want to progress, and people who are at risk of economic inactivity despite having a desire to stay in work. This includes and goes beyond people who are claiming benefits. The new national jobs and careers service will be instrumental in achieving this objective. This service will be available for anyone, including older people, who wants to look for work, wants help to increase their earnings, or who wants help to change their career or re-train. The service will be tailored to local needs.

We are committing to the establishment of 'collaboration committees' to further develop the reforms set out in our Pathways to Work Green Paper. These we will bring together groups of people for specific work areas, collaborating with civil servants to provide discussion, challenge, and recommendations. Each group will have a different mix of people including older people.

My department also engages with employers to ensure their recruitment practises attract and support the retention of older people and encouraging employers to sign the Age-Friendly employer pledge.

■ Pension Credit**Blake Stephenson:** **[40816]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the press notice entitled Nearly fifty thousand extra pensioners receiving vital Pension Credit support following surge in claims processed, published on 27 February 2025, if she will make an estimate of the number of people who were (a) eligible for and (b) not in receipt of Pension Credit on 24 March 2025.

Torsten Bell:

The Department does not have this data for the period up to March 2025.

The latest available Pension Credit take-up statistics cover the financial year 2022 to 2023 and are available at: [Income-related benefits: estimates of take-up: financial year ending 2023 - GOV.UK](#).

■ Pension Credit: South Shropshire**Stuart Anderson:** **[40361]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to help expedite Pension Credit claims from South Shropshire constituency.

Torsten Bell:

The Government put in place the biggest ever pension Credit take-up drive. To help ensure it has the capacity to assess all claims within reasonable timeframes, the Department deployed over 500 additional staff.

On 27 February 2025 we published [Pension Credit Applications and Awards - February 2025 statistics up to 23 February 2025](#). This shows Pension Credit processing times have improved and outstanding volumes returned to normal levels, 33,700 in February 2025.

■ Pension Credit: Winter Fuel Payment**Ben Obese-Jecty:** **[40745]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Oral Statement of 29 July 2024 on Public Spending: Inheritance, Official Report, columns 1033-1040, how many Pension Credit claims have been awarded since the changes in the eligibility criteria for the Winter Fuel Payment were announced.

Torsten Bell:

On 27 February 2025 we published Pension Credit applications and award statistics. This publication provides application and award volumes up to 23 February 2025. [Pension Credit Applications and Awards - February 2025](#).

■ Personal Independence Payment

Helen Whately:

[40511]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working Green Paper, published on 18 March 2025, with which organisations she has held discussions on her proposed reforms to the Personal Independence Payment.

Sir Stephen Timms:

We have set out proposals to reform the health and disability benefits system in the Pathways to Work Green Paper published on 18 March 2025. A full 12-week consultation will begin from the point all accessible versions are published on GOV.UK.

We are consulting on how best to support those who are affected by the new PIP eligibility requirement, and we will consider improvements to the PIP assessment. We would like to hear views from a wide group of people, in particular disabled people and people with health conditions and disability organisations, and encourage responses to the consultation through the online form, email and post. We also intend to run a number of accessible virtual and face-to-face events on the Green Paper to hear from stakeholders, including disabled people and their representative organisations, directly. More information on these events and registration will be advertised on the consultation pages on GOV.UK in due course.

We also announced plans to launch a review of the PIP assessment which I will lead and we will bring together a range of experts, stakeholders and people with lived experience to consider how best to do this and to start the process as part of preparing for a review. We will provide further details as plans progress.

Paula Barker:

[40674]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make an assessment of the potential impact of her Department's proposed changes to PIP on households in which a PIP recipient is exempt from the benefit cap.

Sir Stephen Timms:

Information on the impacts of the Pathways to Work Green Paper will be published in due course, with some information published [here](#) alongside the Spring Statement.

A further programme of analysis to support development of the proposals in the Green Paper will be developed and undertaken in the coming months.

Graeme Downie:

[40710]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people in (a) Dunfermline and Dollar constituency, (b) Scotland and (c) the UK receive the maximum award from PIP.

Sir Stephen Timms:

The Department regularly publishes [Personal Independence Payment \(PIP\) statistics](#). The 'PIP Cases with Entitlement' dataset on [Stat-Xplore](#), which contains the number

of people entitled to PIP by geography including Parliamentary constituency and components received, can be used to calculate the number of people receiving PIP at the highest level. Guidance on how to use Stat-Xplore can be found here:

[Introduction to the Stat-Xplore User Guide.](#)

PIP has been devolved to Scotland since April 2020 and existing claims are currently being moved to the Scottish replacement benefit Adult Disability Payment.

Fabian Hamilton:

[40997]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to support PIP claimants into work.

Sir Stephen Timms:

We announced in the Pathways to Work Green Paper that we would establish a new guarantee of support, backed up by £1 billion of new funding. We want this guarantee to have a particular focus on early support, by offering everyone who claims UC and has a work-limiting health condition or who has recently been in receipt of PIP, with a support conversation. This would be focused on their goals and the help they need to achieve them.

Manuela Perteghella:

[41625]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to ensure the adequacy of Personal Independence Payment assessments in ensuring support for people in need.

Sir Stephen Timms:

It is important that all people claiming Personal Independence Payment (PIP) are able to access our services and that they do not face obstacles in applying and communicating with the Department and its providers.

In the Green Paper *Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working* published on 18 March we outline plans to improve the experience for people who use the health and disability benefits system, including recording more assessments to improve people's trust in the assessment process through greater transparency and using recordings as a learning opportunity to consider potential improvements to the quality of the assessment process and to be available to people who are appealing the initial award given.

We also announced plans to launch a process to review the PIP assessment. We will bring together a range of experts, stakeholders and people with lived experience to consider how best to do this and to start the process as part of preparing for a review. We will provide further details as plans progress.

The Health Transformation Programme is also transforming the entire PIP service, including introducing the option to apply and track applications online. The transformed service will improve how we gather health information, and tailor the process to the customer's needs and circumstances, offering a better customer experience and improving trust in our services and decisions.

Ian Lavery:

[41820]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people claiming the Personal Independence Payment are also claiming the (a) limited capability for work and work-related activity component of Universal Credit or old-style Employment and Support Allowance in (i) Blyth and Ashington constituency, (ii) Northumberland, (iii) the North East and (iv) England.

Sir Stephen Timms:

The information to answer these questions can be found on [Stat-Xplore](#) in the [Benefit Combinations - Data from May 2019 for England and Wales](#) dataset. The most recent month for which data is available is August 2024. The data can be filtered by Benefit to include PIP Claimants only. The data can also be broken down by Additional Claim Details to include ESA Payment type and UC Health Journey information, and for a range of geographical areas.

Guidance on how to use Stat-Xplore can be found [here](#). An account is not required to use Stat-Xplore, the 'Guest Login' feature gives instant access to the main functions.

■ **Personal Independence Payment: Appeals**

Wendy Morton:

[41080]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what her policy is on the continued payment of Personal Independence Payment while a decision to end the payment is subject to an appeal.

Sir Stephen Timms:

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is not an income replacement benefit. It is paid to help with the additional costs that arise from long term health conditions or disability where they impact on the activities set out in legislation. Claimants are assessed against the legislative criteria and a decision on entitlement is made by a DWP decision maker.

In line with the legislative requirement, we continue to apply the latest decision on a PIP award until such time as a new decision is made. Payment of PIP after a claim has been disallowed, or payment at a rate higher than the latest decision, whilst an individual is waiting for an appeal hearing could lead to incorrect expenditure of public funds. If a subsequent first-tier tribunal makes a new decision to reinstate PIP or give a higher award, then the Department will backdate any payments due.

■ **Personal Independence Payment: Carer's Allowance**

Graeme Downie:

[40714]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working Green Paper, published on 18 March 2025, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of those reforms on the finances of people in receipt of carers' allowance caring for someone in receipt of PIP.

Sir Stephen Timms:

Information on the impacts of the Pathways to Work Green Paper will be published in due course, with some information published alongside the Spring Statement. These publications can be found here [‘Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working Green Paper’](#). The publication [‘Spring Statement 2025 health and disability benefit reforms – Impacts’](#) may be of interest. In particular, Table A1 on page 6 and Table A4 on page 9.

A further programme of analysis to support development of the proposals in the Green Paper will be developed and undertaken in the coming months.

■ Personal Independence Payment: Leyton and Wanstead**Mr Calvin Bailey:****[40827]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people that receive (a) enhanced daily living Personal Independence Payment awards and (b) standard daily living Personal Independence Payment awards did not score four or more in any individual activity in Leyton and Wanstead constituency in January 2025.

Sir Stephen Timms:

Information on the impacts of the Pathways to Work Green Paper will be published in due course, with some information published alongside the Spring Statement. These publications can be found here [‘Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working Green Paper’](#).

A further programme of analysis to support development of the proposals in the Green Paper will be developed and undertaken in the coming months.

■ Personal Independence Payment: Local Housing Allowance**Paula Barker:****[40673]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department has made an impact assessment of the potential impact of changes to Personal Independence Payments on under 35's who claim Local Housing Allowance at the 1 bedroom rate.

Sir Stephen Timms:

Information on the impacts of the Pathways to Work Green Paper will be published in due course, with some information published [here](#) alongside the Spring Statement.

A further programme of analysis to support development of the proposals in the Green Paper will be developed and undertaken in the coming months.

■ Personal Independence Payment: Medical Examinations**Danny Kruger:****[40694]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Green Paper entitled Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working, published on 18 March 2025, what proportion of PIP assessments she expects to be face-to-face.

Sir Stephen Timms:

The Department is committed to assessing people for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) as quickly as possible to ensure they receive the support they are entitled to in a timely manner. PIP assessments are currently carried out via a range of channels. As set out in the Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working Green Paper, we are committed to doing more face-to-face assessments, while preserving alternative health assessment channels to meet the specific needs of people who require a different channel, for example as a reasonable adjustment.

Further details on this commitment, along with other measures designed to improve the PIP assessment are set out in the Green Paper. We will set out further detail of the proposals for reform of the health and disability system following a full 12-week consultation period where responses are fully considered.

Danny Kruger:[\[40695\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Green Paper entitled Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working, published on 18 March 2025, whether her Department plans to provide additional training to assessors carrying out PIP assessments.

Sir Stephen Timms:

All health professionals who carry out PIP assessments receive comprehensive training in disability analysis which includes evaluation as to how medical conditions affect claimants in their day-to-day activities, as well as awareness training in specific conditions. The department works extensively with assessment providers to make improvements to guidance, training and audit procedures to ensure a quality service. All core training and guidance material for health professionals undergoes both clinical and policy quality assurance.

On 18 March we announced our plans to introduce a new eligibility requirement in Personal Independence Payment (PIP) so that people must score a minimum of four points in one daily living activity in PIP to be eligible for the daily living component. All health professionals and DWP case managers will receive training and guidance on these changes to eligibility criteria before they are implemented.

■ Personal Independence Payment: Multiple Sclerosis**Tristan Osborne:**[\[40873\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that the revised Personal Independence Payment (PIP) assessment criteria accounts for (a) fluctuating and (b) hidden symptoms of multiple sclerosis; and if she will make an assessment of the accuracy of the PIP assessment process.

Sir Stephen Timms:

We have committed to introduce a new requirement that claimants must score a minimum of four points in at least one daily living activity to be eligible for the daily living component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP).

The PIP assessment considers the needs arising from a long-term health condition or disability, not the health condition or disability itself. Therefore, the impact in each case will depend on an individual's circumstances. For those already on PIP, the changes will only apply from November 2026 at their next award review, subject to parliamentary approval. People will be reviewed by a trained assessor or healthcare professional and assessed on individual needs and circumstance. More information on the impacts and equality analysis for these changes published on 26 March can be found: [Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working Green Paper - GOV.UK](#).

In the Green Paper, *Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working*, we have committed to exploring ways to improve the PIP assessment. We are exploring digitalising transfer of medical information, using evidence from eligibility for other services to reduce the need for people with very severe health conditions to undergo functional assessments, and improving communication with people receiving awards who are expected to remain on disability benefits for life. We have also committed to a full review of the PIP assessment.

Alongside this, the Green Paper also includes plans to improve trust in the process. These plans include reviewing our approach to safeguarding, recording assessments to increase transparency, and moving back to having more face-to-face assessments while continuing to meet the needs of people who may require different methods of assessment.

■ Personal Independence Payment: Neurodiversity

Martin Wrigley:

[41313]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 24 March 2025 to Question 39206 on Personal Independence Payment: Neurodiversity, if she will make it her policy to maintain the level of the Personal Independence Payment for (a) neurodivergent people and (b) people with severe mental distress.

Sir Stephen Timms:

Our intention is that the new eligibility requirement in Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in which people must score a minimum of four points in one daily living activity to be eligible for the daily living component, will apply to new claims and award reviews from November 2026, subject to parliamentary approval.

The PIP assessment considers the needs arising from a long-term health condition or disability, not the health condition or disability itself. Therefore, the impact in each case will depend on an individual's circumstances. From November 2026, at their next award review, people will be reviewed by a trained assessor or healthcare professional and assessed on individual needs and circumstance. More information on the impacts and equality analysis for these changes published on 26 March can be found: [Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working Green Paper - GOV.UK](#)

■ Personal Independence Payment: Reform

Manuela Perteghella:

[\[40864\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to ensure that disabled people receive support following reforms to PIP.

Sir Stephen Timms:

There will be no immediate changes. Our intention is that the new eligibility requirement in Personal Independence Payment in which people must score a minimum of four points in one daily living activity to be eligible for the daily living component, will apply to new claims and award reviews from November 2026, subject to parliamentary approval.

The department already has processes in place to support and safeguard people who use our services, and we will continue to provide this support as changes are taken forward. We are mindful of the impact of this change and, as such, in the Green Paper *Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working* published on 18 March we are consulting on how best to support those who lose entitlement due to the reforms, including how to make sure health and eligible care needs are met.

Paula Barker:

[\[40925\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make an assessment of the potential impact of her Department's proposed changes to PIP on access to (a) carers allowance, (b) council tax support and (c) other benefits linked to PIP.

Sir Stephen Timms:

There will be no immediate changes to Personal Independence Payment (PIP). Our intention is that the changes will apply to new claims and award reviews from November 2026, subject to parliamentary approval.

For those already on PIP, the changes will only apply at their next award review. The average award review is about three years.

When people are reassessed, they will be reviewed by a trained assessor or healthcare professional, and assessed on their individual needs and circumstances.

The personal impact will depend on an individual's circumstances. We are consulting on how best to support those who are no longer eligible for PIP and linked entitlements, including how to make sure health and eligible care needs are met.

■ Personal Independence Payment: Terminal Illnesses

Danny Kruger:

[\[40692\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Green Paper entitled *Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working* Green Paper, published on 18 March 2025, whether people with terminal illnesses will be affected by the new PIP eligibility threshold of four points in a single category.

Sir Stephen Timms:

Claimants of Personal Independence Payment (PIP) who are nearing the end of their life will be unaffected by the reforms to the PIP assessment criteria. Claims made under the special rules for end of life are automatically awarded the enhanced rate of the daily living component without having to take part in an assessment and without having to meet the required period condition. The majority of claimants are also awarded the mobility component.

■ **Poverty: Wales****Ann Davies:**[\[41774\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made, using the same static microsimulation model as in the Spring Statement 2025 health and disability benefit impact assessment, of the number of additional (a) people and (b) children who will be in (i) relative and (ii) absolute poverty after housing costs in Wales in 2029-30 as a result of modelled changes to social security, compared to baseline projections.

Alison McGovern:

The government's impact assessment regarding Health and Disability Reform is available at [Spring Statement 2025 health and disability benefit reforms – Impacts](#)

These estimates have been made at Great Britain level. It is not possible to provide figures for Wales because the static microsimulation model uses survey data and sample sizes are not large enough to provide robust estimates.

■ **Social Security Benefits: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder****Graeme Downie:**[\[40721\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working Green Paper, published on 18 March 2025, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of those reforms on people with ADHD.

Sir Stephen Timms:

Information on the impacts of the Pathways to Work Green Paper will be published in due course, with some information published alongside the Spring Statement. These publications can be found here '[Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working Green Paper](#)'.

A further programme of analysis to support development of the proposals in the Green Paper will be developed and undertaken in the coming months.

■ **Social Security Benefits: Children****Mr James Frith:**[\[40563\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make an estimate of the average amount of money families would receive if the two-child limit was rescinded.

Sir Stephen Timms:

Tackling child poverty is at the heart of the Government's mission to break down barriers to opportunity and improve the life chances of every child. The Child Poverty Taskforce is exploring how we can harness all available levers to reduce child poverty, including considering social security reforms, before publishing a strategy that will deliver lasting change.

■ Social Security Benefits: Disability**Neil Duncan-Jordan:**[\[40983\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of the decision not to consult on all the measures listed in Annex A in the Pathways to Work Green Paper, published on 18 March 2025 on disabled people's organisations.

Sir Stephen Timms:

We are committed to putting the views and voices of disabled people and people with health conditions at the heart of everything we do. We want to improve and refine our reform plans by consulting on certain measures as described in the Green Paper. The consultation will close 12 weeks after the point at which all the accessible versions are available, to ensure that all stakeholders have sufficient time to engage and that we hear from as many people as possible.

However, we urgently need this reform to stop people from falling into inactivity, restore trust and fairness in the system and promote the interests of disabled people. This means we need to take decisive action to tackle a situation in which PIP claims are set to double from 2 million to over 4.3 million this decade. We are consulting on how best to support those affected by the changes. We will also consider improvements to the PIP assessment. We will launch a wider review of the PIP indicators, which I shall lead, and we will bring together a range of experts, stakeholders and people with lived experience to consider how best to do this. We will provide further details as plans progress.

We will rebalance payments in Universal Credit, reducing the health top up for new claims and delivering the first ever permanent, above inflation rise to the standard allowance of UC – actually offering help for people to get into work as quickly as possible.

We will be bringing forward the PIP and UC changes in a Bill so Parliament can fully debate and vote on them.

■ Social Security Benefits: Reform**Alex Sobel:**[\[40633\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what accessibility adjustments are in place for the consultation on the Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working Green Paper; and whether her Department consulted with disabled people on accessibility requirements for that consultation.

Sir Stephen Timms:

We are committed to putting the views and voices of disabled people and people with health conditions at the heart of everything we do. Throughout the consultation period we will listen, learn and take feedback through an online form, email, post and through accessible in-person and online events.

We will publish a full suite of accessible versions of the Green Paper, to ensure that everyone can engage with the consultation. The consultation will close 12 weeks after the point at which all the accessible versions are available, to ensure that all stakeholders have sufficient time to engage and we hear from as many people as possible. We will also be holding a full schedule of public events which we will publish along with the accessible versions in the coming weeks. The public consultation events will accommodate any reasonable adjustments for individuals who wish to attend, including re-imbursing travel costs and arranging accessible venues and interpreters for attendees.

Graeme Downie:[\[40723\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she has conducted an equality impact assessment on proposals in the Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working Green Paper, published on 18 March 2025.

Sir Stephen Timms:

We published an [Equality Analysis](#) and [Policy Rationale impacts](#) alongside the Spring Statement.

Further analysis for the measures in the Green Paper, not included in the Spring Statement, will be published in due course.

Graeme Downie:[\[40725\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working Green Paper, published on 18 March 2025, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of those reforms on people with (a) sarcoidosis, (b) ME and (c) other fluctuating health conditions.

Sir Stephen Timms:

Information on the impacts of the Pathways to Work Green Paper will be published in due course, with some information published alongside the Spring Statement. These publications can be found here '[Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working Green Paper](#)'.

A further programme of analysis to support development of the proposals in the Green Paper will be developed and undertaken in the coming months.

Mr Peter Bedford:[\[40973\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working Green Paper, published on 18 March 2025, whether her Department plans to publish statistics on the number of

claimants who lose their (a) Personal Independence Payment and b) Universal Credit health entitlement following these reforms.

Sir Stephen Timms:

Information on the impacts of the Pathways to Work Green Paper will be published in due course, with some information published [here](#) alongside the Spring Statement.

A further programme of analysis to support development of the proposals in the Green Paper will be developed and undertaken in the coming months.

Tom Morrison:

[41358]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make an estimate of the number of individuals that will have their benefit funding reduced under the Government's proposed welfare reforms.

Sir Stephen Timms:

The Department published an [Impact Analysis](#) alongside the Spring Statement on 26 March 2025.

This document contains forecast estimates of the numbers of individuals who will be affected by the proposed welfare reforms.

■ Social Security Benefits: Young People

Bell Ribeiro-Addy:

[41485]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of (a) restricting eligibility for PIP, (b) reducing the health component of Universal Credit and (c) removing the health component of Universal Credit for 18-21 year olds on the unemployment rate.

Sir Stephen Timms:

Information on the impacts of the Pathways to Work Green Paper will be published in due course, with some information published alongside the Spring Statement. These publications can be found in '[Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working Green Paper](#)'.

A further programme of analysis to support development of the proposals in the Green Paper will be developed and undertaken in the coming months.

■ Universal Credit

Jim Shannon:

[40457]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to encourage those eligible to apply for Universal Credit.

Sir Stephen Timms:

The Department provides extensive information including on Universal Credit on Gov.uk that supports claimants identify what support may be available. Additionally, we signpost potential customers to external benefit calculators where they can identify what they are likely to be eligible for. We also work closely with Citizens

Advice who provide Help to Claim support for claimants in GB to make a claim to Universal Credit. This includes marketing and publicising Help to Claim support.

Graeme Downie: [\[40724\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working Green Paper, published on 18 March 2025, whether she plans to amend the work allowance for people in receipt of the limited capability for work and work related activity element of Universal Credit.

Sir Stephen Timms:

The work allowance for individuals who are found limited capability for work and work related activity (LCWRA) will remain unchanged to continue to incentivise people to try work.

In the reformed system, work allowances will continue to be available to those who receive the UC health element. We want to enable people to take advantage of this strong financial incentive to work, which means they can earn up to £404 a month (or over £673 if they don't get help with housing costs) without their benefits being affected.

Marie Goldman: [\[40875\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she has made an assessment of the adequacy of the universal credit assessment period; and whether she plans to change the frequency of that assessment.

Sir Stephen Timms:

The first payment of Universal Credit is usually made around five weeks after the claim is made.

The first calendar month is the initial assessment period, during which information is verified to ensure accurate payments. At the end of that period, entitlement for that month is calculated and paid seven days later. Payments thereafter are made monthly in arrears. Assessment Periods, once made, are set and cannot be changed.

Universal Credit is designed to top-up earnings from employment, adapting to changes in the amount of earnings received each month. Assessing UC monthly ensures that we receive at least one update of earnings information for each working member of a household, meaning that the benefit calculated accurately reflects the needs of the household.

There are currently no plans to change Universal Credit assessment periods.

■ Universal Credit: Appeals

Danny Kruger: [\[40693\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Green Paper entitled Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working, published on 18 March 2025, whether people affected by changes to the Universal Credit health element will be able to appeal reassessments under the new system.

Sir Stephen Timms:

Decisions made by a decision maker on entitlement to benefit generally confer a right of appeal.

The outcome of any WCA will lead to a decision about the customer’s capability for work, which would have appeal rights. If the customer disagrees with that decision, they may request a Mandatory Reconsideration (MR) and can lodge an appeal if they remain dissatisfied following the MR process.

■ **Universal Credit: Disability**

Graeme Downie: [\[40715\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working Green Paper, published on 18 March 2025, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of changes to the limited capability for work and work related activity element of Universal Credit on families of disabled people aged under 22.

Graeme Downie: [\[40716\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people under 22 in (a) Dunfermline and Dollar constituency, (b) Scotland and (c) the UK will be impacted by changes to the limited capability for work and work related activity element of Universal Credit.

Sir Stephen Timms:

No decision has been made on this policy. The key principle of our focus for 18-21 year olds should be helping them to be earning or learning, because of the long-term scarring effects for young people of a period of unemployment. That is why we are consulting on delaying access to the UC health top up until age 22 with savings reinvested into work support and training opportunities.

Universal Credit Health caseload statistics are available on DWP Stat-Xplore and were most recently updated with December 2024 data.

In December 2024, 13,650 and 68,350 16- to 21-year-olds in Great Britain were in the Limited Capability for Work (LCW) and Limited Capability for Work and Work-Related Activity (LCWRA) groups respectively.

Table: 16–21-year-olds in (a) Dunfermline and Dollar, (b) Scotland and (c) Great Britain on the UC Health caseload (December 2024)

	LCW	LCWRA	TOTAL
(a) Dunfermline and Dollar	20	110	130
(b) Scotland	1,380	7,460	8,830
(c) Great Britain	13,650	68,350	82,000

1. Statistical disclosure control has been applied to this table to avoid the release of confidential data and are rounded to the nearest 10.
2. Totals may not sum due to this disclosure control and rounding.
3. Figures are a count of the number of people on Universal Credit health on the second Thursday of the month.
4. Figures are Experimental Official Statistics

Guidance on how to use Stat-Xplore can be found here: <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/> (opens in new window). An account is not required to use Stat- Xplore, the 'Guest Login' feature gives instant access to the main functions.

■ Universal Credit: Health

Graeme Downie:

[40708]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working Green Paper, published on 18 March 2025, what support will be available for new claims for Universal Credit health rate.

Sir Stephen Timms:

We announced in the Pathways to Work Green Paper that we would establish a new guarantee of support for all disabled people and people with health conditions claiming out of work benefits who want help to get into or return to work, backed up by £1 billion of new funding

As the Green Paper notes, we are keen to engage widely on the design of this guarantee and the components needed to deliver it. To get this right, we will be seeking input from a wide range of stakeholders including devolved governments, local health systems, local government and Mayoral Strategic Authorities, private and voluntary sector providers, employers and potential users. We will confirm further details in due course after we have completed our consultation process.

Graeme Downie:

[40709]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people in (a) Dunfermline and Dollar constituency, (b) Scotland and (c) the UK receive the health rate top-up for Universal Credit.

Sir Stephen Timms:

Quarterly statistics for the number of [People on Universal Credit with a health condition or disability restricting their ability to work](#) in Great Britain are published on [Stat-Xplore](#). The latest release provides figures up to December 2024 which can be broken down by country, [Westminster Parliamentary Constituency](#) and [Local Authority](#).

Users can log in or access Stat-Xplore as a guest and, if needed, can access [guidance](#) on how to extract the information required. Universal Credit statistics for Northern Ireland are published by the [Department for Communities](#).

Note: the Universal Credit health element is paid at a household level, not to individuals, and [Households on Universal Credit](#) statistics can be broken down similarly, by the numbers receiving the [Limited Capability for Work Entitlement](#) and by geography.

■ Universal Credit: Self-employed

Kevin Bonavia: [\[40850\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will review the minimum floor cap for self-employed individuals receiving universal credit.

Sir Stephen Timms:

The Minimum Income Floor (MIF) encourages self-employed customers to progress in work and grow their earnings to a sustainable level.

The Government has committed to reviewing Universal Credit to ensure it is supporting the Government's objectives to make work pay and tackle poverty.

■ Universal Credit: Young People

Martin Wrigley: [\[41320\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of abolishing the lower standard rate of Universal Credit for under 25s.

Sir Stephen Timms:

There are no current plans to remove the under 25 Standard Allowance rate. Young people in work typically earn less than those over 25 and are also more likely to live in someone else's household, with lower living costs.

A reduced Universal Credit rate maintains the incentive for young people to find, and progress in, work, as we continue to support them into employment and to improve their career opportunities. Support is available to help those who live independently or have additional living costs. Depending on their circumstances, they may also be eligible for additional Universal Credit elements, including for housing, children, childcare costs, and disability.

■ Young People: Wolverhampton

Mrs Sureena Brackenridge: [\[41322\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to support economically inactive young people with seeking (a) education and (b) employment opportunities in Wolverhampton.

Alison McGovern:

Our plan to get Britain working includes a new Youth Guarantee for all young people aged 18-21 in England to ensure that they can access quality training opportunities, an apprenticeship or help to find work. The West Midlands Combined Authority, of which Wolverhampton is a part, is one of the eight Mayoral Strategic Authorities in England set to receive grant funding to deliver the Youth Guarantee Trailblazers, as announced in the “Get Britain Working” White Paper from Spring 2025. We will use the learning from the Trailblazers to inform the future design and development of the Youth Guarantee as it rolls-out across the rest of England.

DWP currently provides young people aged 16-24 with labour market support through an extensive range of interventions at a national and local level. This includes flexible provision driven by local need, nationwide employment programmes and support delivered by work coaches based in our Jobcentres and in local communities working alongside our partners. For example, in Wolverhampton we’ve partnered with Wolves Foundation to set up a programme called “Mindshift” which takes place at Molineux football ground and supports young people with health conditions, in particular mental health conditions, into employment.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

CABINET OFFICE

- **Publication of the Infected Blood Compensation Scheme user-friendly explainer**
Paymaster General and Minister for the Cabinet Office (Nick Thomas-Symonds):
[\[HCWS565\]](#)

In August 2024 we established the Infected Blood Compensation Scheme. Since then, we have enshrined the Scheme in law and published the Government's Compensation Scheme Summary. I have been intent on producing a simple and user friendly explainer document. This was driven in part by feedback from the infected blood community and Parliamentarians that a shorter, more digestible document which sets out the key relevant information was necessary.

I am pleased to announce that today this has been published on gov.uk to coincide with the Infected Blood Compensation Scheme 2025 regulations coming into force. This document has been developed with key representatives from the infected blood community.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

- **2024-25 Revised Financial Directions to NHS England and 2025-26 Financial Directions to NHS England**

Minister of State for Health (Secondary Care) (Karin Smyth): [\[HCWS569\]](#)

I am revising the 2024-25 Financial Directions to NHS England made on 26 March 2024 and setting the 2025-26 Financial Directions to NHS England. The amendment to the total revenue resource use limit for 2024-25 has been agreed with NHS England as required under section 223D(4) of the National Health Service Act 2006.

The Directions reflect recent funding settlements with HM Treasury and include a number of transfers of funding between NHS England and DHSC. The 2024-25 revisions include additional funding received in-year for the NHS pay awards and other in-year pressures, including elective activity. The 2025-26 total is as set out by HM Treasury at the Autumn Budget, but with some additional transfers between NHS England and DHSC.

They will be published on gov.uk. The existing NHS Mandate remains unchanged by these publications.

- **Drug, Alcohol Treatment and Recovery Grant**

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Public Health and Prevention (Ashley Dalton): [\[HCWS568\]](#)

On 31st March, the Government published the targeted drug, alcohol treatment and recovery grant funding for local authorities in England for 2025/26.

Drug and alcohol addiction costs the country billions of pounds in additional health and criminal justice expenditure.

Dedicated investment in high quality treatment and recovery services will reduce crime and save lives. This will benefit people who are experiencing drug and alcohol addiction, their families, and communities, many of whom are vulnerable with complex needs. Through access to Individual Placement and Support employment support, we can help people to sustain their recovery and local employers to recruit from an untapped pool of talent.

This funding is an important component of our Plan for Change in health, through which we will build an NHS fit for the future, tackle the underlying drivers of ill health and health inequalities, and deliver three fundamental shifts: from hospital to community, from analogue to digital and from sickness to prevention.

It contributes to the Safer Streets Mission by reducing crime and re-offending and funding services that continue to provide support for people who are sleeping rough who have a substance misuse problem. It also supports the Opportunity Mission by increasing support and early intervention for children and young people's substance issues as well as reducing the adverse childhood experience of parental substance misuse.

Allocations will see £310 million go directly to councils to build on their vital work of improving outcomes for people who need treatment and recovery support.

Full details of the grant allocations to local authorities for 2025/26 can be found on gov.uk. This information has been communicated to local authorities.

■ NHS Pension Scheme

Minister of State for Health (Secondary Care) (Karin Smyth):

[\[HCWS566\]](#)

In 2014 and 2015, the previous government reformed public service pension schemes with the intent to better balance the interests of public service workers, employers and taxpayers. When the reforms were introduced, they provided 'transitional protections' which allowed members who were closer to retirement age to remain in the previous 'legacy' schemes rather than move to the 'reformed' schemes. In December 2018, the Court of Appeal found that these protections in the judicial and firefighters' pension schemes gave rise to unlawful discrimination (the McCloud and Sargeant Case).

Governing legislation - the Public Service Pensions and Judicial Offices Act 2022 - was enacted to remedy the discrimination identified by the courts. A core element of the remedy is providing affected members with a choice of pension benefits, legacy or reformed, for the period the discrimination had effect. Schemes must provide affected members with 'remediable service statements' which set out how this choice will affect the value of their pension benefits. Members who have already retired must be provided with a remediable service statement to allow them to make their benefit choice retrospectively.

The governing legislation requires that a statement is provided to each affected member on or before 1 April 2025 or 'by such later day as the scheme manager considers

reasonable in all the circumstances in the case of a particular member or a particular class of member.’ Today, I am updating the House on the delivery of remediable service statements for affected NHS Pension Scheme members.

The production of remediable service statements involves a complex and challenging programme of work. Technical complexities, some of which extend beyond the NHS Pension Scheme, have affected delivery timelines for statements.

The NHS Business Services Authority, as the scheme administrator of the NHS Pension Scheme, is prioritising the delivery of remediable service statements. However, in order to ensure that affected members receive robust statements that enable informed decision-making I have agreed to a revised delivery plan for these statements with the Authority, which it is communicating with affected members. The revised delivery plan prioritises members based on their likelihood of facing financial detriment as a consequence of the discrimination. Government acknowledges that the revised timelines mean many members will receive their statement later than anticipated and that this will have an impact, especially on those retired members who will financially benefit from their choice.

As part of the revised delivery plan, Government will be holding the NHS Business Services Authority to account against extended deadlines for the delivery of remediable service statements. These extended deadlines are detailed in the table below:

MEMBER CLASS	NUMBER OF MEMBERS	RSS EXTENSION
Retired by 1/10/23 – formerly unprotected and only legacy benefits in payment	5,012	1 July 2025 (three months)
Retired by 1/10/23 – formerly taper protected and only legacy benefits in payment	25,827	1 July 2025 (three months)
Retired by 1/10/23 – formerly unprotected and both legacy and reform benefits in payment	14,376	1 October 2025 (six months)
Retired by 1/10/23 – formerly taper protected and both legacy and reform benefits in payment	21,175	1 October 2025 (six months)
Retired by 1/10/23 – formerly protected and benefits in payment for remedy period	241,233	1 December 2026 (20 months)
Retired between 1/10/23 and 1 July 2025	167,690	1 December 2026 (20 months)

MEMBER CLASS	NUMBER OF MEMBERS	RSS EXTENSION
Active	561,572	1 September 2025 (five months)
Deferred	144,076	1 September 2025 (five months)

■ Outcome of the community pharmacy contractual framework consultation for 2024/25 and 2025/26

Minister of State for Care (Stephen Kinnock):

[\[HCWS570\]](#)

I am delighted to announce we have now concluded our consultation on funding for community pharmacy for 2024/25 and 2025/26. We have agreed with Community Pharmacy England that in 2025/26 the funding will increase to £3.073 billion, an increase of £375 million compared to 2024/25. This means, in addition to other changes, that on a like for like basis the value of the funding will increase by 15.0% compared to 2024/25, compared to 5.8% growth to the budget of the NHS as a whole. This is on top of a consolidated increase in 2024/25 of 4.1%.

This investment will enable us to embed and build on the range of clinical services that we commission from community pharmacy as we seek to improve access through reform and better use the skills of pharmacy teams to keep people well in their communities.

In addition, we have agreed to allow pharmacies to keep £193 million of funding that was paid to them primarily over the pandemic period to support the vital supply of medicines. This will bring more certainty of funding for contractors and support pharmacies in purchasing the medication prescribed for patients.

We know that community pharmacy has been neglected. We are determined to work with the sector to get it back on its feet and delivering for patients. This agreement with CPE will provide much needed investment and start to stabilise the community pharmacy sector. It marks a show of confidence in this Government to deliver the left shift - moving care from hospital to community, and moving from sickness to prevention.

I would like to pay tribute to CPE's committee. I am grateful to them for working constructively and at pace with officials to agree how best to use this significant new investment to support the sector, and to continue to provide services to patients across the country. We have prioritised patient access to medication, support and advice. We are also embedding and extending the clinical service offer. We will provide additional support for people newly prescribed medication for depression, as well as offering access to NHS provided Emergency Hormonal Contraception across the country for the first time.

We have also committed £215 million to grow the Pharmacy First service, as we look to build on the over 1.9m consultations already delivered as of November 2024 and provide a platform for prescribing services in the future.

These services will continue to increase the access and support available for people close to home, in the heart of their communities.

I am therefore very pleased to share this announcement and look forward to continued collaborative working with Community Pharmacy England and the wider sector as we build on what we have announced today and deliver what we all want for community pharmacy, a service fit for the future.

HOME OFFICE

■ Implementation of the Investigatory Powers (Amendment) Act 2024

The Minister of State for Security (Dan Jarvis):

[\[HCWS567\]](#)

The Investigatory Powers (Amendment) Act 2024 (the 2024 Act) received Royal Assent in April 2024. The 2024 Act made targeted changes to the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 (IPA) to enable law enforcement and intelligence agencies to continue to tackle a range of evolving threats in the face of new technologies and increasingly sophisticated terrorist and criminal groups.

The IPA provides a framework for the use and oversight of investigatory powers by the intelligence services, law enforcement, and other public authorities. It helps safeguard people's privacy by setting out stringent controls over the way these powers are authorised and overseen. It consolidated regulatory oversight of the use of investigatory powers into a single body: the Investigatory Powers Commissioners Office. It also created the 'double lock' – the requirement for IPA warrants for the most intrusive powers to be approved both by a Secretary of State and then by a Judicial Commissioner. One of the key cornerstones of the regime is a requirement that public authorities must be able to demonstrate that any use of the powers is necessary and proportionate.

Today I have laid before Parliament the draft Investigatory Powers (Codes of Practice, Review of Notices and Technical Advisory Board) Regulations 2025, which are necessary to implement the 2024 Act. The regulations will bring into force eight new and revised Codes of Practice (the Codes), which have also been laid before Parliament, and which provide operational guidance for public authorities to have regard to when exercising functions to which the Codes relate. They also include a number of provisions relating to the IPA's notices regime, including to specify what types of changes may be included in the new Notification Notices, introduce timelines for the review of Technical Capability, Data Retention, and National Security Notices, and amend existing regulations in relation to notice processes with regards to membership of the Technical Advisory Board.

These regulations, and the Codes of Practice, have been informed by a public consultation which closed on 6 January 2025. The consultation responses included various suggestions for amendments to the draft Codes of Practice and regulations. We have made several changes as a result, including stylistic changes, further clarity on processes, and changes to the Technology Advisory Board's membership requirement. A copy of the Government's response to the consultation has been published on gov.uk.

These regulations are a crucial step in implementing the 2024 Act, which will ensure that the UK's investigatory powers framework continues to protect our national security and to prevent, investigate, disrupt, and prosecute the most serious crimes. The Government has published an Explanatory Memorandum alongside the regulations.