



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 7 April 2025 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:29 P.M., 07 April 2025). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

CONTENTS

ANSWERS	11	■ Coronavirus: Surveys	16
BUSINESS AND TRADE	11	■ Fair Work Agency: Statistics	16
■ Aircraft: China	11	■ Foreign Investment in UK: National Security	17
■ Department for Business and Trade: Impact Assessments	11	■ Government Departments: Advertising	17
■ Department for Business and Trade: Written Questions	11	■ Government Departments: Disclosure of Information	17
■ Import Duties: USA	12	■ Government Departments: Trade Unions	18
■ Motor Vehicles: USA	12	■ Government People Group: Gender and Sexuality	18
■ Trade Formalities	13	■ Great British Railways	18
■ Vehicle Number Plates: Fraud	13	■ Honours	18
CABINET OFFICE	13	■ Honours: Public Appointments	19
■ Cabinet Office: Artificial Intelligence	13	■ Infected Blood Compensation Authority	19
■ Cabinet Office: Boston Consulting Group	14	■ Infected Blood Compensation Scheme	19
■ Cabinet Office: Equality	14	■ Lord-Lieutenants: Political Activities	20
■ Cabinet Office: Standards	14	■ Ministers: Corporate Hospitality and Official Gifts	20
■ Civil Servants: Incentives	15	■ Mission Boards	20
■ Civil Servants: LGBT+ People	15	■ National Security	20
■ Civil Servants: Redundancy Pay	15	■ Permanent Secretaries: Conditions of Employment	21
■ Civil Servants: Workplace Pensions	15		
■ Civil Service Commission: Parliamentary Questions	16		

■ Political Parties: Finance	21	■ EU Defence Policy: UK	
■ Propriety and Constitution		Relations with EU	33
Group: Incentives	21	■ F-35 Aircraft: Procurement	34
■ Public Appointments:		■ Frigates	34
Disclosure of Information	22	■ LGBT Veterans Independent	
■ Public Finance	22	Review	34
■ Public Sector Reform and		■ Ministry of Defence: Billing	35
Innovation Fund	22	■ Ministry of Defence: Civil	
■ Senior Civil Servants: Ethnic		Servants	35
Groups	23	■ Ministry of Defence: Written	
■ Senior Civil Servants:		Questions	36
Workplace Pensions	23	■ National Armaments Director	
■ Stonewall: Arms Length		Group: Senior Civil Servants	36
Bodies	23	■ National Armaments Director:	
■ Transgender People	23	Standards	37
■ UK Relations with EU	24	■ NATO: Military Exercises	37
CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT	24	■ Navy: Reserve Forces	37
■ Journalism: Training	24	■ Portsmouth Dockyard:	
■ Local Press: North West	25	Regeneration	38
DEFENCE	25	■ Royal Marines: Rifles	38
■ Armed Forces: Compensation	25	■ Russia: Supply Chains	38
■ Armed Forces: Hearing		■ Strategic Defence Review	39
Impairment	26	■ UK Defence Innovation	39
■ Armed Forces: Housing	28	■ UK Defence Innovation:	
■ Armed Forces: Labour		Cheltenham	41
Turnover	28	■ Ukraine: Military Aid	42
■ Armed Forces: Recruitment	28	■ Veterans: Civil Proceedings	42
■ Cybersecurity and Defence:		■ Warships: Lasers	43
Cheltenham	29	■ Weapons: Lasers	43
■ Defence: Bolton	29	EDUCATION	44
■ Defence: Exports	30	■ Adoption	44
■ Defence: Finance	30	■ Adoption and Special	
■ Defence: Industry	31	Guardianship Support Fund	44
■ Defence: Procurement	32	■ Adult Education: Construction	44
■ Defence: Small Businesses	33	■ Adult Education: Finance	45

■ Apprentices and Higher Education	45	■ Mathematics: Education	63
■ Apprentices: Health Services	46	■ Overseas Students	63
■ Apprentices: Planning	47	■ Personal Care Services: Employers' Contributions	64
■ Apprentices: Research	47	■ Planning Authorities: Apprentices	64
■ Apprentices: Rural Areas	48	■ Pre-school Education	65
■ Apprentices: Taxation	48	■ Pre-school Education: Coronavirus	65
■ Arts: Curriculum	49	■ Pre-school Education: Finance	66
■ Childcare	50	■ Schools: Disciplinary Proceedings	67
■ Childcare and Pre-school Education	51	■ Schools: Energy	68
■ Children in Care: Mental Health Services	52	■ Schools: Festivals and Special Occasions	69
■ Children: Databases	53	■ Schools: Finance	70
■ Children: Domestic Abuse	53	■ Schools: Security	70
■ Children: Human Rights	54	■ Special Educational Needs: Central Suffolk and North Ipswich	71
■ Children: Identification	54	■ Special Educational Needs: Norfolk	71
■ Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill: Home Education	55	■ Special Educational Needs: Primary Education	72
■ Class Sizes: East Midlands	56	■ Special Educational Needs: Travel	73
■ Department for Education: Departmental Responsibilities	56	■ Students: Cancer	73
■ Department for Education: Secondment	56	■ Teachers: Employment Agencies	73
■ Disability: Grants	57	■ Teachers: Labour Turnover	74
■ Dyslexia: South West	57	■ Teachers: Recruitment	74
■ Education: Mental Health Services	58	■ Universities: Finance	75
■ Family Hubs	59	■ Welding: Training	76
■ Further Education and Schools: Cybercrime	60	ENERGY SECURITY AND NET ZERO	76
■ Higher Education: Standards	61	■ Carbon Emissions	76
■ Home Education: South Suffolk	62		
■ Human Trafficking: Cambridgeshire	62		

■ Energy: Rural Areas	76	■ Horticulture: Subsidies	84
■ Great British Energy: Logos	77	■ Housing: Bricks	85
■ Heat Pumps and Insulation: Low Incomes	77	■ Housing: Construction	85
■ Means-tested Benefits: Pensioners	78	■ Litter: Community Development	86
■ Nuclear Power Stations: Decommissioning	78	■ Livestock: Environmental Land Management Schemes	86
■ Wylfa Power Station	78	■ Livestock: Moorland	86
ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS	79	■ National Parks: Finance	87
■ Agriculture and Environment Protection: Regulation	79	■ Packaging: Recycling	87
■ Agriculture: Disease Control	79	■ Per- and Polyfluorinated Alkyl Substances: Marine Environment	88
■ Agriculture: Subsidies	79	■ Pets: Animal Housing	88
■ Animals: Import Controls	80	■ Port of Dover: Disease Control	89
■ Dangerous Dogs	80	■ Poultry: Norfolk	89
■ Dangerous Dogs: Registration	80	■ Recycling: Packaging	89
■ Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976	81	■ Responsible Dog Ownership Working Group	90
■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Computers	81	■ Sugar Beet	90
■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Equality	81	■ Sustainable Farming Incentive	91
■ Dover Port Health Authority: Finance	81	■ Sustainable Farming Incentive: Educational Visits	91
■ Environment Protection and Food Supply	82	FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE	92
■ Environmental Protection: Regulation	82	■ Afghanistan: British Nationals Abroad	92
■ Fisheries: Costs	83	■ Aid Workers: Armed Conflict	92
■ Food Supply: Carbon Emissions	83	■ Bangladesh: Christianity	92
■ Food: Public Opinion	83	■ Christianity: Religious Freedom	93
■ Food: Public Sector	84	■ Climate Change: Finance	93
		■ Developing Countries: Climate Change	93
		■ Developing Countries: Cooperatives	94

■ Developing Countries: Nuclear Power	94	■ Care Homes and Primary Care: Inspections	107
■ Development Aid	95	■ Care Quality Commission	108
■ Guyana: Politics and Government	95	■ Community Health Services: Medical Equipment	108
■ International Assistance: HIV Infection	96	■ Counselling and Psychiatry: Regulation	109
■ International Cooperation: Education	97	■ Dementia	110
■ International Development Association: Finance	97	■ Dementia: Clinical Trials	111
■ Israel: Lebanon	97	■ Dementia: Research	112
■ Palestinians: West Bank	98	■ Dental Services: Contracts	113
■ Russia: Sanctions	98	■ Dental Services: Finance	113
■ SS Tilawa	99	■ Department of Health and Social Care: Translation Services	114
■ Sudan: Humanitarian Aid	99	■ Diabetes: Screening	114
■ United Nations: Finance	100	■ Doctors: Recruitment	114
HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	100	■ Endometriosis: Diagnosis	115
■ Accident and Emergency Departments: Standards	100	■ Energy Drinks: Children	115
■ Ambulance Services: Standards	101	■ Healthy Start Scheme: Chester South and Eddisbury	115
■ Ankylosing Spondylitis: Diagnosis	101	■ Healthy Start Scheme: Staffordshire	116
■ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: Diagnosis	102	■ Heart Diseases: Medical Treatments	116
■ Autism and Special Educational Needs: South West	103	■ Levetiracetam	117
■ Autism: Diagnosis	104	■ Maternity Services: Negligence	117
■ Brain: Tumours	104	■ Members: Correspondence	118
■ Breast Cancer: Disadvantaged	105	■ Multiple Sclerosis: Diagnosis	119
■ Breast Cancer: Lymphoedema	106	■ NHS England: Secondment	119
■ Cancer: Health Services	106	■ Ovarian Cancer	119
■ Cancer: Young People	107	■ Palliative Care: Children	120
		■ Pharmacy	121
		■ Pharmacy: Finance	122

■ Prostate Cancer: Ethnic Groups	122	HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT	135
■ Radiotherapy: Medical Equipment	123	■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]	135
■ Respiratory Diseases: West Dorset	125	■ Affordable Housing	136
■ Social Services: Standards	126	■ Affordable Housing: Low Incomes	136
■ Telemedicine: Voice over Internet Protocol	127	■ Birmingham City Council: Finance	136
■ Tobacco and Vapes Bill	127	■ Byelaws	136
■ Visual Impairment: Rehabilitation	128	■ Compulsory Purchase	137
HOME OFFICE	128	■ Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017	137
■ Asylum: Applications	128	■ Councillors: Planning	137
■ Asylum: Deportation	128	■ Environmental Delivery Plans	138
■ Asylum: Greater London	129	■ Fast Food: Planning Permission	138
■ Asylum: Housing	129	■ Fire and Rescue Services: Dorset and Wiltshire	139
■ Asylum: Offenders	129	■ Green Belt: Lancashire	139
■ Automatic Number Plate Recognition	129	■ High Rise Flats: Fire Prevention	140
■ Bicycles: Theft	130	■ Housing: Construction	141
■ British Nationality	130	■ Housing: Planning Permission	143
■ Home Office: Billing	130	■ Leasehold: Ground Rent	143
■ Human Trafficking: Havering	131	■ Local Government: Debts	144
■ Immigration: Ukraine	131	■ Local Government: Disqualification	144
■ Metropolitan Police: Finance	132	■ Local Government: Public Records	145
■ Metropolitan Police: Location	132	■ Local Government: Reorganisation	145
■ National Rural Crime Unit and National Wildlife Crime Unit: Northern Ireland	133	■ Local Plans: Gardens Trust	145
■ Nitrous Oxide: Misuse	133	■ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Marketing	146
■ Offensive Weapons	133	■ Nature Restoration Fund	146
■ Refugees: Palestinians	134		
■ Shops: Money Laundering	134		
■ Street Trading: Crime	135		

■ New Towns: Mid Bedfordshire	146	■ Registration of Births, Deaths, Marriages and Civil Partnerships	158
■ New Towns: Planning Permission	147	■ Reoffenders	158
■ Parish and Town Councils: Powers	147	■ Wales Office: Computers	159
■ Parking: Private Sector	148	SCIENCE, INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY	159
■ Planning Permission: Costs	148	■ Aircraft: China	159
■ Planning: Biodiversity and Nature Conservation	149	■ Department for Science, Innovation and Technology: Arts	159
■ Planning: Information Sharing	149	■ Satellites: Regulation	160
■ Playgrounds	149	■ Telemedicine: Voice over Internet Protocol	160
■ Property Management Companies	150	■ UK Research and Innovation: Equal Pay	161
■ Public Consultation: Young People	150	■ Voice over Internet Protocol	161
■ Recreation Spaces	151	SCOTLAND	162
■ Rents: Arrears	151	■ Powers of Attorney: Scotland	162
■ Social Rented Housing: Finance	152	SPEAKER'S COMMITTEE ON THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION	162
■ Temporary Accommodation: Domestic Abuse	152	■ Elections: Expenditure	162
■ Urban Areas: Campaigns	153	■ Political Parties: Finance	162
■ Urban Areas: Shops	153	■ Returning Officers	163
JUSTICE	153	TRANSPORT	163
■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]	153	■ Blue Badge Scheme: Digital Technology	163
■ Animal Welfare: Prosecutions	154	■ Diesel	164
■ Assets: Cohabitation	154	■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points	164
■ Child Trust Fund	155	■ High Speed 2 Line	165
■ Court of Protection: Child Trust Fund	155	■ High Speed 2 Line: Euston Station	166
■ Family Courts: Standards	156	■ Housing: Parking	166
■ HM Courts and Tribunals Service: Staff	156	■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Facilities	166
■ Planning: Judicial Review	157		

■ Motor Insurance Taskforce	167	■ Investment	179
■ Motor Vehicles: Insurance and Safety	168	■ Loans: Government Assistance	180
■ Motorway Service Areas: Leasehold	168	■ London Stock Exchange	180
■ Network Rail: Public Appointments	168	■ Managed Service Companies	181
■ Public Transport	169	■ Motability: Insurance Premium Tax and VAT Zero Rating	181
■ Public Transport: Staffordshire	169	■ Payment Methods	181
■ Railways: Timetables	169	■ Pensions Investment Review	182
■ Road Traffic: South Holland and the Deepings	170	■ Property: Taxation	182
■ Road Works: Utilities	170	■ Public Expenditure	182
■ Roads: Accidents	171	■ Stamp Duty Land Tax: First Time Buyers	183
■ Roads: Closures	171	■ State Retirement Pensions: Underpayments	183
■ Roads: Repairs and Maintenance	171	■ Taxation: Electronic Government	184
■ Roads: Safety	172	■ Universal Credit	184
■ Speed Limits: Cameras	172	■ Universal Credit: Health	185
■ Taxis: Licensing	173	WALES	185
■ Transport: Carbon Emissions	173	■ Data, Statistics and Research on Sex and Gender Independent Review	185
■ Transport: North of England	174	WORK AND PENSIONS	186
■ Transport: Northern Ireland	174	■ Access to Work Programme	186
■ West Coast Main Line	175	■ Ageing and Older People: Public Appointments	186
TREASURY	175	■ Carer's Allowance	187
■ Agriculture: Seasonal Workers	175	■ Carer's Allowance: Overpayments	187
■ Bank Services: South Holland and the Deepings	176	■ Carer's Allowance: Personal Independence Payment	188
■ Banking Hubs and Cash Dispensing: Rural Areas	176	■ Chemicals: Regulation	189
■ Banking Hubs: Rural Areas	177	■ Child Trust Fund	189
■ Chronic Illnesses: Children	178	■ Children: Maintenance	189
■ Cooperatives and Credit Unions	178		
■ Freezing of Assets: Russia	179		

■ Data, Statistics and Research on Sex and Gender Independent Review	190	■ Personal Independence Payment: South Holland and the Deepings	202
■ Disability Living Allowance: Children	190	■ Personal Independence Payment: Universal Credit	202
■ Disability: Unemployment	191	■ Poverty: Health	203
■ Economic Crime	191	■ Poverty: Somerset	204
■ Employment	192	■ Seasonal Workers: Agriculture	204
■ Employment Schemes: Visual Impairment	192	■ Social Security Benefits	205
■ Employment: Disability	193	■ Social Security Benefits: Disability	206
■ Health and Safety Executive: Staff	193	■ Social Security Benefits: Reform	207
■ Means-tested Benefits: Take-up	194	■ State Retirement Pensions: Tax Allowances	209
■ Pathways to Work	194	■ State Retirement Pensions: Underpayments	209
■ Pathways to Work: Impact Assessments	196	■ Universal Credit: Death	210
■ Pension Credit	196	■ Universal Credit: Health	211
■ Personal Independence Payment	197	WRITTEN STATEMENTS	212
■ Personal Independence Payment: Carer's Allowance	199	BUSINESS AND TRADE	212
■ Personal Independence Payment: Carer's Allowance and Universal Credit	200	■ Consultation on The Package Travel and Linked Travel Arrangements Regulations (2018)	212
■ Personal Independence Payment: Death	200	HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	213
■ Personal Independence Payment: Employment	201	■ Childhood obesity	213
■ Personal Independence Payment: Epsom and Ewell	201	HOME OFFICE	214
■ Personal Independence Payment: Reform	201	■ Southport Inquiry	214
		WOMEN AND EQUALITIES	215
		■ Call for Evidence - Equality Law	215

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

■ Aircraft: China

Alicia Kearns:

[\[42704\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, whether he has met with Britten-Norman to discuss the Chinese Company Yitong UAV Systme Co's newly designed model based on the British Islander design.

Sarah Jones:

The Secretary of State for Business and Trade has not met with Britten-Norman.

Details of Ministerial meetings with external organisations are published routinely on Gov.uk as part of the Government's transparency agenda. The latest returns can be found here for Ministers: [DBT: ministerial gifts, hospitality, travel and meetings, July to September 2024 - GOV.UK](#)

■ Department for Business and Trade: Impact Assessments

Joe Robertson:

[\[42160\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what steps his Department is taking to ensure the accuracy of its compliance cost evaluations.

Justin Madders:

On 13 March, the Prime Minister announced that government will cut the costs of regulation to business by 25% by the end of this Parliament. First, we must fully understand these costs. To do this, we will establish a robust regulatory baseline by using data government already holds and working in partnership with business to understand their real-life experiences of complying with regulation.

Reducing these costs on businesses will allow them to flourish and to innovate, enabling economic growth.

■ Department for Business and Trade: Written Questions

Martin Wrigley:

[\[43648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, when he plans to answer Question 39709, tabled on 19 March 2025.

Mr Douglas Alexander:

A response was provided to question 39709 on 3rd April: [Written questions and answers - Written questions, answers and statements - UK Parliament.](#)

■ Import Duties: USA**Saqib Bhatti:** [\[42312\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what discussions he has had with his US counterparts on tariffs.

Saqib Bhatti: [\[42313\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, whether he is considering retaliatory tariffs in response to US tariffs on UK car imports.

Mr Douglas Alexander:

The UK automotive sector is integral to our economy, and we are disappointed by the US decision to impose 25% tariffs on automotive imports and know this will be extremely concerning for the sector. We will always support our automotive industry

The government has launched a request for input from businesses to help inform our response to US tariffs

We remain committed to discussions with the US on a wider economic deal that works for both the UK and the US. But nothing is off the table; this government will do everything necessary to defend the UK's national interest.

■ Motor Vehicles: USA**Saqib Bhatti:** [\[42311\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what steps he is taking to support car manufacturers in the UK in the context of US tariffs.

Mr Douglas Alexander:

We're disappointed by the decision to impose global tariffs of 25% on auto imports and know this will be extremely concerning for our automotive sector. We will always support our automotive industry, and in the first instance we will continue to pursue a deal that works for both us and the US. We will also use our Industrial Strategy to strengthen UK automotive competitiveness and have backed the auto sector with £2 billion to support the transition of domestic manufacturing and £300 million announced in the Budget to drive uptake of electric vehicles.

This government is clear that we will always do everything necessary to defend the UK's national interest. This is why the government has launched a request for input from businesses to help shape our response to US tariffs.

Ben Obese-Jecty: [\[42328\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of US tariffs on the UK car industry.

Mr Douglas Alexander:

We're disappointed by the decision to impose global tariffs of 25% on auto imports and know this will be extremely concerning for our automotive sector. We will always support our automotive industry, and in the first instance we will continue to pursue a

deal that works for both us and the US. We will also use our Industrial Strategy to strengthen UK automotive competitiveness and have backed the auto sector with £2 billion to support the transition of domestic manufacturing and £300 million announced in the Budget to drive uptake of electric vehicles.

This government is clear that we will always do everything necessary to defend the UK's national interest. This is why the government has launched a request for input from businesses to help shape our response to US tariffs.

■ Trade Formalities

Joe Robertson: [\[42159\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, whether his Department has identified international trade compliance obligations for (a) simplification and (b) removal.

Mr Douglas Alexander:

This Government's central mission is economic growth, with trade being a core part of that Mission. The Trade Strategy sets out a clear plan to maximise trade opportunities now and in the future. The Trade Strategy is grounded in the realities of the context in which we are operating and provides practical tools to support businesses to trade and drive growth both in the current context and in the future. It will primarily focus on the ways that trade is changing and how the UK can take a forward-facing approach to upcoming challenges.

■ Vehicle Number Plates: Fraud

Sarah Coombes: [\[43128\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what steps he is taking with National Trading Standards to tackle the sale of ghost number plates.

Justin Madders:

National Trading Standards (NTS) are working with the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA), the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA), local authorities and the police to address the supply and use of modified number plates.

The evidence gathered following a multi-agency investigation by the DVLA, the National Trading Standards Intelligence Team and police forces across the UK will be considered by the NTS National Tasking Group when evaluating potential future action to address this issue.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Cabinet Office: Artificial Intelligence

Mike Wood: [\[42239\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether officials in his Department are allowed to use DeepSeek.

Ms Abena Oppong-Asare:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 24 March 2025 in response to question UIN 38348.

■ Cabinet Office: Boston Consulting Group**Mike Wood:**[\[42462\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 24 March 2025 to Question 38758 on Cabinet Office: Contracts, whether the Chief Operating Officer for the Civil Service was involved in the approval of payments to the Boston Consulting Group in March 2024.

Georgia Gould:

The Chief Operating Officer for the Civil Service is not involved with the process for the approval of payments to suppliers. The purchase to pay process is managed between the Cabinet Office Finance team and the respective Contract Manager.

At the time of this work, the Chief Operating Officer for the Civil Service was a member of the CO Investment Committee which was responsible for the approval of whole life investment spend for projects and programmes over £1m. In addition to this, all professional services spend over £100k required the approval from the Investment Committee and the Minister for Cabinet Office.

■ Cabinet Office: Equality**Mike Wood:**[\[42571\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how much time his Department allocates to each of the cross Civil Service Equality Diversity and Inclusion networks for staff who work in his Department.

Georgia Gould:

There is no specific allocation of network time allocated to each of the cross Civil Service Equality Diversity and Inclusion networks, for staff who work in the Cabinet Office.

■ Cabinet Office: Standards**Mr Richard Holden:**[\[42819\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Answer of 17 February 2025 to Question HL4631 on Cabinet Office: Standards, if he will publish that template.

Georgia Gould:

His Majesty's Government can confirm that:

As was the case under the previous administration, the template is intended solely for internal departmental use and will not be released publicly.

■ Civil Servants: Incentives

Mr Richard Holden:

[\[42807\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 19 September 2024 to Question 4697 on Civil Servants: Incentives, at what point in the year Cabinet Office civil servants are typically given such incentive payments of shopping vouchers; whether such vouchers can be used for paying utility bills; and how much his Department has spent on Love2Shop Gift Cards since 5 July 2024.

Georgia Gould:

In-year vouchers can be given at any point in the year. The vouchers cannot be directly redeemed for utility bills, but have a wide range of retail outlets where they can be spent. The Cabinet Office does not use Love2Shop vouchers.

■ Civil Servants: LGBT+ People

Sir John Hayes:

[\[43014\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the cost to the public purse was of the Civil Service LGBT+ staff network in each year since its creation.

Georgia Gould:

The Civil Service LGBT+ staff network is a volunteer collaborative group of Civil Service staff. The LGBT+ network does not hold a budget, but a department can choose to provide support where there is a business case to do so. We are not aware of any such financial support. There has been no cost to the public purse of the LGBT+ network since 2020. We do not hold any records prior to this date. The LGBT+ network was created in 2003.

■ Civil Servants: Redundancy Pay

Mr Richard Holden:

[\[42820\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether he has issued guidance to (a) the civil service and (b) arm's length bodies on paying back severance payments if civil servants made redundant rejoin the (a) civil service, (b) NHS and (c) wider public sector.

Georgia Gould:

Whilst the NHS and some wider public sector organisations will have their own arrangements, any individual who leaves under the terms of the Civil Service Compensation Scheme, and later returns to the same organisation, or another one that uses the Civil Service Compensation Scheme, within six months, must pay back a proportionate amount of their compensation.

■ Civil Servants: Workplace Pensions

Mike Wood:

[\[42569\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 27 November 2024 to Question 13804 on Civil Service: Workplace Pensions, if he will list the non-Civil

Service organisations whose employees are eligible for the Civil Service Pension Scheme.

Georgia Gould:

A list of the non-Civil Service organisations whose employees are eligible for the Civil Service Pension Scheme is available in the public domain and can be found on the member section of the Civil Service Pension website.

■ **Civil Service Commission: Parliamentary Questions**

Charlie Dewhirst:

[\[42613\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to paragraph 8.1 of the Civil Service Commission Framework Agreement with the Cabinet Office, published in February 2025, what his policy is on substantively answering parliamentary questions on the work of the Civil Service Commission.

Georgia Gould:

In line with paragraph 8.1 of the Framework Agreement, Cabinet Office Ministers will continue to answer parliamentary questions about the work of the Civil Service Commission, as the government department responsible for sponsoring the Commission, while respecting its operational independence.

■ **Coronavirus: Surveys**

Ruth Jones:

[\[43202\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the cost to the Office for National Statistics was of (a) designing, (b) building and (c) running the winter covid infection survey in (i) 2022-23 and (ii) 2023-24.

Ms Abena Oppong-Asare:

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

A response to the Hon lady's Parliamentary Question of 1st April is attached.

Attachments:

1. Letter from the National Statistician [PQ43202 (1).pdf]

■ **Fair Work Agency: Statistics**

Mr Richard Holden:

[\[42813\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Government plans to lay a new Official Statistics Order to designate the Fair Work Agency'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 gentleman's Parliamentary Question of 31st March is attached.

Attachments:

1. Letter from the National Statistician [PQ42813 (2).pdf]

Foreign Investment in UK: National Security**Mr Richard Holden:**[\[42821\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 6 January 2025 to Question 20702 on Foreign Investment in UK: National Security, if he will publish mitigation measures taken as a result of final orders issued in the last year with the 2024-2025 NSI annual report.

Ms Abena Oppong-Asare:

The Government publishes notices of final orders made on GOV.UK - this includes cases that are blocked, unwound, or cleared subject to conditions. The notices include a high level summary of what mitigation measures are imposed on the parties.

Government Departments: Advertising**Mike Wood:**[\[43081\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 30 January 2025 to Question 25850 on Government Departments: Advertising, if he will list (a) each of the seven instances of campaign-specific flexibility and (b) the date on which each was approved.

Georgia Gould:

There are no plans to publish the list of instances of campaign-specific flexibility.

All requests for campaign-specific flexibility are considered on a campaign by campaign basis. Platforms and publishers are assessed on their unique offer to reach our audiences and the context of the campaign, weighing against the risks, to offer a way for us to increase campaign efficiencies

Government Departments: Disclosure of Information**Mike Wood:**[\[42570\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the portal for all transparency data announced in July 2023 has been cancelled.

Georgia Gould:

The portal, announced by the previous Government in July 2023, did not receive funding at the time and this remains the case.

This Government has already introduced tangible improvements to transparency data, notably the monthly Register of Ministers' Gifts and Hospitality, published centrally by the Cabinet Office on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)

■ Government Departments: Trade Unions**Mike Wood:** [\[42573\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 14 January 2025 to Question 22040 on Government departments: trade unions, which unions pay their trade union membership subscriptions via check-off in the Cabinet Office; how many members pay in that way; and at what cost to his Department.

Georgia Gould:

The Cabinet Office does not deduct trade union subscriptions from staff via payroll.

■ Government People Group: Gender and Sexuality**Mr Richard Holden:** [\[42808\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 29 November 2024 to Question 15471 on Office for Equality and Opportunity: Gender and Sexuality, whether the Civil Service People Group formally recognises any (a) genders, (b) sexual orientations and (c) gender identities.

Georgia Gould:

Data collection on gender identities, genders or sexual orientation is delegated to departments.

■ Great British Railways**Mr Richard Holden:** [\[42811\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to his Department's guidance entitled Public Bodies Handbook – Part 2: The Approvals Process for the Creation of New Arm's-Length Bodies, whether his Department's public bodies team assessed Great British Railways against the requirement that the creation of a new arm's length body should only be considered as a last resort; whether the Department for Transport provided evidence that alternative delivery models were considered; and which of the three tests in Chapter 2 of that guidance Great British Railways met.

Georgia Gould:

The Department for Transport is currently working through the approval process to establish Great British Railways as an Arm's Length Body. The completion of business cases as part of this process considers viable delivery mechanisms and the three tests.

■ Honours**Mike Wood:** [\[42237\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether his Department has a strategy for identifying people for the future award of honours and dignities.

Nick Thomas-Symonds:

The Cabinet Office Honours team is working with other government departments to make the honours system representative of UK society, this is in line with the Prime Minister's priorities for the honours system.

■ **Honours: Public Appointments**

Mike Wood: [\[43222\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will place in the Library a copy of the Honours Committees handbook.

Nick Thomas-Symonds:

The Honours Committees handbook is a document used on their appointment to induct independent committee members and chairs to the honours system and the committee process.

More information on these can be found on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

■ **Infected Blood Compensation Authority**

Mike Wood: [\[43963\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether there is a framework agreement in place for the Infected Blood Compensation Authority.

Nick Thomas-Symonds:

The Cabinet Office published the Infected Blood Compensation Authority Framework Document on 10 March 2025. The document is publicly available on gov.uk, and can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67cecb66df94702964916071/IBCA_Framework_Document.pdf.

■ **Infected Blood Compensation Scheme**

Munira Wilson: [\[43922\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many claimants were awarded compensation by the Infected Blood Compensation Authority by 31 March 2025.

Nick Thomas-Symonds:

The Infected Blood Compensation Authority (IBCA) publishes updated figures every month.

As of 14 March, IBCA had invited 255 people to start their compensation claim, and 214 of those had started the claim process. 63 offers of compensation had been made, totalling over £73 million, and so far 40 people had accepted their offers with more than £44 million paid in compensation.

■ Lord-Lieutenants: Political Activities**Mike Wood:** [\[43224\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether his Department has issued guidance on political activity by deputy lieutenants.

Nick Thomas-Symonds:

The Cabinet Office does not issue guidance on the performance of their duties to deputy lieutenants. However the Association of Lord-Lieutenants provides guidance to Lord-Lieutenants on political activity for all Lieutenancy officers.

■ Ministers: Corporate Hospitality and Official Gifts**Mike Wood:** [\[41868\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to his Department's guidance entitled Ministers' Gifts and Hospitality: Publication Guidance, published on 30 January 2025, if he will add large social media companies including (a) X, (b) Meta and (c) Tik Tok to Annex C.

Ms Abena Oppong-Asare:

The Cabinet Office publishes a monthly register of all gifts and hospitality received by ministers in a ministerial capacity. This includes gifts and hospitality received by social media companies.

The Government keeps the guidance on Ministers' Gifts and Hospitality under review. There are no current plans to include representatives of social media companies under the guidance for senior media figures.

■ Mission Boards**Mike Wood:** [\[42567\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 27 November 2024 to Question 14952 on Departmental Coordination, whether the mission boards are Cabinet sub-committees.

Georgia Gould:

Yes, Mission Boards are Cabinet committees. The list of Cabinet committees has been placed in the House of Commons library and published on gov.uk (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-cabinet-committees-system-and-list-of-cabinet-committees>).

■ National Security**Ian Roome:** [\[42369\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the oral statement by the Prime Minister of 25 February 2025 on Defence and Security, Official Report, column 634, if he will list the reviews relevant to national security that are taking place across the Government that will be included in the development of a new National Security Strategy.

Ms Abena Oppong-Asare:

As announced by the Prime Minister, a new national security strategy will be published in June, ahead of the NATO Summit.

There are several reviews and strategies being developed across government that will be taken into consideration. This includes the Strategic Defence Review, Defence Industrial Strategy, AUKUS Review, Industrial Strategy, and Trade Strategy. The Strategy will also take into account other ongoing national security policy development.

■ Permanent Secretaries: Conditions of Employment**Mr Richard Holden:**[\[42816\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether (a) Permanent Secretaries and (b) Second Permanent Secretaries are employed on fixed term contracts.

Georgia Gould:

The majority of Permanent Secretaries (First and Second) are permanent civil servants, on permanent contracts. Exceptionally, fixed term contracts may be offered to external candidates, for example in the case of specialist roles.

When appointed to a Permanent Secretary role, Permanent Secretaries (First and Second) are appointed on fixed term tenures, typically for five years. Where appropriate, and with the Prime Minister and relevant Minister's approval, tenure may be extended.

■ Political Parties: Finance**Kevin Hollinrake:**[\[43088\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Answer of 20 March 2025 to Question HL5597 on Political Parties: Finance, if he will place in the Library an unredacted version of the guidance.

Nick Thomas-Symonds:

As set out in response to question HL5597, the guidance document in question is owned by the House of Lords Appointments Commission and is an internal document for Commission members.

When ordering release of the guidance in December 2021, the Information Commissioner decided that some of the information in the document should be redacted in order to protect the integrity of the Commission's vetting process.

■ Propriety and Constitution Group: Incentives**Mike Wood:**[\[42568\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 28 January 2025 to Question 25447 on Propriety and Constitution Group, whether civil servants in Propriety and Constitution Group have been awarded bonuses in the last 12 months.

Nick Thomas-Symonds:

A total of 97 individuals have been awarded bonuses between April 2024 and March 2025.

Public Appointments: Disclosure of Information**Kevin Hollinrake:**[\[42472\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether every regulated public (a) appointment and (b) re-appointment is published on the Announcement section of the website entitled Apply for a public appointment; and how long each announcement page remains on that website.

Georgia Gould:

All regulated appointment and reappointment announcements should be published on the [Apply for a public appointment](#) digital service, unless the appointing department determines that the appointment is of a sensitive nature.

All announcements remain on the service indefinitely and are archived within the National Archives catalogue.

Public Finance**Mike Wood:**[\[42575\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 26 July 2024 to Question 1283 on Public Finance, whether there have been recent reviews of the process outlined in the Cabinet Manual for access talks.

Nick Thomas-Symonds:

The process for access talks remains as set out in the Cabinet Manual; these arrangements have not been formally reviewed since publication.

Public Sector Reform and Innovation Fund**Mike Wood:**[\[42574\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the headcount is of the team administering the test-and-learn programme; and what proportion of the fund is allocated to cover their costs.

Georgia Gould:

The Programme will deploy Test and Learns teams into the frontline around the country over the next three years to design and test innovative solutions to our biggest public service challenges in partnership with local places – and ensuring that local learning informs national policy decisions.

The Cabinet Office is working across government and with local partners to codesign the detailed approach.

■ Senior Civil Servants: Ethnic Groups

Sir John Hayes:

[\[43018\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the cost to the public purse was of the Race to the Top Grade 6/7 staff network in each year since its creation.

Georgia Gould:

The Race To The Top (RTTT) grade 6/7 Network was a collaborative volunteer network which no longer exists. The RTTT does not hold a budget, but a department can choose to provide support where there is a business case to do so. We are not aware of any such financial support. We are not aware of any cost to the public purse of the Race To The Top Grade 6/7 Network since 2020. We do not hold any records prior to this date. The RTTT network was created in 2018.

■ Senior Civil Servants: Workplace Pensions

Mike Wood:

[\[42579\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 8 January 2025 to Question 21685 on Civil Service: Pensions, if he will publish the most recent Employer Pension Notice from the Cabinet Office to Government departments on the disclosure of Senior Civil Servants' pensions under their financial reporting requirements.

Georgia Gould:

The most recent Employer Pension Notice (EPN), EPN 727, was published on the Civil Service Pension website on 31 January 2025.

■ Stonewall: Arms Length Bodies

Mike Wood:

[\[43083\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what information his Department holds on whether any arm's length bodies are members of Stonewall.

Georgia Gould:

Information on how issued funding is spent by arms length bodies, including any membership of third party organisations, is not gathered centrally.

■ Transgender People

Mike Wood:

[\[43082\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 21 January 2025 to Question 23677 on Gender Dysphoria: Health Services, if he will make it his policy to place a copy of the revised guidance in the Library.

Georgia Gould:

As was the case with the previous Gender Reassignment guidance under the last administration, which was not published, there are no current plans for the revised Gender Reassignment guidance to be published once it has been finalised. This is consistent with the approach taken for other internal HR policies.

■ UK Relations with EU

Katie White:

[\[42969\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of pursuing a new status with the European Union that would allow the United Kingdom access to the single market in exchange for providing security assurances and establishing a framework for reasonable, yet non-binding, regulatory alignment.

Nick Thomas-Symonds:

We are committed to strengthening our relationship with the EU to make the UK safer, more secure and more prosperous, including through negotiating a Security and Defence Partnership with the EU. We have been clear that there will be no return to the single market, the customs union, or freedom of movement.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Journalism: Training

Navendu Mishra:

[\[41226\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that more people from disadvantaged backgrounds take up journalism courses and training.

Stephanie Peacock:

It is key that the public feel represented and reflected by the media. Journalism plays an invaluable role in the fabric of our society and we are committed to supporting a free, sustainable and plural media landscape. Encouraging more people from disadvantaged backgrounds to enter the industry may have a positive impact on the sustainability of the industry where it helps news publishers improve their appeal to currently underserved and under-represented audiences. Government believes that we need routes into journalism that are open to everyone, wherever they grow up.

High-quality apprenticeships available to support employers and learners in the news sector, including the Level 5 Journalist apprenticeship standard, are a means to help enable this. DCMS is working closely with DfE on their work to reform the growth and skills levy. The new growth and skills offer, with apprenticeships at the heart, will deliver greater flexibility for learners and employers in England, and will be aligned with the Industrial Strategy to create routes into good skilled jobs.

This support complements the industry's own efforts, and we welcome the National Council for the Training of Journalists' (NCTJ) recent launch of the new phase of the Community News Project, a major initiative to strengthen local journalism and improve local newsroom diversity across the UK through apprenticeship placements. This project demonstrates the type of industry collaboration which can help secure the future of local journalism, which we want to further encourage through our Local Media Strategy.

■ Local Press: North West

Navendu Mishra:

[\[41225\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, if her Department will make an assessment of the sustainability of local news outlets in (a) Greater Manchester and (b) North West of England.

Stephanie Peacock:

Sustainability of local journalism across the country is an area of particular concern for this Government, including in Greater Manchester and the North West of England. We are developing a Local Media Strategy, in recognition of the importance of this vital sector. Our vision is a thriving local media that can continue to play an invaluable role as a key channel of trustworthy information at local level, reporting on the issues that matter to communities, reflecting their contributions and perspectives, and helping to foster a self-confident nation in which everyone feels that their contribution is part of an inclusive national story.

We are working across Government and with other stakeholders as the Strategy develops, and we recently held a roundtable discussion with local news editors from across the country, including from Manchester Evening news, to discuss our planned approach and explore further collaboration on the Strategy. We will announce further details in due course.

DEFENCE

■ Armed Forces: Compensation

Ben Obese-Jecty:

[\[42325\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 27 March 2025 to Question 40755, for what reason the Total Compensation Payable under the AFCS increased.

Al Carns:

The total expenditure under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) increased in 2023-24 due to the number of Guaranteed Income Payments (GIP) in payment increasing year on year and an increase in the number of awarded initial injury/illness claims in that financial year.

In 2023-24, the number of GIPs in payment increased by 10%.

In 2023-24, 4,075 initial injury/illness claims were awarded which was an increase of 34% when compared to the previous year. This increase was due to an increase in the number of injury/illness claims registered (9,545 in 2023-24 compared to 7,793 in 2022-23) and an increase in the percentage of initial injury/illness cleared claims awarded (57% compared to 50% the previous year).

■ Armed Forces: Hearing Impairment**Ben Obese-Jecty:**[\[43393\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the (a) average, (b) maximum and (c) total cost of claims was for hearing loss in the (i) Army, (ii) Royal Navy, (iii) Royal Marines and (iv) Royal Air Force between March 2003 and the implementation of the Tactical Hearing Protection System in 2015.

AI Carns:

Between March 2003 and 1 April 2015 which was the start of the implementation of the Tactical Hearing Protection System programme the total cost of common law claims for noise-induced hearing loss claims was £110 million. This includes damages and claimant legal costs for claims from both Service and Civilian personnel. Further breakdown including by Service is not readily available. Most claims take a long time to settle and payments occur over a number of years. Calculation of an average payout over this period would incur disproportionate cost.

This does not include claims made via the Armed Forces Compensation and War Pension schemes as providing breakdowns would require information from three different data systems to be combined and individual files to be manually reviewed which would incur disproportionate cost.

Ben Obese-Jecty:[\[43395\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what is the (a) average, (b) maximum individual and (c) total cost of claims paid out for hearing loss, broken down by (i) army, (ii) air force, (iii) navy excluding Royal Marines and (iv) Royal Marines since the implementation of the Tactical Hearing Protection System in 2015.

AI Carns:

The implementation of the Tactical Hearing Protection System programme took place between April 2015 and September 2016. Since 1 October 2016, the cost of common law claims for noise-induced hearing loss claims was £250 million. This includes damages and claimant legal costs for claims from both Service and Civilian personnel. Further breakdown including by Service is not readily available. Most claims take a long time to settle and payments occur over a number of years. Calculation of an average payout over this period would incur disproportionate cost.

This does not include claims made via the Armed Forces Compensation and War Pension schemes as providing breakdowns would require information from three different data systems to be combined and individual files to be manually reviewed which would incur disproportionate cost.

The majority of hearing loss claims are historic, and allegations cover all noise exposures, from a variety of sources, over a long period of time, both in combat and training. Claimants will have used more than one type of hearing protection. It is not possible to identify if claims relate to the Tactical Hearing Protection System.

Ben Obese-Jecty: [43396]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many claims for hearing loss have there been in the (a) British Army and Army Reserve, (b) Royal Air Force and Air Force Volunteer Reserve (c) Royal Navy and Royal Navy Reserve, excluding the Royal Marines and (d) Royal Marines and Royal Marine Reserve for injuries sustained between March 2003 and the implementation of the Tactical Hearing Protection System program.

Al Carns:

The implementation of the Tactical Hearing Protection System programme took place between April 2015 and Sep 2016.

Between 1 April 2003 and 31 March 2015 there were approximately 16,000 common law compensation claims for Noise-induced hearing loss from Defence personnel.

As this is based on historic data on legacy systems it is not possible to be more specific or break down the figure between Service and Civilian personnel. This does not include claims made via the Armed Forces Compensation and War Pension schemes as providing breakdowns would require information from three different data systems to be combined and individual files to be manually reviewed which would incur disproportionate cost.

Ben Obese-Jecty: [43397]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many claims for hearing loss have there been in the (a) British Army and Army Reserve, (b) Royal Air Force and Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, (c) Royal Navy and Royal Navy Reserve, excluding the Royal Marines and (d) Royal Marines and Royal Marine Reserve for injuries sustained since the implementation of the Tactical Hearing Protection System programme.

Al Carns:

The implementation of the Tactical Hearing Protection System programme took place between April 2015 and September 2016.

The number of Noise-induced hearing loss claims brought by current and former Service personnel is reported in the Ministry of Defence common law compensation claim statistics.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/mod-compensation-claims-statistics>

The breakdown of Service is not readily available. This does not include claims made via the Armed Forces Compensation and War pension schemes as providing breakdowns would require information from three different data systems to be combined and individual files to be manually reviewed which would incur disproportionate cost.

It is not possible to identify if claims relate to the Tactical Hearing Protection System.

■ Armed Forces: Housing**James Cartlidge:** [\[42273\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to paragraph 2.7 of the Spring Statement, published on 26 March 2025, whether any of the funding for military housing will go towards finalising the Annington transaction.

AI Carns:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 31 March 2025 to Question 41492.

Attachments:

1. Annington Homes: Contracts [UIN 41492.docx]

James Cartlidge: [\[42276\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which sites will be included in the refurbishment of military housing.

AI Carns:

We are unable to give details of our future plans for specific sites at this time.

The Defence Housing Strategy Review to determine how the Department will utilise its properties reacquired from Annington following the completion of the deal in January 2025 is now underway.

The Military Housing Strategy planned for publication in Summer 2025 will set out a roadmap to deliver a generational renewal of military accommodation.

■ Armed Forces: Labour Turnover**Helen Maguire:** [\[42980\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the average number of months are between a service person enlisting and leaving the (a) Navy, (b) RAF and (c) Army; what the 2015 average number of months was between a service person enlisting and leaving the (a) Navy, (b) RAF and (c) Army; and what the 2020 average number of months was between a service person enlisting and leaving the (a) Navy, (b) RAF and (c) Army.

AI Carns:

It is taking time to collate the required information to answer the hon. Member's Question. I will write to her when the information is available, and a copy of this letter will be placed in the Library of The House.

■ Armed Forces: Recruitment**James Cartlidge:** [\[43215\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what his Department's recruitment targets for the armed forces are for 2025-26.

Luke Pollard:

As the hon. Gentleman will know, the current Government inherited a crisis in recruitment and retention from the last administration. We have made a series of announcements to improve recruitment since July 2024.

The 2025-26 Single Service recruitment targets are detailed below:

Royal Navy – 3,890

Army – 10,200

Royal Air Force – 3,230

These figures are the totals for Regular Service personnel only and are rounded to the nearest 10.

■ Cybersecurity and Defence: Cheltenham**Max Wilkinson:**[\[43105\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment his Department has made of the potential role of the cyber security industry in Cheltenham in growing the UK defence industry.

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.

Defence is not just a cornerstone of national security, it's also a powerful engine to drive economic growth - this Government's number one mission.

The new Defence Industrial Strategy will unlock the potential of every region and nation across the UK. We are working collaboratively with colleagues across Government to maximise the linkages between the Ministry of Defence and other Departments.

We will set out our plans for strengthening the UK defence sector in the Defence Industrial Strategy later this year.

■ Defence: Bolton**Yasmin Qureshi:**[\[42430\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of increasing levels of defence spending on (a) employment and (b) investment in Bolton.

Maria Eagle:

We are ensuring UK defence is on the cutting-edge of technology and innovation, with Defence spending meeting our military needs, supporting 434,000 jobs across the breadth of the UK and increasing the productive capacity of the UK economy to drive sustainable, long-term growth.

The increase in defence spending will fund critical investments in areas like autonomous systems, AI, cyber, rebuilding stockpiles and munition reserves, and therefore will support the security and resilience of the whole of the UK, including Bolton. The full details will be set out in the Strategic Defence Review.

■ Defence: Exports

James Cartlidge: [\[42274\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Spring Statement, published on 26 March 2025, whether his Department has been set a target by which to increase Defence exports.

Maria Eagle:

The UK Government continually assesses the defence export market and plays an important role in supporting industry partners with the export of UK defence equipment. Alongside other measures announced in the Spring Statement, defence exports will play a key role in supporting the Government's Growth agenda. Improving export performance will be a key role for the National Armaments Director.

■ Defence: Finance

James Cartlidge: [\[42293\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he plans to take to help ensure that proposed increases in defence spending create economic growth in all regions.

Maria Eagle:

In the recent announcements of an extra £5 billion for defence next year and setting a pathway to spend 2.5% of GDP by 2027, this Government recognised that Defence and national security are foundational for economic growth across the UK. We are determined to go further and use Defence procurement and investment to actively generate wealth, boost export potential and create high quality jobs across all the nations and regions of our country.

This Government is hard-wiring growth considerations into Defence processes. The new Defence Growth Board, which will be co-chaired by the Chancellor and Secretary of State for Defence, will ensure growth considerations are central to our decision-making.

The Defence Industrial Strategy Statement of Intent, published in December 2024, identified spreading prosperity as one of six key priorities. The new UK Defence Innovation organisation and the associated commitment to spend 10% of the Ministry of Defence's budget on novel technologies, together with fundamental reforms to defence procurement and a new small and medium sized enterprises hub will benefit industry across the UK.

The Ministry of Defence continues to engage with industry, devolved Governments and local authorities to better understand the regional opportunities and barriers for growth in the defence sector. We are working with partners across Government to determine how these can best be addressed.

Katie White:

[\[42972\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he plans to take to use the increase in defence spending to boost British supply chains; and what steps he is taking with Cabinet colleagues to ensure strategic alignment and capitalise on economies of scale in key sectors.

Maria Eagle:

The additional investment in defence announced by the Prime Minister on 25 February 2025 and by the Chancellor in the 2025 Spring Statement will both protect UK citizens from threats and create a secure and stable environment in which businesses can thrive, supporting the Government's number one mission to deliver economic growth. This includes maximising jobs, growth, skills and innovation in the UK.

This Government is bringing forward a Defence Industrial Strategy that will ensure a strong Defence sector and resilient supply chains across the whole of the UK. The Statement of Intent for the Defence Industrial Strategy, published in December 2024, set out a commitment to prioritising UK businesses for investment and boosting sovereign capacity.

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) is working closely with other Government Departments to align strategic objectives in key sectors, for example through the wider cross-Government Industrial Strategy. The Strategic Defence Review will also determine the roles and capabilities required by UK Defence to meet the challenges and threats of the twenty-first century.

The MOD is already actively improving the capabilities of the UK's Defence sector and supply chains through initiatives such as the Defence Supplier Capability Development Programme and the new support hub for small and medium enterprises that the Prime Minister announced on 3 March 2025.

■ Defence: Industry

Ben Obese-Jecty:

[\[42334\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what his Department's timetable is for the publication of the 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, to maximise the impact of our defence spending uplift with British based firms.

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

■ Defence: Procurement**James Cartlidge:** [\[41899\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to paragraph 2.8 of the Spring Statement, 26 March 2025, whether he plans to set a formal target for end to end procurement time for major platforms.

James Cartlidge: [\[42272\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to paragraph 2.8 of the Spring Statement, 26 March 2025, whether he plans to set a formal target for end to end procurement time for rapid commercial exploitation.

James Cartlidge: [\[42275\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to paragraph 3.29 of the Spring Statement, published on 26 March 2025, whether he plans to set a formal target for end to end procurement time for pace-setting modular upgrades.

Maria Eagle:

The Ministry of Defence is reforming its acquisition system to deliver defence capabilities at greater pace, secure the best possible value for money and support growth, under the leadership of a new National Armaments Director.

These reforms will enable the end-to-end procurement approach to be tailored according to the nature of each programme, delivering capability into the hands of the war fighter more quickly to maintain operational advantage.

As set out in the Spring Statement, the department will set targets for time to contract as part of its new segmented approach to procurement. While larger, complex platforms, such as those in the Government Major Projects Portfolio, will often take longer to deliver, we will look for opportunities to drive pace at every stage of the acquisition process.

James Cartlidge: [\[43178\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 01 April 2025 to Question 41483 on Defence: Procurement, what the (a) eight business cases waiting for approval with His Majesty's Treasury and (b) seven cases waiting for approval with the Cabinet Office are.

Maria Eagle:

The eight cases with HM Treasury are as follows:

- 1) Sheffield Forgemaster Recapitalisation
- 2) Future Maritime Support Programme
- 3) Project BRAMLEY (ICT infrastructure)
- 4) Defence Marine Services – Next Generation
- 5) Astute
- 6) Dreadnought Support

7) Future Combat Air System/Global Combat Air Programme

8) Submarine Disposal Capability (NB - this case was approved by HM Treasury on 1 Apr 25).

The seven cases with Cabinet Office are as follows:

1) Defence Marine Services Next Generation

2) AWE Client Partnership Framework

3) Future Maritime Support Programme

4) Land Ground Based Air Defence (GBAD) Mounted SHORAD

5) HESTIA (Facilities Management) - All regional contracts - UK MOD Estate: South West; South; South East; East; North; Wales & W Midlands; Scotland and North Ireland

6) Project "Appivate" - RAF Digital Technology Contract

7) Defence Digital ICT manage services project.

■ Defence: Small Businesses

James Cartlidge:

[\[42282\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to paragraph 2.9 of the Spring Statement, published on 26 March 2025, whether the Defence Reform Model will include a target for spending on UK Defence SMEs.

Maria Eagle:

The Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Defence have announced that, along with other Government Departments, the Ministry of Defence will publish a target for direct spend with Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) by June 2025.

This forms part of broader Defence Reform and complements the commitments within the Spring Statement regarding ringfenced funding for innovation. The Department is committed to a stretching but achievable target to meet this requirement.

■ EU Defence Policy: UK Relations with EU

Edward Morello:

[\[42899\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what discussions he has had with European allies on developing joint weapon production initiatives.

Maria Eagle:

The Secretary of State for Defence continues to discuss defence capability matters, including on joint production, procurement and future development, with a range of our European Allies on a regular basis, both bilaterally and through multilateral fora. For example, the Secretary of State recently discussed our capability cooperation with France in Paris on 11 March, before discussing wider European industrial collaboration at the E5 defence ministers meeting on 12 March. I also have regular

conversations with my counterparts. We continue to promote and encourage European Allies to co-design, co-develop and co-produce through a number of initiatives, including through UK-led Multinational Procurement Initiatives and DIAMOND.

■ F-35 Aircraft: Procurement

Ben Obese-Jecty: [\[42678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the production delays to the F-35 caused by software instability relating to Lockheed Martin's Block 4 upgrade.

Maria Eagle:

We do not routinely comment on detailed delivery schedules however, it is not anticipated that the Block 4 delays will impact the declaration of Lightning Full Operating Capability, scheduled for no later than the end of 2025.

■ Frigates

Helen Maguire: [\[42978\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many (a) type 23 Duke Class, (b) type 31 Inspiration Class and (c) type 26 City Class frigates the UK navy has; how many of each of those types are currently not fit for purpose; and for each frigate currently not fit for purpose, how many days each ship has been out of service.

Maria Eagle:

The Royal Navy operates eight Type 23 Frigates, and as of 2 April 2025, six Type 23 frigates are at readiness and available for operations. Each ship follows a normal operating cycle, going through different readiness levels based on their schedules and maintenance.

In addition to the eight operational Type 23 frigates, the Royal Navy has three that are in the process of being decommissioned. It has been 321 days since the decision to retire HMS Westminster and HMS Argyll, and 133 days for HMS Northumberland.

The retirement announcements are part of the UK's plan to modernise its surface fleet. The Royal Navy will replace the Type 23 Frigates with new Type 26 and Type 31 Frigates. All eight world-class Type 26 ships are scheduled to enter service commencing from 2029, with all five Type 31 ships expected to be operational by the early 2030s.

■ LGBT Veterans Independent Review

Helen Maguire: [\[42979\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which recommendations of the Etherton Report have yet to be implemented; and what his planned timeline is for the implementation of those outstanding recommendations.

AI Carns:

As of 1 April 2025, 42 of the 49 recommendations have been implemented, with work to implement the outstanding seven recommendations underway, demonstrating our commitment to supporting the LGBT veteran community.

Of the seven remaining recommendations, two are for Defence and five are for the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC). Defence officials are also supporting DHSC colleagues with progressing their five remaining recommendations (recommendations 31, 35, 36, 38 and 42).

The two for Defence include recommendation 44 focusing on female veterans affected by the ban; this will be implemented as part of the new inclusive veterans' strategy. Recommendation 17 to implement a dedicated memorial to LGBT personnel at the National Memorial Arboretum is expected to be unveiled before the end of 2025.

Defence encourages those affected to apply for non-financial restorative measures and the LGBT Financial Recognition Scheme by completing the application forms available at the following address: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/lgbt-veterans-support-and-next-steps>.

■ Ministry of Defence: Billing**Andrew Rosindell:****[42225]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what proportion of invoices from UK suppliers his Department paid within 10 days of receipt between September 2024 and February 2025.

Maria Eagle:

Between September 2024 and February 2025, a total of 619,531 invoices were received, of which, 97.28 per cent (602,704) were paid within ten working days of receipt.

Details of the Ministry of Defence's (MOD) supplier invoicing and payment information, including supplier payment performance, invoice processing and MOD contract payments, are published at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ministry-of-defence-supplier-invoicing-and-payment-information>

■ Ministry of Defence: Civil Servants**James Cartlidge:****[43582]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to his Written Ministerial Statement of 1 April 2025 on Defence Reform, HCWS 573, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of his proposed Departmental reforms on the number of civil servants employed by his Department.

James Cartlidge: [\[43583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to his Written Ministerial Statement of 1 April 2025 on Defence Reform, HCWS 573, whether he plans to make any service personnel redundant as part of his reforms.

Maria Eagle:

We are undertaking the biggest UK defence reforms for more than 50 years, including building an Armed Forces and Defence Civil Service workforce which will be more skilled, agile and which better exploits technology.

This means tackling bureaucracy and streamlining processes to increase productivity.

This Government inherited a crisis in Armed Forces recruitment and retention and Ministers are determined to stop the long term decline in troop numbers.

■ Ministry of Defence: Written Questions

Mr Mark Francois: [\[43424\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he plans to respond to Question 36052 on Strategic Defence Review: Contracts, tabled on 6 March 2025 by the Rt hon. Member for Rayleigh and Wickford.

Luke Pollard:

I responded to the right hon. Member on 3 April 2025.

Martin Wrigley: [\[43646\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to Question 35453 on USA: Ammunition when he will provide an answer.

Maria Eagle:

I responded to the hon. Member on 4 April 2025.

■ National Armaments Director Group: Senior Civil Servants

James Cartlidge: [\[43580\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to his Written Ministerial Statement of 1 April 2025 on Defence Reform, HCWS 573, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of the creation of the National Armaments Director Group on the number of senior civil servants in other organisations within his Department.

James Cartlidge: [\[43581\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to his Written Ministerial Statement of 1 April 2025 on Defence Reform, HCWS 573, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of the creation of the National Armaments Director Group on the number of military posts in other organisations within his Department.

Maria Eagle:

Under Defence Reform, Civil Servants and Service personnel in organisations across the Ministry of Defence are re-aligning under four Areas – Department of State,

Military Strategic Headquarters, National Armaments Director Group, and Defence Nuclear Enterprise.

In the first phase of implementation, teams are mostly moving as complete units. As new ways of working bed in, and in response to operational and policy needs, the Department will continue to assign roles in the most effective and efficient way.

■ **National Armaments Director: Standards**

Ian Roome:

[\[42382\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department will take to assess the job performance of the National Armaments Director.

Maria Eagle:

The parameters and performance targets for the National Armaments Director will be agreed in line with the salary approval from the Chief Secretary to the Treasury as part of the recruitment process.

■ **NATO: Military Exercises**

James Cartlidge:

[\[42283\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to paragraph 2.7 of the Spring Statement, published on 26 March 2025, how the UK's programme of joint exercises with NATO allies will be enhanced.

Luke Pollard:

The UK will participate in exercises with NATO Allies to build and enhance interoperability in multi-domain operations, key to NATO's operational effectiveness. This will be demonstrated through participation in Exercises Hedgehog and Steadfast Deterrence in May of this year, which aim to strengthen NATO's defence and deterrence in the Euro-Atlantic area.

■ **Navy: Reserve Forces**

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[42224\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to increase recruitment and retention within the Royal Navy Reserves.

Al Carns:

Our Reserve Forces help the UK Armed Forces meet the threats we face at home and overseas, with the scale, skills, agility and connection to society that we need, in a cost-effective way.

We are actively recruiting for the Royal Navy Reserve through our engaging social media campaign. Key themes for recruitment and retention include growth on the Maritime Reserves along with meaningful, diverse, and rewarding employment, reviewing and evolving administrative models for Part Time Volunteer Reserves to make sure they are fit for purpose, optimising selection processes for specialisations,

credible career development pathways, and the modernising and flexibility of training pipelines.

■ **Portsmouth Dockyard: Regeneration**

James Cartlidge: [\[42476\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to page 18 of the Spring Statement, published on 26 March 2025, how the funding for the regeneration of His Majesty's Naval Base Portsmouth will be allocated.

Maria Eagle:

The funding for the regeneration of His Majesty's Naval Base Portsmouth will be allocated towards three main areas: refurbishment and upgrade of accommodation, jetty upgrade programme, and wider estate development. This allocation aims to provide good quality, safe accommodation, ensure the jetties can better meet the demand of the surface fleet, and create a resilient, efficient, and sustainable Naval Base. This funding does not cover the totality of the regeneration needs, and future requirements will be determined following the Strategic Defence Review.

■ **Royal Marines: Rifles**

Ben Obese-Jecty: [\[42676\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the planned phase out date is of the SA80A3 for the Royal Marines.

Maria Eagle:

The Royal Marines currently operate the KS-1 / L143A2 and SA80 in a variety of roles. There is no current defined timeline to move Royal Marines entirely away from the SA80 until the current Out of Service Date of 2030.

■ **Russia: Supply Chains**

Helen Maguire: [\[42975\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department has taken to protect British supply chains from Russian interference and sabotage.

Maria Eagle:

We closely monitor the impact of global conflicts including the extent of Russian content in our critical programmes and the supply chains that support them, with the aim of identifying and managing emergent issues.

The Department is actively engaged in a range of activity to de-risk critical defence supply chain vulnerabilities to enable us to make informed decisions around if and how to intervene. We work collaboratively with industry to mitigate risks via initiatives such as the recent joint Ministry of Defence (MOD)-industry wargaming event. The MOD also continues to work alongside the National Protective Security Authority and with allies to ensure our industry colleagues are aware of the threats posed by

Russia, and the National Security and Investment Act 2021 is used to address national security risks posed by malign Russian ownership where appropriate.

■ Strategic Defence Review

James Cartlidge: [\[43150\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when the Prime Minister last met with the lead members of the Strategic Defence Review team.

Luke Pollard:

As the Prime Minister reported in his Statement on Defence and Security in the House of Commons, the Strategic Defence Review is being finalised. The Reviewers are reporting regularly on progress to the Prime Minister, the Defence Secretary, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Review will be published in the Spring. It will help set the path for Britain's defence for the next decade.

James Cartlidge: [\[43151\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he last met with the lead members of the Strategic Defence Review team.

Luke Pollard:

The Reviewers are reporting regularly on progress to the Defence Secretary, the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The Review will be published in the Spring. As the Prime Minister reported in his Statement on Defence and Security in the House of Commons, the Strategic Defence Review is advanced, and he will lay it in Parliament as soon as he can. It will help set the path for Britain's defence for the next decade.

■ UK Defence Innovation

James Cartlidge: [\[42278\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to paragraph 2.8 of the Spring Statement, published on 26 March 2025, whether the £400m ringfenced budget for UK Defence Innovation will be ringfenced for UK Defence SMEs.

James Cartlidge: [\[42279\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to paragraph 2.8 of the Spring Statement, published on 26 March 2025, if he will list all the arms-length bodies which will be rolled in to UK Defence Innovation.

James Cartlidge: [\[42280\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to paragraph 2.8 of the Spring Statement, published on 26 March 2025, what the cash terms figure is for the 10% of his Department's equipment procurement that will be spent on novel technologies.

James Cartlidge: [\[42281\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to paragraph 2.8 of the Spring Statement, published on 26 March 2025, if he will fully define each of the areas of

investment to be covered by the 10% of his Department's equipment procurement that will be spent on novel technologies.

James Cartlidge: [\[42285\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to paragraph 2.8 of the Spring Statement, published on 26 March 2025, what will be the construct of UK Defence Innovation.

James Cartlidge: [\[42286\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to paragraph 2.8 of the Spring Statement, published on 26 March 2025, what will be the governance of UK Defence Innovation (UKDI).

James Cartlidge: [\[42287\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to paragraph 2.8 of the Spring Statement, published on 26 March 2025, whether a board will be created for UK Defence Innovation.

James Cartlidge: [\[42288\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to paragraph 2.8 of the Spring Statement, published on 26 March 2025, what the annual budget for UK Defence Innovation will be.

James Cartlidge: [\[42289\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to paragraph 2.8 of the Spring Statement, published on 26 March 2025, how UK Defence Innovation will engage with his Department.

James Cartlidge: [\[42290\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to paragraph 2.8 of the Spring Statement, published on 26 March 2025, what the forecasted annual administration cost of UK Defence Innovation is.

James Cartlidge: [\[42292\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the number of (a) civil servants, (b) service personnel, (c) contractors and (d) others who will be employed by UK Defence Innovation.

James Cartlidge: [\[42295\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how the National Armaments Director will interact with UK Defence Innovation.

James Cartlidge: [\[42296\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how Defence Equipment and Support will interact with UK Defence Innovation.

Maria Eagle:

As set out in the Chancellor's Spring Statement the Ministry of Defence will establish UK Defence Innovation (UKDI). This new body will consolidate, cohere and simplify the current Ministry of Defence (MOD) structures for innovation. As well as capitalise on lessons from Ukraine. It supports the Government's wider agenda for greater departmental agility, driven by advances in technology and increased productivity. UKDI will be granted greater freedoms to exploit and capitalise on new ideas, equip Britain's Armed Forces with cutting-edge tech faster, support the growth of high-tech businesses across the UK and demonstrate the UK's ability to respond at pace to external threats.

UKDI will report under the new National Armaments Director (NAD) and sit within the Ministry of Defence as part of the new operating model being established through Defence Reform. Its output will be fully accountable to Ministers and Parliament. UKDI will be part of cross Government growth boards. UKDI is not a new Arm's Length Body, nor will it pull in any existing Arm's Length Bodies. UKDI is a key part of the biggest overhaul of Defence for over 50 years and will be an essential part of reforming defence acquisition.

UKDI will reach initial operating capability in July 2025, that output will provide more detail on the admin and running costs of UKDI, the detailed design and interactions with MSHQ, other Government departments and industry. This work will look at the size and shape of the workforce needed to deliver the ambition. UKDI will be given the appropriate delegation, resources and authority to achieve its goals.

To achieve these aims UKDI will be given a ringfenced budget to give confidence to industry in the acquisition programme and to be able to move from concept to delivery at pace. Investment cases will prioritise UK SMEs. The Spring Statement also confirmed that from next year the MOD will spend at least 10% of its equipment procurement budget on novel tech including dual-use technologies such as uncrewed and autonomous systems and AI-enabled capabilities. UKDI will be closely linked to the DE&S and DASA teams which have recently been involved in recent rapid procurement activities where appropriate.

The creation of UKDI underlines this Government's commitment to exploiting new ideas and technologies to equip our Armed Forces with cutting edge tech and grow high tech businesses across the UK.

■ UK Defence Innovation: Cheltenham**Max Wilkinson:**[\[42773\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that cyber tech businesses in Cheltenham are able to access funding through new defence innovation organisation.

Maria Eagle:

UK Defence Innovation (UKDI) will equip Britain's Armed Forces with cutting-edge tech faster. It will support the growth of high-tech businesses across the UK –

including in Cheltenham, capitalising on new ideas, supporting them rapidly through development and exploitation.

To achieve these aims UKDI will be given a ringfenced budget of £400 million this year. The Spring Statement also confirmed that the Ministry of Defence will spend at least 10% of its equipment procurement budget on novel tech including dual-use technologies such as uncrewed and autonomous systems and AI-enabled capabilities. This will benefit the UK's cyber tech industry.

UKDI will be closely linked to the DE&S and DASA teams which have recently been involved in rapid procurement activities and currently give businesses across the UK access to funding.

UKDI will be operational by July 2025 and work is ongoing to confirm the detailed design of the organisation.

■ **Ukraine: Military Aid**

Ben Obese-Jecty:

[\[41610\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will publish the outcomes of his meeting with the Ukraine Defence Contact Group on 12 February 2025.

Luke Pollard:

At the Ukraine Defence Contact Group (UDCG) co-chaired by the Defence Secretary, the UK is taking a leading role in ensuring coordination and coherence of international support to Ukraine. We saw almost 50 nations and partners standing together to support Ukraine in February 2025.

The UK Ministry of Defence published the official press release on the February UDCG on gov.uk website, which saw the UK announce a £150 million military support package to Ukraine.

■ **Veterans: Civil Proceedings**

Noah Law:

[\[43373\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that veterans who participated in lawful military operations during the Northern Ireland Troubles are treated fairly in relation to investigations or judicial proceedings; and if he will increase (a) legal protections and (b) welfare support for those veterans.

Al Carns:

The Government recognises the important service of Armed Forces personnel and the sacrifices they made to keep us all safe in Northern Ireland during the Troubles. We are exploring measures to ensure that the legacy of the past is addressed sensitively, efficiently, and lawfully, including with veterans' groups. When a veteran faces judicial proceedings in relation to their duties, we offer, at public expense, legal support and representation as appropriate. Veterans are also offered welfare support tailored to their individual needs and circumstances.

■ Warships: Lasers**James Cartlidge:**[\[42277\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to paragraph 2.7 of the Spring Statement, published on 26 March 2025, how many Royal Navy ships will operate a Directed Energy Weapon by 2027.

Maria Eagle:

As announced in the Spring Statement, part of the additional funding for Defence will be invested in advanced technology, including putting the DragonFire Laser Directed Energy Weapons on four Royal Navy ships, starting from 2027. This is not the totality of the Ministry of Defence (MOD)'s investment in DEW, and we will wait for the outcomes of the Strategic Defence Review and Spending Review before making further announcements on plans for DEW capability. Defence remains committed to bringing novel capabilities to our Armed Forces faster than before, and our Defence Reform efforts will help to set MOD up to deliver this.

James Cartlidge:[\[42294\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which class of Royal Navy ships will operate a directed energy weapon.

Maria Eagle:

Our DragonFire Laser Directed Energy Weapons (DEW) will be fitted to four Royal Navy ships starting from 2027. Type 45 destroyers are being explored as the most suitable platform. The Ministry of Defence is maturing plans for future DEW capabilities alongside DragonFire delivery and in conjunction with the Royal Navy will ensure that the most suitable Royal Navy ships are selected.

■ Weapons: Lasers**James Cartlidge:**[\[42284\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to paragraph 2.7 of the Spring Statement, published on 26 March 2025, how the investment in Directed Energy Weapons will be spent.

Maria Eagle:

The additional funding announced in the Spring Statement is contributing to advanced technology within Defence, including securing the in service date for the DragonFire Laser Directed Energy Weapons (DEW). This investment will continue development of software and overall lethality, integration of the system, and will support the UK industrial base and specialist skills. DragonFire is an example of our commitment to developing UK sovereign capability, and is not the totality of MOD's investment in DEW. We will wait for the outcomes of the Strategic Defence Review and Spending Review before making further announcements on plans for DEW capability.

EDUCATION**■ Adoption**

Tom Gordon: [\[37730\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she collects data on the number of post adoption (a) disruptions and (b) breakdowns in England.

Janet Daby:

I refer the hon. Member for Harrogate and Knaresborough to the answer of 28 March 2025 to Question [37457](#).

■ Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund

Sarah Owen: [\[37316\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether applications received before March 2025 for therapeutic services under the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund will be considered for therapies beginning in the (a) current and (b) 2025-26 financial year.

Janet Daby:

To reduce gaps in therapy, adoption and special guardianship support fund (ASGSF) applications which were received before 31 March 2025 were permitted to extend up to 12 months, allowing children and families to receive continuing therapy across financial years. Where applications were approved, therapy which started up to and including March 2025 could continue into the next financial year, under previously agreed transitional funding arrangements.

Following an announcement on 1 April, the department is delighted to confirm that £50 million has been allocated to the ASGSF for the current financial year. More details on applications for funding for the 2025/26 financial year will be published shortly.

■ Adult Education: Construction

Nadia Whittome: [\[40703\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to expand the availability of evening school classes for (a) plumbing, (b) bricklaying, (c) electrical work and (d) other building trades in Nottinghamshire.

Janet Daby:

Skills are crucial to this government's mission to grow the economy under our Plan for Change and deliver our commitment to build 1.5 million homes across this Parliament.

On 23 March, my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced measures to address skills shortages in the construction sector. This package commits over £600 million over the Parliament to deliver up to 60,000 skilled construction workers. This includes additional funding to deliver more construction

courses, skills bootcamps, foundation apprenticeships, to support industry placements and to deliver 10 new Technical Excellence Colleges. The department will continue to work with post-16 skills providers on their plans to meet local, regional and national skills priorities in construction.

Furthermore, as part of the government's devolution agenda, from August 2025 the East Midlands Combined Authority will be responsible for administering and delivering their Adult Skills Fund (ASF), allowing them to make best use of the ASF to meet their local needs, including in construction.

■ **Adult Education: Finance**

Uma Kumaran: **[41703]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of funding allocations for adult learning in the (a) 2025-26 and (b) 2026-27 financial years.

Janet Daby:

This government is facing a very challenging fiscal context. Fixing the foundations of the economy will take time and tough decisions are needed across the public sector to get finances back under control and ensure delivery on priorities through the Plan for Change.

The department will spend about £1.4 billion on the Adult Skills Fund (ASF) in the 2025/26 academic year to ensure that adult learners can access the education and training they need to get into employment or progress in work. Currently, 62% of the ASF is devolved to 9 Mayoral Strategic Authorities (MSAs) and Greater London Authority. ASF allocations to MSAs are based on 2017/18 learner data and these authorities are responsible for the allocation of the ASF to learning providers.

The department is responsible for the remaining ASF in non-devolved areas, and allocations are made on an academic year basis. Our allocation methodology for the 2025/26 academic year recognises where providers have delivered above their allocations. It also recognises priority courses at higher funding rates introduced in August 2024. We are choosing to prioritise those higher funding rates which recognise delivery in certain subjects, such as engineering or construction.

■ **Apprentices and Higher Education**

Phil Brickell: **[40314]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of (a) trends in the level of completion rates of people undertaking apprenticeships funded by the apprenticeship levy and (b) the quality of monitoring of Higher Education institutions via the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

Janet Daby:

Qualification achievement rates for apprenticeships are published annually at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find->

[statistics/apprenticeships/2024-25](#). Data for the 2023/24 academic year is available at this link.

The department holds all apprenticeship training providers to account for quality delivery through its Apprenticeship Accountability Framework, which encompasses a wide range of quality indicators, including retention rates, employer and apprentice feedback, as well as achievement rates. Further detail about the framework can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-training-provider-accountability-framework/apprenticeship-training-provider-accountability-framework-and-specification--2>.

Ofsted routinely inspects the quality of training delivery in all apprenticeship providers, including higher education (HE) providers, and will ensure that all apprenticeship training providers are inspected by September 2025. A summary of Ofsted's inspection findings up to 31 August 2024 is published at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/further-education-and-skills-inspections-and-outcomes-as-at-31-august-2024/main-findings-further-education-and-skills-inspections-and-outcomes-as-at-31-august-2024#data-4>.

The Office for Students is the independent regulator of English HE providers and works with other organisations to make sure degree apprenticeships meet the right quality and standards. This includes considering the inspections that Ofsted carries out to decide whether a provider is complying with its conditions of registration in this area. Its regulatory framework can be found at:

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-framework-for-higher-education-in-england/>.

■ Apprentices: Health Services

Adam Dance: [\[41693\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of reducing funding for level 7 healthcare apprenticeships on the NHS long-term workforce plan.

Adam Dance: [\[41694\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of reducing funding for level 7 healthcare apprenticeships on the number of advanced clinical practitioners in the NHS.

Adam Dance: [\[41696\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of reducing funding for level 7 healthcare apprenticeships on skills shortages in the NHS; and what discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on that funding.

Janet Daby:

I refer the hon. Member for Yeovil to the answer of 28 March 2025 to Question [39819](#).

Dr Roz Savage: [\[41755\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of cuts to funding for level 7 healthcare apprenticeships on the deliverability of the NHS long-term workforce plan.

Dr Roz Savage: [\[41758\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of cuts to funding for level 7 healthcare apprenticeships on the availability of Advanced Clinical Practitioners in the NHS.

Janet Daby:

I refer the hon. Member for South Cotswolds to the answer of 28 March 2025 to Question [39189](#).

■ Apprentices: Planning

Adam Dance: [\[41695\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of reducing funding for level 7 apprenticeships on the number of chartered town planners in local government.

Janet Daby:

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

Dr Roz Savage: [\[41759\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of cuts to funding for level 7 apprenticeships on the availability of Chartered Town Planners in local government.

Janet Daby:

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

■ Apprentices: Research

Phil Brickell: [\[40316\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether her Department has commissioned research into the satisfaction rates of (a) private companies and (b) students participating in apprenticeship levy programmes.

Janet Daby:

The apprenticeship evaluation surveys commissioned by the department provide insights into the satisfaction rates of employers and apprentices.

For employers, overall satisfaction rates were 83% for all commercial employers and 89% for all employers who reported a wage bill of over £3 million. Employers with wage bills of over £3 million were eligible for the Apprenticeship Levy. These figures are published on sheet 55 of the 'Apprenticeship evaluation 2023: employer survey

data tables (overall)', which can be found here:

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

In the 2023 apprenticeship evaluation survey, 86% of all apprentices were satisfied with their apprenticeship overall. Satisfaction rates are not broken down according to whether their employer paid the Apprenticeship Levy. Further details can be found on page 113 of the 'Apprenticeship evaluation 2023: learner and non-completer surveys research report', which can be found here:

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

■ Apprentices: Rural Areas

Sir John Hayes: [\[40150\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent steps she has taken to raise awareness of apprenticeships in (a) rural and (b) remote areas.

Janet Daby:

This government has a driving mission to break down barriers to opportunity and to grow the economy.

The department continues to raise awareness of the benefits of apprenticeships across the country, including in rural areas. This includes promoting apprenticeships to young people, adults and employers through the Skills for Life campaign. The department also supports the Apprenticeship Ambassador Network, a network of over 2,000 volunteer employers and former and current apprentices, who volunteer their time to inform and inspire the next generation of apprentices and apprentice employers.

The department is transforming career opportunities and advice to increase awareness of the range of high-quality options available to young people, including apprenticeships.

The department has committed to guarantee two weeks' worth of work experience for every young person, as well as to establish a national jobs and careers service to support people into successful long-term employment.

■ Apprentices: Taxation

Sir John Hayes: [\[40142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of the growth and skills levy will be reserved for apprenticeship training.

Sir John Hayes: [\[40146\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether training in the workplace will be a condition of support under the growth and skills levy.

Janet Daby:

This government's first mission is to kickstart economic growth. We know that skills gaps are holding back business growth and that we need to support employers to invest in skills training. Our new levy-funded growth and skills offer will introduce greater flexibility to employers and learners in England, creating routes into good, skilled jobs in growing industries, aligned with the government's industrial strategy.

The new training offer will include shorter duration apprenticeships. From August 2025, subject to the legislative timetable, the minimum duration of an apprenticeship will be reduced to eight months. This change means apprentices will be able to achieve occupational competence more quickly, where appropriate.

The department will also introduce foundation apprenticeships for young people, a work-based offer providing high-quality progression pathways into further work-based training and employment, including occupationally specific apprenticeships.

These are the first steps in expanding the apprenticeships offer into a wider levy-funded growth and skills offer that works better for employers, individuals and the wider economy. The government has established Skills England to form a coherent national picture of skills gaps across all sectors and to help shape the technical education system so that it is responsive to skills needs. This will include advising on priorities for the new growth and skills offer.

■ Arts: Curriculum**Steve Darling:**[\[36833\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans her Department has to enhance arts and culture in the national curriculum.

Catherine McKinnell:

The department has announced a new National Centre for Arts and Music Education. The National Centre will promote arts education, including signposting to careers guidance and opportunities for children and young people to pursue their artistic and creative interests in school. It will drive excellent arts teaching through a new continuing professional development offer to schools and support partnerships between schools and cultural providers.

To complement the curriculum, the department will also work with experts to develop an Enrichment Framework to be published before the end of the year. This will identify the range of different enrichment activity that pupils should access and reflect best practice in supporting schools to plan a high-quality enrichment offer.

The government has established an independent Curriculum and Assessment Review, covering ages 5 to 18, chaired by Professor Becky Francis CBE.

The Review seeks to deliver a rich, broad, inclusive and innovative curriculum that equips young people with the knowledge, skills and attributes needed to thrive in life and work.

The Review Group has now published its interim findings and set out the next phase of work. The interim report can be accessed at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/curriculum-and-assessment-review-interim-report>.

The government will respond to the Review's final recommendations in the autumn.

■ Childcare

Maya Ellis: **[36957]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to extend the free childcare offer to parents in (a) education and (b) training.

Stephen Morgan:

The government is committed to delivering the expansion of the 30 hours free childcare offer so that, from September 2025, eligible working parents in England will be able to access 30 hours of free childcare per week, over 38 weeks of the year, from the term after their child turns nine months old to when they start school. Accessible and high-quality early education and childcare is a crucial part of giving every child the best start in life, boosting children's life chances and giving parents work choices.

Students who work in addition to their studies and earn the equivalent of at least 16 hours a week at National Minimum Wage, which is equivalent to £183 per week/£9,518 per year in 2024/25, and under £100,000 adjusted net income per year, may be eligible for this offer. If parents are unable to meet this threshold, they will remain eligible for the universal 15 hours of free early education, which is available to all three and four-year-olds regardless of family circumstances.

We recognise the value of parents continuing in education and provide a range of support for students in further or higher education (HE) to support them with childcare. Support available to full-time HE students with dependent children includes the Childcare Grant and Parents' Learning Allowance. Entitlement to these grants is based on a student's household income.

Munira Wilson: **[37309]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many two year olds were recorded as eligible for 15 hours of free childcare in the academic year 2024-25; and how many were unable to take up those hours due to shortage of nursery places.

Munira Wilson: **[37310]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many (a) three and (b) four year olds were recorded as eligible for the additional 15 hours of free childcare in the academic year 2024-25; and how many were unable to take up those hours due to shortage of nursery places.

Stephen Morgan:

Information on 15 hours free childcare entitlements is published in the education provision: children under 5 years of age statistical publication. The publication is

available here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/education-provision-children-under-5/2024>.

Data on the number of two-year-olds eligible for the 15 hours free childcare entitlement for working parents is expected to be published in July 2025. An estimated 154,957 disadvantaged 2-year-olds were eligible for 15-hours of free childcare in January 2024. Based on analyses of data from various surveys, an estimated 427,000 three and four-year-olds were eligible for the 30-hour entitlement in January 2024.

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 each local authority in England about their sufficiency of childcare and any issues they are facing. No local authority is currently reporting a sufficiency concern.

Where local authorities report sufficiency challenges, the department will discuss what action the local authority is taking to address those issues and where needed, we support the local authority with any specific requirements through our childcare sufficiency support contract.

■ Childcare and Pre-school Education

Dr Simon Opher:

[40720]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to support (a) early education and (b) childcare providers.

Stephen Morgan:

The government is committed to giving children the best start in life and has set the ambition through the government's Plan for Change for a record proportion of children starting school ready to learn.

The department has set a target for 75% of children to achieve a good level of development by the end of reception, by 2028. This target aims to ensure that children are school-ready and have met their early learning goals by the age of five.

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

The early years pupil premium rate has increased by over 45% compared to the 2024/25 financial year, which is equivalent to up to £570 per eligible child per year. The department is 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.

State-funded primary-phase schools have submitted bids for up to £150,000 of capital funding to refurbish spare internal space to create or expand school-based nurseries. This is the first stage in our plan to deliver 3,000 school-based nurseries and will help deliver on the department's commitment to ensure families across the country have access to high-quality childcare and early education.

The department is also 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.

■ Children in Care: Mental Health Services

Damien Egan:

[36811]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to help improve access to therapy services for children in care.

Janet Daby:

Children in care and care leavers are significantly more likely to have poor mental health. The department's latest data shows that two thirds of children become looked after due to abuse or neglect and we know that care experienced adults are at 4 to 5 times greater risk of suicide attempt than their peers. Providing effective support is crucial given the significant trauma that many of these children and young people have experienced and its lasting impact.

To support looked after children, looked after children attract pupil premium plus funding of £2,570 per year. This is managed by the local authority's virtual school head and can be used to facilitate a wide range of educational support including additional mentoring, tuition, and therapeutic services.

Given our significant concerns for the health and wellbeing of children in care and care leavers, the department is working alongside the Department of Health and Social Care to review and update current statutory guidance on promoting the health and wellbeing of looked-after children. This guidance sets expectations on local authorities, Directors of Public Health, commissioners of health services for children, NHS England and others, for the promotion of physical, emotional and mental health.

Regulations require an assessment of physical, emotional and mental health needs for every child when they enter care and a plan to be developed to address their needs.

As part of the department's statutory guidance review, we will consider what changes are needed to further ensure that children in care and care leavers receive the support they need for their physical and mental health and wellbeing, including access to any needed treatment or therapy.

In addition to the statutory guidance review, the department is also undertaking a programme of work specific to children with complex needs. Children with complex needs and multiple needs are some of our most vulnerable children in the care system. The outcomes for these children can often be very poor, with neither

children's social care nor health services alone capable of meeting their needs, and services not working effectively together for these children.

Since July 2023, the department and NHS England have jointly led a Task and Finish Group to consider how to improve the way system partners work together to support and improve outcomes for children and young people who are deprived of their liberty and who are in the most complex situations.

Drawing on the best evidence, including the voice of children, input from professionals and commissioned research, the department will, in collaboration with NHS England, test a new, community-based approach to pathways and provision which provides treatment and care, bringing in professionals from children's social care, health, justice and education. This will enable the system to deliver specialist care and accommodation for children who have complex needs.

We have also recently commissioned independent research on how the system works, its current impacts and how we could do things differently to achieve better outcomes for children and young people. We plan to publish this research in summer 2025. We will draw on these reports to support the development and testing of evidence-based models of safe, therapeutic care that delivers integrated, consistent, and collaborative practices for these children and young people.

■ Children: Databases

Alex Ballinger:

[\[35094\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she has plans to reintroduce a safeguarding database for children.

Stephen Morgan:

Keeping children safe is a priority for this government. Through the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill, the department is taking a range of steps to improve safeguarding. We are introducing a new information sharing duty, making provision for a Single Unique Identifier, strengthening the role of education in local safeguarding arrangements and introducing multi-agency child protection teams.

There are presently no plans to re-introduce a national safeguarding database for children.

■ Children: Domestic Abuse

Daisy Cooper:

[\[36778\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the average length of time was for children fleeing domestic abuse to be allocated a school place in the latest period for which data is available.

Catherine McKinnell:

Children living in a refuge are, among a number of other categories of vulnerable and hard-to-place children, eligible for consideration under the fair access protocol.

Where a child is referred to the protocol, they must be allocated a school place within 20 school days.

Where a child has difficulty in securing a school place via the usual in-year admissions processes, fair access protocols exist to ensure that school places can be secured as quickly as possible for vulnerable and hard-to-place children.

Each local authority is required to have a fair access protocol in place and all admission authorities are required to participate in it.

■ Children: Human Rights

Clive Lewis:

[\[41072\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether her Department has made an assessment of the (a) quality of child's rights impact assessments prepared by Government Departments on (i) reserved and (ii) other matters and (b) extent to which children's (A) views and (B) experiences have been taken into account in these assessments.

Janet Daby:

Departments are responsible for carrying out assessments on their policy or legislation area. The Department for Education does not collect information centrally on the number or quality of assessments carried out and the extent to which children's views and experiences have been taken into account in those assessments. This is the responsibility of individual departments and their policy teams to oversee.

Child's Rights Impact Assessments are encouraged to be used across government to ensure new or significant changes to policy or legislation do not adversely affect children's rights and wellbeing.

The department co-produced, with civil society experts, a Child's Rights Impact Assessment template with guidance that has been shared with other departments. Within the template, the guidance prompts the departments to detail what steps have been taken to directly or indirectly gather the views of children and young people.

We value the voices and lived experiences of children and young people and recognise the importance of listening to how decisions made in government impact them.

■ Children: Identification

Neil O'Brien:

[\[32080\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether the Single Unique Identifier that the Government are piloting is the NHS number; what the (a) locations, (b) timing and (c) size of the pilot is; and how families have been informed.

Stephen Morgan:

The department is currently exploring the suitability of using the NHS number as a single unique identifier with Wigan local authority. This process will take several

months. This first phase of work will explore whether success rates of linking children's records can be improved within a local authority by using the NHS number provided by the NHS Personal Demographic Service. This work will inform future tests and pilots.

The department anticipates several rounds of piloting the different aspects of implementation to establish where it can have the right impact, and to understand the system costs and business process changes associated with its usage.

We will be working with NHS England and local authorities as part of the piloting process, to ensure that the data processed as part of the pilot is secure and meets legal requirements around the data subject's rights to be informed about how their information is processed. One way children and families are informed about how their personal information is used, is via privacy notices. Wigan's privacy notices that are relevant in this context can be accessed at:

<https://www.wigan.gov.uk/Council/DataProtection-FOI-Stats/Privacy-notices/Privacy-Notices-for-all-services.aspx>.

■ Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill: Home Education

James McMurdock:

[36342]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what representations her Department has received from parents who home school their children about the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill.

James McMurdock:

[36343]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will meet with parents who home school their children to discuss the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill.

James McMurdock:

[36346]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of the removal of the automatic right to home educate under the Children and Wellbeing Bill on parents home schooling their children.

Stephen Morgan:

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education and the Ministerial team try to meet with stakeholders regularly, including in relation to the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill.

It is important that the department engages and listens to the views of key stakeholders who have an interest in the Children Not in School measures within the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill. That is why we have established stakeholder implementation forums to listen to the views of home educating parents, home education organisations, local authorities and other safeguarding and education stakeholders with a vested interest.

There is currently no automatic right for all parents to be able to home educate their children, with local authority consent currently being required for a small cohort of children.

■ Class Sizes: East Midlands**Nadia Whittome:**[\[40868\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent progress she has made on reducing school class sizes in (a) the East Midlands and (b) Nottingham East constituency.

Catherine McKinnell:

The average class size for state-funded primary schools in the East Midlands is 26.3 pupils, which is below the national average of 26.6 pupils, and 26.7 for Nottingham East, which is a fraction higher than the national average. The average class size for state-funded secondary schools in the East Midlands is 22.4 pupils, which is equal to the national average, and 23 for Nottingham East, which is just above the national average of 22.4.

Legislation limits the size of an infant class to 30 pupils per school teacher. An infant class is one in which the majority of children will reach the age of five, six, or seven during the school year, which includes reception, year 1 and year 2.

There is no statutory limit on the size of classes for older children (pupils aged eight and over), and it is up to schools to decide how to organise classes based on local needs and circumstances to ensure all children can be supported to achieve and thrive.

■ Department for Education: Departmental Responsibilities**James Cartlidge:**[\[39919\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether her Department has plans to establish a new framework for independent institutions.

Stephen Morgan:

The department expects independent educational institutions to be regulated under the same framework which exists for independent schools under Part 4 of Chapter 1 of the Education and Skills Act 2008.

The department keeps policy regarding independent educational institutions under review to ensure that appropriate action can be taken to provide the best education and opportunities for all children and young people.

■ Department for Education: Secondment**Jon Trickett:**[\[36589\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many of her Department's officials have been seconded from (a) the Institute for Economic Affairs, (b) the Policy Exchange, (c) the Adam Smith Institute and (d) Labour Together since July 2024.

Janet Daby:

There have been no staff working in the department since July 2024 who were seconded from the Institute for Economic Affairs, the Policy Exchange, the Adam Smith Institute, or Labour Together.

■ **Disability: Grants**

Helen Hayes: [\[39482\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to confirm the future of the Support for Families with Disabilities grant scheme for future financial years.

Janet Daby:

Each year, the Support for Families with Disabled Children programme provides individual grants to approximately 60,000 low-income families raising a disabled or seriously ill child. The department is currently running a business planning exercise which will conclude with funding for programmes announced shortly.

■ **Dyslexia: South West**

Adam Dance: [\[35064\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of support for dyslexic students in mainstream education in (a) Somerset and (b) the South West.

Adam Dance: [\[35066\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans she has to improve (a) inclusivity and (b) expertise on dyslexia in mainstream schools in (i) Somerset and (ii) the South West.

Adam Dance: [\[35067\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to support children diagnosed with dyslexia in Yeovil constituency.

Adam Dance: [\[35068\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to ensure early diagnosis of dyslexia in schools.

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.

We are providing £1 billion more for high needs budgets in 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, 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 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.

In the South West there are 6 English Hubs: Cornerstone, Ilsham, Kernow, Mangotsfield, Ramsbury and 'Unlocking Excellence'. This academic year, they are supporting a total of 130 schools with the Reading Ambition for All programme.

■ Education: Mental Health Services

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

[\[36607\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether her Department plans to provide funding to help improve the mental health of (a) primary school pupils, (b) secondary school pupils and (c) 18-25 year olds in (i) further or (ii) higher education.

Stephen Morgan:

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.

That is why the government has committed to expand Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs), so every young person has access to early support to address problems

before they escalate. NHS-funded MHSTs are expected to cover at least 50% of pupils in schools and learners in further education in England by the end of March 2025.

The department will also recruit an additional 8,500 new mental health staff to treat children and adults and open new Young Futures hubs with access to mental health support workers.

In addition, 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 choose evidence-based early support for pupils.

The department continues to work closely with the further education sector to promote and support providers to develop and implement a whole college approach to mental health and wellbeing. This includes supporting the Association of Colleges (AoC) in their goal for all colleges to sign up to the AoC Mental Health Charter and to align it with the University Mental Health Charter in higher education (HE). AoC's framework aims to integrate mental health and well-being into every aspect of college life.

Departmental officials also continue to work closely with students, parents, mental health experts and the HE sector to drive meaningful change in mental health practice through the HE Mental Health Implementation Taskforce, which recently published its second stage report.

To raise standards in the sector, the Office for Students has also provided £400,000 of funding to the student mental health charity, Student Minds. This has enabled significant expansion of the University Mental Health Charter Programme, with 113 universities now signed up. The programme helps universities to adopt a whole-institution approach to mental health, bringing universities together to drive forward continuous improvement in mental health support for students.

■ Family Hubs

Stuart Anderson:

[\[40362\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will take steps to deliver at least one Family Hub in every local authority area.

Janet Daby:

The government's Plan for Change sets out a commitment to give children the best start in life, measured by a record 75% of children starting school ready to learn, measured by the number hitting the early learning goals at the end of reception.

Delivering this will require strengthening and joining up family services to improve support through pregnancy and early childhood. This includes continuing to invest in and build up Family Hubs and Start for Life programmes.

75 local authorities with some of the highest levels of deprivation have received funding and there are now more than 400 Family Hubs open across the 75 local

authorities. The department is investing a further £126 million in 2025/26 to give every child the best start in life and deliver on the Plan for Change. Future funding decisions are subject to the multi-year spending review.

The evidence and learning from this investment will help to improve services across England where they are most needed and those local authorities not receiving funding will be able to access expert advice, guidance and resources from the National Centre for Family Hubs.

■ Further Education and Schools: Cybercrime

Mr Luke Charters:

[37450]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether her Department holds data on the number of ransomware attacks against schools and colleges in the last three years.

Stephen Morgan:

Educational settings in England are responsible for maintaining their IT systems and cyber security. There is currently no mandatory reporting requirement legislation for schools to report a cyber attack and no central register of cyber attacks exists. However, the department has been notified of 53 ransomware cases across the sector over the last 3 years.

The department has a small, dedicated sector cyber security team to support the education sector. The team provides appropriate guidance and advice, via regular targeted and broad communications, to help schools adhere to and maintain good cyber security standards. The department provides guidance for schools and colleges on how to help protect against a cyber incident, which can found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/meeting-digital-and-technology-standards-in-schools-and-colleges/cyber-security-standards-for-schools-and-colleges>.

The department also works closely with the National Cyber Crime Security Centre (NCSC) and Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) to ensure that up-to-date cyber security guidance is shared with schools, colleges and universities.

Further guidance on cyber security for schools can be found at:

<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/section/education-skills/cyber-security-schools>.

The department's Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA) has more than 9,900 member schools, which is 52% of eligible schools in England, and is including cover for cyber incidents as standard from the 2022/23 membership years. In the event of a cyber incident, RPA members have access to a 24/7 Incident Response Service.

The department's dedicated sector cyber security function provides advice in response to cyber security enquiries and incident reports from the sector, liaising with the affected institution following an incident to advise on steps to mitigate the threat and provide guidance on recovery.

The department adheres to the NCSC guidance on payment of ransoms and does not encourage, endorse nor condone the payment of ransom demands in response to

a ransomware attack. This guidance is outlined at:

<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/guidance/mitigating-malware-and-ransomware-attacks>.

■ Higher Education: Standards

Neil O'Brien:

[39962]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, which higher education institutions have been made subject by the Office for Students to (a) enhanced monitoring, (b) investigation, (c) a quality assessment report and (d) other quality related interventions; and when these interventions took place.

Janet Daby:

The Office for Students (OfS) is the non-departmental public body responsible for higher education in England. It is independent of government.

In 2022/23, the OfS opened investigations into the quality of business and management courses at eight providers and of computing courses at three providers. It also opened investigations into grade inflation concerns at three providers and opened a further 12 investigations into potential non-compliance with condition B3, which sets minimum thresholds for student outcomes. Quality assessments are conducted as part of the quality investigations.

The OfS began publishing the subject-based investigation case reports in September 2023. Details of these, including decisions about any regulatory action, can be found here: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/about/how-we-are-run/key-performance-measures/kpm-11-efficient-regulation/>.

The OfS also publishes information about enhanced monitoring of providers. The OfS does not tell the department which providers are subject to enhanced monitoring, but where that enhanced monitoring follows an investigation, it is included in the case reports. The published case reports show that the OfS has decided to conduct enhanced monitoring of the University of Bolton (the OfS has since approved a change of name for the University of Bolton to the University of Greater Manchester) and the University of Bedfordshire, until such a point at which it judges the risk of non-compliance with its quality conditions to have been acceptably minimised.

The OfS began publishing the B3 investigation case reports in July 2023. Details of these can be found here: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/for-providers/quality-and-standards/how-we-regulate-student-outcomes/assessment-reports/>.

The case reports for the investigations into grade inflation concerns have not yet been published.

The OfS does not share details about open ongoing investigations with the department.

■ Home Education: South Suffolk**James Cartlidge:**[\[39918\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to support the well-being of children returning to school following a period of home education in South Suffolk constituency.

Stephen Morgan:

Supporting the wellbeing of children in schools is central to their ability to achieve and thrive. That is why the department encourages schools to ensure a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils want to be are ready to learn. The department also provides a range of guidance and practical resources on promoting and supporting pupils' wellbeing, including a resources hub for mental health leads and a toolkit to help choose evidence-based early support for pupils.

The information that local authorities will collect through the Children Not in School statutory registers, which the department are introducing under the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill, will help to build a clearer picture of the child's individual needs and circumstances and enable the local authority or school to provide the tailored support required to best meet those needs.

The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill also introduces a duty on local authorities to provide advice and information to parents of children on their registers, should the parents request it.

■ Human Trafficking: Cambridgeshire**Ben Obese-Jecty:**[\[36474\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to help identify victims of child-trafficking in schools in Cambridgeshire.

Stephen Morgan:

Protecting children requires cooperation and coordination across multiple agencies. Local authorities, police, and health services share a joint and equal statutory duty to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The three safeguarding partners (local authorities, police, and health services) collaborate with other relevant agencies, including education settings, to make strategic decisions essential for effective practice and child safety.

There is also an established robust framework in place in the form of 'Keeping children safe in education' (KCSIE), which is the statutory safeguarding framework to which all schools and colleges must have regard when safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

Part 1 of this guidance, which should be read by all staff who work directly with children, not only sets out the different types of abuse and harm but it also supports all staff to know what signs to look out for, including how to respond to any concerns about a child.

In addition, the guidance includes information on modern slavery, the National Referral Mechanism and links to joint guidance from the Department for Education and the Home Office. The full guidance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-who-may-have-been-trafficked-practice-guidance>.

This safeguarding framework ensures that all concerns are identified and managed swiftly, effectively and in line with local safeguarding protocols. Schools and colleges must also work with their local safeguarding partners to ensure these processes are implemented consistently.

■ Mathematics: Education

Helen Maguire:

[40944]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she has made an assessment of the potential merits of reforming mathematical education to emphasise (a) data, (b) technology and (c) computing.

Catherine McKinnell:

The government has established an independent Curriculum and Assessment Review, covering ages 5 to 18, chaired by Professor Becky Francis CBE. The Review is looking at all curriculum subjects, including mathematics. It is committed to ensuring the curriculum sufficiently prepares children and young people for future life and work, building the knowledge, skills and attributes to thrive.

The Review Group has now published an interim report, which sets out its findings and confirms the key areas for further work. The report can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/curriculum-and-assessment-review-interim-report>. The report highlights the need for the curriculum to “respond to social and technological change”. The Review Group’s next steps include considering how best to equip young people with “the essential knowledge and skills which will enable them to adapt and thrive in a rapidly changing and artificial intelligence (AI)-enabled world”.

The government will respond to the final recommendations in autumn.

■ Overseas Students

Afzal Khan:

[39959]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of the graduate route in promoting the UK as an international study destination.

Janet Daby:

The UK has a world-class higher education sector, with four universities in the world university rankings top 10 and 15 in the top 100, alongside a wide array of leading institutions which can offer a fulfilling and enjoyable experience to international students from around the world.

There are many factors that influence international students when they choose to study abroad. These include the range and quality of available courses, the visa rules that apply in countries they are considering, and the appeal of living and studying in those countries.

The graduate route enables international students who have successfully completed an eligible qualification to stay in the UK for two years, or three years for doctoral students. Former students who are on the graduate route may switch to another route, for example the skilled worker route, if the relevant requirements are met.

This government has made clear its approach to international students. We welcome international students who enrich our university campuses, forge lifelong friendships with our domestic students and become global ambassadors for the UK.

■ Personal Care Services: Employers' Contributions

Ben Obese-Jecty: [\[41612\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions she has had with Cabinet colleagues on the potential impact of changes to (a) employer National Insurance contributions and (b) the minimum wage on the number of new apprentices in the hair salon industry.

Janet Daby:

I refer the hon. Member for Huntington to the answer of 26 March 2025 to Question [39407](#).

■ Planning Authorities: Apprentices

John Glen: [\[39821\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of reductions in funding for level seven apprenticeships on the availability of Chartered Town Planners in local government.

Janet Daby:

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

Andy McDonald: [\[39859\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of reductions in funding for level seven apprenticeships on the availability of Chartered Town Planners in local government.

Janet Daby:

I refer my hon. Friend, the Member for Middlesbrough and Thornaby to the answer of 20 January 2025 to Question [23140](#).

■ Pre-school Education

Vikki Slade:

[\[40127\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment she has made of trends in the level of areas without childcare providers in England; and what estimate her Department has made of the number of early years providers that have closed since September 2024.

Vikki Slade:

[\[40129\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she plans to review the upper threshold for small business rates relief for early years providers.

Stephen Morgan:

The government is committed to ensuring children have the best start in life, and has set a target of a record number of children starting school ready to learn as part of the government's Plan for Change.

Local authorities are responsible for ensuring that the provision of childcare is sufficient to meet the requirements of parents in their area. They are required to report annually to elected council members on how they are meeting this duty, and to make this report available to parents. The department regularly discusses sufficiency with each local authority in England, and where there are challenges, the necessary actions to take and provision of support via our childcare sufficiency support contract is explored. We do not currently have any reports of sufficiency issues in any local authority.

The latest available figures on early years providers show that, between 31 August and 31 December 2024, 1,275 providers joined Ofsted's Early Years Register and 1,581 providers left the Register. In the same period, the number of registered places grew slightly from 1,275,264 to 1,277,932.

His Majesty's Treasury has been working on a fundamental review of business rates in the UK. The latest update indicates that the final report of this review will be published in autumn 2025. This review aims to reduce the overall burden on businesses, improve the current business rates system and consider more fundamental changes in the medium-to-long term. Childcare providers are being considered as part of this, and the review acknowledges the unique challenges faced by nurseries and other childcare providers.

■ Pre-school Education: Coronavirus

Cameron Thomas:

[\[36572\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the impact of Covid 19 on the reception class cohort of September 2025; and whether additional (a) preparation and (b) provision has been made for that cohort.

Catherine McKinnell:

Giving children the best start in life is the foundation of government's mission to break down barriers to opportunity. The earliest years are the most crucial stage of child

development. That is why we have set a milestone of a record proportion of children starting school ready to learn in the classroom. As announced in Plan for Change, we will measure our progress through 75% of children at the end of reception reaching a good level of development in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile assessment by 2028.

Research showed that the COVID-19 pandemic set back children's learning and development and may have exacerbated the outcome gap.

To help achieve the milestone set out in Plan for Change, the department will work in partnership with the sector, reforming training and support for the workforce to drive up standards. We will offer sustained professional development and work with providers to help spread evidence-based programmes as part of comprehensive plans to drive high-quality early education and care. We will ensure that the reception year sets children up for success, by rolling out schools' access to evidence-based programmes that boost early literacy and numeracy skills.

The department is providing a range of high-quality support and training for early years educators and leaders, building a stronger, more expert workforce, to enable settings and childminders to deliver quality early education, including currently available continuing professional development and support such as Maths Champions, Early Years Child Development Training, and the Early Years Stronger Practice Hubs.

The government will also deliver the largest ever uplift to the early years pupil premium in the 2025/26 financial year, increasing the rate by over 45%, equivalent to up to £570 per eligible child per year. This unprecedented increase is an investment in quality early education for those children who need it most, in the areas that need it most, to give them the support they need to be 'school ready' at age 5 and go on to have the best life chances.

■ Pre-school Education: Finance

Vikki Slade:

[\[40126\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of the (a) changes to employer National Insurance contributions, (b) increase in the National Minimum Wage, (c) removal of the ability to charge for (i) consumables and (ii) compulsory extras and (d) requirement to extend funded hours of childcare provision to younger children as a standard rate on early years providers.

Stephen Morgan:

This government believes giving children the best start in life is the foundation of the mission to break down barriers to opportunity. We have set a milestone of a record proportion of children starting school ready to learn in the classroom. We will measure our progress through 75% of children reaching a good level of development in the early years foundation stage profile assessment by 2028. This assessment takes place at the end of reception.

In the 2025/26 financial year alone, this government plans to spend over £8 billion on early years entitlements, which is a £2 billion increase on the previous year. The department is providing an additional £75 million expansion grant to support the sector in providing the additional places and staff needed ahead of the September 2025 expansion to 30 hours of childcare and early education from when a child is nine months old. The grant is focused on the 2 year-old and under-2s cohort to target the extra costs involved in delivering the entitlements to younger children.

The department will also deliver the largest ever uplift to the early years pupil premium, increasing the rate by over 45% compared to the 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 National Insurance contributions grant for public sector employers in early years.

In determining funding rates for 2025/26, the department will be reflecting forecasts of average earnings and inflation next year, including the National Living Wage. In line with a recent High Court judgment, any charges providers seek to levy must not be mandatory or a condition of accessing a funded place.

Providers must offer reasonable alternatives to parents that enable them to access the entitlements for free if they wish, however we know that many parents prefer to purchase consumables from their provider and will continue to be able to do so.

The department is grateful for the fantastic work the sector is doing to deliver the expanded entitlements and prepare for the final phase from September 2025. We are engaging closely with the sector through provider roadshows and engagement with representative bodies and will continue to listen to any concerns around costs and ensure the sector is financially sustainable going forward.

■ Schools: Disciplinary Proceedings

Mark Pritchard:

[\[41029\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will increase the powers of local education authorities to take action against parents who threaten teaching staff over decisions taken under school disciplinary procedures.

Stephen Morgan:

No teacher should feel unsafe or face violence or abuse in the workplace. The department will always support teachers to ensure they can work in safe and calm classrooms. All school employers, including trusts, have a duty to take reasonable steps to protect the health, safety, and welfare of their employees.

Schools should have their own clear processes in place for dealing with issues of bullying or harassment from parents. All incidences of bullying or harassment by a parent should be reported immediately to the designated lead and head teacher or governing body or proprietor.

Should the incident constitute a potential criminal offence, it would be for the school to consider involving the police, having followed the advice contained in the 'When to

call the police' guidance for schools and colleges by the National Police Chief's Council, written in partnership with the department and Home Office.

For staff who are experiencing bullying or harassment from any source, support is available from sources including Education Support, a charity supporting the mental health and wellbeing of teachers and education staff in schools, colleges and universities.

■ Schools: Energy

Nick Timothy: [\[41158\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much (a) primary and (b) secondary schools in England paid for energy bills on average in each year since 2015.

Nick Timothy: [\[41159\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much (a) primary and (b) secondary schools in England are projected to pay on average for energy bills in each year between 2025 and 2030.

Stephen Morgan:

The average annual energy costs for primary and secondary schools based on financial returns to the department from 2015 to 2024 are as follows:

YEAR	PRIMARY SCHOOLS (£)	SECONDARY SCHOOLS (£)
2023/24	38,214	190,897
2022/23	33,078	169,338
2021/22	20,285	107,613
2020/21	16,768	85,773
2019/20	17,508	86,578
2018/19	16,672	88,800
2017/18	15,402	82,867
2016/17	14,715	80,388
2015/16	15,556	87,343

To note:

- Local authority-maintained schools report costs for the 12-month period to 31 March. Academies report costs for the 12-month period to 31 August.
- These figures do not include energy costs recorded as attributable to or incurred by multi-academy trust central services.

- All spending data reported by schools to the department is publicly available at <https://financial-benchmarking-and-insights-tool.education.gov.uk/data-sources>.

The department does not hold a forecast for how much primary and secondary schools are projected to pay in their energy bills beyond the 2025/26 financial year. This is set out in the 'School costs technical note' which estimated energy price inflation for schools at a 4.1% increase for the 2024/25 financial year and a fall of 5.1% for the 2025/26 financial year .

The department is developing a suite of productivity initiatives to support schools in making efficiencies in their budgets. This includes giving schools the opportunity to join the department's Energy for Schools initiative. When schools' energy contracts are up for renewal, they can join the department's contract. During the pilot for this project, schools saved 36% on average compared to their previous contracts.

Nick Timothy: **[41160]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many smart meters have been installed in (a) primary and (b) secondary schools in England in each year since 2015.

Nick Timothy: **[41161]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many smart meters he expects to be installed in (a) primary and (b) secondary schools in each year between 2025 and 2030.

Stephen Morgan:

The department does not hold information on how many primary and secondary schools have installed smart meters since 2015, nor do we set an expectation for how many primary and secondary schools should install smart meters. However, smart meters are recommended within the department's published energy efficiency guidance. The guidance outlines that educational settings should monitor their energy use to help prioritise the best ways to reduce energy consumption. The guidance is available at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/energy-efficiency-guidance-for-the-school-and-fe-college-estate/energy-efficiency-guidance-for-the-school-and-further-education-college-estate>.

■ Schools: Festivals and Special Occasions

Mr Andrew Snowden: **[41977]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she plans to encourage schools to celebrate (a) Easter and (b) other Christian holidays.

Catherine McKinnell:

Easter and other Christian holidays provide good opportunities for schools to celebrate the traditions of our country, and the department supports schools taking those opportunities with their pupils.

■ Schools: Finance**Pippa Heylings:****[36467]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what information her Department holds on the number of schools that receive charitable funding to cover essential costs.

Catherine McKinnell:

The department collects information on the total income that academy trusts and maintained schools receive from private and charitable sources, beyond their core budgets, but does not hold information on what proportion of this was charitable or how money raised through charitable funding is spent in academy trusts and maintained schools. There is no expectation that educational resources should be paid for through charity and we are working closely with schools to understand their financial pressures.

Overall core revenue funding for schools in the 2024/25 financial year totals almost £61.6 billion. At the Autumn Budget 2024, the government announced an additional £2.3 billion for mainstream schools and young people with high needs for the 2025/26 financial year, compared to the 2024/25 financial year. This means that overall core school funding will total almost £63.9 billion in the 2025/26 financial year.

These increases, against the backdrop of a challenging fiscal picture, demonstrate the government's commitment to enabling every child to achieve and thrive through delivery of the Opportunity Mission.

■ Schools: Security**Mark Pritchard:****[41036]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will have discussions with the Secretary of State for Education on (a) domestic extremist threats and (b) other terror related threats against primary and secondary schools; and what assessment she has made of the potential measures of putting new measures in place to strengthen (i) entrances and (ii) perimeter boundaries in schools.

Stephen Morgan:

The Prevent duty safeguards children and young people from extremist ideologies to prevent them from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. The department publishes over 150 resources to support schools, parents and pupils in protecting children from extremism. These resources can be found at:

<https://www.educateagainsthate.com/>.

For any new school building the department recommends a security risk assessment is completed which will set out any necessary safeguarding and security requirements, where they are suitable.

The department publishes comprehensive and well-established 'Protective Security and Preparedness' guidance which helps staff prepare for and respond to terrorist and other significant threats. This guidance can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protective-security-and-preparedness-for-education-settings>.

The government will further strengthen the national security response through measures included in the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill. The Bill will require all education settings to take forward public protection procedures. This will establish a legal requirement which specifically relates to the response to a terrorist attack.

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

Patrick Spencer:

[37004]

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

Stephen Morgan:

Early language skills are vital to enable children to thrive in the early years and later in life, including for all aspects of later attainment in school. That is why in July 2024, this government announced that funded support for the Nuffield Early Learning Intervention (NELI) programme would continue for the 2024/25 academic year.

To date the department has invested over £20 million in the NELI programme, which supports reception aged children needing extra support with their speech and language development.

In randomised control trial evaluations of the programme at scale, when supported by departmental funding, NELI was proven to help children make, on average, an additional four months progress, or seven months for those eligible for free school meals.

The implementation cost of the NELI programme has been rated as 'very low' by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), when compared to other programmes that EEF have evaluated. It is estimated since 2020 that 650,000 children have had their language screened nationally from the investment in the NELI programme nationally.

Based on the £20 million investment, the cost to the department works out, on average, to be as little as £31 per child. EEF's findings in relation to the NELI programme is available at: <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects-and-evaluation/promising-programmes/nuffield-early-language-intervention>.

■ **Special Educational Needs: Norfolk**

Steff Aquarone:

[R] [43375]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to her Department's press release entitled £740 million allocated for 10,000 new places for pupils with SEND, published on 27 March 2025, how many new SEND places will be created in Norfolk.

Catherine McKinnell:

The statutory duty to provide sufficient school places for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or who require alternative provision, sits with local authorities.

The department has now published allocations for £740 million in High Needs Provision Capital Allocations for the 2025/26 financial year, to support local authorities to deliver new places in mainstream and special schools, as well as other specialist settings, and to improve the suitability and accessibility of existing buildings.

The funding can be used to adapt schools to be more accessible for children with SEND, to create specialist facilities within mainstream schools that can deliver more intensive support adapted to suit the pupils' needs and to create special school places for pupils with the most complex needs.

Norfolk County Council has been allocated just over £13 million for 2025/26 and it is up to the local authority to make decisions about the places they create and to prioritise this funding to meet local needs.

■ Special Educational Needs: Primary Education**Mr Lee Dillon:**[\[37035\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to help ensure that primary schools can fund their SEND provision without reallocating funding from other budget areas.

Catherine McKinnell:

This government's ambition is that all children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) receive the right support to succeed in their education and as they move into adult life.

Following the Autumn Budget 2024, the department is providing an additional £3.2 billion for mainstream schools and young people with complex SEND for the 2025/26 financial year. This means that overall school funding will total almost £64.8 billion in 2025/26. Most schools funding is not allocated and ring-fenced for specific purposes, such as for supporting pupils with SEND. Schools decide how to spend their budgets to meet their legal duties and other responsibilities, including support for their pupils with SEND.

Of the increase in total schools funding, £1 billion will be for high needs budgets in England in the 2025/26 financial year, bringing total high needs funding for children and young people with complex SEND to over £12 billion. Of that total, West Berkshire Council is being allocated over £30 million through the high needs funding block of the dedicated schools grant (DSG), an increase of £1.8 million on this year's DSG high needs block. High needs funding is allocated by local authorities to primary schools for the costs of special educational needs support in excess of £6,000 per pupil per annum.

■ Special Educational Needs: Travel

Damien Egan: [\[42340\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of local authorities in England offer independent travel training for young people with SEND.

Catherine McKinnell:

The department's statutory guidance for local authorities states that wherever possible, local authorities should offer independent travel training to children with special educational needs or disabilities who are eligible for free travel to school and who they think will be able to complete the programme. This guidance can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-to-school-travel-and-transport-guidance>.

The department does not hold the information requested. We are, however, working with local authorities to gather more data on home to school travel arrangements, including via a recent voluntary data collection.

■ Students: Cancer

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[35745\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent discussions she has had with universities on (a) support and (b) accommodations for students who receive a cancer diagnosis during their studies.

Janet Daby:

I refer my hon. Friend, the Member for Slough to the answer of 29 March 2025 to Question [34303](#).

■ Teachers: Employment Agencies

Dame Caroline Dinage: [\[41023\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of education recruitment agencies on the number of teachers finding jobs via her Department's teaching vacancies service; and if she will make an estimate of the potential cost to the public purse of these agencies to schools.

Catherine McKinnell:

Schools spend an estimated £75 million a year on recruitment advertising. Teaching Vacancies is a leading job listing service and 98% of secondary schools and 75% of primary schools have signed up to post their vacancies, for free. The department estimates that primary and secondary schools using Teaching Vacancies have saved, in total, between £47.3 and £60.8 million (from September 2018 to August 2024). More information about this calculation can be found on the Teaching Vacancies website: <https://teaching-vacancies.service.gov.uk/pages/savings-methodology>.

In addition to listing teaching and leaderships roles, the service expanded last year to include all school roles meaning schools will be able to save even more money by using the service.

■ Teachers: Labour Turnover

Damien Egan: [\[42339\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment her Department has made of trends in the levels of teacher recruitment and retention.

Catherine McKinnell:

I refer my hon. Friend, the Member for Bristol North East, to the answer of 13 March 2025 to Question [35471](#).

■ Teachers: Recruitment

Munira Wilson: [\[36783\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent progress she has made on recruiting 6,500 new teachers.

Munira Wilson: [\[36784\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how her Department is measuring its progress on recruiting 6,500 new teachers; and whether this measurement will account for teachers that leave the profession over the remainder of the Parliament.

Munira Wilson: [\[36785\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of career changers on meeting her target of recruiting 6,500 new teachers.

Catherine McKinnell:

The factor in schools and colleges that makes the biggest difference to a young person's educational outcomes is high-quality teaching. Ensuring a high-quality teaching workforce is therefore critical to the government's mission to break down barriers to opportunity and boost life chances for every child. However, this government inherited shortages of qualified teachers across the country as the number of teachers has not kept pace with demographic change. That 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.

The department has already made good early progress towards this key pledge, including providing a 5.5% pay award for teachers and leaders in maintained schools, announcing a £233 million initial teacher training financial incentives package for the 2025/26 recruitment cycle, and confirming targeted retention incentives for shortage subjects worth up to £6,000 after tax.

We have also taken steps to improve teachers' workload and wellbeing, to support retention and help reestablish teaching as an attractive profession. This includes opportunities for greater flexible working, such as allowing planning, preparation and assessment time (PPA) to be undertaken remotely, and making key resources to support wellbeing, developed with school leaders, available to teachers.

Career changers make a valuable contribution to the teaching profession and the department remains committed to recruiting and supporting them into initial teacher training, including as part of our efforts to recruit an additional 6,500 new expert teachers. Our wider offer to all potential teachers, including career changers, supports them through their journey to apply for teacher training and during the critical early years of teaching. This includes the Get Into Teaching service which offers one-to-one support and advice to all candidates, including targeted support for career changers.

We are working with the sector to develop our approach as part of the spending review.

■ Universities: Finance

Vikki Slade:

[\[40087\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she plans to take steps to identify alternative sources of funding for the university sector.

Janet Daby:

The higher education (HE) sector needs a secure financial footing to face the challenges of the next decade and ensure that all students can be confident they will receive the world-class HE experience they deserve.

The government is also determined to work with the sector to transition to sustainable research funding models, including by increasing research grant cost recovery, as announced by UK Research and Innovation last week. However, universities will also need to take their own steps to ensure they are working as efficiently as possible and, where necessary, make difficult choices.

Ultimately, HE providers are independent from government and as such must continue to make the necessary and appropriate financial decisions to ensure their long-term sustainability.

The department has set out five priorities for reform of the HE system, which relate to access and outcomes for disadvantaged students, economic growth, the civic role of HE providers, teaching standards and efficiency, transparency and reform.

The department will publish our plan for HE reform this summer, and work with the sector and the Office for Students to ensure the system delivers these priorities.

■ Welding: Training

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[39949\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make an assessment of recent trends in the levels of welding training courses available.

Janet Daby:

The department supports learners who wish to have a career in welding through our technical education offer, with a range of high-quality qualifications and apprenticeship opportunities available at all levels. This includes the level 2 welder apprenticeship standard and the plate welder and pipe welder apprenticeship standards at level 3.

T Levels in engineering, manufacturing, processing and control are now being taught across the country, providing students with the core knowledge and skills in fabrication and welding technologies.

Welding is predominately a level 2 occupational entry point and, at level 1 and 2, there are seventeen qualifications in welding available to young people and adults, including two new reformed level 2 technical qualifications approved for funding from 1 August 2025.

ENERGY SECURITY AND NET ZERO

■ Carbon Emissions

Bell Ribeiro-Addy:

[\[43541\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what steps he is taking to ensure the revised sixth carbon budget plan reduces economic inequality and poverty.

Kerry McCarthy:

Decarbonising the UK economy and scaling up clean energy industries brings an opportunity to reduce regional inequalities by creating new, high skill jobs in our industrial heartlands. Delivering net zero also means improving the energy performance of homes – the support provided through the Warm Homes Plan helps tackle fuel poverty and supports those struggling most with their energy bills. The Government considers the impact on inequality of each policy in our plans through Public Sector Equality Duty assessments. We will also deliver an updated plan that sets out the policy package out to the end of Carbon Budget 6 in 2037 in due course.

■ Energy: Rural Areas

Stuart Anderson:

[\[42310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what steps he is taking to help people in rural areas with energy costs.

Miatta Fahnbulleh:

The Government believes that our mission to deliver clean power by 2030 is the best way to break our dependence on global fossil fuel markets and protect billpayers permanently.

The creation of Great British Energy will help us to harness clean energy and have less reliance on volatile international energy markets and help in our commitment to make Britain a clean energy superpower by 2030. This, combined with our Warm Homes Plan to upgrade millions of homes to make them warmer and cheaper to run is how we will drive down energy bills and make cold homes a thing of the past.

We recognise that we need to support households struggling with bills whilst we transition to clean power by 2030. This is why we are delivering the Warm Home Discount to around 3 million eligible low-income households this winter. On 25 February, we published a consultation on the expansion of the Warm Home Discount, giving more eligible households £150 off their energy bills. These proposals would bring around 2.7 million households into the scheme – pushing the total number of households that would receive the discount next winter up to around 6 million.

■ Great British Energy: Logos**Joe Robertson:**[\[42937\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, pursuant to the Answer of 28 March 2025 to Question 40054, what the total salary cost was for the staff engaged in the redesign of the Great British Energy logo from commission to delivery.

Michael Shanks:

As per my answer to Question [40054](#), Great British Energy's logo was created in-house and with government resources. However, since the staff involved were not recruited specifically to design the logo a detailed breakdown of the time and costs involved is not readily available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

I can however assure the hon Member that the Government is committed to ensuring that staff resources are used efficiently and effectively.

■ Heat Pumps and Insulation: Low Incomes**Sarah Gibson:**[\[42376\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, whether he has considered providing free (a) insulation and (b) heat pumps to low-income households; and if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of such provision on (i) fuel poverty and (ii) carbon emissions.

Miatta Fahnbulleh:

Government energy efficiency schemes such as the Energy Company Obligation, Great British Insulation Scheme, Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund and Warm Homes: Local Grant are targeted at low-income households to tackle fuel poverty.

The Boiler Upgrade Scheme grant provides capital support for property owners to install a low carbon heating system.

Home energy efficiency improvements and upgraded heating systems under these schemes look to reduce carbon emissions, overall energy demand and energy bills for consumers. Further details on the Warm Homes Plan will be set out in due course.

■ Means-tested Benefits: Pensioners

Wendy Morton: [\[43066\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, if he will make an estimate of the number of pensioners in receipt of means-tested benefits who are experiencing fuel poverty.

Miatta Fahnbulleh:

The latest official Fuel Poverty Statistics for England were published in March 2025 on gov.uk here: [Fuel poverty statistics - GOV.UK](#).

■ Nuclear Power Stations: Decommissioning

Llinos Medi: [\[43655\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, whether the Government plans to provide financial support for the decommissioning of (a) nuclear projects, (b) Wylfa and (c) Trawsfynydd in (i) the 2026-27 financial year and (ii) future financial years.

Michael Shanks:

HM Government remains committed to the decommissioning of nuclear power stations across the UK. The nuclear decommissioning projects including those at Wylfa and Trawsfynydd are carried out by Nuclear Restoration Services (NRS) on behalf of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA). The NDA are publicly funded through the Department (DESNZ) and in the future from the Nuclear Liabilities Fund for the Advanced Gas Reactors (AGR) stations.. Funding for 2026-27 and beyond is currently in discussion with the Department as part of the ongoing Spending Review process.

■ Wylfa Power Station

Llinos Medi: [\[43656\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, pursuant to the Answer of 7 January 2025 to Question 21108 on Wylfa Power Station, whether his Department has finished examining the previous Government's plans for Wylfa.

Michael Shanks:

I refer the hon Member to the answer I gave to her on 7 January 2025 to Question UIN [21108](#). No decisions have been taken on any projects and technologies to be deployed at sites owned by Great British Nuclear. We will set out our plans in due course.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS**■ Agriculture and Environment Protection: Regulation**

Joe Robertson: [\[41764\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how his Department validates estimates of compliance costs provided by regulated industries.

Emma Hardy:

“Compliance costs” are the costs of complying with government regulation. These will typically include familiarisation costs, costs relating to monitoring or data reporting, and costs related to inspections where relevant. When analysing impacts on businesses of any new or amended policy, Defra complies with the Better Regulation Framework alongside HMT’s Green Book and Magenta Book principles.

Where required, Defra will conduct post implementation reviews (PIRs) of legislation.

■ Agriculture: Disease Control

James Naish: [\[36165\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans his Department has in place to ensure that urgent biosecurity information reaches farmers quickly.

Daniel Zeichner:

Biosecurity is a priority for this government. Urgent biosecurity information, such as alerts about animal and plant health disease incidents, any geographic restrictions in place as a result, and signposting to information on what farmers should do to maintain good biosecurity measures – are shared frequently across the sector.

During the current bluetongue virus outbreak, text messages and email alerts are regularly sent to those registered via livestock keeper databases so that they are aware of their responsibilities. We have made bird registration mandatory for those with poultry or other captive birds, so that we can inform them of the biosecurity risks, for example from Avian Influenza.

We maintain continued communications through our industry partners, on gov.uk, social media and, where possible, through the national and trade press, to increase awareness and action to help protect the UK from biosecurity risks.

■ Agriculture: Subsidies

Joe Robertson: [\[41741\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to reduce compliance costs for agricultural subsidies.

Daniel Zeichner:

“Compliance costs” are the costs of complying with Government regulation. Our Environmental Land Management Schemes provide farmers and land managers with the support they need to help restore nature, which is vital to safeguard our long-term

food security, support productivity and build resilience to climate change. Participation in these schemes is discretionary, and so they do not of themselves carry compliance costs.

■ **Animals: Import Controls**

Martin Wrigley: [\[36242\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will have discussions with international counterparts on changes to the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (the SPS Agreement) to support (a) zoo animal transfers and (b) commercial farmers; and if he will have discussions with representatives from Shaldon Zoo to discuss the application of the SPS Agreement to the Zoo's work.

Daniel Zeichner:

The World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures sets the overarching international rules on food safety, animal and plant health. It does not contain specifics on the movement of live animals.

For zoo animal transfers and commercial farm animal movements, Defra works with the officials in the importing country to ensure requirements are practical and achievable. Queries on animal movements can be sent to imports@apha.gov.uk or exports@apha.gov.uk, as relevant.

■ **Dangerous Dogs**

Will Stone: [\[42883\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will undertake an impact assessment on the XL Bully ban.

Daniel Zeichner:

Defra is continuing to engage closely with the Police, local authorities, and rescue and rehoming organisations to monitor the impacts of the XL Bully dog ban. These measures are vital to protect the public and we expect all XL Bully owners to comply with the conditions.

■ **Dangerous Dogs: Registration**

Adam Dance: [\[43714\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to publish public guidance on the process for withdrawing certificates of exemption for dogs wrongly registered as XL Bullies.

Daniel Zeichner:

We are currently working to develop a withdrawal scheme so that owners who no longer believe that their dog is an XL Bully can apply to have their certificate of

exemption for their dog withdrawn. Information about this process will be available soon.

■ **Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976**

Mr Gregory Campbell: [\[42420\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether it is his policy to review the effectiveness of the implementation of the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976.

Daniel Zeichner:

The Government currently has no plans to review the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976.

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

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[40636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the median age is of computers issued to officials in their Department.

Daniel Zeichner:

The median age of devices, since deployment, issued by Defra's IT team to officials working in Defra, Animal and Plant Health Agency, Climate Change Committee, Environment Agency, Marine Management Organisation, Natural England and Rural Payments Agency is 3.2 years.

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

Lee Anderson: [\[41931\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what diversity, equality and inclusion targets his Department has for staff recruitment.

Daniel Zeichner:

Defra complies with the Civil Service Recruitment Principles by ensuring that appointments to the Civil Service are made on the basis of merit following a fair and open competition.

There are four strategic Defra group equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) objectives for 2024-26. One of these objectives is to attract, empower and retain diverse talent. Defra does not have set targets for EDI in relation to recruitment. Defra seeks to draw on talent across all protected characteristics as well as geographical, social and career backgrounds, providing opportunities to build a workforce which is reflective of the communities we serve.

■ **Dover Port Health Authority: Finance**

Victoria Atkins: [\[42587\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 28 March 2025 to Question 35691 on Dover Port Health Authority: Finance,

how much funding his Department plans to provide to Dover Port Health Authority in the 2025-26 financial year.

Daniel Zeichner:

Defra remains committed to agreeing an appropriate funding model with Dover PHA to help tackle illegal imports. Officials are working with Dover Port Health Authority to agree funding for 2025/26.

■ **Environment Protection and Food Supply**

Martin Wrigley:

[\[38216\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of his Department's (a) resources and (b) staff to implement his policies on (i) environment protections and (ii) food security.

Daniel Zeichner:

Phase 1 of the Spending Review concluded in October last year and set Defra's budget for 2025-26. Phase 2 of the Spending Review is underway and will set our departmental budgets until 2028-29 for RDEL and 2029-30 for CDEL.

All departments are being asked to find savings and efficiencies in their budgets in an effort to ensure all public money is focused on the Government's priorities. For 2025-26 the department has carried out an intensive exercise to ensure resources and staff have been allocated to priorities, including environmental protection and food security.

Once the department has received its spending review settlement, we will finalise allocations for environmental protection and food security from 2026-27 until 2029-30.

■ **Environmental Protection: Regulation**

Joe Robertson:

[\[41744\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department maintains records of compliance costs for agricultural regulations.

Daniel Zeichner:

Costs of compliance for regulations are assessed through Impact Assessments when regulations are introduced according to the Better Regulation Framework. Defra regulators carry out regular monitoring and evaluation of regulations to understand their effectiveness.

Joe Robertson:

[\[41757\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department maintains accurate records of compliance costs for agricultural regulations.

Daniel Zeichner:

Costs of compliance for regulations are assessed through Impact Assessments when regulations are introduced according to the Better Regulation Framework. Defra

regulators carry out regular monitoring and evaluation of regulations to understand their effectiveness.

■ Fisheries: Costs

Joe Robertson:

[\[41740\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department is taking steps to (a) monitor and (b) reduce compliance costs for fisheries regulations.

Daniel Zeichner:

Costs of compliance for regulations are assessed through Impact Assessments when regulations are introduced according to the Better Regulation Framework. Defra regulators keep all regulations under review to understand their effectiveness. We are also mindful of the desire of the fishing industry to have bespoke regulation, appropriate for the stocks and circumstances. This can add complexity and costs, something we are considering as we develop and implement Fisheries Management Plans.

■ Food Supply: Carbon Emissions

Wendy Morton:

[\[42595\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of the Government's net zero policies on food supply from British producers.

Daniel Zeichner:

This Government is committed to delivering net zero by 2050 while ensuring that the transition to more climate friendly practices goes hand in hand with food security and farm profitability.

Alongside the recently announced Food Strategy, we will deliver a credible plan to decarbonise food and farming. As part of this, we will work with farmers to assess opportunities to drive economic growth and support British farming whilst protecting the environment. This includes accelerating the uptake of innovative technologies to increase productivity and efficiency in the agriculture sector that will support food production as well as reduce emissions.

■ Food: Public Opinion

Dr Allison Gardner:

[\[42932\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he plans to take to ensure that the opinions of people on (a) low and (b) middle incomes are adequately heard in the development of the food strategy.

Daniel Zeichner:

A key priority for the food strategy is to improve access to healthy food for everyone, including children and those on low and middle incomes, in order to give all children the best start in life and help adults live longer healthier lives.

We are forming a coalition with the food sector, academics and charities and key thinkers to pool our collective ideas, influence and effort, and ensure that a range of voices are heard as we develop the strategy.

We are developing a programme of stakeholder engagement that will include civil society and consumer group representatives. The Food Strategy Advisory Board, announced on 21 March, includes representatives from civil society organisations such as Anna Taylor from the Food Foundation and Ravi Gurumurthy of NESTA. This collaboration will ensure a systems-wide approach and a comprehensive food strategy.

■ Food: Public Sector**Sarah Champion:**[\[42454\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the press notice entitled Government announces reforms to boost profits for farmers with a cast iron commitment to food production, published on 9 January 2025, whether his Department plans to monitor food currently bought by (a) all public sector bodies and (b) Government departments.

Daniel Zeichner:

At the Oxford Farming Conference in January, I announced that, for the first time ever, the government will review food currently bought in Government Departments and the wider public sector, including where it is bought from. This is in line with the National Procurement Policy Statement, published in February alongside the Procurement Act coming into effect, which sets out the government's commitment to increasing the procurement of food that meets higher environmental standards, supporting local suppliers and upholding ethical sourcing practises across public sector contracts.

■ Horticulture: Subsidies**Ellie Chowns:**[\[42918\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will have discussions with representatives of the horticultural industry on an alternative to the Fruit and Vegetable Aid Scheme.

Daniel Zeichner:

The Government's commitment to our horticulture sector and its vital role in strengthening food security remains steadfast. Our proposed approach to future funding for horticulture will be considered alongside Defra's work to simplify and rationalise agricultural grant funding, ensuring that grants deliver the most benefit for food security and nature. This includes developing a 25-year Farming Roadmap,

which will involve government and the industry working together to identify solutions to challenges to make the sector more profitable in the decades to come.

We recognise the specific needs of the horticulture sector, and Defra ministers and officials meet regularly with a variety of growers from across the sector, (including a number of Producer Organisation members), to discuss a wide range of issues to help us understand how best to support sector.

■ Housing: Bricks

David Taylor:

[\[43708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of using swift bricks when building new homes.

Mary Creagh:

Natural England has identified that the lack of nest sites is a pressure on certain bird species, including the swift. Therefore, provision of swift bricks may aid recovery alongside other actions, such as to increase food resources.

The revised National Planning Policy Framework, published by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in 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 such as swift bricks which support priority or threatened species. Defra policy officials are also working with MHCLG colleagues to consider what action may be appropriate to drive up rates of swift brick installation in new build properties.

■ Housing: Construction

Kevin Hollinrake:

[\[42465\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of biodiversity net gain on (a) housebuilding costs and (b) levels of development.

Mary Creagh:

Mandatory biodiversity net gain establishes a consistent set of requirements which give developers clarity on how they can meet their net gain obligations and deliver developments which leave biodiversity in a better state.

The biodiversity net gain regulatory impact assessment determined that the additional costs of the policy would have a low impact on development viability.

As is the case with any new policy, we are collecting information and evidence about the implementation of mandatory biodiversity net gain. Government is committed to working closely with the housebuilding sector to make biodiversity net gain work effectively and implement solutions to unlock new homes without weakening environmental protections.

Katie White: [\[42987\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how he plans to (a) quantify and (b) measure the impact of new developments on biodiversity.

Mary Creagh:

Grants of planning permission for new development, unless exempt, are now subject to biodiversity net gain, requiring developers to achieve a 10% increase in biodiversity compared to the value of the site before the development proposal.

Developers must use the statutory biodiversity metric to measure and quantify how they will achieve the 10% net gain.

■ **Litter: Community Development**

Wendy Morton: [\[43068\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps is he taking to support participation in the Great British Spring Clean initiative.

Mary Creagh:

I was proud to speak at the launch event of the Great British Spring Clean in parliament in February. It is encouraging to see that there are a growing number of public-spirited individuals and community groups tackling litter all over the country. I also joined a litter pick with Defra officials and Keep Britain Tidy on 1 April where we cleaned part of the Regent's Canal in partnership with the Canal and River trust.

We will continue to use our influence to encourage as many people and business as possible to take part in such events.

■ **Livestock: Environmental Land Management Schemes**

Steve Race: [\[42695\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what consultation took place before setting the grazing densities (Livestock Grazing Unit Per Hectare) for all tiers of the Moorland Low Grazing Actions in Environmental Land Management schemes.

Daniel Zeichner:

The actions were developed in consultation with stakeholder organisations from the agricultural and environmental sectors and through workshops with groups of farmers as well as with Arm's Length Bodies (Natural England, Forestry Commission, Environment Agency, Historic England and the Rural Payments Agency).

■ **Livestock: Moorland**

Steve Race: [\[42696\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the efficacy of the grazing densities (Livestock Grazing Unit Per Hectare) on the enhancement of Moorland biodiversity was discussed with Natural England's expert Science Advisory Committees before publication.

Daniel Zeichner:

The actions were developed in liaison with specialists from Arms Lengths Bodies (Natural England, Forestry Commission, Environment Agency, Historic England and the Rural Payments Agency) and were assured by Arm's Lengths Bodies to ensure they are effective in contributing to environmental targets and offer value for money.

Steve Race:[\[42697\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what data analysis took place before Environmental Land Management scheme Low Grazing densities were published, to measure the difference or similarity in biodiversity enhancement achieved when an identical grazing density (grazing livestock unit per hectare) is applied to Moorland areas in different geographical and climatic regions of England.

Daniel Zeichner:

The Environmental Land Management scheme actions were designed and appraised using a variety of qualitative and quantitative data. Geomorphology, climate and historic management practices all combine to make each moorland unique. The offer therefore includes a range of actions that can be selected based on the needs of each moorland. This includes an annual moorland assessment to assess the habitats on each moorland and their condition to inform the choice of grazing actions.

■ National Parks: Finance**Caroline Voaden:**[\[43739\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what funding he has allocated to support National Parks in England in 2025-26.

Mary Creagh:

In 25/26 the Government is providing £44.8 million resource funding to the 10 National Park Authorities, alongside £15 million capital investment.

Projects in National Parks will also receive funding through extensions to our Farming in Protected Landscapes and Access to All programmes. We have extended Farming in Protected Landscapes until March 2026, providing £30 million across England's 10 National Parks and 34 National Landscapes. Access For All has also been extended to March 2026, with an additional £6.8 million for National Parks and National Landscapes to deliver improved access to nature for all users.

■ Packaging: Recycling**Dr Allison Gardner:**[\[42929\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of implementing a phased introduction of extended producer responsibility fees.

Mary Creagh:

We have taken a phased approach to implementing Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging (pEPR). Reporting obligations for this scheme were

introduced in 2024, and fee obligations for large producers introduced on 1 April 2025. From April 2026 PackUK will modulate fees to incentivise use of easily recyclable packaging material.

The pEPR policy has been under development since 2019, with extensive engagement and consultation providing businesses with a clear indication of the scheme's design and implementation. This policy underwent consultations in 2019, 2021, and a final consultation on reforms to the Packaging Recovery Note (PRN) system in 2022. Additionally, in 2023, the four nations of the UK consulted on the operability of the draft Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging and Packaging Waste) Regulations 2024, and further amendments were made to address stakeholder concerns prior to final regulations being introduced.

■ Per- and Polyfluorinated Alkyl Substances: Marine Environment

Anna Gelderd:

[\[43005\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he plans to take to help tackle the impact of Per- and Polyfluorinated Alkyl Substances in the marine environment.

Emma Hardy:

The UK Government is working closely with domestic regulators and key stakeholders to improve wider understanding and approach to managing the risks from PFAS. This includes working with the Environment Agency (EA) to assess levels of PFAS occurring in the environment, their sources, and potential risks to inform future policy and regulatory approaches. My department has asked the Health and Safety Executive to consider a UK REACH Restriction on PFAS in firefighting foams, and a proposal is due to be published soon. Internationally, PFAS were added to the OSPAR List of Chemicals for Priority Action in 2023. This list identifies substances considered to be a threat to the marine environment and the actions that OSPAR Contracting Parties (including the UK) should take to minimise those threats.

■ Pets: Animal Housing

Will Stone:

[\[42880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will introduce a mandatory regulated size requirement for gerbil and hamster cages.

Daniel Zeichner:

The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 (the LAIA Regulations) set strict animal welfare standards that commercial sellers of pets, such as gerbils and hamsters, must adhere to.

The accompanying statutory guidance sets out specific minimum enclosure size standards for animals such as gerbils and hamsters in pet shops. Under these regulations, sellers must also ensure that any equipment being sold with an animal, including enclosures, are suitable for its' needs.

The Animal Welfare Act 2006 also requires owners to meet the welfare needs of their pets, including the need for a suitable environment. Anyone failing to ensure that their animal's welfare needs are met may face an unlimited fine or be sent to prison for up to six months, or both.

■ Port of Dover: Disease Control

Dr Neil Hudson: [\[39976\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to continue to provide funding for biosecurity checks onsite at the Port of Dover.

Daniel Zeichner:

Defra remains committed to agreeing an appropriate funding model with Dover PHA to help tackle illegal imports. Officials are working with Dover Port Health Authority to agree funding for 2025/26.

■ Poultry: Norfolk

Steff Aquarone: [\[42810\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he expects the mandatory housing order for poultry in Norfolk to be lifted.

Daniel Zeichner:

Mandatory Housing combined with stringent biosecurity measures provides greater risk reduction and together these measures have been key in mitigating the risk of spread of avian influenza and keeping the case rate down in the face of extensive wild bird infection during the recent higher risk winter periods.

The need for Avian Influenza Prevention Zones (AIPZ) is kept under regular review as part of the government's work to monitor and manage the risks of avian influenza. Any decisions on introduction or amendment of AIPZs, including on addition or removal of mandatory housing measures, are based on risk assessments that take full account of the latest scientific and ornithological evidence and veterinary advice.

■ Recycling: Packaging

Wendy Morton: [\[42598\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of ensuring the extended producer responsibility (EPR) scheme meets the needs of industry.

Mary Creagh:

The UK Government has assessed the potential merits of ensuring the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) scheme meets industry needs through a range of measures. The scheme was developed with input from an industry-led advisory steering group which continues to guide its development and implementation. The four UK Governments have committed to the appointment of a Producer Responsibility Organisation (PRO). PackUK engaged with packaging material

specialists to inform fee development, while exemption thresholds were introduced to protect smaller businesses from disproportionate impacts.

To ensure cost efficiency, PackUK is responsible for delivering value for money for producers and managing costs effectively. Additionally, the Recyclability Assessment Methodology (RAM) was developed collaboratively with stakeholders from across the value chain to support fair and transparent fee modulation. Clear communication channels have also been established to enable businesses to raise concerns and provide feedback. The ongoing collaboration between industry and PackUK demonstrates the continued effort to engage with and meet the needs of businesses, ensuring that the EPR scheme remains both effective and commercially viable.

■ Responsible Dog Ownership Working Group

Josh Newbury: [\[41522\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will take steps to reconvene the Responsible Dog Ownership Working Group.

Adam Dance: [\[41692\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will reconvene the Responsible Dog Ownership Working Group.

Daniel Zeichner:

Defra is continuing to work with the police, local authorities and animal welfare groups to explore measures to reduce dog attacks and promote responsible dog ownership across all breeds of dog. We are currently considering the best way to take forward the Responsible Dog Ownership Taskforce.

■ Sugar Beet

Rachel Taylor: [\[42610\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to support sugar beet farmers on the negotiations with British Sugar.

Rachel Taylor: [\[42737\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions he has had with sugar beet farmers on negotiations with British Sugar.

Daniel Zeichner:

The Government recognises the importance of sugar beet farmers who are vital 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. That includes seeing a price agreed for sugar beet that benefits both growers and processors, in the context of the global market. There is a well-established process in place to agree the sugar beet price; designed to be independent between both parties. An Inter

Professional Agreement is agreed each year between both parties and sets out the process for negotiating and agreeing price, terms and conditions for the upcoming crop year, as well as any dispute resolution process.

■ Sustainable Farming Incentive

Martin Wrigley: [\[38215\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the Rural Payment Agency's ability to handle the change announced to SFIs this week.

Daniel Zeichner:

As the principal sponsor of the RPA, Defra works closely with RPA officials at every level to provide constructive challenge and support on RPA implementation of policy changes. The RPA's ability to implement policy changes is well understood and comprehensive planning and discussion is undertaken between the RPA and Farming and Countryside Programme to ensure that changes are implemented smoothly, including external communications and customer handling. There is full confidence and understanding of the RPAs ability to handle the recent announcement on the Sustainable Farming Incentive.

James Cartlidge: [\[39921\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what proportion of the Sustainable Farming Initiative was spent on family-owned farms in financial year 2024-2025.

Daniel Zeichner:

We do not hold information on ownership arrangements.

■ Sustainable Farming Incentive: Educational Visits

Dr Simon Opher: [\[42686\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 17 March to Question 36816 on Sustainable Farming Incentive: Educational Visits, whether the proposed standalone capital item for educational access will be included in the Sustainable Farming Incentive.

Daniel Zeichner:

The proposed stand-alone capital item for educational access is a separate offer from the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI). To be eligible for the education access payments applicants must have an SFI or other agri-environment or woodland agreement. We expect to publish more information about the reformed SFI offer in summer 2025.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**■ Afghanistan: British Nationals Abroad****Mr Peter Bedford:**[\[42102\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to help secure the release of Peter and Barbie Reynolds from Afghan authorities.

Mr Hamish Falconer:

We are supporting the family of two British nationals who are detained in Afghanistan. I met their family on 2 April and I am closely monitoring this case. We are unable to provide comment on the detail of individual consular cases in line with relevant UK data protection legislation: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/foreign-commonwealth-development-office/about/personal-information-charter>.

■ Aid Workers: Armed Conflict**Wendy Morton:**[\[41092\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to support humanitarian organisations in providing mental health support for workers who experience trauma in conflict zones.

Stephen Doughty:

We recognise the courage and commitment of those who take part in humanitarian operations and take their health and safety, including mental health and psychosocial well-being and safeguarding seriously.

The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) funding arrangements require partners to demonstrate sufficient capacity and capability to meet their obligations, including those relating to the physical and mental health of staff. This is tested through the FCDO's due diligence framework, which considers risks relevant to the programme in question.

■ Bangladesh: Christianity**Chris Evans:**[\[42437\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will take steps to help prevent the religious persecution of Christians in Bangladesh.

Catherine West:

The UK has a long-standing commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights, including Freedom of Religion or Belief. In November 2024, I visited Bangladesh and discussed the importance of the protection of religious minorities, including Christians, with Chief Adviser Yunus.

The UK is providing up to £27 million under the Bangladesh Collaborative, Accountable and Peaceful Politics programme for protecting civic and political space, fostering collaboration, reducing corruption, and mitigating tensions that lead to

violence. We support the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and their report on the violations that occurred last year.

■ Christianity: Religious Freedom

Wendy Morton: [\[41841\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking with his European counterparts to help tackle (a) intolerance and (b) other discrimination against Christians in Europe.

Stephen Doughty:

There is no space for religious intolerance in pluralistic, modern societies. We are championing the right to freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) and promoting tolerance and mutual respect through our engagement in multilateral fora, our bilateral work, and our programme funding. We will continue to recognise the impact of the issue of Christian persecution globally, alongside the persecution of other individuals on the basis of their religion or belief. The Special Envoy for FoRB met with European and US counterparts in the margins of the 58th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council in March. We actively participate in the Article 18 Alliance - bringing together 38 Member States, 26 of whom are European, to discuss actions our nations can take so that together we can promote respect for FoRB worldwide. Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office officials attended the Article 18 Alliance and International Contact Group meetings in Geneva in March.

■ Climate Change: Finance

Wendy Morton: [\[42470\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 19 March 2025 to Question 36412 on Climate Change: Finance, when he plans to publish this data for the 2024-25 financial year.

Stephen Doughty:

International Climate Finance spend for financial year 2024-25 will be available after the publication of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's Annual Report and Accounts later this year.

■ Developing Countries: Climate Change

Kanishka Narayan: [\[40852\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to help children maintain access to essential public services in countries impacted by climate change.

Stephen Doughty:

Climate change is one of the most significant challenges facing children around the world. We know that children are disproportionately at risk from the effects of climate change, and children and young people will be at the forefront of shaping a resilient, sustainable future. The UK-led Glasgow Climate Pact urges Parties and stakeholders

to ensure meaningful youth participation and representation in multilateral, national and local decision-making processes. We championed this approach at COP29, with the former Minister of State for Development meeting youth climate activists from developing countries, and UK Special Representative for Climate Rachel Kyte attending events alongside universities and the UN Youth Office to highlight the critical role of youth in climate action. I have also met with young people to discuss the impacts of climate change during my first to our overseas territories in the Caribbean.

■ Developing Countries: Cooperatives

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[42724\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential role of cooperative models in strengthening economic resilience in developing countries.

Catherine West:

Cooperatives and producer organisations have an important role to play in enabling smallholder farmers and communities to access services and markets and raise productivity sustainably. The UK has supported cooperatives and other forms of collective action through the Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme (GAFSP) managed by the World Bank, which has a dedicated funding facility for producer organisations, and the Commercial Agriculture for Smallholders and Agribusiness Programme (CASA), which provides support to help producer organisations in Africa access markets.

■ Developing Countries: Nuclear Power

Sir Gavin Williamson: [\[41400\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of establishing a Western-led initiative to provide nuclear energy infrastructure to the Global South.

Catherine West:

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office monitors international interest in nuclear energy and engages with western partners to understand and discuss this context. We expect nuclear energy to be part of the future energy mix for some countries and support the work done to ensure its safe and secure development.

Sir Gavin Williamson: [\[41401\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions his Department has had with developing countries on identifying UK-backed nuclear energy partnerships.

Catherine West:

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office is keen to understand and support countries with their transition to low carbon energy and engages in regular conversations with many countries, including developing countries. Understanding if,

when, where and how civil nuclear plays a role in that transition is an important part of this conversation.

■ Development Aid

Wendy Morton:

[\[41834\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Minister for International Development's letter of 14 March 2025 to the International Development Select Committee, how many (a) business cases, (b) contracts and (c) agreements for aid programmes were put on hold following the instruction issued to aid programmes.

Stephen Doughty:

As an immediate step to prepare for the reduction to the UK's Official Development Assistance (ODA) budget, the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) issued an instruction on 7 March to all ODA programme teams in FCDO not to approve new business cases, contracts or agreements, or announce new funding until initial allocations for FCDO ODA in the financial year 2025/26 are set. Payments under existing agreements has continued. In the Minister for Development's letter of Thursday 27 March to the International Development Committee, she confirmed FCDO's approach to setting initial ODA allocations for the financial year 2025/26, including the broad criteria against which new business cases, contracts and agreements will be considered through an exemption process. Given the ongoing exemption process, it is not possible to set out a total number of new business cases, contracts and agreements that FCDO ODA programme teams may have progressed but did not do so as a result of this approach. Guidance has been provided to teams to enable the ongoing development of business cases in high priority areas.

Wendy Morton:

[\[41836\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of changes to Overseas Development Assistance on WASH funding worldwide.

Stephen Doughty:

The UK recognises the fundamental role that clean water, sanitation and good hygiene play in terms of improving people's health and wellbeing, in helping communities adapt to the impacts of climate change, and in empowering women and girls. Official Development Assistance (ODA) allocations and the impact on programmes are being worked through following the decision to reduce UK ODA from 0.5 per cent of gross national income to 0.3 per cent in 2027. We will set out our spending plans following the completion of the spending review.

■ Guyana: Politics and Government

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[41012\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 20 March 2025 to Question 36369 Guyana: Politics and

Government, what steps have been taken by the Commonwealth Ministerial Group on Guyana to support Guyana's territorial integrity.

Catherine West:

The Commonwealth Ministerial Group on Guyana (CMGG) met on 3 September 2024 to discuss developments in the border controversy between Guyana and Venezuela. The group reiterated its support for Guyana's territorial integrity and for the ongoing International Court of Justice process. The Group also encouraged the Commonwealth Secretary-General to continue to use her Good Offices to support Guyana in upholding its territorial integrity. On 2 March 2025, the Secretary-General firmly condemned the entry of a Venezuelan coast guard vessel into Guyanese waters. Commonwealth support for Guyana's territorial integrity was also amplified by the Leaders' Statement following the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting 2024.

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[41013\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 20 March 2025 to Question 36369 on Guyana: Politics and Government, what steps he plans to take with international counterparts to de-escalate tensions related to Guyana's territorial integrity.

Catherine West:

The Foreign Secretary reiterated UK support for Guyana's territorial integrity on 2 March following the incursion of a Venezuelan coast guard vessel into Guyanese waters. The Joint Statement of the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Charlevoix further underlined support for Guyana. The UK will continue to work with our international partners to de-escalate tensions and underline support for the ongoing International Court of Justice process, for which Venezuela is due to submit their final written submission in August, as the lawful means of resolving this controversy.

■ **International Assistance: HIV Infection**

Paul Davies:

[\[42066\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking with international counterparts to help tackle HIV/AIDS.

Stephen Doughty:

We are proud of our long-standing support to global health organisations at the core of the response to HIV and AIDS, including the Global Fund, Unitaid and UNAIDS which have helped reduce AIDS-related deaths by 69 per cent since the peak in 2004. The UK has played, and continues to play, a significant role in this success. We are pleased to be co-hosting the 8th replenishment of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria together with South Africa. In 2023, 25 million people were on lifesaving antiretroviral therapy in countries where the Global Fund invests.

■ International Cooperation: Education

Fabian Hamilton: [\[42415\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his international counterparts on promoting education that fosters respect between different faiths and genders.

Catherine West:

The UK champions the right to freedom of religion or belief for all through our engagement in multilateral fora and our programme funding. We are committed to empowering women and girls around the world through our international work. The UK seeks to support quality, inclusive, and safe education systems that provide the knowledge and skills children need to thrive. Key to this is inclusive education which fosters respect between genders, which we support through several of our programmes and investments. For example, the UK's Education Quality Improvement Programme in Bangladesh (2021-2027) programme is enabling adolescent girls to stay in school by integrating gender-responsive approaches in national curricula and trialling innovative methods to support girls to remain and learn in schools.

■ International Development Association: Finance

Mr Gregory Campbell: [\[42418\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he plans to change funding committed to the International Development Association.

Stephen Doughty:

The UK is strongly committed to the International Development Association and its centrality in development finance. The impacts of the decision to reduce UK Official Development Assistance (ODA) from 0.5 per cent of gross national income to 0.3 per cent are still being worked through and we will be taking a rigorous approach to ensure all ODA delivers value for money. We will set out our spending plans following the completion of the Spending Review and departmental resource allocation processes.

■ Israel: Lebanon

Andrew Gwynne: [\[41811\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what diplomatic steps he is taking to help prevent the deterioration of the situation in southern Lebanon.

Mr Hamish Falconer:

The UK has made clear that all sides must maintain a cessation of hostilities and work towards securing a lasting peace. That is the only way to ensure security and stability for the people living on either side of the border. The UK continues to engage Israel and Lebanon to urge them to build on the progress made and implement fully the terms of the ceasefire agreement.

■ Palestinians: West Bank**Iqbal Mohamed:** [\[41265\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his counterpart in Israel on the rights of residents in Masafer Yatta in the West Bank.

Mr Hamish Falconer:

The Government condemns settler violence, and we are clear that the Israeli government must crack down on settler violence, stop settlement expansion, halt demolitions of Palestinian homes and reject annexation of the West Bank. The Foreign Secretary continues to raise the rights of Palestinians and the need for Israel to hold settler violence to account in his engagements with Israeli counterparts. We have always been clear that Israeli settlements are illegal under international law and harm prospects for a two-state solution. The demolitions of Palestinian homes causes unnecessary suffering to Palestinians. In all but the most exceptional of cases, demolitions by an occupying power are contrary to international law. Israel must cease its policy of demolitions and provide a clear route to construction for Palestinians in Area C.

■ Russia: Sanctions**Wendy Morton:** [\[41840\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he plans to apply further sanctions to assets associated with (a) the (i) owners and (ii) affiliated entities of Chelsea Football Club and (b) other Russian (A) people and (B) entities.

Stephen Doughty:

The UK has been clear that we need to keep the economic pressure on Russia to hinder its ability to wage war. The UK has sanctioned over 2,200 individuals and entities under the Russia sanctions regime, over 2,000 of which were sanctioned since Putin's full-scale invasion. We will not comment or speculate on future designations as to do so could reduce their impact. We are determined to see the proceeds from the sale of Chelsea FC reach humanitarian causes in Ukraine as soon as possible and we are doing everything we can to bring that about quickly.

Wendy Morton: [\[42469\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his (a) EU and (b) US counterparts on the use of (i) proceeds from the sale of Chelsea Football Club and other (ii) assets (A) frozen and (B) seized via sanctions.

Stephen Doughty:

We are determined to see the proceeds from the sale of Chelsea FC reach humanitarian causes in Ukraine as soon as possible. The Government is working closely with the European Commission and Portugal on this issue. Separately, we

continue our work at pace with allies to consider all lawful routes to ensure Russia pays for the damage it is causing Ukraine. The Foreign Secretary is having regular discussions with key partners on this issue, including at the Weimar+ Group on Monday 31 March.

■ SS Tilawa

Harpreet Uppal: [\[43360\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he plans to mark the 83rd anniversary of the sinking of the SS Tilawa.

Harpreet Uppal: [\[43361\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make representations to the Government of Japan to respond to longstanding correspondence relating to the sinking of the SS Tilawa.

Catherine West:

The sinking of the S.S. Tilawa is a tragedy that has touched the lives of so many. Alongside the Prime Minister, I reiterate my heartfelt condolences to all the victims and families affected. On the 80th Anniversary of VE/VJ Day this year, the UK will honour the lives lost in all conflicts, including those from the S.S. Tilawa on its important 83rd Anniversary. I cannot comment on the subject of correspondence to the Government of Japan regarding S.S. Tilawa, which is a private and reserved matter.

■ Sudan: Humanitarian Aid

Wendy Morton: [\[39009\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the oral statement by the Prime Minister of 25 February 2025 on Defence and Security, Official Report, column 634, what steps he plans to take to provide humanitarian support in Sudan; and which aid programmes will continue to operate.

Stephen Doughty:

The Sudan conflict has created the largest and most severe humanitarian crisis in the world with over 30 million people in need of assistance. UK funded organisations are providing life-saving assistance in Sudan and to those who have sought refuge in Chad and other neighbouring countries. This financial year (FY) the UK will provide £226.5 million towards the crisis. This funding includes support to key UN agencies such as the World Food Programme (WFP) and UNICEF who are providing critical food assistance and other support. We are also one of the largest donors to the UN-led Sudan Humanitarian Fund (SHF) which provides support to local and national responders, Emergency Response Rooms and international non-governmental organisations. The UK continues to support the International Committee of the Red Cross, including their work on emergency preparedness and response, protection of civilians, and providing life-saving healthcare across Sudan. Once budgets for FY

25/26 have been finalised we will be able to share information about those programmes that will continue.

■ United Nations: Finance

Wendy Morton: [\[39448\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking with international partners to help ensure that UN Member States pay assessed contributions (a) in full and (b) on time.

Stephen Doughty:

The UK is proud of its longstanding support to the UN. We continue to show leadership and, together with partners, call on Member States to pay their Regular Budget contributions "in full and on time", as the UK has done consistently. We unambiguously assert this at all international meetings that include discussions on UN budgetary issues, particularly in the current UN liquidity crisis.

The UK submitted its regular budget contribution of USD \$137 million for 2025 "in full and on time"; the first permanent UN Security Council member to do so and 7th overall.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Accident and Emergency Departments: Standards

Helen Morgan: [\[43126\]](#)

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 available and published to support improvements to urgent and emergency care services under review.

NHS England has been working with trusts since 2024 to put in place new reporting arrangements related to the use of temporary escalation spaces, 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.

Helen Morgan: [\[43127\]](#)

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 are unacceptable and lead to worse patient outcomes. Patients should expect and

receive the highest standards 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, we published the National Health Service's mandate and planning guidance for 2025/26, which 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 an emergency department 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.

■ **Ambulance Services: Standards**

Jessica Toale:

[42847]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve ambulance waiting times in (a) Bournemouth West constituency, (b) Dorset, (c) the South West and (d) England.

Karin Smyth:

Ambulance services in Bournemouth West, Dorset, and the South West are provided by the South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust, with commissioning responsibility for the services being a matter for the local NHS Dorset Integrated Care Board. Specific local actions to reduce ambulance waiting times should be undertaken and agreed locally by National Health Service organisations in the best interests of the local population and patients.

At a national level, the Government and NHS England are committed to improving ambulance response times. The NHS 2025/26 priorities and operational planning guidance set national priorities, which include improving accident and emergency waiting times and ambulance response times compared to 2024/25.

■ **Ankylosing Spondylitis: Diagnosis**

Markus Campbell-Savours:

[42372]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average time taken to diagnose ankylosing spondylitis was in each of the last five years.

Ashley Dalton:

We do not hold data in the format requested. To support health and care professionals in the early diagnosis of musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions, such as ankylosing spondylitis, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has published expert guidance on the diagnosis and management of spondyloarthritis in over 16 year olds, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng65>

The NICE guidance aims to raise awareness of the features of spondyloarthritis and provide clear advice on what action to take when people with signs and symptoms first present in healthcare settings.

As announced in the Get Britain Working white paper, we are delivering the joint Department for Work and Pensions, Department of Health and Social Care, and NHS England Getting It Right First-Time (GIRFT) MSK Community Delivery Programme. With a £3.5 million funding boost, GIRFT teams will deploy their proven Further Faster model to work with integrated care board leaders to further reduce MSK community waiting times, including for those with ankylosing spondylitis, and improve data, metrics, and referral pathways to wider support services.

■ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: Diagnosis

Max Wilkinson:

[42771]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of ADHD diagnoses made by private sector specialist clinics.

Max Wilkinson:

[42772]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of the framework governing private clinics offering ADHD diagnoses.

Stephen Kinnock:

The Department has not made these assessments. Medical practitioners must demonstrate that they work in line with the principles and values set out in the General Medical Council's (GMC) Good Medical Practice. This applies to all doctors, whether they work in the National Health Service, the independent sector, or undertake private work. The GMC is the regulator of all medical doctors, anaesthesia associates, and physician associates practising in the United Kingdom, and is directly accountable to Parliament.

Additionally, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is an independent public body that provides national guidance and advice to improve health and social care. The guideline for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) aims to improve recognition and diagnosis, as well as the quality of care and support for people with ADHD. When exercising their judgement, professionals and practitioners are expected to take this guideline fully into account, alongside the individual needs, preferences, and values of their patients or the people using their service. The NICE guideline recommends that an ADHD diagnosis should only be made by a licenced specialist psychiatrist, paediatrician, or other healthcare professional with specialist training in ADHD diagnosis. We expect integrated care boards and private providers to take the NICE's guidelines fully into account when commissioning and providing services on behalf of the NHS.

Independent providers who offer diagnosis and treatment of ADHD are currently in scope of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014, and are therefore regulated by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). However, independent providers who only offer diagnosis of ADHD, without any form of treatment, are not within scope of CQC registration, as the regulations currently stand. Further information on the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014 is available at the following link:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2014/9780111117613/schedule/1>

■ Autism and Special Educational Needs: South West

Jessica Toale:

[42843]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average waiting time was for (a) autism assessments and (b) SEND assessments in (i) Bournemouth West constituency, (b) Dorset and (c) the South West in the latest period for which data is available.

Stephen Kinnock:

Information on autism assessments is not held centrally in the format requested, but may be held by individual providers or integrated care boards (ICBs). Some relevant information is available on autism assessment waiting times for the NHS Dorset ICB and the South West commissioning region.

In the NHS Dorset ICB, the Autism Waiting Time Statistics published by NHS England show that there were a total of 1,000 patients, of all ages, with an open suspected autism referral in December 2024, the latest available data. The median waiting time of all patients in this ICB with an open suspected autism referral, where their first care contact was in the quarter, was 62 days in December 2024.

In the South West commissioning region, the Autism Waiting Time Statistics show that there were a total of 23,030 patients, of all-ages, with an open suspected autism referral in December 2024. The median waiting time of all patients in the South West commissioning region with an open suspected autism referral, where their first care contact was in the quarter, was 548 days in December 2024. Caution should be used when interpreting these statistics, since they are experimental rather than official statistics.

Schools decide whether a pupil has additional needs that warrant them being on the school's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) register. Some relevant information on waiting times for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) for children with SEND is available from the GOV.UK website, with the latest data available being from 2023, at the following link:

<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/3ba82524-3944-4f30-c442-08dd57945a2e>

In Dorset, 60.2% of EHCPs, including exceptions, were issued within 20 weeks, and in the South West, 33.0% of EHCPs, including exceptions, were issued within 20 weeks.

■ Autism: Diagnosis

Jessica Toale:

[\[42804\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to increase the availability of autism assessments in (a) England and (b) Bournemouth West constituency.

Stephen Kinnock:

It is the responsibility of integrated care board (ICBs) to make available appropriate provision to meet the health and care needs of their local population, including autism assessments and diagnosis, in line with relevant National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines. In doing so, ICBs should take account of waiting lists, and should consider how local funding can be deployed to best meet the needs of their local population.

On 5 April 2023, NHS England published national framework and operational guidance to help ICBs and the National Health Service to deliver improved outcomes for children, young people, and adults referred to an autism assessment service. Since publication, NHS England has been supporting systems and services to identify where there are challenges for implementation, and how they might overcome these.

NHS England is also working with research organisations to explore evidence-based models that support improved outcomes for those people waiting for an autism assessment.

The NHS Dorset ICB advises that it has conducted a review with local partners and people with lived experience to help develop plans to improve services. The ICB plans to introduce a local tool, which will be available to people working with children and young people, to identify their individual needs and provide support ahead of assessment. The ICB further advises that it is looking at creating additional assessment appointments over the next two years, while it develops a longer-term plan to create neurodiversity services which are fit for the future and provide all local people with the support they need.

■ Brain: Tumours

Dr Kieran Mullan:

[\[39128\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 20 February 2025 to Question 28573 on Brain: Tumours, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of including grading in the national cancer plan to help improve (a) treatment and (b) outcomes for brain tumour patients.

Ashley Dalton:

There are currently limited treatment options available for people who have been diagnosed with brain tumours, at any grade. The Government has invested in new lifesaving and life-improving research, supporting those diagnosed and living with brain tumours.

In September 2024, the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) announced new research funding opportunities for brain cancer research, spanning both adult and paediatric populations. This includes a national NIHR Brain Tumour Research Consortium, to ensure the most promising research opportunities are made available to adult and child patients and a new funding call to generate high quality evidence in brain tumour care, support, and rehabilitation.

The National Cancer Plan will include further details on how we will improve outcomes for all cancer patients including those with brain tumours. However, we do not expect to consider the grading of brain tumours as part of the National Cancer Plan.

■ Breast Cancer: Disadvantaged**Mr James Frith:****[41968]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to address health inequalities in breast cancer prevention by ensuring that women in disadvantaged areas have (a) safe and (b) affordable access to (i) facilities and (ii) resources to maintain a healthy (A) lifestyle, (B) diet and (C) level of physical activity.

Ashley Dalton:

Tackling health inequalities, including in breast cancer prevention, requires a whole-Government effort. That is why there is ongoing work across the Government, from housing and education to employment and welfare, to ensure that health is built into all policies.

NHS England is working with integrated care systems, local authorities, and the directors of public health to embed regional and local solutions to reducing inequalities, ensuring that communities, including in deprived areas, have the power and resources to improve health outcomes, for instance through the maintenance of a healthy lifestyle.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs is developing an ambitious new cross-Government Food Strategy that will set the food system up for long-term success and provide wide ranging improvements. The Food Strategy will work to provide healthier, more easily accessible food to help people live longer, healthier lives.

By aligning policy efforts across health, social care, local government, and the voluntary sector, the Government is committed to driving real change, so that everyone, regardless of their background, has the opportunity to live a longer, healthier life.

The Government's goal is to reduce the time people spend in ill health, support independence, and close the healthy life expectancy gap, ensuring that no one's health outcomes are determined by their background or where they are born.

■ **Breast Cancer: Lymphoedema**

Liz Jarvis: [\[40334\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of access to (a) compression treatment and (b) other follow-up care for women with arm lymphoedema after breast cancer treatment.

Ashley Dalton:

No assessment has been made on the adequacy of access to compression treatment or follow-up care for women with arm lymphoedema after breast cancer treatment.

Local health service commissioners – through Integrated Care Boards - determine what lymphoedema services are needed locally, based on the needs of their local population.

The NHS' roll-out of personalised care ensures people with cancer have a holistic needs assessment, covering both their physical and psychosocial needs, and are referred to services where appropriate. Lymphoedema support is in the NHS' Personalised Stratified Follow-Up (PSFU) handbook as a required part of PSFU pathways, however it does not cover the specifics of treatment.

We know that more should be done to support people living with and beyond cancer. The National Cancer Plan, coming later this year, will set out how we will seek to improve the experience and outcomes for people at every stage of the cancer pathway. It will look at how we can improve communication and coordination for patients, so that they feel informed and in control of their care.

■ **Cancer: Health Services**

Clive Jones: [\[42940\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how the National Cancer Plan will be funded; and whether the funding will include ring-fenced resources specifically for children's and young people's cancers.

Ashley Dalton:

The National Cancer Plan will focus on how we make things better for patients through reforming the cancer sector and improving efficiency, building on the steps announced in the Elective Reform Plan. This will support a more scrupulous and effective use of funds in the future.

At the 2024 Autumn Budget, the Government made nearly £26 billion available to the health and care system over two years, to fix the foundations of our broken National Health Service. We will review cancer funding, including funding for children and young people's cancers, as part of the forthcoming Spending Review.

■ Cancer: Young People

Bambos Charalambous:

[\[42270\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to tackle inequalities in (a) access to clinical trials and (b) specialist psychological support for young people with cancer.

Ashley Dalton:

The Department is committed to maximising the United Kingdom's potential to lead the world in clinical research and to ensuring that clinical trials are more accessible.

The Department funded National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) funds research and research infrastructure, which supports patients and the public to participate in high-quality research, including clinical trial participation for young people with cancer.

The NIHR has made research inclusion a condition of its funding. Applicants to domestic research programmes are required to demonstrate how inclusion is being built into all stages of the research lifecycle, and are also required to provide details of how their research contributes towards the NIHR's mission to reduce health and care inequalities. Before the end of March 2026, this will also be required for global health research and infrastructure awards.

The Department is dedicated to ensuring that all children and young people with cancer have access to psychological support, to help them through their diagnosis and treatment.

NHS England has published service specifications that set out the service standards required of all providers of children and young people's cancer services. The requirements include ensuring that every patient has access to specialist care and reducing physical, emotional, and psychological morbidity arising from the treatment for childhood cancer. Further information on NHS England's published service specifications is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/commissioning/spec-services/npc-crg/group-b/b05/>

Children and young people's cancer care is managed by Principal Treatment Centres (PTCs) who ensure quality care. Each PTC has a multi-disciplinary team which meets at least weekly and includes a specific focus on the psychosocial needs of patients. The multi-disciplinary team ensures that each service user is assessed for psychological needs and can access any psychosocial support that is required.

■ Care Homes and Primary Care: Inspections

Dame Caroline Dinenge:

[\[41024\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of waiting times for Care Quality Commission initial inspections for (a) GP practices, (b) dental practices and (c) care homes.

Dame Caroline Dinenge:[\[41025\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to reduce waiting times for Care Quality Commission initial inspections for (a) GP practices, (b) dental practices and (c) care homes.

Ashley Dalton:

[Holding answer 31 March 2025]: The Department has introduced additional oversight measures to ensure significant improvements are made to the Care Quality Commission's (CQC) operational performance.

CQC is aware of the issues providers have experienced with delays in processing registration applications and the reduction in the number of assessments it undertakes.

CQC is progressing four immediate actions and five foundational improvements, which includes clearing the backlog of registration applications and making improvements to its assessment approach to enable it to complete more, and better quality, assessments. These actions will ensure CQC is more efficient, and lead to a reduction in the time providers wait before they receive a first inspection and rating.

■ Care Quality Commission**Dr Neil Shastri-Hurst:**[\[42196\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the role of the Care Quality Commission in the new NHS structure post NHS England.

Ashley Dalton:

Ministers and senior Department officials will work with the new transformation team at the top of NHS England, led by Sir Jim Mackey, to lead this transformation. The whole health and care sector, including all relevant Arms Length Bodies, needs to work effectively for patients.

■ Community Health Services: Medical Equipment**Joe Robertson:**[\[42143\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of the recent National Living Wage increase and National Insurance Contributions rise on the financial viability of community equipment providers.

Joe Robertson:[\[42144\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to support community equipment providers in managing rising operational costs while ensuring continued service provision.

Joe Robertson:

[\[42145\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with representatives from the community equipment sector on the potential impact of costs on service availability and patient access.

Karin Smyth:

At the 2024 Autumn Budget, the Government announced a £22.6 billion increase in day-to-day health spending and a £3.1 billion increase in the capital budget over financial years 2024/2025 and 2025/2026. Departmental budgets beyond 2025/26 will be set through phase two of the Spending Review, which will conclude and be published in June 2025.

The rise in employer National Insurance contributions (ENIC) will be implemented from April 2025, and NHS England has published planning guidance setting out the funding available to integrated care boards and the overall approach to funding for National Health Service providers in the next financial year, which takes account of a variety of pay and non-pay factors and pressures on providers of secondary healthcare. The NHS Payment Scheme is equally applicable to NHS and non-NHS providers of secondary healthcare, and published national prices include an estimate of ENIC costs.

Local NHS procuring authorities, whether integrated care boards or NHS providers, are responsible for discussing and agreeing contracts with community equipment providers, which will take into account the resources available to them. Economic growth is the Government's number one mission, and the Government supports businesses to invest, grow, and export, creating jobs and opportunities across the country. To support the growth mission, the Government is driving forward work to implement a modern Industrial Strategy, to reset trade relations, to support small business, and to deliver a new deal for working people.

■ **Counselling and Psychiatry: Regulation**

Lisa Smart:

[\[42624\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential impact of levels of statutory regulation of (a) counsellors and (b) psychotherapists on patient safety.

Lisa Smart:

[\[42625\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to introduce statutory regulation for (a) counsellors and (b) psychotherapists to help ensure minimum standards of (i) training, (ii) supervision and (iii) professional conduct.

Lisa Smart:

[\[42626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help prevent people without accreditation from offering paid counselling services.

Karin Smyth:

There are no current plans to extend statutory regulation to therapists and counsellors, and no recent assessment has been made of the potential impact of the lack of statutory regulation on patient safety.

When considering which professions should be protected in law the Government is clear that the level of regulatory oversight must be proportionate to the risks to the public, and that statutory regulation of healthcare professionals should only be used where the risks to public and patient protection cannot be addressed in other ways, such as through employer oversight or accredited voluntary registration. Decisions about which professions are regulated, and which professional job titles are protected, are made by the Government and by Parliament.

Health professionals that are not subject to statutory regulation can join voluntary registers accredited by the Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care (PSA). The Government would encourage anyone accessing mental health services to use a practitioner who is subject to statutory regulation or voluntary registration accredited by the PSA.

■ Dementia**Jessica Toale:**[\[42792\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of dementia diagnosis rates in (a) England and (b) Dorset.

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 the implementation of the Dementia Care Pathway, we have developed a memory service dashboard to support commissioners and providers with appropriate data on the diagnostic pathway and enable targeted support where needed.

To aid dementia diagnosis and provision of support in care homes, NHS England has funded an evidence-based improvement project to fund two trusts in each region (14 sites) to pilot the Diagnosing Advanced Dementia Mandate protocol. Learning is currently being shared and promoted with regional and local partners following an impact assessment of the pilots.

Published data collated in February 2025 shows that the South West region has diagnosed 61.2% of the expected prevalence. The current DDR in Dorset is 57%. Dorset Integrated Care System is finalising a formal Dementia Diagnosis Review with the aim of establishing a fully co-produced model, from pre-diagnosis to post-diagnosis, to improve the offer to their local population.

■ Dementia: Clinical Trials

Freddie van Mierlo:

[\[43301\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many phase (a) one, (b) two and (c) three dementia clinical trials there have been in the UK in each of the last ten years; and how many participants were recruited for each of those trials.

Stephen Kinnock:

The Department delivers dementia research via the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR). The Department does not hold information centrally on clinical trials hosted in Wales and Scotland. The Department is therefore unable to provide how many phase one, phase two, and phase three clinical trials for dementia have taken place in Wales and Scotland in each of the last 10 years.

The following table shows the number of phase one, two, and three trials in England for dementia, supported by the NIHR Research Delivery Network, from 2014/15 to 2023/24:

YEAR	PHASE 1	PHASE 2	PHASE 3
2014/15	-	12	17
2015/16	1	15	18
2016/17	-	12	24
2017/18	1	14	26
2018/19	1	12	18
2019/20	2	13	6
2020/21	1	8	8
2021/22	2	13	11
2022/23	4	11	11
2023/24	4	13	9

In addition, the following table shows the number of participants recruited into phase one, two, and three trials in England for dementia, supported by the NIHR Research Delivery Network, from 2014/15 to 2023/24:

YEAR	PHASE 1	PHASE 2	PHASE 3
2014/15	-	755	663
2015/16	10	843	1,165
2016/17	-	464	625

YEAR	PHASE 1	PHASE 2	PHASE 3
2017/18	3	415	471
2018/19	12	577	7,473
2019/20	4	600	440
2020/21	2	48	46
2021/22	6	35	61
2022/23	4	68	75
2023/24	15	123	190

Note: studies are sometimes conducted across multiple phases, for example a study may cross phase one/two or phase two/three. Therefore, figures cannot be totalled.

■ Dementia: Research

Freddie van Mierlo: [\[43300\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding was allocated to dementia research by (a) the National Institute for Health and Care Research, (b) UK Research and Innovation and (c) other public bodies in each of the last five years.

Stephen Kinnock:

The Government's responsibility for delivering dementia research is shared between the Department of Health and Social Care, with research delivered via the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR), and the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, with research delivered via UK Research and Innovation (UKRI).

The following table shows NIHR and UKRI spend data for dementia research across five financial years, from 2019/20 to 2023/24:

YEAR	NIHR	UKRI	TOTAL
2019/20	£29,000,000	£56,600,000	£85,600,000
2020/21	£21,900,000	£63,700,000	£85,600,000
2021/22	£30,300,000	£56,000,000	£86,300,000
2022/23	£35,100,000	£64,800,000	£99,900,000
2023/24	£42,800,000	£96,300,000	£139,000,000
Total	£159,100,000	£337,400,000	£496,400,000

Spend for dementia research is calculated retrospectively, with a time lag due to annual reporting cycles, therefore 2023/24 is the most recent year for which we have data. The Department does not centrally hold data on dementia research funding from other public bodies.

The NIHR welcomes funding applications for research into any aspect of human health and care, including dementia. These applications are subject to peer review and judged in open competition, with awards being made on the basis of the importance of the topic to patients and health and care services, value for money, and scientific quality. All NIHR programmes welcoming applications on dementia enables maximum flexibility both in terms of the amount of research funding a particular area can be awarded, and the type of research which can be funded.

■ **Dental Services: Contracts**

Rachel Blake: [\[43000\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of changes which need to be made to the NHS Dental contracting framework.

Stephen Kinnock:

To rebuild dentistry in the long term and increase access to National Health Service dental care, we will reform the dental contract, with a shift to focus on prevention and the retention of NHS dentists.

There are no perfect payment systems and careful consideration needs to be given to any potential changes to the complex dental system, so that we deliver a system better for patients and the profession.

We are continuing to meet with the British Dental Association and other representatives of the dental sector to discuss how we can best deliver our shared ambition to improve access for NHS dental patients.

■ **Dental Services: Finance**

Jo Platt: [\[42621\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of re-evaluating the Units of Dental Activity formula.

Ashley Dalton:

To rebuild dentistry in the long term and increase access to National Health Service dental care, we will reform the dental contract, with a shift to focus on prevention and the retention of NHS dentists.

There are no perfect payment systems and careful consideration needs to be given to any potential changes to the complex dental system, so that we deliver a system better for patients and the profession.

We are continuing to meet with the British Dental Association and other representatives of the dental sector to discuss how we can best deliver our shared ambition to improve access for NHS dental patients.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Translation Services

Lee Anderson: [\[40621\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the total cost was of providing translation services in his Department in the last year.

Karin Smyth:

The Department uses external suppliers to meet its requirements for translation and interpretation services. In the 2024 calendar year, the cost to the Department was £16,833.

■ Diabetes: Screening

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[42727\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the potential implications for his policies of levels of screening of type 1 diabetes.

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[42728\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of screening relatives of people with type 1 diabetes.

Ashley Dalton:

The Early Surveillance for Autoimmune diabetes (ELSA) study is researching a screening programme for children, aged three to 13 years old, to detect for type 1 diabetes with a simple finger stick blood test. This looks for four antibodies, protein markers, which are associated with a higher risk of developing diabetes. Further information is available at the following link:

<https://www.elsadiabetes.nhs.uk/>

This study is currently screening children across the United Kingdom to identify those at risk of developing type 1 diabetes. The programme has been running through schools and general practice surgeries, as well as through online recruitment, and has been hugely successful, with over 24,000 children stepping forward for this test. The ELSA study launched in November 2022 with the intention for all enrolled children to be screened by the end of February 2025. The Department is awaiting the publication of the results of this study.

■ Doctors: Recruitment

Lee Anderson: [\[41986\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure the provision of healthcare jobs for British born medical graduates.

Karin Smyth:

The Government is committed to growing homegrown talent and giving opportunities to more people across the country to join our National Health Service.

Decisions about recruitment are matters for individual NHS 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.

Internationally educated staff remain an important part of the workforce, and our Code of Practice for International Recruitment ensures stringent ethical standards when recruiting health and social care staff from overseas.

■ Endometriosis: Diagnosis

Markus Campbell-Savours: [\[42373\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department plans to take to ensure accurate recording of a presumed diagnosis of endometriosis in primary care.

Stephen Kinnock:

General practices are expected to follow National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) clinical guidance for the treatment and management of clinical conditions, as part of meeting the reasonable needs of patients. The NICE guidance on endometriosis is available at the following link:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng73?UID=83951178202532511728>

■ Energy Drinks: Children

Blair McDougall: [\[42714\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made a recent assessment of the potential impact of energy drinks on children under 16.

Ashley Dalton:

As set out in the King's Speech, we plan to bring forward the necessary secondary legislation to deliver on our commitment to ban the sale of high-caffeine energy drinks to children under the age of 16 years old.

We are developing plans which consider the potential impact of high-caffeine energy drinks on children, and will set these out in a consultation in due course.

■ Healthy Start Scheme: Chester South and Eddisbury

Aphra Brandreth: [\[42357\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of eligible families are receiving Healthy Start in Chester South and Eddisbury constituency.

Ashley Dalton:

The NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) operates the Healthy Start scheme on behalf of the Department. Monthly figures for the number of people on the digital

Healthy Start scheme are published on the NHS Healthy Start website, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/healthcare-professionals/>

The NHSBSA does not hold data on the number of families receiving Healthy Start. The Chester South and Eddisbury constituencies are included within the local authority areas of Chester West and Chester, within NHSBSA data reporting. The total number of people on the scheme for Chester South and Eddisbury in March 2025 was 1,729.

The NHSBSA does not currently hold data on the number of people who are eligible for the scheme. An issue was identified with the source data that is used to calculate uptake of the NHS Healthy Start scheme. The NHSBSA has therefore removed data for the number of people eligible for the scheme and the uptake percentage from January 2023 onwards.

The issue has only affected the data on the number of people eligible for the scheme. It has not prevented anyone from joining the scheme or continuing to access the scheme if they were eligible.

■ **Healthy Start Scheme: Staffordshire**

Dr Allison Gardner:

[\[42930\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many families are receiving support from Healthy Start in (a) Stoke-on-Trent and (b) Stafford.

Ashley Dalton:

The NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) operates the Healthy Start scheme on behalf of the Department. Monthly figures for the number of people on the digital Healthy Start scheme are published on the NHS Healthy Start website, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/healthcare-professionals/>

The NHSBSA does not hold data on the number of families receiving Healthy Start. The number of people receiving support from the Healthy Start scheme in March 2025 in Stoke-on-Trent was 2,592, and in Stafford was 566.

■ **Heart Diseases: Medical Treatments**

Ben Lake:

[\[38654\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to reduce the time taken for people displaying symptoms of inherited cardiac condition to receive a diagnosis from (a) GPs and (b) cardiac specialists.

Ben Lake:

[\[38655\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with his Welsh counterpart on levels of diagnosis of inherited cardiac conditions in Wales.

Ben Lake: [\[38656\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to (a) support and (b) ensure equitable access to new treatments for people with inherited cardiac conditions.

Ben Lake: [\[38657\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve the uptake of (a) existing and (b) new treatments for people with inherited cardiac conditions.

Ashley Dalton:

In 2017, NHS England published a national service specification for inherited cardiac conditions (ICC) which defines the standards of care expected from organisations commissioned by NHS England. The specification sets the national minimum standards for the diagnosis, treatment, and outcome of patients with ICC.

NHS England is reviewing this service specification, working with a broad range of stakeholders, including National Health Service clinical experts, the Association of Inherited Cardiac Conditions, Cardiomyopathy UK, Heart Valve Voice, and the British Heart Foundation. This review considers the referral of ICC patients from primary care into ICC specialised services and considers how families of ICC patients are supported through the screening and identification process. The service specification review has also considered referrals directly from primary into secondary care, which would improve the timeliness of patient diagnosis.

Department ministers regularly have discussions with their colleagues and counterparts in Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland on matters of cross border interest.

■ **Levetiracetam**

Samantha Niblett: [\[42885\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 28 March 2025 to Question 40872 on Epilepsy: Drugs, what steps he is taking to support patients whose neurologist has specified that Levetiracetam must come from Millfarm.

Karin Smyth:

The Department is not aware of any supply issues with levetiracetam tablets from the manufacturer, Milpharm. Pharmacies can obtain stocks from their usual wholesalers.

■ **Maternity Services: Negligence**

Ben Obese-Jecty: [\[42333\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 25 March 2025 to Question 39649 on NHS: Negligence, how many maternity negligence payments have been made to an adult claimant who was the victim of medical negligence at birth since 6 April 2019.

Ashley Dalton:

NHS Resolution (NHSR) manages clinical negligence and other claims against the National Health Service in England. The following table shows the number of clinical negligence claims where the periodical payment orders (PPO) or settlement was equal or above the £4.75 million threshold, where payments were made for 'life-changing' injuries, excluding 'fatality' at any level, within the specialty of obstetrics, each year from 2019/20 to 2023/24:

PAYMENT YEAR	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Claims	774	782	778	786	782

Notes:

1. NHSR cannot break down the table by an adult and child split as NHSR often receive claims from both the mother and child for the same incident. NHSR's coding does not distinguish who the claim relates to and so they have provided the data based on incidents preceding April 2001, with a presumption that a claimant continuing to receive payments for such an incident would be an adult by 2019;
2. in terms of life-changing injuries, NHSR does not code for this and therefore cannot provide data. The term life-changing injuries could also have various meanings. NHSR has, however, provided data using its actuarial value for PPO payments, which is over £4.7 million. Any case which is estimated to settle over this value will have life-changing injuries. There will be claims below that level that have life changing injuries, but this is the best way that NHSR can try and provide this data; and
3. as the data relates to payments made during the relevant financial years, it is also possible that the same claim may appear more than once in the dataset. For example, one payment is made in 2021/22, and a separate payment is made in 2022/23 for the same claim.

■ Members: Correspondence

Clive Jones:**[R] [35076]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when his Department plans to respond to the hon. Member for Wokingham in relation to the correspondence of 5 February 2025 from the Leader of the House on the number of newly-qualified GPs employed under the Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme GP Sum in each integrated care board since August 2024.

Stephen Kinnock:

I replied to the hon. Member on 4 April 2025.

■ Multiple Sclerosis: Diagnosis

Markus Campbell-Savours:

[\[42371\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average time taken to diagnose multiple sclerosis was in each of the last five years.

Ashley Dalton:

We do not hold data in the format requested. The latest data for referral to treatment waiting times in England, from January 2025, shows there were under 233,000 pathways waiting for a neurology appointment, 53.8% of which had been waiting less than 18 weeks.

On 6 January 2025, NHS England published the new Elective Reform Plan, which sets out a whole system approach to hitting the 18-week referral to treatment target by the end of this Parliament. We have delivered an additional two million appointments between July and November 2024, compared to the same period in 2023, seven months ahead of schedule, as a first step in our commitment to ensuring that patients can expect to be treated within 18 weeks. These additional appointments have taken place across a number of specialities, including neurology.

■ NHS England: Secondment

Dr Luke Evans:

[\[41181\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether staff seconded from NHS England to a transitional operations team in his Department will focus solely on the transfer of responsibilities from NHS England to the Department for Health and Social Care; and what steps he is taking to ensure that the work ordinarily undertaken by the staff who have been seconded will be completed.

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. The transition team will work across NHS England and the Department, bringing together the expertise and experience of both organisations.

As we work to return many of NHS England's current functions to the Department, we will continue to evaluate impacts of all kinds and take precautions to avoid disruption, including when staff have been moved to work on the transition.

■ Ovarian Cancer

Greg Smith:

[\[39089\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to work with (a) the NHS and (b) other (i) stakeholders and (ii) charities to increase awareness of ovarian cancer.

Greg Smith: [\[39090\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help shorten the diagnostic pathway for ovarian cancer.

Greg Smith: [\[39091\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help tackle regional variation in the levels of early diagnosis of ovarian cancer.

Greg Smith: [\[39092\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have been diagnosed with ovarian cancer through the non-specific symptoms pathway.

Ashley Dalton:

[Holding answer 27 March 2025]: NHS England does not hold comprehensive national data on cancers diagnosed through non-specific symptom (NSS) pathways since their roll out began. The data set records the number of gynaecological cancers diagnosed through NSS pathways but does not specify how many of these were ovarian cancer cases specifically. In the latest evaluation report on the programme, covering data until January 2024, there were 55 patients diagnosed with gynaecological cancers.

NHS England runs Help Us Help You campaigns to increase knowledge of cancer symptoms and address barriers to acting on them, to encourage people to come forward as soon as possible to see their general practitioner (GP).

NHS England and other National Health Service organisations, nationally and locally, also publish information on the signs and symptoms of many different types of cancer, including ovarian cancer. This information can be found on the NHS website, in an online only format.

It is a priority for the Government to support the NHS to diagnose cancer, including ovarian cancer, as quickly as possible, to treat it faster, and improve outcomes. This is supported by NHS England's key ambition on cancer to meet the Faster Diagnosis Standard, which sets a target of 28 days from urgent referral by a GP or screening programme to patients being told that they have cancer, or that cancer is ruled out.

The recently announced National Cancer Plan will have patients at its heart and will cover the entirety of the cancer pathway, from referral and diagnosis to treatment and aftercare. This will include improving levels of early diagnosis across England.

■ Palliative Care: Children

Ian Byrne: [\[42635\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help ensure that children with life-limiting conditions have access to children's palliative care in the community (a) out of hours and (b) at weekends.

Stephen Kinnock:

Palliative care services, including for children and young people, are included in the list of services integrated care boards (ICBs) must commission. ICBs are responsible for the commissioning of palliative and end of life care services to meet the needs of their local populations. This promotes a more consistent national approach and supports commissioners in prioritising palliative and end of life care. To support ICBs in this duty, NHS England has published statutory guidance and a service specification for children and young people.

The statutory guidance produced by NHS England on palliative and end of life care makes specific reference to commissioners defining how their services will meet population needs 24/7 and includes a priority action for ensuring that staff, patients and carers can access the care and advice they need, whatever the time of day. Regional NHS England teams continue to liaise with ICBs to ensure these commissioning arrangements are in place. Expert strategic networks in the regions provide an opportunity to share good practice around improving access and quality of palliative care and end of life care.

As part of our 10-Year Health Plan, we will shift more healthcare out of hospitals and into the community, and the palliative and end of life care sector will have a big role to play in that shift.

■ **Pharmacy****Jessica Toale:**[\[42845\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what information his Department holds on the number of pharmacies in (a) Bournemouth West constituency, (b) Dorset, (c) the South West and (d) England.

Stephen Kinnock:

The NHS Business Services Authority publishes the consolidated pharmaceutical list every quarter, with further information available at the following link:

<https://opendata.nhsbsa.net/dataset/consolidated-pharmaceutical-list>

The following table shows the number of pharmacies, broken down by type, in Bournemouth West, Dorset, the South West, and England, as of 31 December 2024:

PHARMACY TYPE	BOURNEMOUTH			
	WEST	DORSET	SOUTH WEST	ENGLAND
Community pharmacies	20	132	895	10,023
Distance selling pharmacies	0	3	19	407

PHARMACY TYPE	BOURNEMOUTH			
	WEST	DORSET	SOUTH WEST	ENGLAND
Locally commissioned pharmacies	0	0	3	13
Total	20	135	917	10,443

■ Pharmacy: Finance

Max Wilkinson: [\[39606\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of providing immediate cash-flow funding for pharmacies.

Max Wilkinson: [\[39607\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the status is of the independent economic review of pharmacies, in the context of the recently announced abolition of NHS England.

Max Wilkinson: [\[39608\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his planned timetable is for publishing the independent economic review of pharmacies.

Stephen Kinnock:

NHS England commissioned Frontier Economics to undertake an independent economic analysis of National Health Service pharmacy funding in 2024. The findings of this work were published by Frontier Economics on 28 March 2025.

We have now concluded the consultation on funding for 2024/25 and 2025/26, and have agreed with Community Pharmacy England to increase the community pharmacy contractual framework to £3.073 billion. This deal represents the largest uplift in funding of any part of the NHS, over 19% across 2024/25 and 2025/26. This shows a commitment to rebuilding the sector.

■ Prostate Cancer: Ethnic Groups

Helen Maguire: [\[42152\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help increase research into the causes of prostate cancer in men of sub-Saharan African ancestry.

Ashley Dalton:

The Department funded National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) funds research and research infrastructure, which supports patients and the public to participate in high-quality research, including clinical research on prostate cancer.

NIHR research expenditure for all cancers was £133 million in 2023/24, reflecting its high priority.

These investments are pivotal towards efforts to improve cancer prevention, treatment, and outcomes. The TRANSFORM trial is an important example of this. On 19 November 2023, the Government and Prostate Cancer UK announced the £42 million TRANSFORM screening trial to find the best way to screen men for prostate cancer, to find it before it becomes advanced and harder to treat.

Prostate Cancer UK is leading the development of the trial with the Government contributing £16 million through the Department. One of the aims of the trial is to address some of the inequalities that exist in prostate cancer diagnosis today. For example, one in four black men will develop prostate cancer, double the risk of other men, and often at a younger age. The trial will ensure that at least 10% of the men who are invited to participate in the trial are black.

The NIHR provides an online service called Be Part of Research, which promotes participation in health and social care research by allowing users to search for relevant studies and register their interest. This makes it easier for people to find and take part in health and care research that is relevant to them.

The NIHR continues to encourage and welcome applications for research into any aspect of human health, including prostate cancer.

■ Radiotherapy: Medical Equipment

Tessa Munt:

[\[41043\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many new radiotherapy machines were applied for from the funding announced in the Autumn Budget 2024; and which hospital trusts applied.

Ashley Dalton:

[Holding answer 1 April 2025]: 31 trusts submitted applications for funding to replace a total of 40 machines, with some trusts having applied to replace two machines. This became 30 trusts after the North Middlesex University Hospital Trust joined the Royal Free London Group on 1 January 2025, during the application process. Each trust had submitted a separate request.

Of the 30 trusts that submitted applications, two withdrew their applications, namely the Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust and the University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust, having received funding for a replacement machine from National Health Service capital underspend. University Hospitals Birmingham did receive a contribution from this funding towards the refurbishment of its radiotherapy bunker infrastructure.

The 28 trusts that submitted applications, and who have been awarded funding to replace one machine, are as follows:

- Barts Health NHS Trust;
- Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust;

- East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust;
- Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust;
- Guys and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust;
- Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust;
- Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust;
- Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust;
- Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust;
- Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust;
- North Middlesex University Hospital NHS Trust (Royal Free London Group);
- Northampton General Hospital NHS Trust;
- Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust;
- Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust;
- Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust;
- Royal Surrey County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust;
- Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust;
- South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust;
- The Christie NHS Foundation Trust;
- The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre NHS Foundation Trust;
- The Newcastle Upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust;
- The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust;
- United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust;
- University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust;
- University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust;
- University Hospitals of Derby and Burton NHS Foundation Trust;
- University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust; and
- Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust.

Tessa Munt:

[41044]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding was allocated to the emergency radiotherapy capital equipment fund in 2024-25; and which hospital trusts have been awarded that funding.

Ashley Dalton:

[Holding answer 1 April 2025]: Providers were awarded a total of £15 million to replace ageing radiotherapy equipment from an underspend in the National Health

Service's capital settlement for 2024/25. The providers who were allocated money, and the amount they were allocated, are as follows:

- £2.5 million for the University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust;
- £2.3 million for the Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust;
- £2.2 million for the South Tees Hospitals NHS Trust;
- £3.2 million for the Newcastle Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust;
- £2.4 million for the University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust; and
- £2.4 million for the Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust.

The University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust received funding for two machines.

■ Respiratory Diseases: West Dorset

Edward Morello: [\[42906\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help reduce the incidence of respiratory diseases in West Dorset constituency.

Edward Morello: [\[42907\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate his Department has made of the levels of respiratory diseases in West Dorset constituency.

Ashley Dalton:

In the West Dorset area, which includes the Sherborne, Mid Dorset, and Jurassic primary care networks, there are 8,617 patients with asthma, and 2,490 patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). A systematic review published in 2021 highlighted the global variation in the diagnosis of pulmonary fibrosis, and it is estimated that NHS Dorset could have between five and 25 people who suffer from pulmonary fibrosis.

The Dorset Respiratory Network has made significant progress in improving care for people with asthma, COPD, and other respiratory conditions, over the last few years. With Respiratory Champions now supporting 15 of the 18 primary care networks, local expertise has been strengthened, ensuring better access to care. A key focus has been enhancing diagnosis and management, which includes the increased use of fractional exhaled nitric oxide testing and a targeted drive to reduce over-reliance on short-acting reliever inhalers. These efforts have led to better outcomes for patients and a reduction in unnecessary hospital visits.

Local pulmonary rehabilitation (PR) teams have expanded their reach, delivering more PR classes across a wider range of locations in Dorset. This is helping more people manage their condition effectively, improve their quality of life, and reduce hospitalisation risks. Alongside this, an online platform has been launched, providing healthcare professionals with resources, training, and updates, ensuring the latest

guidance is easily accessible. A new quarterly newsletter keeps clinicians informed of National Health Service updates, best practice, and innovations in respiratory care.

As part of the Reducing Hospital Admissions and Enhancing Care initiatives, targeted projects have employed a review of medication use to ensure the most effective treatments are available. There is also work on improving diagnosis rates through better access to essential tests and exploring digital solutions to help people manage their conditions at home.

Smoking cessation is one of the most effective ways to reduce respiratory disease and improve long-term health. In the first three quarters of 2024/25, over 6,000 people in Dorset quit smoking through support from the Council's smoking cessation programmes, the National Swap to Stop initiative and the NHS Treating Tobacco Dependency offer.

By expanding innovation, improving accessibility, and strengthening collaboration across healthcare teams, the Dorset Respiratory Network is delivering tangible improvements in respiratory health. Their work is helping people across the county breathe easier, stay healthier, and reduce their reliance on hospital care, ensuring better outcomes for patients and a more sustainable NHS for the future.

■ Social Services: Standards

Jessica Toale:

[\[42800\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve adult social care provision in (a) England and (b) Bournemouth West constituency.

Stephen Kinnock:

We recognise the challenges facing the adult social care system, and we are taking immediate action to improve the situation. These actions include:

- making up to £3.7 billion of additional funding available for social care authorities in 2025/26, including an £880 million increase in the Social Care Grant. The additional funding available to Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole in 2025/26 means that they will see an increase to their core spending power of up to £25.84 million, or up to 6.6% in cash terms;
- taking forward a range of initiatives in 2025/26, including funding more home adaptations, promoting better use of care technologies, and professionalising the adult social care workforce;
- increasing the Carer's Allowance weekly earnings limit in April 2025 from £151 a week to £196, to support our unpaid family carers;
- introducing the first ever Fair Pay Agreement to the adult social care sector so that care professionals are recognised and rewarded for the important work that they do; and
- launching an independent commission, which will begin in April 2025, as part of our critical first steps towards delivering a National Care Service. Chaired by Baroness

Casey of Blackstock, the commission will make clear recommendations for how to rebuild the adult social care system to meet the current and future needs of the population.

Under the Care Act 2014, local authorities are tasked with the duty to shape their care markets to meet the diverse needs of all local people. This includes commissioning a diverse range of care and support services that enable people to access quality care. The Department funds an annual programme of support to local authorities and their partners to help them improve the delivery of their statutory duties.

■ **Telemedicine: Voice over Internet Protocol**

Ann Davies:

[\[43273\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his Department's joint policy paper entitled Telecare National Action Plan: protecting telecare users through the digital phone switchover, published on 11 February 2025, if he will publish the (a) targets (b) key performance indicators (c) other relevant metrics used for (i) the Plan overall (ii) each headline outcome and (iii) each individual outcome.

Stephen Kinnock:

We are currently in the process of agreeing targets and Key Performance Indicators for each of the actions included in the Telecare National Action Plan, working with action owners and wider stakeholders.

The Telecare National Action Plan commits to providing updates every six months. We will comment on the progress against the actions in these updates. We will include relevant metrics, where the data and evidence are considered sufficiently robust.

■ **Tobacco and Vapes Bill**

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[43024\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how he plans to implement the Tobacco and Vapes Bill across all parts of the United Kingdom.

Ashley Dalton:

The Tobacco and Vapes Bill is United Kingdom-wide, and has been developed in partnership with the Scottish Government, the Welsh Government, and the Northern Ireland Executive.

The Department of Health and Social Care in England will work with the devolved administrations to implement the measures in the bill, including future regulations, once the bill receives Royal Assent.

■ Visual Impairment: Rehabilitation

Sir John Hayes:

[\[42396\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to increase the number of vision rehabilitation specialists in (a) South Holland and the Deepings constituency and (b) Lincolnshire.

Stephen Kinnock:

It is the responsibility of local authorities and the National Health Service integrated care boards to commission therapy-led rehabilitation, reablement, and recovery services, including vision rehabilitation specialists, based on their assessment of local capacity and demand.

The Government understands the importance of having effective rehabilitation services available for people who need them, to assist recovery and return to their day-to-day activities. Intermediate care and reablement support services, including vision rehabilitation, can play a key role in providing alternatives to hospital admission and improving patient outcomes, by providing appropriate rehabilitation and reablement options following hospital discharge.

HOME OFFICE

■ Asylum: Applications

Mr James Cleverly:

[\[41441\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with her international counterparts on third-country processing arrangements for people seeking to claim asylum in the UK.

Dame Angela Eagle:

The Government will continue to work with international partners to tackle the global migration crisis. The Home Secretary has convened an international summit focussed on Organised Immigration Crime, bringing together Interior ministers and law enforcement experts from across the world to develop our combined response to the gangs who facilitate this vile trade in human lives.

■ Asylum: Deportation

Mr James Cleverly:

[\[41443\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum seekers who have had their applications rejected have been deported from the UK since July 2024; and what steps is she taking to increase such deportations in the next six months.

Dame Angela Eagle:

The Home Office has recently published the number of asylum related returns between 05 July 2024 and 22 March 2025 in [Returns from the UK from 5 July 2024 to 22 March 2025 - GOV.UK](#).

■ Asylum: Greater London

David Simmonds:

[\[42879\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with the Mayor of London on supporting London boroughs to house asylum seekers.

Dame Angela Eagle:

The Home Office is working closely with a range of stakeholders to fulfil its statutory obligations, while seeking to reduce the overall cost of asylum accommodation for the taxpayer.

■ Asylum: Housing

Kevin Hollinrake:

[\[43097\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 12 March 2025 to Question 35307, on Asylum: Contracts, whether her Department directly procures asylum accommodation itself, separate to those contracts.

Dame Angela Eagle:

The Home Office is working closely with a range of stakeholders to fulfil its statutory obligations, while seeking to reduce the overall cost of asylum accommodation for the taxpayer.

As part of this programme, the Home Office works with its contracted Estates delivery partner, Cushman and Wakefield, to identify potential leasehold and freehold properties for the Home Office to acquire. This involves assessing the feasibility of options and working with Local Authorities and MPs.

■ Asylum: Offenders

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[42212\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what guidance her Department has issued on (a) ascertaining a court judgement and (b) informing a relevant local authority in cases where someone who (i) is seeking asylum, (ii) is housed in hotel accommodation and (iii) has been convicted of an offence has been given a non-custodial sentence.

Dame Angela Eagle:

No specific guidance has been published for the scenario referenced, but the Home Office works closely with our contracted accommodation providers and law enforcement partners to deal with any cases of concern, and we will always do everything necessary to keep local communities safe.

■ Automatic Number Plate Recognition

Sarah Coombes:

[\[43130\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much funding her Department has provided for improving Automatic Number Plate Recognition systems in the last three years.

Dame Diana Johnson:

A total of £85.45 million has been provided for maintaining and improving national Automatic Number Plate Recognition systems in the last three years.

ANPR technology is used for law enforcement purposes, to help detect, deter and disrupt criminality at a local, force, regional and national level.

■ **Bicycles: Theft****Andrew Rosindell:**[\[42217\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to prevent pedal cycle theft within the Havering London Borough.

Dame Diana Johnson:

Bike theft has a significant impact on individuals and for too long, many victims have felt not enough was being done to prevent their bikes being stolen or track down the thieves responsible.

As part of this Government's Plan for Change, our Safer Streets Mission is determined to clamp down on the crime that damages our communities, and affects people's lives, and tackling theft is a crucial part of that work.

The BTP-led National Cycle Crime Group, working with DfT, have set up Cycle Crime Reduction Partnerships across the country to coordinate regional enforcement activity to disrupt organised cycle theft.

We are also delivering on our commitment to restore and strengthen neighbourhood policing, recruiting 13,000 police personnel into neighbourhood roles, ensuring every community has a named officer to turn to, and doubling investment to £200 million to kickstart this.

■ **British Nationality****Daisy Cooper:**[\[42305\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of applications for naturalisation as a British citizen took longer than the six month service standard in the latest reporting period for which data is available.

Seema Malhotra:

The information requested is published at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/passports-and-citizenship-data-q4-2024>.

■ **Home Office: Billing****Andrew Rosindell:**[\[42220\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of invoices from UK suppliers her Department paid within 10 days of receipt between September 2024 and February 2025.

Dame Diana Johnson:

All Government departments publish payment performance on a quarterly basis, showing the percentage of invoices paid in 5 days, the percentage of invoices paid in 30 days, and net debt interest liability. This is available on GOV.UK.

The Home Office's payment performance is available at:

[Home Office prompt payment data 2024 to 2025 \(accessible\) - GOV.UK](#)

The specific information requested is not readily available, and could only be collated and verified for the purposes of answering this question at disproportionate cost.

Human Trafficking: Havering**Andrew Rosindell:****[42219]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to support victims of human trafficking in Havering London Borough.

Jess Phillips:

The Government is committed to tackling modern slavery, ensuring that all victims are provided with the support they need to begin rebuilding their lives and that those responsible are prosecuted.

The Government offers support to all adult potential and confirmed victims of modern slavery in England and Wales through the Modern Slavery Victim Care Contract (MSVCC). Consenting adults who are potential victims of human trafficking can access safe and secure accommodation and financial support where necessary, and a support worker who will facilitate access to other support including medical assistance and mental health support, through the Modern Slavery Victim Care Contract.

Local authorities are responsible for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children in their area, including child victims of modern slavery. The Independent Child Trafficking Guardianship (ICTG) service, which is being piloted in Havering London Borough, also provides support to potential child victims of modern slavery. An ICTG offers direct or indirect support and advocacy to ensure the child is protected from further harm, and promote their child's recovery.

Immigration: Ukraine**Sir Julian Lewis:****[43012]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her policy is on Ukrainian families invited to the UK following the Russian invasion wishing to seek (a) employment, (b) rental agreements, (c) educational continuity for their children and (d) indefinite leave to remain; and whether time already spent in the UK counts towards qualifying for such leave.

Seema Malhotra:

The UK's Ukraine visa schemes (including the new Ukraine Permission Extension scheme) provide full access to the right to work, rent, access benefits, healthcare, and education in the UK.

The Ukraine Visa Schemes provide temporary sanctuary and do not lead to settlement in the UK. We recognise the Ukrainian government's desire for the future return of its citizens to Ukraine. It is important our approach respects these wishes.

Similarly, time spent in the UK with permission granted under the Ukraine Schemes cannot be relied upon towards the continuous qualifying period for the purposes of a Long Residence application.

There are other routes available for those who wish to settle in the UK permanently, if they meet the requirements.

Metropolitan Police: Finance**Julia Lopez:**[\[43180\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with the (a) Mayor of London and (b) Metropolitan Police Commissioner on increasing investment in the Metropolitan Police Estate.

Dame Diana Johnson:

The Metropolitan Police will receive up to £3.8 billion in 2025-26, an increase of up to £262.1 million compared to the 2024-25 funding settlement. This represents a 7.4% cash increase and 4.9% real terms increase in funding.

Metropolitan Police: Location**Neil Coyle:**[\[43460\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people employed by the Metropolitan police in (a) counter terrorism and (b) other national responsibility areas are based outside London.

Neil Coyle:[\[43461\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Metropolitan Police employees are based outside London.

Dame Diana Johnson:

The Home Office does not hold the requested information. Details of the numbers of Metropolitan Police Services employees in different locations are a matter for the service itself.

■ National Rural Crime Unit and National Wildlife Crime Unit: Northern Ireland**Robin Swann:** [\[42921\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much and what proportion of funding allocated to the (a) National Rural Crime Unit and (b) National Wildlife Crime Unit will be for (i) operations and (ii) activities in Northern Ireland.

Dame Diana Johnson:

Chief Constables have operational independence to tackle the crimes that matter most to their communities; these decisions will inform the support that they request and receive from the units in question.

■ Nitrous Oxide: Misuse**Dr Neil Hudson:** [\[43209\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of reviewing the (a) categorisation of nitrous oxide as a Class C drug and (b) the potential impacts this categorisation has on levels of use of nitrous oxide.

Dr Neil Hudson: [\[43210\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of regulations governing the sale of nitrous oxide.

Dame Diana Johnson:

Nitrous oxide was controlled as a Class C drug under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 in November 2023. At the same time the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001 were amended to regulate its lawful use in healthcare, catering and other sectors.

In the year to March 2024, the most recent year for which we have data, 0.9% of people aged 16 to 59 years in England and Wales reported having used nitrous oxide in the last year, a decrease compared to the previous year (1.3%). Various factors underlie drug use and this decline cannot be attributed directly to the control implemented in 2023.

The Government will continue to keep all drug legislation under review.

■ Offensive Weapons**Helen Whately:** [\[43553\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when her Department plans to respond to e-petition 701064.

Dame Diana Johnson:

A response was sent to the Petitions Committee (Commons Select Committee) on 3 April 2025 for consideration for publication.

■ Refugees: Palestinians

Tahir Ali: [\[41446\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will take steps to establish a dedicated resettlement route for Palestinians leaving Gaza.

Seema Malhotra:

The humanitarian situation in Gaza remains extremely challenging. The UK committed £129 million in the last financial year, including £41 million for UNRWA. This supports vital infrastructure and ensures that those most in need across the Occupied Palestinian Territories, as well as those in neighbouring countries, are able to access healthcare, shelter and food assistance.

In any humanitarian situation, the UK must carefully consider its approach in response. Any decision to implement a bespoke visa scheme would need to consider a range of factors, including assessing the unique crisis and relevant impacts on security, compliance and returns.

The Government is working with the Israeli, Jordanian and Egyptian authorities to identify safe routes for British nationals and other eligible people to leave Gaza. Palestinians who wish to settle in the UK can do so via the existing routes available which allow a person to apply to work, study, settle or join family in the UK. Further information can be found on the GOV.UK website: [UK Visas and Immigration - GOV.UK](#).

■ Shops: Money Laundering

Kevin Hollinrake: [\[42244\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of whether particular types of retail outlets in high streets and town centres are used for money laundering from the sale of drugs.

Dame Diana Johnson:

The Government recognises that cash intensive businesses such as barber shops and nail bars can be exploited by criminals seeking to launder their criminal cash from serious and organised crime. Addressing cash-based money laundering is one of the strategic priorities of the National Economic Crime Centre which sits within the National Crime Agency, and who are currently working with partners to facilitate an increased operational response to this threat.

In parallel, the National Police Chiefs' Council economic crime co-ordinators are engaged in the development of Clear Hold Build strategies to help police forces tackle serious and organised crime. Clear Hold Build aims to reclaim and rebuild neighbourhoods affected by organised crime, including tackling financial crime on the high street.

■ Street Trading: Crime**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[42218\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to prevent illegal street vending in Greater London.

Dame Diana Johnson:

Responsibility for tackling illegal street vending in Greater London is a matter for the relevant local police forces.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Mr Richard Holden:**[\[903637\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps she is taking to ensure that local government is accountable for its decisions.

Jim McMahon:

Councils are democratic institutions accountable to the communities they serve. We are strengthening that accountability through clearer expectations, stronger local scrutiny, and a renewed focus on outcomes.

Together, these measures are building a more trusting and equal partnership-based relationship between central and local government.

Sean Woodcock:[\[903640\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps her Department is taking to support veterans affected by homelessness.

Rushanara Ali:

We have increased funding for homelessness services and supported veterans to access social housing by exempting them from local connection tests for social housing in England.

The Deputy Prime Minister is chairing an Interministerial Group, which includes the Veterans Minister, to develop a long-term cross-Government strategy to end homelessness.

Rachel Hopkins:[\[903643\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent progress her Department has made on implementing the Remediation Acceleration Plan.

Alex Norris:

Progress has been made in many areas, such as identifying remaining buildings with unsafe cladding, making developer remediation progress information more accessible for public scrutiny, and increasing regulator funding to build and maintain their capacity and capability.

We will provide an update in summer 2025 assessing progress, outlining further steps, and reflecting the spending review.

■ Affordable Housing

Kevin Hollinrake: [\[42240\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the press release entitled £2 billion new investment to support biggest boost in social and affordable housebuilding in a generation, published on 25 March 2025, over what period the (a) funding will be allocated and (b) new homes will be (i) commenced and (ii) completed.

Matthew Pennycook:

I refer the hon. Member to the Written Ministerial Statement made on 25 March 2025 ([HCWS549](#))

■ Affordable Housing: Low Incomes

Andrew Ranger: [\[43525\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps she is taking to ensure equal access to affordable housing for families from lower-income backgrounds.

Matthew Pennycook:

Social housing goes to those who need it most. Where someone is eligible for social housing, they will have their housing needs considered in accordance with the relevant local authority's housing allocation scheme.

■ Birmingham City Council: Finance

Laurence Turner: [\[43306\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if she will make an estimate of the cost to the public purse of her Department's intervention at Birmingham City Council since October 2023.

Jim McMahon:

The Commissioners' fees and expenses are published on Birmingham City Council's website at regular three-month intervals. There are additional costs associated with the admin support team provided by Birmingham City Council. Commissioners' fees and expenses for one year were just over £1.3m.

■ Byelaws

Kevin Hollinrake: [\[42245\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether her Department holds information on the individual bye-laws in force by each local authority.

Jim McMahon:

MHCLG does not hold information on individual byelaws in force by each local authority.

■ Compulsory Purchase**Kevin Hollinrake:**[\[42247\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, in what circumstances a previous landowner is eligible for additional compensation following a Compulsory Purchase Order; and how this applies to Compulsory Purchase Orders where hope value has been removed.

Matthew Pennycook:

Additional compensation may be payable where a compulsory purchase order was confirmed with a direction removing hope value, but the acquiring authority does not build out their scheme as proposed.

The Department has issued [guidance](#) on the circumstances where additional compensation may be claimed.

■ Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017**Kevin Hollinrake:**[\[42271\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether she plans to amend the Habitats Regulations.

Matthew Pennycook:

The Planning and Infrastructure Bill includes targeted amendments to the Habitats Regulations, with Schedule 4 including changes necessary to streamline environmental assessment as part of Environmental Delivery Plans and Schedule 6 adding Ramsar Sites to Part 6 of the Habitats Regulations so these sites are covered whilst strengthening protections.

■ Councillors: Planning**Wendy Morton:**[\[42591\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what measures does the Planning and Infrastructure Bill contain to empower local councillors, outside formal committee settings, to effectively influence planning decisions and represent their constituents' interests.

Wendy Morton:[\[42592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether the Planning and Infrastructure Bill will safeguard the call-in powers of local councillors.

Wendy Morton:

[\[42593\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much decision making authority local councillors will have over large-scale planning applications.

Matthew Pennycook:

The Planning and Infrastructure Bill does not change the consultation rules on local planning applications.

Representations can be made by interested parties and these are considered by the relevant decision maker – whether that be a local planning officer or planning committee.

The government intends to consult on the delegation of planning decisions in England alongside passage of the Bill.

■ Environmental Delivery Plans

Kevin Hollinrake:

[\[42463\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether environmental delivery plans will apply to all protected species within the designated area.

Matthew Pennycook:

The scale and coverage of an Environmental Delivery Plan (EDPs) will reflect the nature of the specific environmental impact being addressed.

EDPs will only be put in place where Natural England and the Secretary of State are confident that conservation measures will be sufficient to outweigh the negative effects of development. Where this is not the case, existing environmental obligations, including those arising under the Habitats Regulations, will remain in place.

Where a protected species is not suitable for this more strategic approach, Natural England will not propose an EDP.

■ Fast Food: Planning Permission

Kevin Hollinrake:

[\[43560\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 24 March 2025 to Question 38367 on Fast Food: Planning Permission, what rulings the Planning Inspectorate has made on the working definition of a fast food outlet.

Matthew Pennycook:

The Planning Inspectorate has not made any rulings on the working definition of a fast food outlet.

■ Fire and Rescue Services: Dorset and Wiltshire

Edward Morello: [\[42908\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if she will make an assessment of the potential impact of changes in the number of firefighters on fire and rescue response times in Dorset and Wiltshire.

Alex Norris:

It is the responsibility of Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) to decide how the authority's resources, including staff, are best deployed to meet core functions. This includes determining crewing levels and appropriate targets for local response times. Decisions are based on analysis of risk and local circumstances within local Community Risk Management Plans.

The Government is committed to ensuring FRAs have the resources they need to do their important work keeping the public safe. In 2024/25, fire and rescue authorities received around £2.87 billion. Standalone FRAs saw an increase in core spending power of £95.4m during 2024/25.

■ Green Belt: Lancashire

Mr Andrew Snowden: [\[43157\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps she is taking to protect the green belt in (a) Fylde constituency and (b) Lancashire.

Matthew Pennycook:

The government is committed to preserving Green Belts which have served England's towns and cities well over many decades, not least in terms of checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas and preventing neighbouring towns merging into one another.

The government's new approach to the Green Belt, including prioritising the release of lower quality grey belt land and introducing 'golden rules' to ensure development benefits communities and nature, is set out in the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published on 12 December.

On 27 February, Planning Practice Guidance was published to assist local authorities and other decision-makers, and to support a consistent approach to determining whether land is grey belt. It can be found on gov.uk [here](#). This new guidance will support authorities in producing Local Plans, while also making sure that planning applications and development on suitable grey belt land can proceed in the short-term in areas without an up-to-date plan.

The government has also provided 133 local planning authorities with £70,000 of pump priming funding each to contribute towards the costs of carrying out Green Belt reviews in their areas.

■ High Rise Flats: Fire Prevention**Neil Coyle:** [\[42584\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, under what circumstances freeholders become liable for higher insurance fees if they delay fire safety works.

Neil Coyle: [\[43074\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether freeholders are liable for insurance costs for leaseholders if court ordered safety works are not completed in time.

Alex Norris:

The terms of individual leases determine when freeholders can pass on insurance costs to leaseholders. This remains the case even if there is a delay to remediating the building.

We are pushing for faster remediation as set out in the Remediation Acceleration Plan. We also intend to make it a criminal offence, and apply civil sanctions, against those who fail to remediate their unsafe buildings - including freeholders. Freeholders who delay works can expect swift and robust enforcement action from regulators, with the full support of government.

We remain committed to ensuring residents have access to information regarding their buildings insurance and can challenge unreasonable costs. Under the Leasehold & Freehold Reform Act we are making sure landlords provide leaseholders with information about their building's insurance.

Neil Coyle: [\[42585\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that penalties are enforced for businesses and freeholders that delay works on cladding issues.

Alex Norris:

Landlords are legally responsible for making sure their buildings are safe and must do so without delay. Where works on cladding issues are delayed, regulators have legal powers to compel work by a set time and can penalise inaction. In 2023, Newham Council became the first council to successfully prosecute a landlord for delays in removing dangerous cladding. Others are following suit: As of 19 February 2025, enforcement action has been, or is being, taken under the Housing Act against 532 landlords of 11m+ buildings with unsafe cladding.

This Government is committed to working hand-in-glove with regulators to get unsafe buildings fixed without delay. We recently published '[remediation enforcement guidance for regulators](#)', and launched a [new](#) fund which LAs and FRAs can access to obtain funding to get their own specialist legal advice on enforcement cases. The Department's Recovery Strategy Unit also holds organisations to account who are failing to fix unsafe buildings and contribute to remediation costs.

Our Remediation Acceleration Plan sets out our plan to go further in making sure there are severe penalties for landlords that delay works on cladding issues. We intend to introduce new criminal and civil sanctions for those who fail to assess and remediate unsafe buildings within fixed timescales, backed by a further £33 million investment in 25/26 to provide local and national regulators with capacity and capability to tackle hundreds of enforcement cases a year, targeting those neglecting to quickly remediate their buildings.

Neil Coyle: [\[43073\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if her Department will impose higher penalties on freeholders who do not implement fire safety works within timetables set out in court Remediation Orders.

Neil Coyle: [\[43075\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps her Department plans to take with (a) developers and (b) freeholders who fail to meet remediation orders on time.

Alex Norris:

The Building Safety Act 2022 (the Act) provides that a First-tier Tribunal decision made under or in connection with section 123 (remediation orders), will be enforceable with the permission of the County Court. Proceedings will function in the same way as under orders of that Court.

The current regime is intended to provide security to the majority of leaseholders and support actions to ensure buildings are remediated. As with all policies, the Government will keep open the option of considering changes in the future.

Indeed, our Remediation Acceleration Plan sets out our plan to go further in making sure there are severe penalties for landlords that delay works on cladding issues. We intend to introduce new criminal and civil sanctions for those who fail to assess and remediate unsafe buildings within fixed timescales, backed by a further £33 million investment in 25/26 to provide local and national regulators with capacity and capability to tackle hundreds of enforcement cases a year, targeting those neglecting to quickly remediate their buildings.

■ Housing: Construction

Kevin Hollinrake: [\[41861\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what the average time was to complete a home once planning permission had been granted in the latest period for which data is available.

Matthew Pennycook:

The information requested is not held by the Department.

Ben Obese-Jecty: [\[42335\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Spring Statement of 26 March 2025, Official Report, column 945, what steps she is taking to monitor the progress made in meeting housebuilding targets.

Matthew Pennycook:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to Question UIN [39650](#) on 25 March 2025.

Blake Stephenson: [\[42675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 14 March 2025 to Question 36223 on Housing: Construction, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits for policy-making of collecting that information.

Matthew Pennycook:

The government will keep the matter under review.

Blake Stephenson: [R] [\[42677\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 14 March 2025 to Question 36221 on Housing: construction, whether she plans to issue guidance to local authorities on density.

Matthew Pennycook:

The National Planning Policy Framework is supportive of development that makes efficient use of land and makes clear that local development plans should include the use of minimum density standards to that ends.

I otherwise refer the hon. Member to the answer given to Question UIN [36221](#) on 14 March 2025.

Blake Stephenson: [R] [\[42681\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 14 March 2025 to Question 36228 on Housing: Construction, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of publishing (a) a housing supply forecast and (b) projected profiles of housing delivery every (i) month, (ii) quarter) and (iii) year.

Matthew Pennycook:

The government publishes quarterly data on planning applications and housing starts and completions.

The latest data on planning application statistics can be found on gov.uk [here](#).

Data on housing starts and completions can be found on gov.uk [here](#). The main measure of housing supply is net additional dwellings, the latest data on which can be found on gov.uk [here](#).

■ Housing: Planning Permission

Nigel Huddleston: [\[42583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many planning applications for housing developments in (a) Wychavon District Council and (b) England have the Gardens Trust and Sport England contributed to in their capacities as statutory consultees in the last five years; and how many of these applications (i) passed and (ii) were refused.

Matthew Pennycook:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to Question UIN [39567](#) on 27 March 2025 in relation to The Gardens Trust.

In respect of Sport England, available data from 2022/23 and 2023/24 show that they responded to 1,145 and 1,168 applications respectively across England. The government does not hold data on response times or the nature of the responses from statutory consultees broken down by individual local planning authorities.

Statutory consultees do not have a veto on planning applications and therefore cannot pass or refuse an application. It is for the local planning authorities to determine planning applications.

As set out in the [Written Minister Statement](#) made on 10 March 2025, the government intend to consult this Spring on the impacts of removing a limited number of statutory consultees, including Sport England and the Gardens Trust. Even if ultimately removed as statutory consultees, both organisations will still be able to submit views on individual planning applications.

■ Leasehold: Ground Rent

Apsana Begum: [\[42644\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether she has had discussions with mortgage-lenders on ensuring that existing leaseholders with (a) unregulated and (b) uncapped ground rents are able to secure buyers for their properties.

Apsana Begum: [\[42645\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps she is taking to ensure that existing leaseholders with (a) unregulated and (b) uncapped ground rents are able to secure buyers for their properties.

Matthew Pennycook:

The government remains firmly committed to its manifesto commitment to tackle unregulated and unaffordable ground rents, and we will deliver this in legislation.

Local Government: Debts**Suella Braverman:**[\[42600\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether debts from local authorities being merged together will be taken on jointly by the new authority under her Department's local government reorganisation plans; and how any existing debt will be serviced.

Jim McMahon:

On 6 February I wrote to the leaders of two-tier councils and neighbouring unitaries to formally invite them to develop proposals for reorganisation. It is for the councils to develop robust and sustainable proposals that are in the best interests of the whole area.

As outlined in our invitation letter, in general, as with previous restructures, there is no proposal for council debt to be addressed centrally or written off as part of reorganisation. For areas where there are exceptional circumstances where there has been failure linked to capital practices, proposals should reflect the extent to which the implications of this can be managed locally, including as part of efficiencies possible through reorganisation.

Local Government: Disqualification**Kevin Hollinrake:**[\[42252\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether her Department plans to change disqualification rules for (a) councillors, (b) mayors and (c) other elected representatives, in relation to those found guilty of sexual offences.

Jim McMahon:

On changes to local government disqualification criteria, I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to Question UIN [41451](#).

The government has been clear that standards in local government need to be improved and that could include a standards regime which has the power to suspend, sanction and disqualify for the most serious breaches.

Councillors and mayors already face disqualification if found guilty of sexual offences. Individuals made subject to the notification requirements or who receive a relevant order for sexual offences are disqualified for as long as they remain subject to them.

Someone cannot be a Police and Crime Commissioner if they have ever been convicted of an imprisonable offence.

We have no plans to extend the House of Commons disqualification criteria beyond those set out in the House of Commons Disqualification Act 1975 and the Representation of the People Act 1981. There are also mechanisms in place under the Recall of MPs Act 2015 for the electorate to decide whether to remove MPs convicted of other offences.

■ Local Government: Public Records

Blake Stephenson:

[R] [\[42673\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 12 March 2025 to Question 35438 on Tree Preservation Orders: Bedfordshire, what steps her Department plans to take to ensure that locally held records like Tree Protection Orders are not lost during Local Government reorganisation.

Matthew Pennycook:

The implementation of local government reorganisation will be a matter for local authorities to consider as they develop their proposals for reorganisation and establish new unitary authorities. It is essential that councils continue to deliver their business-as-usual services and duties, which remain unchanged up until such time as the reorganisation process is complete.

■ Local Government: Reorganisation

Sir John Hayes:

[\[42398\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if she will make an assessment of the cost to the public purse of local government reorganisation in Lincolnshire.

Jim McMahon:

The overall case for local government reorganisation is set out the English Devolution White Paper.

A PWC 2020 report estimated that reorganisation of the then 25 two-tier areas to a single unitary would have a one-off cost of £400 million, with the potential to realise £2.9 billion over five years, with an annual post-implementation net recurring saving of £700 million, however as it is for local areas to submit proposals for government to consider, the savings could vary area by area and across England in the round. We are also keen to ensure the wider benefits are also promoted, specifically simplified and more efficient structures.

[Councils in Lincolnshire were invited](#) on 5 February to develop proposals for reorganisation, which are due to be submitted to government by November 2025. It will be for the new councils to achieve the efficiencies identified in reorganisation proposals and subsequent detailed implementation and transformation plans while delivering high quality and sustainable public services to local residents and businesses.

■ Local Plans: Gardens Trust

Daisy Cooper:

[\[42653\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 27 March 2025 to Question 39567 on Local Plans: Gardens Trust, what criteria was applied to the decision to remove the Gardens Trust as a statutory planning consultee.

Matthew Pennycook:

I refer the hon. Member to the Written Ministerial Statement made on 10 March 2025 ([HCWS510](#)).

■ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Marketing**Kevin Hollinrake:**[\[33491\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 27 January 2025 to Question 16552 on MHCLG: Marketing, if she will provide (a) an extract and (b) hyperlink to the details of the expenditure on the re-branding.

Alex Norris:

The costs of rebranding fell significantly below the threshold for publishing expenditure, but records indicate costs incurred amounted to £13,921.70.

■ Nature Restoration Fund**Kevin Hollinrake:**[\[42248\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether the Nature Restoration Fund levy will be in addition to Biodiversity Net Gain.

Matthew Pennycook:

The Nature Restoration Fund will be in addition to Biodiversity Net Gain and will run concurrently, focusing on enabling development in areas where it has stalled due to specific environmental obligations relating to impacts on protected sites or species.

We will ensure that developers receive a user-friendly experience and that BNG credit and the Nature Restoration Fund revenue is deployed in a joined-up manner to maximise environmental outcomes.

■ New Towns: Mid Bedfordshire**Blake Stephenson:**[\[42674\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 14 March 2025 to Question 36227 on New Towns, whether any sites submitted as part of the call for evidence are in the Mid Bedfordshire constituency.

Blake Stephenson:[\[42679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 14 March 2025 to Question 36225 on New Towns: Mid Bedfordshire, if she will make it her policy to inform Rt hon. and hon. Members of a new town proposal in their constituency before publicly disclosing such information.

Matthew Pennycook:

The New Towns Taskforce will submit its final report this summer.

As there may be political or commercial sensitivities to information submitted regarding prospective developments, the New Towns Taskforce will not be sharing

information about the evidence base of locations prior to publication of the final report.

■ **New Towns: Planning Permission**

Charlie Dewhirst:

[\[40908\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the speech entitled PM remarks on the fundamental reform of the British state, published on 13 March 2025, on what evidential basis the Prime Minister said that jumping spiders stopped the development of an entire new town.

Matthew Pennycook:

The Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) at the Swanscombe Peninsula was designated in 2021 due to the presence of a number of rare plant, bird and invertebrate species, including the rare Distinguished Jumping Spider. The SSSI includes a significant area of land that had been purchased by the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation to bring forward an important part of the new Garden City at Ebbsfleet.

As a consequence of the designation and the need to comply with National Planning Policy on SSSI's the Development Corporation took the decision to re-masterplan the area leading to the loss of approximately 1,300 new homes and some 30,000sqm of commercial development.

The Ebbsfleet Development Corporation continues to progress its plans for c15,000 new homes and facilities across its wider development area.

■ **Parish and Town Councils: Powers**

Alicia Kearns:

[\[42867\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans she has to (a) reform and (b) enhance the (i) powers, (ii) financial responsibility and (iii) wider responsibilities of parish councils through the process of local government reform.

Jim McMahon:

The English Devolution White Paper is clear that the government wants to create new opportunities for communities to have a say in the future of their area and play a part in improving it. Ensuring that parish councils are effective and representative of their communities will contribute to this goal.

The government has consulted on necessary reforms to the local government standards regime, including in parish councils. The consultation closed on 26 February 2025 and government will respond in due course. We have also consulted on aims to enable stronger financial oversight of parish councils following the publication of our 'Strategy for Overhauling Local Audit in England.' The consultation closed on 29 January 2025 and we will respond in due course.

We want to see stronger community arrangements when reorganisation happens in the way councils engage at a neighbourhood or area level. Proposals will need to explain plans to make sure that communities are engaged. Where there are already arrangements in place it should be explained how these will enable strong community engagement. Town and parish councils can work with other tiers of local government to determine how they can best serve their communities.

■ **Parking: Private Sector**

Blair McDougall: [\[42709\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when her Department plans to re-introduce the Parking Code of Practice.

Blair McDougall: [\[42710\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if her Department will consider introducing protections for consumers in the new Parking Code of Practice.

Blair McDougall: [\[42711\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether her Department has made an assessment of the potential implications for her policies of parking enforcement companies; and whether she plans to bring forward legislative proposals to protect consumers from their practices.

Alex Norris:

The Government recognises the need for high standards in the private parking industry and is committed to delivering a Code of Practice, in accordance with The Parking (Code of Practice) Act 2019.

We are progressing with plans to protect and support motorists and to help us further understand the potential impacts of the Code, we will be launching a consultation in due course.

■ **Planning Permission: Costs**

Joe Robertson: [\[43692\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether she has assessed compliance costs associated with local authority planning approvals.

Matthew Pennycook:

Ensuring compliance with planning approvals is a matter for local planning authorities. As such, the Department has not made an assessment of the costs involved.

■ Planning: Biodiversity and Nature Conservation

Mr Andrew Mitchell: [\[43023\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether her Department plans to take steps to ensure that planning guidance issued by her Department includes measures on preserving (a) biodiversity and (b) habitats for pollinators.

Matthew Pennycook:

The National Planning Policy framework is clear that planning policies and decisions should conserve and enhance the natural environment by minimising impacts on, and providing net gains for, biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species. Planning Practice Guidance on the Natural Environment provides further detail on how users of the planning system can implement these policies.

■ Planning: Information Sharing

Blake Stephenson: [R] [\[42669\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps her Department is taking to increase levels of data sharing between developers and local authorities.

Matthew Pennycook:

The Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) runs a Digital Planning Programme which aims to enable a modern and efficient planning system in England.

Core objectives of the Programme include providing better access to planning data, improving data quality, and making data more open.

We are delivering on these objectives through the Planning Data platform, which will continue to expand the availability of standardised and open data on planning.data.gov.uk to drive the creation of new tools and services that share planning data (including making more data accessible to developers) and enable improved monitoring of planning outcomes.

■ Playgrounds

Alice Macdonald: [\[42755\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent assessment she has made of the accessibility of playgrounds; and what steps her Department is taking to help increase accessibility of playgrounds.

Alex Norris:

The government is firmly committed to creating better access to play areas, and parks more widely. They are an essential part of local social infrastructure which supports more connected, stronger communities.

Local authorities must consider their obligations under the Equalities Act of 2010 in relation to work being done on play areas, this includes ensuring that they are accessible and inclusive.

We will use our bold £1.5 billion Plan for Neighbourhoods to bolster community assets, including play areas. The plan will deliver up to £20 million of funding and support over the next decade into 75 communities across the UK, bringing together “neighbourhood boards” to develop local regeneration plans in partnership with local authorities.

Furthermore, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is clear that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places.

In addition to this, the National Design Guide demonstrates through ten characteristics for well-designed places how new development can promote inclusive design by creating buildings and spaces that are safe, social and inclusive, with an integrated mix of uses that are accessible for all. This should include spaces for comfort, relaxation and stimulation, including play.

■ **Property Management Companies**

Dr Roz Savage:

[\[42957\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of existing regulatory mechanisms for property management companies on mixed tenure estates; and what her planned timetable is for the implementation of provisions in the Leasehold and Freehold Reform Bill designed to support freeholders seeking to change their management company.

Matthew Pennycook:

I refer the Hon Member to the Written Ministerial Statement made on 21 November 2024 ([HCWS244](#)).

■ **Public Consultation: Young People**

Kevin Hollinrake:

[\[42250\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 7 March 2025 to Question 31685 on Public Consultation: Young People, how the young people for the two round tables on the long term strategy for communities were selected.

Kevin Hollinrake:

[\[42251\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 7 March 2025 to Question 31685 on Public Consultation: Young People, what his planned timetable is for the publication of the long term strategy for communities; and what policy areas it will cover.

Alex Norris:

Young people were invited to participate via DCMS-funded youth programmes. Participants represented a range of age groups and communities from across the country.

The government continues its work to deliver for communities and is currently developing its longer-term strategy. We will set out next steps in due course.

Recreation Spaces**Kevin Hollinrake:**[\[42243\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether (a) environmental delivery plans and (b) the nature restoration fund will replace suitable alternative natural greenspace.

Matthew Pennycook:

Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) can be used to address the negative effects of development leading to recreational disturbance of Habitats Sites. Where appropriate, SANGs will continue to play an important role in nature restoration under both Environmental Delivery Plans (which will be funded by the Nature Restoration Fund) and the existing Habitats Regulations Assessment regime.

Rents: Arrears**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[42209\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps she is taking to support housing landlords with tenants in long-term rent arrears.

Matthew Pennycook:

Financial support is available for tenants facing difficulty paying their rent, including through the Household Support Fund and Discretionary Housing Payment schemes. In 2025/26, the government is investing £1 billion into these schemes, which are administered by local authorities in line with local priorities.

Free, non-means tested legal advice is available through the Housing Loss Prevention Advice Service for tenants who are at risk of possession proceedings or loss of their home. Through this service, tenants can receive advice on housing, welfare benefits and debt as soon as they receive written notice that possession of their home is being sought.

While support is available to sustain tenancies where appropriate, the government believes that landlords must have robust grounds for possession where there is good reason to take their property back, including where a tenant has accrued long-term rent arrears. Under the Renters' Rights Bill, there will be grounds for possession for rent arrears allowing mandatory eviction after three months' arrears are accrued, and discretionary grounds for lesser amounts in situations such as frequent late payment.

It is also important that landlords can have efficient access to justice in the minority of cases where court action becomes necessary. We will make the court possession process more efficient for users by digitising it from end-to-end.

■ **Social Rented Housing: Finance**

Luke Murphy: [\[42889\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether she is taking steps to increase the level of funding for social rent homes at the spending review.

Matthew Pennycook:

The government will set out 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.

■ **Temporary Accommodation: Domestic Abuse**

Liam Conlon: [\[42844\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps her Department is taking to provide safe accommodation for victims of domestic abuse.

Rushanara Ali:

This government is committed to tackling violence against women and girls and supporting victims of domestic abuse.

Since 2021, local authorities in England have a duty under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 to ensure victims of domestic abuse and their children have access to support within safe accommodation. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government provides funding to local authorities to deliver this duty. For 2025-26, £160 million has been allocated, a £30 million uplift from the previous year. This revenue funding is for local authorities to commission lifesaving support for victims and their children within safe accommodation. Funding for 2026/27 onwards will be a matter for the Spending Review.

Statutory guidance to local authorities is available [here](#) providing further details on how the duty should be delivered.

The current Affordable Homes Programme for 2021-2026 includes capital funding for new supply of supported housing, including domestic abuse safe accommodation. 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 milestone of building 1.5 million safe and decent homes in this Parliament, including for victims of domestic abuse.

■ Urban Areas: Campaigns

Kevin Hollinrake: [\[42246\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what guidance her Department has issued to local authorities on how campaigners can (a) hold street stalls and (b) give out leaflets in local high streets.

Rushanara Ali:

The government has not issued any guidance to local authorities on issues relating to campaigning.

The Electoral Commission is responsible for providing guidance directly to candidates and campaigners.

■ Urban Areas: Shops

Andrew Rosindell: [\[42211\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps she is taking to ensure the diversity of (a) shops and (b) service provision on high streets.

Alex Norris:

The Government is committed to fostering the conditions for prosperous and diverse high streets. The Government has recently introduced High Street Rental Auctions to tackle persistent vacancy and ensure that more business ventures can access commercial property opportunities at a fair market rate.

The National Planning Policy Framework also supports town centres by requiring policies and decisions to promote their growth, management and adaptation. The commercial business and service use class provides flexibility for premises between high street uses, including to provide services such as creches or health services, without the need for a planning application.

JUSTICE

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

John Milne: [\[43737\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, which organisations within the financial industry her Department has consulted with on locked Child Trust Funds since January 2025.

Sarah Sackman:

The Department continues to engage with financial organisations on the issue of Child Trust Funds where the account holder lacks mental capacity to access their account and legal authority is required to enable a parent or carer to access the funds on their behalf.

Since January 2025, the Department has engaged with The Investment and Savings Alliance (TISA) and UK Finance. The Department has also engaged with a range of stakeholders with interest including One Family and others.

■ Animal Welfare: Prosecutions

Tessa Munt: [\[43046\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate she has made of the number of private prosecution cases brought by the RSPCA under the Animal Welfare Act 2006.

Sarah Sackman:

The Ministry of Justice does not collate or record detailed data on individual private prosecutions, although some prosecutors may publish their own data separately. Therefore, it is not possible to provide data on the number of prosecutions which have been brought by the RSPCA under the Animal Welfare Act 2006.

This Government recognises that greater transparency is needed in relation to private prosecutions, in order to improve confidence in the criminal justice system. This is why we have launched a public consultation on options to improve the oversight, regulation, and transparency of private prosecutors in the criminal justice system, which closes on 8 May. The consultation seeks respondents' views on improvements to the available data on private prosecutors and the prosecutions they bring, and this includes prosecutions brought by the RSPCA.

■ Assets: Cohabitation

Manuela Perteghella: [\[43289\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will bring forward legislative proposals to introduce legal protections for cohabiting couples to ensure equitable distribution of assets on separation.

Manuela Perteghella: [\[43290\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of the non-recognition of unmarried partnerships in family law on economic abuse.

Alex Davies-Jones:

The financial difficulties which cohabitants can face when their cohabiting relationships come to an end is a matter of concern. The Government committed in its manifesto to strengthening the rights and protections for women in cohabiting couples within its broader commitment to tackle violence against women and girls.

As part of our work on cohabitation reform, we are carefully considering issues relating to cohabitation and domestic abuse, including economic abuse. We will launch a public consultation later this year to build public consensus on what cohabitation reform should look like.

■ Child Trust Fund

James Wild:

[\[42858\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what options she is considering for improving access to matured Child Trust Funds for people who lack capacity.

Sarah Sackman:

Where a young adult lacks mental capacity, including due to a disability, the law requires parents or a guardian to have legal authority to make decisions on their behalf about financial assets or property. This requirement to have legal authority is vital in ensuring that vulnerable people are safeguarded and protected from all forms of abuse including financial abuse. This is not specific to accessing funds held in Child Trust Funds or Junior ISAs but applies more widely to all assets belonging to vulnerable people who lack capacity. This includes in relation to accessing funds held in a Child Trust Fund or a Junior ISA.

On 9 June 2023, the Ministry of Justice published the *Making Financial Decisions for young people: parent and carer toolkit* explaining the process by which parents and guardians of disabled children are able to obtain legal authority if no other arrangements are in place. This can be done by making an applying to the Court of Protection for an order authorising access to monies held in a Child Trust Fund or Junior ISA. The toolkit is available on Gov.UK.

We understand that concerns remain, and I am speaking with relevant stakeholders to explore what further can be done to help improve access to matured Child Trust Funds in a way that balances facilitating access with safeguards.

■ Court of Protection: Child Trust Fund

James Wild:

[\[42861\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many applications to the Court of Protection for a deputyship order in cases relating to Child Trust Funds were made in each year since 2019.

James Wild:

[\[42863\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the average cost of applying to the Court of Protection for a deputyship order was in cases relating to Child Trust Funds in the latest period for which data is available.

Sarah Sackman:

It is not possible to provide information on the numbers of applications for a deputyship order in cases relating to Child Trust Funds as Court of Protection data is not broken down by the type of asset held.

Locally collected management information relating to Child Trust Funds does not include those cases where a Child Trust Fund may be one of several assets owned by the young person lacking capacity and therefore does not provide an accurate picture of the number of applications made.

With effect from 08 April 2025, applications to the Court of Protection will cost £421. Where an application to access a Child Trust Fund is made before the child reaches 18, no fee is payable if the child has savings of less than £4,250 and a monthly income less than £1,420. In addition, where the Child Trust Fund is the sole asset, an exceptional fee waiver can be applied for. When an application is made after a child turns 18, and they have savings or income above these levels, a parent or carer can apply for an exceptional fee waiver at the court's discretion.

The Ministry of Justice has published a toolkit for parents and carers to help them navigate the court process.

The Department is exploring plans to facilitate the CoP process for parents and guardians applying for a deputyship, for example by alerting parents in advance of a child's 18th birthday of the need to make an application.

■ Family Courts: Standards

Katie White:

[\[42970\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps she is taking to speed up proceedings within the Family Court system; and what initiatives are being implemented to enhance the digitisation of documents and processes.

Alex Davies-Jones:

Delays in the court process can have a significant impact on children and families. HM Courts & Tribunals Service is committed to improving timeliness of cases and reducing the outstanding caseload.

The Family Justice Board agreed system-wide national targets for reducing delay in 2024/25. These are focused on closing the longest running cases in private and public law, resulting in a reduction of the private law cases by 10% and increasing the proportion of public law cases concluded within the statutory 26-week timeframe.

The HMCTS Reform Programme has introduced several new digital services within the Family Courts, enhancing and automating the administration of family court orders. These services encompass Divorce, Financial Remedy, and Public Law Proceedings. Currently, HMCTS is piloting a new digital service for private law proceedings, aiming to replicate the administrative improvements seen in other family services. This service is scheduled to be implemented across England and Wales by the end of 2025.

■ HM Courts and Tribunals Service: Staff

Dame Harriett Baldwin:

[\[43047\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many (a) judges and (b) other people were employed in the Employment Tribunal by HM Courts and Tribunals Service in each of the last five years; and what proportion of those roles were vacant in that time period.

Sarah Sackman:

The number of judges and members of tribunals is published annually in the 'Diversity of the Judiciary' statistics. Headcount figures can be found at the tabs named "3_2_JO_Area".

- 2020: [diversity-of-the-judiciary-2020-data-tables.ods](#)
- 2021: [diversity-of-the-judiciary-2021-data-tables.ods](#)
- 2022: [Judicial diversity 2022 Tables.ods](#)
- 2023: [2023 JDS tables.ods](#)
- 2024: [JDS 2024 tables - FINAL v3.ods](#)

We are maintaining investment in the annual recruitment of about 1,000 judges and non-legal tribunal members across all jurisdictions. Annual recruitment requirements for judicial and non-legal tribunal members are determined by business need and judicial departures.

HM Courts & Tribunals Service has recorded Employment Tribunal staff (including legal caseworker) headcount in December each year as follows between 2020 and 2024:

YEAR	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
HMCTS Staff	465	514	500	470	427
Agency Staff	100	104	106	112	118
Total	565	618	606	582	545

Staff vacancies in the Employment Tribunal over this period are not held centrally. Recruitment requirements for HMCTS staff and legal officers in the Employment Tribunal is determined in response to business need and staff departures.

■ Planning: Judicial Review

Kevin Hollinrake:[\[42464\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether she has considered raising the Aarhus Convention cost limits on judicial reviews of development and infrastructure.

Sarah Sackman:

The Government remains committed to protecting access to justice in environmental cases, while supporting the timely delivery of infrastructure projects under the Government's Growth Mission. The issue of cost caps relating to Judicial Review in the planning context was considered by Lord Banner in his independent review published in October 2024. He did not recommend any change to the default cost caps in Aarhus cases. Judges already have the power to vary costs caps upwards or downwards according to the particular circumstances in a case.

In addition, between September and December 2024, the Government ran a Call for Evidence on access to justice in relation to the Aarhus Convention. This Call for Evidence considers the recommendations of the Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee (ACCC) regarding whether changes are required to the Environmental Costs Protection Regime (ECPR).

The Government intends to publish a response to the Call for Evidence in the coming months.

■ Registration of Births, Deaths, Marriages and Civil Partnerships

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[43518\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that the names of deceased fathers can be included on birth certificates in instances where the parents were unmarried prior to his death.

Alex Davies-Jones:

Under Section 55A of the Family Law Act 1986, in situations where a child is born to unmarried parents, and the father dies prior to the birth, a Declaration of Parentage must be issued by the court in order for the paternity to be established. Once a declaration is issued, the birth can be re-registered to include the father's details.

We want to make the process as simple as is possible in these circumstances, whilst still ensuring the court has means to establish parentage if one parent is deceased and not able to convey their views. This is vitally important as, in some cases, this decision will have significant financial implications for others, such as children from previous relationships.

■ Reoffenders

Kanishka Narayan:

[\[42778\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that the views of (a) victims and (b) the families of victims affected by serious offences committed by offenders on probation are considered in the criminal justice system.

Alex Davies-Jones:

All victims and bereaved family members are entitled under the Victims' Code to have their voices heard in the criminal justice process by making a Victim Personal Statement. This enables victims to explain in their own words how the crime has affected them, which will be considered by the court when determining the sentence.

Victims who are eligible for, and have opted into, the Victim Contact Scheme can make representations about victim related licence conditions and submit a Victim Personal Statement to the Parole Board. These enable victims to help the Parole Board to understand what the impact of the crime on them has been and provide information about requested licence conditions to protect the victim where there is a decision to release the offender.

When an offender on probation supervision is charged with a serious further offence, including murder, manslaughter and rape, the Probation Service will complete a serious further offence review and victims can meet with a senior probation manager to discuss the findings of the review and receive a copy.

■ **Wales Office: Computers**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[42745\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 31 March 2025 to Question 40651 on Wales Office: Computers, what the median age is of computers issued to officials in the Wales Office.

Alex Davies-Jones:

We are unable to provide the median age of laptop and desktop computers in the Wales Office due to the disproportionate amount of time it would take to calculate. However, our policy is to refresh laptops and desktop computers issued to officials every 4-5 years.

SCIENCE, INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY

■ **Aircraft: China**

Alicia Kearns:

[\[42705\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what steps he is taking to protect the UK's aviation industry from intellectual property theft by Chinese companies.

Feryal Clark:

The government takes the issue of global intellectual property crime and infringement seriously and engages with other governments, industry and law enforcement partners to tackle this issue. We also work with businesses to help them safeguard their innovations across international markets.

The UK aviation market operates predominantly in the private sector; therefore, it is ultimately the responsibility of the industry to determine appropriate protections of intellectual property.

■ **Department for Science, Innovation and Technology: Arts**

Anneliese Midgley:

[\[42366\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, how many (a) in person and (b) online meetings he has had with organisations representing the creative industries since July 2024.

Feryal Clark:

Ministers and officials have regular meetings with a range of stakeholders about the creative industries.

Ministerial meetings and engagements are published through quarterly transparency reports on GOV.UK.

■ Satellites: Regulation

Damien Egan: [\[42364\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of introducing stricter regulations on UK-licensed satellite operators to ensure the safe deorbiting of satellites at the end of their operational life.

Chris Bryant:

The Government is taking forward a wide package of space regulatory reforms to drive growth and innovation, which includes working to ensure a safe, secure and sustainable space environment. As part of this work, the UK Space Agency is undertaking research into the impact of options such as reducing post-mission disposal timelines. The timelines are currently set at 25 years in the UK. Additionally, they have commissioned studies on atmospheric ablation to understand the impact of deorbiting spacecraft on the Earth's atmosphere. The Government will consider the outcomes of this research to determine if regulatory actions are appropriate and necessary.

■ Telemedicine: Voice over Internet Protocol

Ben Lake: [\[43110\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, how he plans to measure the progress of the National Telecare Campaign in Ceredigion Preseli constituency.

Ann Davies: [\[43272\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what steps he is taking with the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport to support the effective delivery of the National Telecare Campaign.

Chris Bryant:

We are very focused on making sure that the transition - which is industry-led - happens safely and securely. The objective of the National Telecare Campaign is to identify vulnerable customers. The campaign is one method of identifying vulnerable customers, by raising awareness among telecare users and their family and friends. In addition, communication providers are identifying vulnerable people through data sharing agreements with local authorities, including in Ceredigion Preseli, and private telecare providers.

The Government is monitoring the development of the campaign and the number of data sharing agreements made by communication providers to identify vulnerable customers.

■ UK Research and Innovation: Equal Pay

Chi Onwurah:

[\[42267\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what assessment he has made of the potential implications for his policies of the pay gap between men and women working at UK Research and Innovation; and what steps he is taking to tackle that pay gap.

Feryal Clark:

UKRI published its [sixth Gender Pay Gap report](#) in March 2025. The report describes the steps that UKRI is taking across the organisation, including developing inclusive recruitment and career progression strategies.

UKRI's mean gender pay gap has narrowed by 0.6 percentage points since 2022. However, the most recent data shows that the gender pay gap widened by 0.7 percentage points in the last year. This change is largely driven by the 2022 pay award, which increased the salaries of employees in research delivery roles to address external pay market pressures. There is a higher proportion of male staff than female staff within this cohort compared to the wider UKRI employee population. Actions to address this disparity are set out in the report; these include reviewing recruitment and selection process to eliminate biases and ensuring that UKRI's practices are fair and inclusive for all.

■ Voice over Internet Protocol

Llinos Medi:

[\[43155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what discussions he has had with the (a) the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, (b) Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and (c) Welsh Government on ensuring that (i) local authorities are prepared for the Public Switched Telephone Network migration and (ii) no vulnerable people are missed in that migration.

Chris Bryant:

The Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) migration is industry-led. The Department works closely with other departments, including the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Welsh Government, to ensure that local authorities and vulnerable customers are protected and prepared for the migration.

On 18 November 2024, the Government published guidance for local authorities on the migration. Local authorities have been asked to sign data sharing agreements with communication providers on telecare and vulnerable customers. Over 85% of local authorities that provide telecare have an agreement with at least one communication provider.

Industry are leading and funding a National Telecare Campaign to support identifying vulnerable customers. Welsh language will be used in broadcast and printed adverts.

SCOTLAND**■ Powers of Attorney: Scotland****Mr Angus MacDonald:**[\[42923\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what discussions his Department has had with the Scottish Government on the difference in the (a) process and (b) cost of completing a Power of Attorney in Scotland compared to England and Wales.

Kirsty McNeill:

The process and costs associated with Power of Attorney vary between legal jurisdictions within the UK due to the distinct legal frameworks in place. The processes and costs are a matter for the Scottish Government.

SPEAKER'S COMMITTEE ON THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION**■ Elections: Expenditure****Kevin Hollinrake:**[\[43087\]](#)

To ask the Right hon. Member for Kenilworth and Southam, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission, pursuant to the Answer of 19 March 2025 to Question 37583 on Elections: Expenditure, what guidance the Commission has issued on (a) itemising and (b) listing notional spending below £50 in Representation of the People Act returns where the total notional expenditure from that organisation is greater than £50.

Sir Jeremy Wright:

The Electoral Commission has published [guidance for candidates and agents on reporting notional expenditure](#). Property, goods, services or facilities received over the value of £50, provided for free or at a non-commercial discount, must be reported as candidate spending and as a donation. There are no requirements in law for candidates to report items of notional spending where the value is £50 or lower.

Candidates do not need to itemise or list individual items of spending with a value of £50 or below, even when they have received multiple items of spending from the same organisation with a total value over £50.

Agents are required to include the details of any reportable notional expenditure, and a declaration of its value in the candidate spending return.

■ Political Parties: Finance**Kevin Hollinrake:**[\[43883\]](#)

To ask the Right hon. Member for Kenilworth and Southam, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission, what guidance the Electoral Commission has provided on whether a linked donation which a Parliamentary candidate benefits from but given to a national political party during the 2024 general election short campaign, must be declared in the candidate's Representation of the People Act return.

Sir Jeremy Wright:

The Electoral Commission publishes [guidance for candidates and agents](#) on donations that are held on a candidate's behalf by a party, such as in a local party fighting fund. How a donation must be reported depends on the intention of the donor and who controls the donation once received.

If a donation is held by the party but made with the intention that the candidate benefits and is made available to the candidate, it must be declared in the candidate's spending return.

If there is no intention to donate to the candidate, or the donation is received and controlled by the party, this is likely to be a party donation. If the party then uses the donation to benefit the candidate, the candidate may need to report a separate donation from the party.

■ Returning Officers**Kevin Hollinrake:**[\[43477\]](#)

To ask the Right hon. Member for Kenilworth and Southam, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission, whether the Electoral Commission has produced guidance on the inclusion of local Electoral Returning Officers within the definition of local authorities for the Re-use of Public Sector Information.

Sir Jeremy Wright:

The Electoral Commission has not produced guidance on the inclusion of local Electoral Returning Officers within the definition of local authorities for the Re-Use of Public Sector Information.

The Electoral Commission produces guidance on the roles and responsibilities of Returning Officers and Electoral Registration Officers in carrying out the statutory functions to deliver well-run electoral services.

The Information Commissioner's Office is responsible for enforcing data protection legislation and has produced [guidance for public sector bodies covered by the Re-Use Public Sector Information Regulations 2015 \(RPSI\)](#)

TRANSPORT**■ Blue Badge Scheme: Digital Technology****Lee Anderson:**[\[42306\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if she will make an assessment of the adequacy of the accessibility of the blue badge digital service for applicants with disabilities.

Lee Anderson:[\[42307\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether she is taking steps to reduce administrative requirements for local authorities handling the blue badge digital service.

Lee Anderson:

[\[42308\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps her Department is taking to reduce processing times for applications to the blue badge digital service.

Lilian Greenwood:

The Blue Badge Digital Service offers a national online application and badge management facility through GOV.UK. Nearly 90% of all badge applications are now made through this service.

The Department for Transport runs a programme of continuous improvement to the digital service to make online badge applications quicker and easier for applicants and local authorities, including undertaking specific research and testing to identify innovative improvements to the online application process. The service also undergoes regular accessibility and assurance testing to guarantee compliance with the Government's digital standards.

■ Diesel

Martin Wrigley:

[\[43353\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of funding research into the use of Diethyl Ether fuel.

Lilian Greenwood:

The Department has no plans to fund research into the merits of Diethyl Ether fuel.

Renewable transport fuels that deliver significant greenhouse gas emissions savings relative to fossil fuel and meet stringent sustainability criteria are eligible for support under the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO) scheme. The RTFO has successfully promoted a market for renewable fuels used in road transport since 2008.

■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points

Zöe Franklin:

[\[42894\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether she has had discussions with (a) local authorities and (b) private companies that own electrical infrastructure that delivers public services on using existing (i) electric infrastructure and (ii) lamp posts to create additional EV charging points.

Lilian Greenwood:

The Government is committed to expanding the electricity network to enable decarbonisation and is working closely with Ofgem and industry to mobilise the required investment. In the current distribution price control, Ofgem has allowed £22.2bn for upfront investment in low voltage networks, including £3.1bn for network upgrades to support low-carbon technologies, including infrastructure to support EV charging.

The Government regularly engages with the electricity network companies, which are responsible for maintaining and upgrading electrical infrastructure.

The Government also meets regularly with chargepoint operators and local authorities that plan and deliver on-street chargepoints. The £381m LEVI Fund supports local authorities in England to work with industry and transform the availability of EV charging for drivers without off-street parking. This includes lamp post chargepoints.

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[43027\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether she has made an assessment of trends in the level of regional disparities in the number of public charging devices for electric vehicles by population.

Lilian Greenwood:

The Government is committed to accelerating the roll-out of affordable and accessible charging infrastructure so that everyone, no matter where they live or work, can make the transition to an electric vehicle.

Chargepoint availability is increasing everywhere with public charging device numbers increasing by 45% in rural areas of England in 2024.

■ High Speed 2 Line

Gareth Bacon:

[\[41999\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether current (a) northbound and (b) southbound calling patterns will be (i) maintained and (ii) increased at (A) Tamworth, (B) Lichfield, (C) Nuneaton, (D) Rugby and (E) Milton Keynes stations following the commencement of HS2 services between London and (1) Liverpool and (2) Manchester via Handsacre.

Simon Lightwood:

No decisions have been made on the timetable that will operate when HS2 opens, including for the named stations on the West Coast Main Line. Detailed planning remains underway ahead of government decisions that will be made in due course, informed by consultation.

Gareth Bacon:

[\[42304\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if she will take steps to renew the land purchase powers contained in the HS2 West Midlands to Crewe hybrid Bill before they expire in February 2026.

Lilian Greenwood:

I am aware of the limitations on land purchase powers contained in the High Speed Rail (West Midlands to Crewe) Act 2021. This government is carefully reviewing the position it has inherited on HS2 and wider rail infrastructure and I will set out detailed plans in due course.

■ High Speed 2 Line: Euston Station**Gareth Bacon:** [\[41997\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps she is taking to permit the earliest possible operation of some HS2 services into the Euston terminus, even on a temporary basis.

Simon Lightwood:

The Department for Transport is working with key partners to develop affordable, integrated plans for Euston Station, which will comprise the new HS2 station, an upgraded Network Rail station and enhancements to the London Underground station and local transport facilities along with a significant level of development. We will set out more details in due course.

In parallel, HS2 Ltd is progressing with preparations of the Euston Tunnel Boring Machines (TBMs) at Old Oak Common, with tunnelling scheduled to commence in 2026.

Gareth Bacon: [\[42303\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps she is taking to ensure that more than ten HS2 services can be accommodated at Euston station when required.

Lilian Greenwood:

The new HS2 Euston station will consist of 6 platforms, which can support up to 10 HS2 trains per hour. We are considering whether and how to future-proof the station with additional platforms, to accommodate any longer-term expansion.

■ Housing: Parking**Kevin Hollinrake:** [\[42475\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 12 March 2025 to Question 36099 on Housing: Parking, whether local authorities may recover costs of dropping a kerb greater than the actual cost of the (a) works and (b) administration.

Lilian Greenwood:

Section 184 of the Highways Act 1980 provides that local authorities may recover the expenses reasonably incurred by them in carrying out works to create a dropped kerb.

Local authorities are responsible for managing and maintaining the roads in their area and must themselves make any decision on dropped kerbs.

■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Facilities**Natalie Fleet:** [\[42739\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps her Department is taking to support the roll out of (a) parking and (b) welfare facilities for HGV drivers at motorway service areas.

Natalie Fleet: [\[42741\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps her Department is taking to encourage public-private collaboration in the (a) investment and (b) delivery of welfare facilities for HGV drivers.

Lilian Greenwood:

The Department for Transport (DfT) and industry are jointly investing up to £43.5 million to upgrade HGV parking and driver welfare facilities across England, including at independent truck stops and motorway service areas. This is on top of up to £26 million joint investment by National Highways and industry in lorry parking facilities, including Motorway Service Areas, along the strategic road network.

This investment is supporting operators across 30 counties in England to improve security, toilets, showers and refreshment facilities and increase lorry parking spaces.

DfT also established an industry-led Task and Finish Group (TFG) on HGV facilities, which commenced in February 2024. The TFG was a 12-month, industry-led forum focused on increasing capacity for safe and secure HGV parking, and driving industry adoption of existing HGV parking standards. DfT is considering the conclusions of this group.

Motor Insurance Taskforce**Dr Luke Evans:** [\[42796\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when the cross-Government motor insurance taskforce last met; what the outcomes were of that meeting; and what the date is for the next meeting of the taskforce.

Dr Luke Evans: [\[42798\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when the cross-Government motor insurance taskforce plans to next meet with the stakeholder panel of industry experts; and what the subjects for discussion will be.

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.

The taskforce is supported by a separate stakeholder panel of industry experts representing the insurance, motor, and consumer sector. This taskforce has a strategic remit to set the direction for UK Government policy, identifying short- and long-term actions for departments that may contribute to stabilising or reducing premiums.

■ Motor Vehicles: Insurance and Safety

Tom Morrison:

[43305]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of requiring drivers to display proof of (a) insurance and (b) MOT in vehicles.

Lilian Greenwood:

We have no plans to require drivers to display evidence of insurance in their vehicles, as it would only demonstrate insurance cover at one point in time, which may have since been cancelled. Uninsured driving is tackled by Continuous Insurance Enforcement (CIE), which allows uninsured vehicles to be identified from a comparison of the DVLA's vehicle register and the Motor Insurance Database of insurance policies managed by the Motor Insurers' Bureau (MIB). This and police enforcement on the road are the most effective tools to tackle uninsured driving.

Although the MOT status of a vehicle is not required to be physically displayed, it can easily be discovered for free by entering the vehicle registration at <https://www.gov.uk/check-mot-history>. This service can be used by both the wider public and enforcement bodies. It will immediately show the due date for the vehicle's next MOT as well as other relevant information, such as previous MOT certificates. In 2023, the Department for Transport and DVSA published a call for evidence asking for views on the future of the MOT and this was not identified as an issue. As such, we have no current plans to require the MOT status to be physically displayed on the vehicle.

■ Motorway Service Areas: Leasehold

Natalie Fleet:

[42742]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions her Department has had with motorway service area operators on the renewal of leases of those areas.

Lilian Greenwood:

Government owns the freehold of 19 motorway service areas. The DfT is in discussions with the operators regarding the future of the leases, recognising that many of these expire from around 2030. The nature of these discussions means they are commercially confidential.

■ Network Rail: Public Appointments

Laurence Turner:

[43253]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent progress she has made on the appointment of a new Chair of Network Rail.

Simon Lightwood:

The Department plans to launch an open and fair recruitment to appoint a new permanent Chair of Network Rail and has appointed an Executive Search Agency to run the recruitment.

■ Public Transport

Alex Mayer:

[\[44201\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to her Department's guidance entitled Demand responsive transport: local authority toolkit, published on 13 April 2022, what assessment her Department has made of the effectiveness of Demand Responsive Transport (a) as feeder services to existing rail and bus services and (b) in general.

Simon Lightwood:

The government believes demand responsive transport (DRT) has an important role to play in ensuring communities can access transport services in areas where more traditional, regular stopping services may not be viable.

The Department has funded 16 innovative DRT pilots through the Rural Mobility Fund. Each scheme is taking part in a detailed monitoring and evaluation process. This will provide a strong base of evidence and good practice for DRT and a better understanding of both the role it can play in rural areas and the challenges associated with introducing it. The final process evaluation will be published later in 2025, and an impact and value for money evaluation is just commencing, with findings available in late 2026.

■ Public Transport: Staffordshire

Adam Jogee:

[\[42660\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many individual representations her Department has received from Staffordshire County Council on the (a) adequacy and (b) reliability of public transport in (i) Newcastle-under-Lyme and (ii) North Staffordshire in each of the last five years.

Simon Lightwood:

Although we have had representations from Staffordshire County Council on a range of transport matters, we have not, over the last five years, received correspondence from Staffordshire County Council specifically on the adequacy or reliability of public transport in Newcastle-Under-Lyme or North Staffordshire.

■ Railways: Timetables

Gareth Bacon:

[\[41996\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, which body will have the directing role in confirming operational timetables exploiting released capacity.

Simon Lightwood:

The Department specifies the services it seeks to procure through its contracts with operators. Trains operate on very restricted infrastructure and timetables must be carefully planned to operate around other services. The scheduling service is conducted by Network Rail. Network Rail is held to account by the Office of Rail and Road.

The Railways Bill consultation proposes that in future Great British Railways will have consolidated accountability for planning the use of its rail network.

■ **Road Traffic: South Holland and the Deepings**

Sir John Hayes: [\[42405\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of the (a) construction and (b) operation of a new National Grid electricity substation at Weston Marsh on levels of traffic in South Holland and the Deepings constituency.

Lilian Greenwood:

Roads in the South Holland and the Deepings constituency are the responsibility of Lincolnshire County Council, as the Local Highway Authority and Local Traffic Authority.

This Department does not make an assessment of the impact of individual projects of this nature on the local road network.

■ **Road Works: Utilities**

Adam Dance: [\[43241\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps she plans to take to reduce the time within which utility companies conducting roadworks must ensure that roads are permanently repaired to six months.

Adam Dance: [\[43242\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans she has to increase local authorities' powers to ensure the immediate permanent reinstatement of roads by utility companies near (a) high-traffic areas, (b) hospitals, (c) schools and (d) other critical locations.

Lilian Greenwood:

Utility companies can put temporary reinstatements in place following works to re-open roads to traffic whilst, for example, waiting for specialist materials which may be specified by local authorities such as a particular type of paving stone. Permanent reinstatements must be put in place within 6 months. The DfT has no plans to change these arrangements.

Adam Dance: [\[43243\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans she has to increase local authorities' powers to inspect roads that have temporarily been reinstated by utility companies conducting roadworks more frequently.

Lilian Greenwood:

Local highway authorities already have powers to inspect both temporary and permanent reinstatements for compliance with the DfT's technical standards (the specification for the reinstatement of openings in the highway). Since 2023, a

performance-based inspections regime has been in place which means those companies who fail inspections are inspected more than those who comply. As companies pay for inspections, there is also a strong financial incentive for them to meet standards.

■ Roads: Accidents

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[43025\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps she plans to take to reduce the number of car accidents among (a) recently-qualified and (b) young drivers.

Lilian Greenwood:

We recognise that young people are disproportionately victims of tragic incidents on our roads. As work progresses on the new road safety strategy, we are exploring options to tackle the root causes of this without unfairly penalising young drivers.

My Department's THINK! campaign aims to reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured on the roads in England and Wales, and is primarily focused on men aged 17-24. THINK! plays an important role in raising awareness of risky driving behaviours amongst young people. This has recently included campaigns on drink-driving and speeding on rural roads.

■ Roads: Closures

Clive Efford:

[\[42392\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether she plans to incentivise utility companies to not overrun on roadworks.

Clive Efford:

[\[42393\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether she plans to fine utility companies for inconvenience caused when their roadworks overrun.

Lilian Greenwood:

Utility companies are already incentivised to complete works on time with charges of up to £10,000 per day for works that overrun. We have announced that these charges will apply to weekends and bank holidays. We are also doubling fixed penalty notices for companies that breach permit conditions. These conditions can include setting days and times when works can take place.

■ Roads: Repairs and Maintenance

Carla Denyer:

[\[44063\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the availability of (a) suitably skilled contractors and (b) materials to allow local authorities to meet the 31 March 2027 deadline for investing City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements.

Simon Lightwood:

The Government recognises that investment in transport infrastructure is of critical importance to unlocking national growth and the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements (CRSTS) programme has a key role to play in continuing to transform local transport across the country. DfT is working closely with Local Authorities and other Government departments on understanding and mitigating any potential barriers to delivery, including supply chain or capacity constraints, as part of our ongoing Spending Review discussions.

Carla Denyer:[\[44065\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what her planned timetable is for publishing finalised City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements 2.

Simon Lightwood:

Funding in future years is being considered as part of the current Spending Review, the outcome of which will be confirmed in due course.

■ **Roads: Safety****Sarah Coombes:**[\[43163\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what her planned timeframe is for publishing a road safety strategy.

Lilian Greenwood:

This Government treats road safety with the utmost seriousness, and we are committed to reducing the numbers of those killed and injured on our roads. My Department is developing the first road safety strategy in over a decade, and will set out more details in due course.

■ **Speed Limits: Cameras****Lisa Smart:**[\[42355\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether she plans to update guidance on the deployment of fixed speed cameras to allow their proactive use.

Lilian Greenwood:

Measures to address speeding will be considered for inclusion within the forthcoming road safety strategy.

The Department for Transport guidance on 'Using speed and red-light cameras for traffic enforcement: deployment, visibility and signing' notes that while the primary objective for camera deployment is to reduce the number of deaths and serious injuries, cameras can also be beneficial where there is community concern. The authority can set its own criteria, depending on the local needs and priorities. There are no Department for Transport rules preventing traffic authorities from installing speed cameras.

The Departmental guidance is not mandatory, and non-compliance does not provide any mitigation of, or defence against, any alleged offence under UK law.

Lisa Smart:

[\[42616\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to her Department's guidance entitled Using speed and red-light cameras for traffic enforcement: deployment, visibility and signing, published on 31 January 2007, what recent assessment her Department has made of the effectiveness of the criteria for the placement of fixed speed cameras in reducing (a) speeding and (b) road accidents.

Lilian Greenwood:

The Department for Transport has not made a recent assessment of the effectiveness of the criteria for the placement of fixed speed cameras in reducing (a) speeding and (b) road collisions. While the speed camera guidance does include criteria for placement which the police and traffic authorities may consider using, it invites authorities to set their own criteria, depending on local needs and priorities.

The guidance notes that while the primary objective for camera deployment is to reduce the number of deaths and serious injuries, cameras can also be beneficial where there is community concern. The guidance is not mandatory; there are no Department for Transport rules preventing traffic authorities from installing speed cameras.

To note, my Department uses the terms 'collision' or 'crash' rather than 'accident'.

■ **Taxis: Licensing**

Sarah Coombes:

[\[43206\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of updating the guidance entitled Taxi and private hire vehicle licensing best practice guidance for licensing authorities in England, published on 17 November 2023, to include guidance on compliance with registration plate regulations.

Simon Lightwood:

It is an offence for any vehicle to display a vehicle registration number plate that does not comply with the relevant regulations. Work is ongoing to quantify the number of illegal plates that may be in circulation on our roads, which will include taxis and private hire vehicles. The evidence gathered will be considered when evaluating potential future action, such as amending the best practice guidance, that may be taken to address this issue.

■ **Transport: Carbon Emissions**

Bell Ribeiro-Addy:

[\[43544\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate she has made of the emissions reductions required in transport to deliver the sixth carbon budget.

Lilian Greenwood:

As the UK's largest source of greenhouse gas emissions, decarbonising transport will play an important role in meeting economy-wide carbon budgets. Transport emissions reduced by 10% between 2019 to 2023, but emissions must fall faster to

achieve our legal targets. The Government will deliver an updated delivery plan for meeting legislated carbon budgets later this year, with policy detail for all sectors provided up to the end of Carbon Budget 6 in 2037.

■ Transport: North of England

Mrs Elsie Blundell:

[\[42699\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps she is taking to ensure the resilience of critical transport infrastructure in the north of England.

Simon Lightwood:

The government is committed to ensuring the resilience of the transport network across the UK, including vital services in the North of England. We work closely with transport operators to prevent and respond to the range of risks the sector faces: and aid them in assessing their vulnerabilities and implementing contingency planning arrangements.

Transport related risks to resilience are kept under review, including through the internal, classified National Security Risk Assessment, and the external-facing version, the National Risk Register, to ensure that we effectively plan at the national and local levels. This includes risks around adverse weather conditions, security threats and accidents.

We are also conducting a Critical National Infrastructure (CNI) review to support our work, building our understanding of the CNI landscape and the wide variety of systems, dependencies and redundancies that keep it running. This work is strengthening our ability to plan against risks and threats and bolster our incident response capabilities, ensuring our Critical National Infrastructure is resilient and secure.

■ Transport: Northern Ireland

Jim Shannon:

[\[43055\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps she is taking to improve transport links between Northern Ireland and Great Britain.

Simon Lightwood:

Whilst transport is devolved, the Department for Transport is committed to enhancing links between Northern Ireland and Great Britain. The Department is providing funding for Transport Scotland's feasibility study to explore options to bypass the villages of Springholm and Crocketford on the A75 and is supporting the Windsor Framework to streamline transport and customs processes. The Government is also supporting key aviation routes, including the Public Service Obligation between City of Derry Airport and London Heathrow Airport.

■ West Coast Main Line

Gareth Bacon:

[\[41994\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when she plans to make train service options for the West Coast Main Line after introduction of HS2 services Old Oak Common to Birmingham available for discussion and consultation.

Simon Lightwood:

No decisions have been made on the timetable that will operate when HS2 opens. Train service options for HS2 and the broader West Coast Main Line will be made available in due course, and will be informed by consultation.

Gareth Bacon:

[\[41995\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when she plans to make train service options for the West Coast Main Line after introduction of HS2 services Old Oak Common to West Coast Main Line locations beyond the West Midlands available for discussion and consultation.

Simon Lightwood:

No decisions have been made on the timetable that will operate when HS2 opens. Train service options for HS2 and the broader West Coast Main Line will be made available in due course, and will be informed by consultation.

TREASURY

■ Agriculture: Seasonal Workers

Chris Law:

[\[42555\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 19 March 2025 to Question 37199 on Agriculture: Seasonal Workers, how many complaints were received by HMRC for seasonal agricultural workers in each of the last five years.

James Murray:

The Government is determined that everyone who is entitled to the National Minimum Wage (NMW) receives it. All businesses, irrespective of size or business sector, are responsible for paying the correct minimum wage to their staff.

HMRC continue to crack down on employers who ignore the law, ensuring workers receive the wages to which they are entitled.

HMRC continues to undertake compliance activity within the agriculture sector across the UK. However, we do not hold specific data on how many complaints we receive relating to seasonal agricultural workers.

■ Bank Services: South Holland and the Deepings**Sir John Hayes:**[\[42397\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps her Department is taking to support small businesses impacted by a reduction in (a) local bank branches and (b) in-person banking services in South Holland and the Deepings constituency.

Emma Reynolds:

The Government understands the importance of face-to-face banking to communities, businesses and high streets in the South Holland and Deepings constituency and across the UK, and is committed to championing sufficient access for all as a priority. This is why the Government is working closely with industry to roll out 350 banking hubs across the UK. The UK banking sector has committed to deliver these hubs by the end of this Parliament. Over 220 hubs have been announced so far, and over 135 are already open.

Alternative options to access everyday banking services can be via telephone banking, through digital means such as mobile or online banking, and via the Post Office. The Post Office Banking Framework allows personal and business customers to withdraw and deposit cash, check their balance, pay bills and cash cheques at 11,500 Post Office branches across the UK.

■ Banking Hubs and Cash Dispensing: Rural Areas**Sir Julian Smith:**[\[42443\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions she has had with LINK on its criteria for assessing applications for (a) access to cash services and (b) banking hubs in rural areas.

Sir Julian Smith:[\[42444\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether she will make an assessment of the potential merits of reviewing the criteria used by LINK to assess applications for banking hubs to help meet the needs of rural communities.

Blake Stephenson:[\[42693\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps the Government has taken to achieve the target of 350 banking hubs since 5 July 2024.

Emma Reynolds:

The Government recognises that cash continues to be used by millions of people across the UK, including those who may be in vulnerable groups or face challenges using alternative payment methods. The Government is committed to maintaining the viability of cash as a payment method for those who choose to use it. The Government also understands the importance of face-to-face banking to communities and high streets across the UK, including those in rural communities, and is committed to championing sufficient access for all as a priority.

In September 2024, The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) introduced regulatory rules for access to cash. Its rules require the reasonable provision of free cash withdrawal and deposit facilities for personal current accounts.

Where a branch closure is announced or a community has submitted a cash access assessment request, LINK, the independent industry coordinating body responsible for making access to cash assessments, assesses a community's access to cash needs, and will recommend appropriate solutions where it considers that a community requires additional cash services. Any decisions on changes to LINK's independent assessment criteria are a matter for LINK, the financial services sector, and for the FCA, which oversees the access to cash regime.

Under the framework provided by this regime, the Government is working closely with industry to roll out 350 banking hubs across the UK which will provide individuals up and down the country with critical cash and banking services. The UK banking sector has committed to deliver these hubs by the end of this Parliament. Over 220 hubs have been announced so far, and over 135 are already open.

■ Banking Hubs: Rural Areas

Adam Dance:

[\[43246\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if she will hold discussions with LINK on the adequacy of (a) its assessment process for approving banking hubs in rural areas and (b) its considerations of the need for in-person banking services beyond access to cash when approving banking hubs.

Emma Reynolds:

Banking has changed significantly in recent years with many customers benefitting from the ease and convenience of remote banking. The Government understands the importance of face-to-face banking to communities and high streets across the UK, and is committed to championing sufficient access for all as a priority. This is why the Government is working closely with industry to roll out 350 banking hubs across the UK. The UK banking sector has committed to deliver these hubs by the end of this Parliament. Over 220 hubs have been announced so far, and over 135 are already open.

Where a branch closure is announced or a community has submitted a cash access assessment request, LINK, the independent industry coordinating body responsible for making access to cash assessments, assesses a community's access to cash needs, and will recommend appropriate solutions where it considers that a community requires additional cash services.

The FCA's rules require designated firms to consider a range of factors in their assessments which will account for challenges in cash access faced in rural areas. For example, firms are required to consider the actual travel times and costs to reach cash access facilities and identify gaps in provision where these are unreasonable, which may be particularly the case in rural areas.

Whilst the government meets with LINK to discuss a variety of matters, any decisions on changes to LINK's independent assessment criteria are a matter for LINK, the financial services sector, and for the FCA, which oversees the access to cash regime.

■ Chronic Illnesses: Children

David Chadwick: [\[42942\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if she will bring forward proposals for a furlough scheme for parents of chronically ill children.

James Murray:

The Government recognises the important role parents and carers play in looking after disabled people and people with health conditions, including chronically ill children. Significant support is available to support disabled people and their families and carers, such as Disability Living Allowance for children worth up to £184.30 per week, and Carer's Allowance worth up to £81.90 per week.

This Government is going further to give carers greater flexibility to work and increase their financial security by raising the Carer's Allowance Weekly Earnings Limit to the equivalent of 16 hours at the National Living Wage from 6th April 2025. This will be the largest increase to the earnings limit since Carer's Allowance was introduced in 1976.

We are also strengthening the right to request flexible working arrangements through the Employment Rights Bill, enabling parents and carers to better balance work around their caring commitments.

■ Cooperatives and Credit Unions

Ellie Chowns: [\[43742\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment she has made of the technical differences between co-operatives and credit unions which justify excluding credit unions from the exemption from audit requirements available to smaller co-operatives under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014; and whether the Government plans to review this distinction in light of forthcoming recommendations from the Law Commission's review of the Act.

Emma Reynolds:

The Government recognises the important contribution of co-operatives and mutuals to the economy, serving local communities around the country and ensuring the UK has a diverse business sector with their model of shared ownership. The Government is committed to unlocking the full potential of the mutual and co-operative sector to support inclusive growth.

Co-operatives are diverse organisations that span a variety of different sectors. Credit unions are financial co-operatives which offer savings and loans to their members. As deposit-takers, credit unions are subject to specific regulatory requirements.

The Government is funding the Law Commission's independent review of the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 to help ensure that co-operatives legislation is meeting the needs of this sector. This review will consider ways to update and modernise the Act. The Government will carefully consider the findings of this review to understand whether reform of the legislation is needed to ensure these businesses are supported to grow and succeed into the future.

■ Freezing of Assets: Russia

Emily Thornberry: [\[43028\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 1 April 2025 to Question 41805 on Freezing of Assets: Russia and with reference to the guidance entitled Financial sanctions guidance for Insolvency Practitioners, published on 18 March 2025, what the value is of assets immobilised in the UK under the prohibited persons provision of the Russia regime.

Emma Reynolds:

Coordinating closely with our G7 partners, the UK is contributing a £2.26bn loan to Ukraine through the Extraordinary Revenue Acceleration (ERA) scheme, generated from profits of immobilised Russian sovereign assets held across the UK's jurisdiction.

It is important that any decision to publicise information relating to the ERA scheme is taken on a collective G7 basis.

■ Investment

Kanishka Narayan: [\[43511\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps she is taking to increase retail investor participation in UK capital markets.

Emma Reynolds:

The Government wants to see more consumers participate in capital markets and benefit from the long-term financial security that investing can provide.

The Financial Services Growth & Competitiveness Strategy Call for Evidence, which closed on 12 December, asked how increasing retail participation in capital markets could support long-term sustainable growth within the sector and the wider economy. The call for evidence welcomed further evidence on how to improve consumer engagement with investing, and the Government is considering the feedback provided.

At Spring Statement 2025, the Government announced it is looking at options for reforms to ISAs that get the balance right between cash and investing, to earn better returns for savers, boost the culture of retail investment in capital markets, and support the growth mission.

More broadly, the Government is committed to boosting our capital markets to deliver growth across the UK and is pursuing ambitious reforms to make our markets even

more competitive. For example, reforms to the Prospectus rules will give investors, including retail investors, access to better quality information and so participate more easily in the capital raising process. The Government is also working with the FCA to review the boundary between financial advice and guidance, to ensure consumers get the support they need to make decisions about their finances.

■ Loans: Government Assistance

Wendy Chamberlain:

[\[43219\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps she is taking to support (a) credit unions and (b) other responsible lenders.

Emma Reynolds:

The Government has made clear its strong support for the credit union sector, recognising the value that credit unions bring to their members in local communities across the country in providing products and affordable credit. In her Mansion House speech on 14 November, the Chancellor announced new measures to support the growth of the credit union and mutuals sector. This included publishing a call for evidence on the potential to reform common bonds for credit unions in Great Britain, asking the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA) to produce a report on the mutuals landscape by the end of 2025, and welcoming the establishment of an industry-led Mutual and Co-operative Business Council.

The Government recognises that credit, when provided responsibly, can be crucial for people facing unexpected expenses or managing their cash flow. Alongside continuing to engage with the banking and mutuals sector, HM Treasury is considering access to affordable credit more broadly as part of the financial inclusion strategy work announced last year.

Additionally, Community Development Finance Institutions (CDFIs) play an important role in the provision of credit to SMEs and individuals, promoting access to finance, and offering an alternative to mainstream lenders. The Government has a renewed commitment to the CDFI sector and launched the Community ENABLE Funding programme through the British Business Bank in November 2024. This has the overall purpose of increasing the supply of debt finance to smaller businesses by supporting CDFIs.

■ London Stock Exchange

Blake Stephenson:

[\[43753\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 11 March 2025 to Question 35444 on London Stock Exchange, if she will make an assessment of the potential implications for her policies of the 6.6% reduction in the number of firms listed on the London Stock Exchange between July 2024 to March 2025.

Emma Reynolds:

The UK has recently attracted several high-profile listings from firms taking advantage of our reforms to make it easier to raise capital and fund growth on UK markets.

This includes IPOs from high-growth UK firms such as Applied Nutrition, as well as listings from prominent international firms such as Canal+ and CK Infrastructure.

More broadly, in 2024, London raised over £25bn equity capital, which is more capital than the next three European exchanges combined.

Managed Service Companies**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[43221\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of the enforcement of legislation relating to managed service companies on chartered providers of accountancy services.

James Murray:

The managed service companies legislation tackles specific tax avoidance arrangements that disguise employment in order to not pay the right tax. Ordinary tax advisory and accountancy services do not come within scope of these rules.

In November 2024, HMRC published [Spotlight 67](#) explaining how the legislation works and what activities fall outside its scope.

Motability: Insurance Premium Tax and VAT Zero Rating**Joe Robertson:** [\[42181\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate she has made of the total value of the (a) VAT zero-rating and (b) Insurance Premium Tax concession applied to vehicles (i) purchased or (ii) leased as part of the Motability Scheme from the most recent data available.

James Murray:

HMRC's published tax relief statistics provide an estimate of the cost of the Zero Rate of VAT for Vehicles and other supplies to disabled people (vehicles only) of £1,210 million in 2023-24, see [Non-structural tax reliefs - GOV.UK](#). Most of this cost represents vehicles in the Motability scheme, but it also includes other sales of adapted vehicles to disabled people.

Payment Methods**Kanishka Narayan:** [\[43510\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps she is taking to reduce friction in the UK's payments infrastructure.

Emma Reynolds:

The National Payments Vision, published at Mansion House 2024, sets out the government's ambition for a trusted, world-leading payments ecosystem delivered on

next generation technology, where consumers and businesses have a choice of payment methods to meet their needs. It sets out two key foundations to deliver the government's vision: a clear, predictable and proportionate regulatory framework, and resilient payments infrastructure that supports innovation.

The Vision established a Payments Vision Delivery Committee, which is chaired by HM Treasury and attended by senior representatives from the Bank of England, Payment Systems Regulator and Financial Conduct Authority, to drive forward key outputs over the course of this year, including on payments infrastructure.

The Committee, through work led by the PSR and the Bank of England, will set out an approach for the development and delivery of the UK's retail infrastructure needs and the required governance and funding model to achieve it.

■ Pensions Investment Review

Mr Gregory Campbell: [\[43026\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when she plans to bring forward any legislative proposals from the first phase of the Pensions Investment Review.

Torsten Bell:

The final report of the Pensions Investment Review, including the policy proposals to be legislated for, will be published in the Spring ahead of the introduction of the Pension Schemes Bill.

■ Property: Taxation

Mr Richard Holden: [\[43106\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for what reason the guidance entitled Property business arrangements involving hybrid partnerships (Spotlight 63) was published on 4 October 2023; whether her Department prepared an impact assessment for that guidance; and whether she is taking steps to ensure that HMRC complies with its charter in the context of affected (a) landlords and (b) tenants.

James Murray:

HMRC tackles avoidance schemes by directly challenging promoters and by informing and educating taxpayers. This includes for example, targeted educational campaigns for taxpayers, spotlight publications which provide an early warning to taxpayers of marketed avoidance arrangements, and publication of details on tax avoidance schemes and those that promote them.

HMRC takes the Charter very seriously. The HMRC charter, published on GOV.UK, defines the service and standard of behaviour that taxpayers should expect.

■ Public Expenditure

Mel Stride: [\[43439\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 26 March 2025 to Question 40157 on Public Expenditure, and with reference to the Chief Secretary to the

Treasury's statement to the House on 28 October 2024, Official Report, column 562, whether it is her Department's policy to target an overall budget surplus.

Darren Jones:

At Autumn Budget 2024, the government confirmed new fiscal rules to put the public finances on a sustainable path, and prioritise investment to support long-term growth.

The stability rule is that the current budget must be in surplus in 2029-30, until 29-30 becomes the third year of the forecast period. From that point, the current budget must then remain in balance or in surplus from the third year of the rolling forecast period, where balance is defined as a range: in surplus, or in deficit of no more than 0.5% of GDP. This range will support the government's commitment to a single fiscal event every year by avoiding the need for policy adjustment at forecasts outside of fiscal events. If the range is used between fiscal events, the current budget must return to surplus from the third year at the following fiscal event.

In its March 2025 forecast, the independent Office for Budget Responsibility confirmed the government was on track to meet its stability and investment rules two years early. By 2029-30, the current budget is forecast to be in a surplus of £9.9 billion.

■ **Stamp Duty Land Tax: First Time Buyers**

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[42561\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if she will make transitional relief on Stamp Duty Land Tax (SDLT) available to first-time buyers in cases where completion has been subject to unexpected delays.

James Murray:

In September 2022, the previous government announced a change to the level at which purchasers of residential property start paying Stamp Duty Land Tax (SDLT), from £125,000 to £250,000. This change was made temporary in November 2022, and the rate reverted to £125,000 on 1 April 2025. For first-time buyers, the nil-rate band had been temporarily raised to £425,000 and the purchase price limit for accessing the relief to £625,000. On 1 April 2025, after the rates reverted, first time buyers can still benefit from paying no SDLT up to £300,000 and will be able to claim relief on purchases up to £500,000.

Purchasers have had notice of these tax changes, as legislated for in the Stamp Duty Land Tax (Temporary Relief) Act 2023. In order to benefit from the temporary rates, purchasers will have needed to complete on their purchase by 31 March 2025. The Government keeps all taxes under review as part of the usual tax policy making process.

■ **State Retirement Pensions: Underpayments**

Steve Darling:

[\[43135\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if HMRC will provide (a) National Insurance records, (b) historic income tax records showing taxable payments of state pensions and

(c) any other related records of deceased people to bereaved family members for claims for underpaid state pensions.

James Murray:

His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) operates a strict duty of confidentiality to protect customers' data. Therefore they can only supply information regarding the deceased to family members in certain circumstances permitted in law, for example to enable the tax and National Insurance affairs of the deceased to be settled.

At present HMRC does not have the power to provide families with tax and National Insurance information for the purpose mentioned.

The State Pension is a matter for the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and HMRC shares information via an established legislative gateway with DWP for its administration.

■ **Taxation: Electronic Government**

David Chadwick:

[\[42922\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps her Department is taking to help ensure (a) that the rollout of digital quarterly submissions for tax returns under MTD for ITSA does not lead to penalties for non-compliance and increased stress for vulnerable groups who do not have the digital skills or digital access to meet the new requirements and (b) that measures are in place for people without digital access or digital skills to continue to submit manual books where necessary.

James Murray:

Making Tax Digital (MTD) for Income Tax is designed to make it easier for users to get their tax right and keep on top of their affairs. Taxpayers will use software to keep digital records and send simple quarterly updates to HMRC; in turn, this will help to finalise their Income Tax position after the year end.

A new fairer penalty regime will also be introduced to support taxpayers submitting more frequent updates under MTD. They will not be penalised for occasionally missing a deadline. Instead, they will receive a penalty point towards a points threshold. They will only receive a financial penalty once that threshold is met.

The government recognises that not everyone is able to interact with HMRC digitally. Digitally excluded taxpayers will be able to apply for an exemption from MTD and will continue to file using existing processes. HMRC will set out further information on the exemption process when it opens later in 2025.

■ **Universal Credit**

Mel Stride:

[\[43436\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to paragraph 3.2 of the Office for Budget Responsibility's Economic and Fiscal Outlook, published on 26 March 2025, what changes were made to the universal credit standard allowance increase following the certification deadline; and for what reason.

Darren Jones:

In response to feedback from the Office for Budget Responsibility, the government made amendments to the policy parameters of the Universal Credit standard allowance change. The UC standard allowance will reach £106 per week in 2029-30, an increase above inflation.

This update was made after the statement delivered to the House by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on 18 March 2025, once the Office for Budget Responsibility had given its final assessment of the costing and behavioural assumptions associated with the measure. The adjustments were made to ensure we continue to strike the right balance between setting strong work incentives and fiscal sustainability.

■ Universal Credit: Health**Mel Stride:**[\[43437\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to paragraph 3.2 of the Office for Budget Responsibility's Economic and Fiscal Outlook, published on 26 March 2025, what changes were made to the reduction in the level of the Universal Credit health element following the certification deadline; and for what reason.

Darren Jones:

In response to feedback from the Office for Budget Responsibility, the government made amendments to the policy parameters of the changes to the Universal Credit health element. The government is freezing the reduced Universal Credit health element level for new claimants, in line with our objectives to rebalance the system, rather than uprating it by Consumer Price Index inflation.

This update was made after the statement to the House delivered by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on 18 March 2025, once the Office for Budget Responsibility had given its final assessment of the costing and behavioural assumptions associated with the measure. The adjustments were made to ensure we continue to strike the right balance between setting strong work incentives and fiscal sustainability.

WALES**■ Data, Statistics and Research on Sex and Gender Independent Review****Tonia Antoniazzi:**[\[43199\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, pursuant to the Answer of 27 March 2025 to Question 40390 on Data, Statistics and Research on Sex and Gender Independent Review, if she will have discussions with the Welsh Government on the potential implications for their policies of the recommendations of the Sullivan Review.

Jo Stevens:

I have regular discussions with the Welsh Government on a wide range of matters.

The government has now published the independent review of data, statistics and research on sex and gender commissioned by the previous government, which was also sent to the Welsh Government. We are considering the findings in light of ongoing policy work in this area.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Access to Work Programme

Alex Brewer:

[\[43700\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that companies and charities are paid on time in the Access to Work Plus Scheme.

Sir Stephen Timms:

To enable charities and companies to receive timely payments, officials have been working in collaboration with these organisations to explore how the Access to Work Plus claims process can be made easier for their employees. In March 2025, to ensure payments can be made swiftly, a streamlined claims process was put in place to clear outstanding claims for payment. Guidance on the new process has been issued to charities and companies, and officials continue to work with the charities and companies to develop longer term improvements to the employees' claims process.

■ Ageing and Older People: Public Appointments

Fabian Hamilton:

[\[42413\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she has made an assessment of the potential merits of the introduction of a Commissioner for Older People and Ageing in England.

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.

The 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.

■ Carer's Allowance

Fabian Hamilton:

[42412]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to reduce delays in the administration of Carer's Allowance; and what steps she is taking to inform carers about the Carer's Allowance earnings threshold.

Sir Stephen Timms:

Recruitment and deployment of additional resources is taking place to enable the Carer's Allowance (CA) unit to meet the consistent increased demand, which should reduce the clearance times for new claims to CA.

DWP has reviewed its communications to ensure the increase in the CA earnings threshold from 7 April 2025 is clearly visible. These include:

- Advice on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk),
- Annual benefit uprating notification letters. These are issued to customers over a 7-week period from the beginning of March, and include the new weekly rate of CA and the new earnings limit,
- Use of our advocates' platform, such as Carers UK,
- Clerical claim form supporting notes,
- Upskilling our telephony agents who deal with inbound customer enquiries,
- Focussed media coverage on the CA threshold increase - press releases, Facebook etc.

■ Carer's Allowance: Overpayments

Ann Davies:

[43707]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of the potential merits of pausing the creation of new Carer's Allowance overpayment debts until the conclusion of the independent review.

Sir Stephen Timms:

Overpayments have caused significant anxiety for some people. It is important to take the time to review what happened independently, to establish what exactly what went wrong and assess how to put things right. We will await the findings of the independent review being conducted by Liz Sayce. The review is not a substitute for legal proceedings and the existence of the review does not prejudice any business-as-usual activity by DWP.

We carefully balance our duty to the taxpayer to recover overpayments with safeguards in place to manage repayments fairly. Carers have a responsibility to ensure they are entitled to benefits and to inform the DWP of any changes in their circumstances that could impact their award. Support remains in place with DWP's Debt Management Service available to speak to anyone who has had an overpayment about the terms of their repayment.

■ **Carer's Allowance: Personal Independence Payment**

Yuan Yang: [\[42981\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of changes to the uptake of Carer's Allowance as a result of proposed tightening of PIP eligibility criteria on (a) rates of poverty among carers, (b) carers' labour market participation and (c) levels of demand for public services.

Sir Stephen Timms:

No assessment has yet been conducted.

Information on the impacts of the Pathways to Work Green Paper will be published in due course, and some information was 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.

Yuan Yang: [\[42983\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people claiming Carer's Allowance are caring for a person who scores fewer than four points for each individual descriptor in the daily living part of Personal Independence Payment (a) by sex, (b) by ethnicity and (c) in total.

Sir Stephen Timms:

Information on the impacts of the Pathways to Work Green Paper will be published in due course, and some information was 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.

The Department does not hold data on the ethnicity of all PIP claimants on its computer systems, since it is not required for the administration of benefit.

Information on the ethnicity of PIP claimants is available from the [Family Resources Survey: financial year 2023 to 2024](#) (Table 2.10), but this cannot be related to PIP point scores.

■ Chemicals: Regulation

Anna Gelderd:

[\[43003\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will publish the budget for (a) UK REACH and (b) GB CLP for 2025-26; and identify (i) income from fees, charges and other sources and (ii) expenditure including staff costs in the (A) Health and Safety Executive, (B) Environment Agency, (C) Office for Product Safety and Standards and (D) UK Health Security Agency.

Sir Stephen Timms:

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) does not publish separate budgets for the UK REACH and GB CLP regulatory regimes. For the financial year 2025-26, the full cost of the planned activity is around (a) £6.1m on UK REACH, of which approximately £2.5m are staff costs and (b) £1m on GB CLP, of which approximately £0.44m are staff costs.

These costs will be met by income from several sources, including fees and charges paid by industry and allocations from government which vary each year depending on the activity being carried out. For UK REACH, fees from industry for 2025-26 are forecast to be £1.53m.

The information requested on budgets and expenditures in relation to different agencies are not held by this department. You may wish to contact the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for the Environment Agency, the Department for Business and Trade for Office for Product Safety and Standards, and the Department of Health and Social Care for UK Health Security Agency.

■ Child Trust Fund

James Wild:

[\[42859\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she has made an assessment of the potential merits of extending the DWP appointee scheme to cover Child Trust Funds with a value up to £5,000.

Sir Stephen Timms:

The DWP will not be extending its appointeeship scheme to include Child Trust Funds. The scheme only applies to Government benefits which help with day-to-day living expenses, as opposed to a capital asset like a Child Trust Fund which matures overtime. Further, applying benefit rules to Child Trust Funds would not provide the protections currently delivered by the Mental Capacity Act and could expose vulnerable people to risk.

■ Children: Maintenance

Manuela Perteghella:

[\[43312\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that the Child Maintenance Service does not allow economic abuse through missed payments by the paying parent.

Andrew Western:

The Child Maintenance Service (CMS) takes the issue of domestic and economic abuse extremely seriously and is committed to ensuring that victims of abuse get the help and support they need.

The Child Maintenance Service (CMS) possess robust enforcement powers and use them effectively in the collection of arrears. CMS has also implemented significant improvements to speed up action when payments break down, targeting enforcement actions more effectively.

A consultation on proposed reforms to the CMS was published by the previous Government on 8 May 2024. This included proposals to remove the Direct Pay service. These measures will allow the CMS to tackle non-compliance faster as monitoring all payments would enable the CMS to immediately identify any missed, late or partial payments and take swift enforcement action.

The consultation was extended by this Government at the end of July and ran until 30 September 2024. We are currently analysing the responses we have received, and the Government will publish a response in due course.

■ Data, Statistics and Research on Sex and Gender Independent Review**Tonia Antoniazzi:****[43197]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 27 March 2025 to Question 40390 on Data, Statistics and Research on Sex and Gender Independent Review, what steps her Department is taking to implement the recommendations of the Sullivan Review of Data, Statistics and Research on Sex and Gender, published on 19 March 2025.

Andrew Western:

The government has now published the independent review of data, statistics and research on sex and gender commissioned by the previous government. We are considering the findings in light of ongoing policy work in this area.

■ Disability Living Allowance: Children**Ian Lavery:****[41821]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people under the age of 16 are claiming Disability Living Allowance in (a) Blyth and Ashington constituency, (b) Northumberland, (c) the North East and (d) England.

Sir Stephen Timms:

The latest available data on the number of children claiming Disability Living Allowance can be found at <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>. The requested data can be found in the 'DLA: Cases in Entitlement', which allows you to view the number of individuals that are entitled to DLA. To filter for information related to children only, this can be found by expanding 'Client Type' and selecting 'Children'. The specific areas requested can be found by expanding 'Westminster Parliamentary Constituency 2024' or 'National – Regional – LA – OAs'.

Guidance on how to use Stat-Xplore can be found here: <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/index.html>. An account is not required to use Stat- Xplore, the 'Guest Login' feature gives instant access to the main functions.

■ Disability: Unemployment

Lee Anderson: [\[41982\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to support severely disabled people who cannot work.

Sir Stephen Timms:

The social security system will always be there for those who can't work. As part of making changes to the payment rates in Universal Credit, we will ensure that those with the most severe, lifelong conditions who will never be able to work have their incomes protected.

For those who are affected by the new PIP eligibility changes, we are consulting on how best to support this group, including how to make sure health and eligible care needs are met.

■ Economic Crime

Apsana Begum: [\[42646\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what criteria will be used to determine suspicious bank account activity that would result in the Department requiring access to the individuals bank account under the Public Authorities (Fraud, Error and Recovery) Bill.

Andrew Western:

DWP's information gathering powers may be used where there is a reasonable suspicion of fraud. In such cases the Department can issue an information notice, where necessary and proportionate, to any information holders who DWP believe hold relevant information, including banks. When gathered, this information can be used to either prove or disprove the allegation of fraud.

This is distinct from the new Eligibility Verification measure contained within the Public Authorities (Fraud, Error and Recovery) Bill, where banks and financial institutions will be required to share limited data with DWP on benefit-receiving account holders and accounts relating to specified benefits, where it suggests someone may be receiving an incorrect payment. For example, where a person is in receipt of Universal Credit and has savings over £16,000. This is done without any presumption of fraud.

■ Employment

Dr Luke Evans:

[\[42825\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to monitor outputs arising from the £1bn for guaranteed personalised employment support to help people get back to work.

Alison McGovern:

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.

■ Employment Schemes: Visual Impairment

Sir John Hayes:

[\[42409\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to support partially sighted people into employment in Lincolnshire.

Alison McGovern:

Backed by £240m investment, the Get Britain Working White Paper launched last November will drive forward approaches to tackling economic inactivity and work toward the long-term ambition of an 80% employment rate. We announced in the recent 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. This support is needed to break down barriers, unlock work and open up opportunity. It will get people off welfare and into work – which we know many believe they could do.

Appropriate work is generally good for health and wellbeing, so we want everyone to get work and get on in work, whoever they are and wherever they live. Disabled people and people with health conditions including the partially sighted are a diverse group so access to the right work and health support, in the right place, at the right time, is key. We therefore have a range of specialist initiatives to support individuals to stay in work and get back into work, including those that join up employment and health systems. Measures include support from Work Coaches and Disability Employment Advisers in Jobcentres and Access to Work grants, as well as joining up health and employment support around the individual through Employment Advisors in NHS Talking Therapies, Individual Placement and Support in Primary Care and WorkWell.

It is also recognised that employers play an important role in addressing health and disability. To build on this, the Joint DWP and DHSC Work & Health Directorate (JWHD) is facilitating “Keep Britain Working”, an independent review of the role of UK employers in reducing health-related inactivity and to promote healthy and inclusive workplaces. The lead reviewer, Sir Charlie Mayfield, is expected to bring forward recommendations in Autumn 2025. Additionally, the JWHD has developed a digital

information service for employers, continues to oversee the Disability Confident Scheme, and continues to increase access to Occupational Health.

■ **Employment: Disability**

Neil Duncan-Jordan:

[\[42955\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of (a) part-time and (b) full-time employment opportunities that will be available by 2029-30 for those disabled people and people with health conditions as outlined in the Green Paper: Pathways to Work, published on 18 March 2025.

Sir Stephen Timms:

No such estimate has been made.

However, we have evidence that delivering better and more tailored employment support can get more people off welfare, and into work - alongside a higher expectation to engage with that support. Therefore, we are investing £1 billion a year by the end of the decade in new employment, health and skills support – one of the biggest packages of new employment support for sick and disabled people ever.

In addition, corrective action is needed after the value of the basic unemployment benefit was run down to a 40-year low, while incapacity benefits continued to rise. This means that the rate of Universal Credit for those on the health element is now double that for those on the standard allowance. As a result, all the incentives are to claim incapacity benefits and define yourself as incapable of work, with both the OBR and IFS suggesting this has been a factor in driving higher incapacity benefit claims.

■ **Health and Safety Executive: Staff**

Chris Law:

[\[42558\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 17 March 2025 to Question 37202 on Seasonal workers: Agriculture, how many Health and Safety Executive inspection officials are based in (a) Scotland, (b) England and (c) Wales.

Sir Stephen Timms:

As the table below shows, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) currently employs 897 full time equivalent (FTE) inspector staff in all grades and roles including trainees, managers and specialists with warrants. There are currently 663 FTE Band 3 and 4 inspectors who undertake the delivery of the operational division workplans. This includes inspections and investigations into reported incidents and concerns and where non-compliance with health and safety legislations is identified, the inspectors take regulatory action in accordance with HSE's published Enforcement Policy Statement.

Although HSE staff work across England, Scotland and Wales, these figures are based on the office location where the staff are employed.

JOB BAND	ENGLAND	SCOTLAND	WALES	TOTAL
SCS	9	1	-	10
Band 1	28	4	3	35
Band 2	152	26	11	189
Band 3	377	94	42	513
Band 4	117	21	12	150
Total	683	146	68	897

■ Means-tested Benefits: Take-up

Martin Wrigley:

[\[42703\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to increase the take up of means-tested benefits among households with children in poverty.

Alison McGovern:

I refer the honourable member to the answer given on 27 March 2025 to question UIN [41344](#).

■ Pathways to Work

Alex Sobel:

[\[42846\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 31 March 2025 to Question 40633 on Social Security Benefits: Reform, when her Department plans to publish the full suite of accessible versions of the Green Paper.

Sir Stephen Timms:

The remaining accessible formats of the Green Paper have now been published and can be accessed here: [Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working Green Paper - GOV.UK](#). A full suite of accessible versions is available including Audio, British Sign Language, Braille, Large Print and Easy Read.

The consultation will close in 12 weeks on 30 June 2025, to ensure that everyone has sufficient time to engage with and respond to the consultation.

Neil Duncan-Jordan:

[\[42956\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people with disabilities and long-term health conditions will be supported by the £1bn a year funding outlined in the Green Paper: Pathways to Work, published on 18 March 2025.

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 across Great Britain.

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.

Neil Duncan-Jordan:

[42958]

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, if she will make an estimate of the number of (a) children and (b) adults who will be in relative poverty after housing costs in each region in the 2029-30 financial year.

Alison McGovern:

An assessment on this basis is not available. The government's impact assessment regarding Health and Disability Reform is available at [Spring Statement 2025 health and disability benefit reforms – Impacts](#).

Neil Duncan-Jordan:

[42961]

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 steps she plans to take to help support people with severe lifelong conditions.

Sir Stephen Timms:

The social security system will always be there for those who can't work. As part of making changes to the payment rates in Universal Credit, we will protect the incomes of those with the most severe, lifelong conditions who will never be able to work.

For those with the most severe, life-long health conditions, who have no prospect of improvement and will never be able to work, will see their incomes protected. We will also guarantee that for both new and existing claims, those in this group who have no prospect of improvement will not need to be reassessed in future.

We also want to improve peoples' experience of the health and disability benefits system, as set out in the Green Paper. This includes exploring ways to improve PIP assessments through using recording of assessments as a lever for improvement, 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.

Neil Duncan-Jordan:

[42965]

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, when she plans to publish further information on how her Department

plans to use the £1 billion a year funding to help more disabled people and people with health conditions into employment.

Sir Stephen Timms:

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 people who are out of work on health and disability grounds and their representative organisations, and from a wide range of other stakeholders including devolved governments, local health systems, local government and Mayoral Strategic Authorities, private and voluntary sector providers, and employers. We will confirm further details in due course after we have completed our consultation process.

■ **Pathways to Work: Impact Assessments**

Neil Duncan-Jordan:

[\[42060\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to her Department's Green Paper entitled Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working, published on 18 March 2025, whether she considered the potential merits of producing a health impact assessment of that Green Paper.

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.

■ **Pension Credit**

Anna Sabine:

[\[42341\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what is the average processing times for pension credit applications in each of the last five years.

Torsten Bell:

Pension Credit application Average Actual Clearance Times (AACT) are measured weekly. Please see attached annex for details of Pension Credit applications average processing times back to October 2022. We do not hold this information prior to October 2022.

Please note, The Average Actual Clearance Time figures shown are unpublished management information, collected and intended for internal departmental use and have not been quality assured to National Statistics or Official Statistics publication standard. The figures are rounded to the nearest working day and based on the week the claim was cleared, rather than the week the claim was made.

DWP currently works to a planned timescale of 50 working days to clear Pension Credit claims. The next publication of the Annual Reporting and Accounts will include claims processed in the Financial Year 2024 to 2025, which is due for publication in the summer.

Attachments:

1. Attachment [Annex.pdf]

Wendy Morton:

[43063]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she plans to review the eligibility criteria for Pension Credit.

Torsten Bell:

The Government has no current plans to review the eligibility criteria for Pension Credit.

Wendy Morton:

[43064]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the uptake of Pension Credit among (a) disabled and (b) non-disabled pensioners.

Torsten Bell:

The latest estimates of Pension Credit take-up cover the financial year 2022/23:

[Income-related benefits: estimates of take-up: financial year ending 2023 - GOV.UK.](#)

The take-up does not provide a break down of rates of take-up amongst disabled and non-disabled pensioners.

Wendy Morton:

[43065]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many single pensioners there are who earn less than £20,000 a year and more than the threshold required for pension credit.

Torsten Bell:

The income threshold for eligibility for Pension Credit is dependent on personal circumstances, and not all forms of income are taken into account when determining eligibility. Therefore it is not possible to produce a robust estimate of how many single pensioners exceed this threshold due to earned income.

■ **Personal Independence Payment**

Ian Lavery:

[41813]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people receiving the enhanced level of PIP did not score four points in any of the ten descriptors in (a) Blyth and Ashington constituency, (b) Northumberland, (c) the North East and (d) England.

Ian Lavery:

[41814]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people receiving the standard level of PIP did not score four points in any of the ten descriptors in (a) Blyth and Ashington constituency, (b) Northumberland, (c) the North East and (d) England.

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.

Neil Duncan-Jordan:

[42351]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to her Department's report entitled Spring Statement 2025 health and disability benefit reforms - Impacts, published on 26 March 2025, what financial support her Department plans to provide to Personal Independent Payments claimants affected by the proposed changes to the entitlement rules.

Sir Stephen Timms:

The changes to PIP eligibility will ensure we can focus the benefit more on those with higher needs. There will be no immediate changes to anybody's entitlement. Our intention is that the new eligibility requirement in Personal Independence Payment, where people must score a minimum of four points in one daily living activity to be eligible for the daily living component, will - subject to parliamentary approval - apply to new claims and award reviews from November 2026.

We are mindful of the impact this change could have on people. That is why, 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.

Yuan Yang:

[42982]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people claiming the daily living part of Personal Independence Payment scored fewer than four points in each of the daily living activities (a) by sex, (b) by age, (c) by ethnicity and (d) in total.

Sir Stephen Timms:

Information on the impacts of the Pathways to Work Green Paper will be published in due course, and some information was 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.

The Department does not hold data on the ethnicity of all PIP claimants on its computer systems, since it is not required for the administration of benefit.

Information on the ethnicity of PIP claimants is available from the [Family Resources Survey: financial year 2023 to 2024](#) (Table 2.10), but this cannot be related to PIP point scores.

■ Personal Independence Payment: Carer's Allowance

Ian Lavery:

[41815]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people receiving the enhanced level of PIP did not score four points in any of the ten descriptors allowing someone else to receive carers allowance in (a) Blyth and Ashington constituency, (b) Northumberland, (c) the North East and (d) England.

Ian Lavery:

[41816]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people claiming the standard level of the Personal Independence Payment who did not score four points in any of the 10 descriptors have a claim where someone else receives Carer's Allowance in (a) Blyth and Ashington constituency, (b) Northumberland, (c) the North East and (d) England.

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.

Steve Darling:

[41966]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she has made an assessment of the potential impact of the proposed changes to the Personal Independence Payment qualifying criteria and the consequential effect on Carer's Allowance eligibility on the ability of carers to participate in paid employment.

Sir Stephen Timms:

We have committed to introduce a new requirement that, in addition to the existing eligibility criteria, 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. Our intention is that – subject to parliamentary approval – the changes will apply to new claims and award reviews from November 2026.

We understand the struggles facing many carers. We have launched an Independent Review of Carer's Allowance which is exploring how earnings-related overpayments have occurred and what changes can be made. We've already taken action by boosting the Carer's Allowance earnings threshold by £45 a week to £196 – a move that will benefit more than 60,000 carers by 2029/30.

As the Green Paper sets out, we will consider the impacts on benefits for unpaid carers as part of our wider considerations of responses to the consultation as we develop our detailed proposals for change. We are also consulting on how best to support those who lose entitlement to Personal Independence Payment due to the reforms, including how to make sure health and eligible care needs are met.

■ Personal Independence Payment: Carer's Allowance and Universal Credit

Ian Lavery:

[41819]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of what the weekly reduction in income would be for a household where one person receives (a) Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and does not have four points in any descriptor and (b) Carer's Allowance and the care component of Universal Credit, in the context of her proposed reforms to PIP.

Sir Stephen Timms:

No estimate has yet been made.

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.

■ Personal Independence Payment: Death

Paulette Hamilton:

[43170]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many claims for Personal Independence Payment were stopped due to the death of the claimant where they received a Daily Living component but less than four points for each Daily Living activity in their last assessment in the last year for which information is available.

Sir Stephen Timms:

This information is not readily available.

Information on the impacts of the Pathways to Work Green Paper will be published in due course, and some information was 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.

Paulette Hamilton:

[43172]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people died who had been assessed as having Limited Capability for Work and Work-Related Activity under the Normal Rules and received a Daily Living component of Personal Independence

Payment but received less than four points for each Daily Living activity in their last assessment in the last year for which information is available.

Sir Stephen Timms:

This information is not readily available.

Information on the impacts of the Pathways to Work Green Paper will be published in due course, and some information was 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.

■ **Personal Independence Payment: Employment**

Mr Toby Perkins:

[\[42433\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of working people in receipt of Personal Independence Payment (PIP) who will be forced to leave work if they cease to receive PIP.

Sir Stephen Timms:

No estimate has been made. The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost, as it would require a bespoke survey of claimants.

■ **Personal Independence Payment: Epsom and Ewell**

Helen Maguire:

[\[42991\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of proposed reductions to the level of the Personal Independence Payment on people in Epsom and Ewell constituency.

Sir Stephen Timms:

No estimate has yet been made.

Information on the impacts of the Pathways to Work Green Paper will be published in due course, and some information was 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.

■ **Personal Independence Payment: Reform**

Richard Burgon:

[\[43597\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to paragraph 139 of the Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working Green Paper, published on 18 March 2025, for what reason it is her policy that people should no

longer be eligible for the daily living component of the Personal Independence Payment if they need (a) assistance to be able to cut up food, (b) supervision or prompting to be able to wash or bathe, (c) assistance to be able to wash either their hair or body below the waist, (d) assistance to be able to get in or out of a bath or shower, (e) supervision or prompting to be able to manage toilet needs, (f) assistance to be able to dress or undress their lower body and (g) supervision, prompting or assistance to be able to manage medication and, or, to be able to monitor a health condition.

Sir Stephen Timms:

We have committed to introducing a new requirement whereby, in addition to the existing eligibility criteria, people 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. Our intention is that – subject to parliamentary approval – the changes will apply to new claims and award reviews from November 2026.

A high number of people get PIP by having multiple but low-level functional needs across several activities. These could individually be managed with small interventions or the addition of aids or appliances. This change will focus PIP more on those with the greatest needs, ensuring those who are unable to complete activities at all, or who require more help from others to complete them, still get support.

Through the Green Paper we are consulting on how best to support those who may lose any entitlement because of this change.

■ **Personal Independence Payment: South Holland and the Deepings**

Sir John Hayes:

[42404]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people received Personal Independence Payment in South Holland and The Deepings constituency in each of the last five years.

Sir Stephen Timms:

Data on Personal Independence Payment (PIP) can be found on [Stat Xplore](#). The requested data can be found in the 'PIP Clearances' dataset. You can use the 'Month' filter to select each month for the last five years and add it as a row or column. You can filter for South Holland and The Deepings by using the 'Geography' filter to select 'Westminster Parliamentary Constituency 2024'. You can use the 'Clearance Type Detail' filter to select those who were awarded PIP.

You can log in or access Stat-Xplore as a guest user and, if needed, you can access [guidance](#) on how to extract the information required.

■ **Personal Independence Payment: Universal Credit**

Ian Lavery:

[41817]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people claiming the enhanced level of the Personal Independence Payment who did not score four points in any of the 10 descriptors have a claim where someone else receives the carers

component of Universal Credit in (a) Blyth and Ashington constituency, (b) Northumberland, (c) the North East and (d) England.

Ian Lavery:

[41818]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people claiming the standard level of the Personal Independence Payment who did not score four points in any of the 10 descriptors have a claim where someone else receives the carers component of Universal Credit in (a) Blyth and Ashington constituency, (b) Northumberland, (c) the North East and (d) England.

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.

■ Poverty: Health

Neil Duncan-Jordan:

[42057]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to her Department's report entitled Spring Statement 2025 health and disability benefit reforms - Impacts, published on 26 March 2025, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of the increase of people in relative poverty on (a) those people's health and (b) societal health inequalities.

Neil Duncan-Jordan:

[42058]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to her Department's report entitled Spring Statement 2025 health and disability benefit reforms - Impacts, published on 26 March 2025, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of the increase of children in relative poverty on (a) those children's health and (b) the societal health inequalities of children.

Sir Stephen Timms:

No such assessment has been made. However, the proposals have been carefully designed to protect the finances of severely disabled people.

The Department published "[Spring Statement 2025 health and disability benefit reforms - Equality Analysis](#)" and "[Spring Statement 2025 health and disability benefit reforms – Impacts](#)" 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.

■ Poverty: Somerset

Adam Dance:

[\[43245\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the potential impact of the Spring Statement 2025 on the number of benefit claimants at risk of poverty in (a) Yeovil constituency and (b) Somerset.

Alison McGovern:

The government's impact assessment regarding Health and Disability Reform is available at [Spring Statement 2025 health and disability benefit reforms – Impacts](#).

An assessment of the poverty impacts of the reforms is not available at the constituency or local authority area level.

■ Seasonal Workers: Agriculture

Chris Law:

[\[42553\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 19 March 2025 to Question 37203 on Seasonal workers: Agriculture, how many Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations reports were received by the Health and Safety Executive for (a) agricultural and (b) seasonal agricultural workers in each of the last five years.

Sir Stephen Timms:

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) does not require dutyholders submitting reports under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) to specify that the report relates to “seasonal agricultural workers”. Therefore, HSE does not hold specific data on the number of RIDDOR reports submitted for “seasonal agricultural workers” in each of the last five years.

HSE does collect RIDDOR reports on injuries and diseases to agricultural workers. The two tables below show the total number of RIDDOR reports received for “agricultural workers” from 1 April to 31 March over the last 5 years.

Table 1 - Reports of injuries*

YEAR	NON-REPORTABLE	REPORTABLE	ALL REPORTS
2020/21	40	829	869
2021/22	22	786	808
2022/23	26	778	804
2023/24	27	765	792
2024/25	33	786	819

*Table 1 - Injury outcomes include fatal, specified injuries, and over-7-day injuries.

Table 2 - Reports of occupational diseases, exposures to biological agents, and occupational cancers*

YEAR	NON-REPORTABLE	REPORTABLE	ALL REPORTS
2020/21	3	58	61
2021/22	1	20	21
2022/23	0	16	16
2023/24	0	10	10
2024/25	3	8	11

*Table 2 - Reports of specific occupational diseases, includes those caused by an occupational exposure to a biological agent; and cases of occupational cancer.

Notes on the two tables:

1. These figures for 'Agricultural workers' are defined using Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) 01 – 'Crop and animal production, hunting and related service activities', this information is selected by the notifier during the reporting process.
2. Reports marked 'non-reportable' in the database, are those determined by HSE operational teams as either not meeting the reporting scope of RIDDOR, or reported as a duplicate. These figures are as-reported, no adjustments are made for under-reporting.
3. Data in Tables 1 and 2 is based on RIDDOR reports as notified to HSE. HSE also publish as official statistics numbers of RIDDOR reported injuries. These official statistics have undergone further data quality checks and differ in scope and coverage to numbers in Tables 1 and 2. For more details of official statistics on RIDDOR reported injuries, see www.hse.gov.uk/statistics

■ Social Security Benefits

Nick Timothy:

[41956]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many benefits claimant households received (a) Universal Credit, (b) New Style Jobseekers' Allowance, (c) New Style Employment and Support Allowance, (d) Personal Independence Payment and (e) legacy benefits in each year since 2010, broken down by local authority.

Sir Stephen Timms:

Monthly statistics for the number of households on Universal Credit and Housing Benefit in Great Britain by local authority are published quarterly on [Stat-Xplore](#).

Universal Credit statistics are available from August 2015 to November 2024 in the [Households on Universal Credit](#) dataset.

Housing Benefit statistics are available from November 2008 to March 2018 in the [Housing Benefit – Data to March 2018](#) dataset and from April 2018 to November 2024 in the [Housing Benefit - Data from April 2018](#) dataset.

Users can log in or access Stat-Xplore as a guest and, if needed, can access [guidance](#) on how to extract the information required. There is also a [Universal Credit Official Statistics: Stat-Xplore user guide](#)

The information requested for households receiving the other benefits is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

Nick Timothy: **[41957]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make an estimate of the average amount received in benefits by benefit claimant households in each year since 2010, broken down by local authority.

Sir Stephen Timms:

Monthly statistics for the number of households on Universal Credit and Housing Benefit in Great Britain by local authority are published quarterly on [Stat-Xplore](#).

Universal Credit statistics, by monthly average award amount, are available from August 2015 to November 2024 in the [Households on Universal Credit](#) dataset.

Housing Benefit statistics, by weekly average award amount, are available from November 2008 to March 2018 in the [Housing Benefit – Data to March 2018](#) dataset and from April 2018 to November 2024 in the [Housing Benefit - Data from April 2018](#) dataset.

Users can log in or access Stat-Xplore as a guest and, if needed, can access [guidance](#) on how to extract the information required. There is also a [Universal Credit Official Statistics: Stat-Xplore user guide](#)

The information requested for households receiving other benefits is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

Nick Timothy: **[41958]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of benefit claimant households had received welfare payments for (a) five, (b) ten, (c) twenty and (d) more than twenty years in each year since 2010 in the latest period for which data is available, broken down by local authority.

Sir Stephen Timms:

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

■ Social Security Benefits: Disability

Neil Duncan-Jordan: **[42353]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to her Department's Green Paper entitled Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain

Working, published on 18 March 2025, by what date she expects to publish accessible formats of that Green Paper.

Sir Stephen Timms:

The remaining accessible formats of the Green Paper have now been published and can be accessed here: [Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working Green Paper - GOV.UK](#). A full suite of accessible versions is available including Audio, British Sign Language, Braille, Large Print and Easy Read.

The consultation will close in 12 weeks on the 30 June 2025, to ensure that everyone has sufficient time to engage with and respond to the consultation.

Neil Duncan-Jordan:

[\[42354\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to her Department's Green Paper entitled Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working, published on 18 March 2025, what steps her Department is taking to consult (a) disabled people and (b) organisations representing disabled people on the Green Paper.

Sir Stephen Timms:

We have set out proposals to reform the health and disability benefits proposals 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 want to improve and refine our plans by consulting on certain measures as described within the paper. We are committed to putting the views and voices of disabled people and people with health conditions at the heart of everything we do.

The Green Paper is an important staging post on a journey of reform, building on the vision and approach set out in the Get Britain Working White Paper in November 2024. It sets out our vision, strategy and proposals for change. 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.

In the Green Paper, we have also announced that we will set up collaboration committees to develop parts of our reforms further. This will involve bringing together disabled people and other experts with civil servants around specific issues to collaborate, provide ideas, challenge, and input into recommendations.

■ **Social Security Benefits: Reform**

Neil Duncan-Jordan:

[\[42059\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to paragraphs 2.33 to 2.35 of HM Treasury's document entitled Spring Statement 2025, published on 26 March 2025, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of the changes in

health and disability benefits on (a) the health of those people receiving such benefits and (b) societal health inequalities.

Sir Stephen Timms:

No such assessment has been made.

However, we have evidence that delivering better and more tailored employment support can get more people off welfare, and into work - alongside a higher expectation to engage with that support.

We are investing £1 billion a year by the end of the decade in new employment, health and skills support – one of the biggest packages of new employment support for sick and disabled people ever.

In addition, corrective action is needed after the value of the basic unemployment benefit was run down to a 40-year low, while incapacity benefits continued to rise. Meaning the rate of Universal Credit for those on the health element is now double that for those on the standard allowance. As a result, all the incentives are to claim incapacity benefits and define yourself as incapable of work, with both the OBR and IFS suggesting this has been a factor in driving higher incapacity benefit claims.

Ellie Chowns:

[\[42915\]](#)

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 criteria she plans to use to identify claimants with serious and lifelong health conditions to ensure they will never face reassessment.

Sir Stephen Timms:

The assessment process is an important part of claiming PIP and WCA to ensure that people receive the right level of support.

However, for some people with very severe health conditions and disabilities, by the time they come to make a claim, they have already undergone intensive assessments and provided detailed evidence about their condition to receive support from other services. That is why in PIP, we are also exploring ways in which we could use evidence from eligibility for other services to reduce the need for some people with very severe health conditions to undergo a full PIP functional assessment. For example, for young people with very severe long-term conditions who have already been assessed for and awarded support from Disability Living Allowance for children before claiming PIP for the first time.

For those on UC with the most severe, life-long, conditions who we know will never be able to work, we will aim to exempt them from ever needing to be reassessed.

Neil Duncan-Jordan:

[\[42952\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of the Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working Green Paper, published on 18 March 2025, on people in receipt of carer's allowance.

Sir Stephen Timms:

This government is committed to supporting unpaid carers, who provide invaluable support to elderly or disabled people.

As the Green Paper sets out, we will consider the impacts on benefits for unpaid carers as part of our wider considerations of responses to the consultation as we develop our detailed proposals for change.

State Retirement Pensions: Tax Allowances**Sir Ashley Fox:**[\[43380\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she has had discussions with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on raising the level of the personal tax-free allowance in line with the basic state pension.

Torsten Bell:

The DWP Secretary of State engages regularly with the Chancellor of the Exchequer. As the Minister for Pensions, I also serve as a Parliamentary Secretary at HM Treasury. Currently the Personal Allowance, which is the amount an individual can earn before paying tax, is higher than the full rates of both the basic and new State Pensions. This means pensioners whose income is solely the full new State Pension or basic State Pension will not pay any income tax.

The previous Government made the decision to freeze the income tax Personal Allowance at its current level of £12,570 until April 2028. At our first Budget, we decided not to extend the freeze on personal tax thresholds.

Under the previous Government the vast majority of pensioners already pay Income Tax. When individuals' wider income was taken into account in 2022/23 over 80% of pensioners had an income over the Personal Allowance Tax Threshold.

This Government is absolutely committed to supporting pensioners and giving them the dignity and security they deserve in retirement.

Over 12 million pensioners will benefit from our commitment to protect the Triple Lock which is set to increase spending on the State Pension by around £31 billion and will increase people's yearly State Pensions by up to £1,900 this Parliament.

State Retirement Pensions: Underpayments**Steve Darling:**[\[43136\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many letters she has issued to people who registered details of deceased family members on underpaid state pensions in 2025; whether her Department holds other records to assist with validating claims for underpaid state pensions; whether her Department has paused the destruction of state pension payment records; and what the age is of the oldest of those records retained by her Department.

Torsten Bell:

The Next of Kin / representatives of a deceased State Pension customer had the opportunity to contact DWP if they thought the customer may be in scope for the State Pension Underpayments exercise.

In reviewing these enquiries, the Department has identified that for a small number, approximately 2,500 customers, our Pension Service Computer System (PSCS) no longer holds a record for the deceased customer. This is in line with our Data Retention Policy.

A pause on the deletion of customer records was implemented at the start of the State Pension Underpayments exercise and remains in place. However, records for customers who died before 16/01/21 will have been deleted in line with our Data Retention Policy.

DWP may be able to review a deceased customer's State Pension award, if the Next of Kin / representative could supply historical records, such as letters received by the deceased customer from DWP and supporting bank statements.

■ **Universal Credit: Death**

Paulette Hamilton:[\[43171\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people receiving Universal Credit assessed as having Limited Capability for Work and Work-Related Activity died (a) in total and (b) under the Special Rules for Terminal Illness in the last year for which information is available.

Sir Stephen Timms:

The Department supports people nearing the end of life through special benefit rules – called the Special Rules for End of Life (SREL). These enable people who are nearing the end of their lives to get faster, easier access to certain benefits, without needing to attend a medical assessment, serve waiting periods and in most cases, receive the highest rate of benefit.

This table shows the total number of Universal Credit claimants who had a **Limited Capability for Work and Work-Related Activity (LCWRA)** award during 2024 broken down by the number with a LCWRA award under SREL and the number who died during the year.

	LCWRA CLAIMANTS IN 2024	LCWRA CLAIMANTS IN 2024 UNDER SREL
Total number	1,858,800	17,400
Number who died in 2024	24,100	5,900
Percentage who died in 2024	1.3%	34%

Notes:

Numbers are rounded to 100.

Data is taken from Universal Credit analytical systems but results have not been quality assured to Official Statistics publication standard and are subject to retrospective change.

■ **Universal Credit: Health**

Neil Duncan-Jordan: [\[42953\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make an estimate of the level of saving from freezing the health element of Universal Credit in cash terms at £97 per week until 2029-30 for existing recipients.

Neil Duncan-Jordan: [\[42954\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the level of saving from reducing the health element of Universal Credit in cash terms to £50 per week in 2026-27 for new claimants.

Sir Stephen Timms:

The table below breaks down the overall savings into the static savings of the two policies and the impact of the expected behavioural changes. The behavioural changes are the expected impact of both policies on claimant behaviour.

DWP costings are produced at a GB level. The final line aligns the DWP estimates to the Spring Statement 2025 policy costing document which includes the impact of the Scotland Block Grant Adjustment and Northern Ireland.

SAVINGS, £, M	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
Static impact: Pre-April 2026 stock freeze	490	700	900	1,090
Static impact: Post April 2026 flow reduced rate	430	1,070	1,690	2,280
Behavioural impact (of -210 both policies combined)		-300	-400	-500
Scotland Block Grant Adjustment and Northern Ireland	30	70	100	130

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

BUSINESS AND TRADE

■ Consultation on The Package Travel and Linked Travel Arrangements Regulations (2018)

Minister for Employment Rights, Competition and Markets (Justin Madders):
[\[HCWS577\]](#)

The current Package Travel and Linked Travel Arrangements Regulations 2018 set a series of requirements for organisers of package holidays and Linked Travel Arrangements and provide bespoke protections for travellers. As the way we book holidays evolves, it's important that these Regulations remain fit for purpose- for both consumers and travel providers.

The Government's previous 12-week call for evidence (18th September-13th December 2023), targeted stakeholder engagement, and externally commissioned consumer research highlighted a number of areas within the Regulations that may benefit from revision and reform. This is why we are launching this consultation.

We propose to retain the principle behind the Regulations – that consumers should be offered protection when purchasing package holidays. However, there is room to improve the framework to achieve economic growth and regulatory simplification. The proposed changes to the Regulations aim to facilitate growth, increase consumer choice, and simplify the existing regulations, making them easier for business to comply with and for consumers to understand.

We intend to look at the following areas as part of the consultation:

- Reforming the domestic package market to exempt domestic (UK) holidays that do not contain a booked travel element from the regulations. Other existing consumer protections will still apply.
- Reform Linked Travel Arrangements (LTAs) by either removing or simplifying the definition of LTAs.
- Examine the case for setting a time limit for third parties to provide redress to organisers where the third party has contributed to the event but has not already provided redress directly to the consumer. This is to respond to difficulties some package organisers have in exercising their right to recoup refund monies from suppliers.
- Further technical changes to make clearer what services are within the scope of the regulations, and to reform measures around insolvency protection.

Next steps

To support these objectives, the Department for Business and Trade have published a consultation on the Package Travel and Linked Travel Arrangements Regulations 2018, which is available on GOV.UK.

The consultation will be open for 12 weeks. We encourage all interested stakeholders to respond. Subject to the outcome of this consultation, the Government will then make a final decision on whether and how to change the Regulations.

I am placing a copy of the consultation in the Libraries of both Houses.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Childhood obesity

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Public Health and Prevention (Ashley Dalton): [\[HCWS579\]](#)

Today, I am updating the House on the implementation of the TV and online advertising restrictions for less healthy food or drink that are due to come into force UK-wide on 1 October 2025. I wish to re-confirm the Government's view on how the restrictions will apply to brand advertising and update on how we are working with Ofcom and the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA), as the regulators, to ensure an effective and proportionate implementation of the restrictions.

This government has set a bold ambition to raise the healthiest generation of children ever and take action to address the childhood obesity crisis. As part of this ambition, this government made a Manifesto commitment to implement the advertising restrictions for less healthy food or drink on TV and online. These are designed to reduce children's exposure to less healthy products, based on evidence that it contributes to childhood obesity, as well as incentivise businesses to reformulate their products and help create a healthier food environment for our children. Alongside this and in support of the Government's growth mission, we want to deliver proportionate regulation that balances the health benefits with the impact on businesses.

To achieve these objectives, the Communications Act 2003 (as amended by the Health and Care Act 2022) sets out that the restrictions will apply to adverts for 'identifiable' less healthy food or drink products. 'Identifiable' means if persons in the UK could reasonably be expected to be able to identify an advert as being for a less healthy product(s).

While it is for a court to interpret the legislation, the Government's view remains that pure brand advertising is not in scope of this policy. This is because the legislation only restricts adverts that could reasonably be considered to be for identifiable less healthy products, and not adverts that could be reasonably understood to be advertising brands. This has been the consistent position of this government and was clearly stated to Parliament during the passage of the Health and Care Bill. We therefore expect that businesses will still have opportunities to promote their brands, provided that their adverts do not identify a less healthy product(s). For example, brands could promote their non-product attributes, such as corporate social responsibility commitments or customer experience, or advertise the healthier products within their portfolios. We do not expect the perception or association of a corporate brand with less healthy products to automatically bring an advert into scope of the restrictions. The Government does not

intend to prevent brands from advertising but instead intends to give businesses an incentive to innovate and create healthier products.

We understand that businesses need clarity in order to plan and secure future advertising campaigns. We also recognise the considerable investment they have already made in preparing for the restrictions coming into force. The Government has been clear that, whilst a robust regulatory framework is needed, we expect regulators to act in a way that supports economic growth and helps industry to make future investment decisions and innovate with confidence.

The Government and the regulators share the same aims to offer clarity and support to businesses as these restrictions are introduced. While it is of course for the regulators to act independently, we anticipate that they will want to act quickly and firmly on any obvious breaches of the law where a less healthy product(s) is clearly identified in an advert. However, in other instances and where the circumstances make it appropriate, in the Government's view, the law provides considerable discretion in how the available enforcement tools can be used positively to support a business to move to compliance over a period of time.

The ASA will finalise its implementation guidance following consultation. We know that the ASA is already engaging with industry and will continue to do so following publication of the final guidance later in the Spring.

By implementing the advertising restrictions and taking preventative action now, the Government is beginning to fix the foundations of good health and protecting the next generation so that it can become the healthiest ever.

HOME OFFICE

■ Southport Inquiry

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Yvette Cooper): [\[HCWS580\]](#)

On 29 July 2024, a brutal attack took place at a children's dance club in Southport. Tragically, the perpetrator murdered three young girls, Elsie Dot Stancombe, Alice da Silva Aguiar and Bebe King, and injured ten other people. My thoughts remain with their families as they come to terms with this devastating loss as well as with those injured and with all those who were present that day who survived the attack but live with the serious emotional consequences.

Nothing will ever take away their trauma and loss and we will ensure they receive the support and care they need in the years to come.

It is of vital importance that there is a clear understanding of how this terrible attack was able to happen, and the lessons learnt, so that we can take all necessary steps to minimise the risk of a future tragedy. That is why I announced in my statement to the House on 21 January that the Government would establish an independent public inquiry to do this.

Today I am formally announcing the establishment of an Inquiry, under the Inquiries Act 2005. It will need to be able to swiftly receive evidence from the full range of relevant organisations. After careful consideration, including the representations made by some of the families and victims of the attack, I have decided to set the inquiry up on a statutory basis from the beginning. The formal date of establishment of the Inquiry is today and the inquiry will begin its work immediately.

The Inquiry will be chaired by The Right Honourable Sir Adrian Fulford. Sir Adrian will bring an impartial and extensive legal background to the inquiry, particularly on issues related to policing, the criminal justice system and multi-agency working. In accordance with the provision of section 3(1)(a) of the Inquiries Act 2005, Sir Adrian will sit alone as Chair.

The Inquiry will take place in two phases. The first phase will thoroughly investigate the circumstances surrounding the attack, as well as the events leading up to it – including the perpetrator's interactions with different public bodies. I am today publishing the terms of reference for this first phase, and I will place a copy in the Libraries of both Houses.

A later, second phase will examine the wider issue of young people being drawn into extreme violence and will be informed by the first phase.

The direction of the Inquiry's investigation will be a matter for the Chair. The Government will provide support and ensure that the Inquiry has the resources needed to fulfil its terms of reference.

I had the privilege to meet with some of the victims and families last month. I would like to put on record my thanks to them for taking the time to meet with me and the Safeguarding Minister and sharing their deeply personal experiences. Their courage and strength in recounting these painful memories is greatly appreciated. I know Sir Adrian is planning to travel to meet with them soon, as his first priority.

I also had the opportunity to discuss the public inquiry and how it could be approached to support victims and their families, to ensure they get answers they need and to minimise further distress from this terrible attack. I am grateful for their willingness to engage so constructively in this important conversation. Their input will be crucial in shaping the inquiry's approach and ensuring the voices of all victims are heard during the process.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Call for Evidence - Equality Law

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Equalities) (Seema Malhotra):

[\[HCWS578\]](#)

I am pleased to announce the launch of a Call for Evidence on Equality Law, an important step in this Government's missions to break down barriers and make work pay. This Call for Evidence aims to gather comprehensive insights from expert stakeholders in order to shape future policy development and potential legislative reform.

Equality is a key factor in delivering long-term and sustainable growth across the UK economy. It is essential that individuals can achieve according to their talents, irrespective of their background. This not only maximises individual opportunity but enables businesses to employ the best person for the job, leading to increased productivity, innovation, and economic resilience, driving up household incomes and putting more money in working people's pockets.

Our goal is to understand how we can better remove barriers to ambition and success for everyone, to improve the lives of working people and strengthen our country as part of our Plan for Change.

We are seeking evidence and views on the following areas:

- the prevalence of pay discrimination on the basis of race and disability
- making the right to equal pay effective for ethnic minority and disabled people
- measures to ensure that outsourcing of services can no longer be used by employers to avoid paying equal pay
- improving the enforcement of equal pay rights by establishing an Equal Pay Regulatory and Enforcement Unit, with the involvement of trade unions
- improving pay transparency
- strengthening protections against combined discrimination
- ensuring the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) is met by all parties exercising public functions
- creating and maintaining workplaces and working conditions free from sexual harassment
- commencing the socio-economic duty

We invite responses from anyone with evidence in these areas. Contributions will be crucial in shaping the steps we take towards achieving a fair, prosperous and equitable society for all. A copy of the Call for Evidence on Equality Law has been placed in the library of both Houses and will be available on Gov.UK