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**Notes:**

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

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

## ANSWERS

### BUSINESS AND TRADE

#### ■ **Agricultural Supply Chain Adjudicator: Groceries Code Adjudicator**

**Sarah Gibson:**

[\[61474\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of consolidating the functions of the Grocery Code Adjudicator and the Agricultural Supply Chain Adjudicator to create a unified regulator with a broader oversight remit.

**Justin Madders:**

The government is currently undertaking the fourth statutory review of the Groceries Code Adjudicator (GCA). The consultation to this review includes question about the GCA's remit in relation to the Agricultural Supply Chain Adjudicator (ASCA), and additionally asks if there are unfair contractual practices in parts of the supply chain not covered by either Adjudicator. The government encourages those interested to respond to the consultation by 5 August.

#### ■ **Arms Trade: USA**

**Callum Anderson:**

[\[60747\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what steps his Department is taking to support British aerospace manufacturers to utilise UK-US defence trade cooperation arrangements.

**Sarah Jones:**

My Department welcomes the opportunities that come from the Government's recent announcements on trade arrangements with the USA, alongside those from our longstanding defence cooperation agreements, which support our growth ambitions. We work directly with British Industry and trade associations to provide appropriate support to UK business including the aerospace sector, to access opportunities, including at trade shows in the US and globally, such as the recent Paris Air Show and DSEI later this year.

#### ■ **Business: North Shropshire**

**Helen Morgan:**

[\[61321\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 19 June 2025 to Question 59415 on Business: Market Towns, whether he has made an assessment with the Secretary of State for Transport on the potential impact of rural public transport on high street (a) footfall and (b) business viability in North Shropshire constituency.

**Gareth Thomas:**

The government believes that local leaders, working with bus operators, are best placed to make decisions around the provision of local bus services. The government has confirmed £955m for the 2025/26 financial year to introduce new bus routes, make services more frequent and protect crucial bus routes for local communities, including in rural areas. This includes £243m for bus operators and £712m to local authorities across the country, of which Shropshire Council has been allocated £4.4m.

The government has reaffirmed its commitment to bus services in this Spending Review by confirming around £900m each year from 2026/27 to maintain and improve vital bus services. Improved bus routes and connectivity will increase access to local high streets improving footfall and business viability in North Shropshire.

North Shropshire high street businesses are supported by the Marches Growth Hub which provides businesses of all sizes and sectors across Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin with advice and support throughout the business journey.

**■ Business: Rural Areas****James Naish:**[\[60986\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of access to capital from the British Business Bank on rural businesses.

**Gareth Thomas:**

The British Business Bank's programmes are designed to support businesses across the UK, including in rural areas, to access the finance they need to invest and thrive. Start Up Loans have been issued to new businesses in every UK parliamentary constituency, while the Nations and Regions Investment Funds provide debt and equity finance to businesses in both rural and urban areas outside London and the South East.

ENABLE transactions with the likes of Oxbury Bank are helping more rural and agricultural businesses to access lending tailored to their needs.

**■ Chemicals: Sanitary Products****Martin Wrigley:**[\[61603\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing testing for period products to ensure they are free from toxic chemical residues.

**Martin Wrigley:**[\[61604\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to introduce a legal requirement for manufacturers to list (a) the components and (b) any trace toxic chemicals in period products.

**Martin Wrigley:**

[61606]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, if he will take steps bring forward regulations to ban period products which include pesticide residues.

**Justin Madders:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2025 to question 57485 ([Written questions and answers - Written questions, answers and statements - UK Parliament](#)).

## ■ Corporate Governance

**Patrick Hurley:**

[61299]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of requiring companies to amend articles of association to reflect (a) environmental and (b) stakeholder responsibilities.

**Patrick Hurley:**

[61300]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what recent assessment his Department has made of the potential implications for its policies of international best practices in embedding stakeholder governance into company law.

**Justin Madders:**

Section 172 of the Companies Act 2006 requires company directors to have regard in their decision-making to the interests of their employees, customers and suppliers, and also to the impact of the company's operations on the community and the environment. Large companies must report annually on how their directors have met this duty. Section 172 also enables companies to amend their articles of association to adopt a purpose of their own choosing, which may include placing particular weight on environmental, stakeholder or other interests.

The United Kingdom Government is an active member of the OECD Corporate Governance Committee which regularly discusses and shares good practice on corporate governance.

## ■ Department for Business and Trade: Public Expenditure

**James Wild:**

[61227]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 17 June 2025 to Question 59412 on Government Departments: Reviews, if his Department will publish the line by line review of its spending conducted for the Spending Review 2025.

**Justin Madders:**

DBT is committed to meeting the 5% savings and efficiency target, with SR funding allocations agreed on this basis.

These funding allocations – informed by the findings of the ZBR – are the first step in a wider plan to finalise budgets for different projects and programmes, with any necessary savings decided through that process. The savings taken forward will be

subject to the normal rigorous business planning processes, and in-year financial management.

## ■ Fujitsu

**Bob Blackman:** [60430]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, whether his Department is considering designating Fujitsu as a high-risk vendor, in the context of the failures of the Horizon system.

**Sir Gavin Williamson:** [60836]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, whether he is considering placing Fujitsu on the High Risk Vendor list as a result of its involvement in the Horizon IT system failures.

**Gareth Thomas:**

The High Risk Vendor process is not one that the Department for Business and Trade is responsible for.

We welcome Fujitsu's acknowledgement of their moral obligation to contribute to the cost of the Horizon scandal. Fujitsu have also announced they will voluntarily not bid for new contracts unless requested by Government. The contract with Fujitsu to supply the Post Office Limited's IT system is time limited - we are working with the Post Office and Fujitsu to ensure the transition is as soon as practically possible.

## ■ Home Shopping

**Mr Angus MacDonald:** [61649]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what steps his Department is taking to inform the public of their rights under the Consumer Contracts Regulations when buying from an online trader.

**Justin Madders:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2024 to question 4955.

## ■ Industry

**Jim Shannon:** [60446]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what progress his Department has made on developing the upcoming industrial strategy.

**Sarah Jones:**

The Government published "The UK's Modern Industrial Strategy" on 23 June 2025. The document has been laid before Parliament and published online at [www.gov.uk/industrialstrategy](http://www.gov.uk/industrialstrategy)



## ■ Iron and Steel: Manufacturing Industries

**Jim Shannon:**

**[60449]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what recent steps he has taken to help protect the steel industry.

**Gareth Thomas:**

Through measures announced in our Industrial Strategy, we are taking action to improve the competitiveness and growth potential for our steel sector.

This includes steps to make industrial electricity costs for UK businesses cheaper and accelerating grid connection timelines for new projects. We are leveraging the Government's purchasing power to bolster domestic competition by streamlining and strengthening criteria for suppliers to contribute to these objectives in their bids and continuing to incentivise investment in CCUS and hydrogen.

This Industrial Strategy, together with the Steel Strategy to be published later in the year, will ensure that this Government has a coordinated response to sector challenges and to drive new investments.

## ■ Office for Investment: Staff

**Mr Richard Holden:**

**[57743]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, how many full time equivalent permanent staff were assigned to work in the Office for Investment in June (a) 2024 and (b) 2025.

**Sarah Jones:**

The number of staff (FTE) in the Office for Investment (OfI) was approximately 30.

The target operating model for the expanded OfI, which launched on the 5th of June 2025, includes approximately 230 FTE (including overseas OfI representatives). This will be subject to revisions in line with Government policy.

## ■ Post Offices: Bank Services

**Helen Morgan:**

**[61307]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, whether the Post Office will continue to provide banking services after the expiration of banking framework 4 in 2030.

**Gareth Thomas:**

Banking Framework 4 is a commercial agreement between the Post Office and the banking sector which will ensure that the Post Office continues to provide cash and basic banking services to the end of the decade. Decisions on future service provision are subject to commercial and voluntary negotiations between the Post Office and the banking sector.

The Post Office Green Paper, due to be published soon, will set out further detail on the Post Office's long-term future.

## ■ Railways: Freight

**Connor Naismith:**

**[58530]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what assessment he has made of the potential role of (a) railways and (b) rail freight in supporting the forthcoming industrial strategy.

**Sarah Jones:**

The Government recognises that the supply chain is crucial for the day-to-day running, maintenance, and development of the railway.

Under the strategic leadership of Great British Railways, there will be more coordination between track and train, a centralised point of contact and more certainty for rail suppliers, but equally the Government requires a resilient and productive rail supply chain that invests in skills, technology, and innovation to reduce costs and increase competitiveness.

The Industrial Strategy Green Paper, Invest 2035, identified eight growth-driving sectors. All sectors will benefit from wider policy reform, including rail, through the Industrial Strategy's cross-cutting policies alongside the broader Growth Mission. This will create the pro-business environment for all businesses to invest and employ, with growth that supports high-quality jobs and ensures that the benefits are shared across people, places, and generations.

## ■ Small Businesses

**Luke Murphy:**

**[61380]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what assessment he has made of the potential contribution of small and mid-sized quoted companies to the Government's growth mission.

**Gareth Thomas:**

SMEs, including quoted companies, are an integral part of the Government's growth mission in creating vibrant and prosperous local communities and being critical to supply chains for key industries. They are a diverse group operating in every sector, region and international market.

The SME Strategy - due to be published this summer - will set out the Government's intentions on supporting businesses across key areas, including thriving high streets, making it easier to secure finance, improving productivity, accessing new domestic and international markets, encouraging entrepreneurship and building business capabilities such as digital adoption, whilst tackling the scourge of late payments.

## ■ Small Businesses: Audit

**Luke Murphy:**

**[61382]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure the (a) accessibility and (b) affordability of audit requirements for small and mid-sized quoted companies.

**Justin Madders:**

Audit standards for UK companies are adopted and set by the Financial Reporting Council (FRC), with reference to internationally-agreed standards. The Government is aware of concerns about the cost and availability of high-quality audit for smaller quoted companies, and supports the FRC's work to make sure that every UK company, including small and mid-sized quoted companies, can access good quality audit services at a proportionate cost, including through its current year-long campaign to support small and medium-sized enterprises. In addition, the Government will consider these issues as it develops legislation to reform audit and corporate governance.

**■ Supermarkets: Supply Chains****Sarah Gibson:**[\[61475\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that fair dealing improvements under Grocery Supply Code of Practice are extended to upstream suppliers who are not covered by the Code.

**Justin Madders:**

The Groceries Code is a competition measure owned by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA). The CMA can only change the Code in ways which address the specific effects on competition found during its original market investigation, and not to address new issues or sectors.

The government has introduced Fair Dealing Regulations under the Agriculture Act 2020 to deal with the production end of the supply chain in specific sectors. These are enforced by the Agricultural Supply Chain Adjudicator (ASCA).

The government is currently undertaking the fourth statutory review of the Groceries Code Adjudicator (GCA). The review additionally asks if there are unfair contractual practices in parts of the supply chain not covered by the GCA or ASCA.

**CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT****■ Department for Culture, Media and Sport: Public Expenditure****James Wild:**[\[61223\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 17 June 2025 to Question 59412 on Government Departments: Reviews, if her Department will publish the line by line review of its spending conducted for the Spending Review 2025.

**Stephanie Peacock:**

The Department for Digital, Media and Sport is committed to meeting the 5% savings and efficiency target, with SR funding allocations agreed on this basis.

These funding allocations – informed by the findings of the ZBR – are the first step in a wider plan to finalise budgets for different projects and programmes, with any

necessary savings decided through that process. The savings taken forward will be subject to the normal rigorous business planning processes, and in-year financial management.

## ■ Football: Governing Bodies

**Patrick Hurley:**

**[61243]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that (a) people and (b) organisations involved in futsal feel able to raise concerns about the conduct of (i) the Football Association and (ii) other governing bodies to the relevant authorities without fear of adverse consequences.

**Stephanie Peacock:**

England Futsal is a private company, licensed by the Football Association (FA).

In the first instance, participants should follow the complaints process of the relevant National Governing Body (NGB), including any procedures for appeal. UK Sport's and Sport England's complaints procedures set out how they handle complaints falling within their remits.

The Code for Sports Governance sets out the levels of transparency, diversity and inclusion, accountability and integrity that are required from sporting governing bodies, including the FA, who seek, and are in receipt of, Government and National Lottery funding from either Sport England or UK Sport.

## ■ Sports: Ashfield

**Lee Anderson:**

**[61214]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what funding her Department has allocated to grassroots sports clubs in Ashfield constituency in the last 12 months.

**Stephanie Peacock:**

The Government is committed to ensuring that everyone, regardless of background, has access to and benefits from high-quality sport facilities, which offer the chance to be physically active.

The Government provides the majority of funding for grassroots sports and health club facilities through our Arm's Length Body, Sport England, which annually invests over £250 million in Exchequer and Lottery funding in areas of greatest need to tackle inactivity levels through community-led solutions. Details of the funded projects are available on Sport England's website [here](#).

The constituency of Ashfield also received a total of £1,849,232 of investment via the Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities Programme in 2024/25. Details of the funded projects are available on Gov.uk [here](#).

## EDUCATION

### ■ Degrees: Artificial Intelligence

**Lee Anderson:**

**[60897]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of AI on undergraduate degree integrity.

**Janet Daby:**

There are huge opportunities for artificial intelligence (AI) as it becomes more sophisticated, particularly through generative AI, and the department knows higher education (HE) and the industries they work with are at the forefront of this. There will be many benefits, and we are already seeing these, but there are also challenges in how the HE sector incorporates AI, particularly for teaching, learning and assessment.

The Quality Assurance Agency has been exploring the implications of AI, particularly in relation to academic integrity and published a briefing for its members in February 2024 focusing on the challenges. The briefing was underpinned by insights from HE sector leaders.

The experience and expertise of the sector is contributing to the department's evidence base for how generative AI is used in education. In January 2024, the department published research entitled 'Generative AI in education: Educator and expert views', containing insights from interviews with teachers and experts in HE and the education technology industry. The full research paper is available here: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65b8cd41b5cb6e000d8bb74e/DfE\\_GenerativeAI\\_in\\_education\\_-\\_Educator\\_and\\_expert\\_views\\_report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65b8cd41b5cb6e000d8bb74e/DfE_GenerativeAI_in_education_-_Educator_and_expert_views_report.pdf).

The Office for Students set out its approach to the use of AI in HE in a recent blog post entitled 'Embracing innovation in higher education: our approach to artificial intelligence'. The full blog post is available here: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/news-blog-and-events/blog/embracing-innovation-in-higher-education-our-approach-to-artificial-intelligence/>.

### ■ Department for Education: Gender

**Esther McVey:**

**[58594]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether her Department has updated guidance on the use of single-sex facilities in response to the Supreme Court judgement in the case of *For Women Scotland v The Scottish Ministers* of 16 April 2025.

**Janet Daby:**

The department will review and update policy wherever necessary to ensure it complies with the latest legal requirements. We aim to ensure appropriate facilities are available for all staff.

**■ Department for Education: Public Expenditure****James Wild:** [61218]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 17 June 2025 to Question 59412 on Government Departments: Reviews, if her Department will publish the line by line review of its spending conducted for the Spending Review 2025.

**Catherine McKinnell:**

The department is committed to meeting the 5% savings and efficiency target, with spending review funding allocations agreed on this basis.

These funding allocations, informed by the findings of the Zero Based Review, are the first step in a wider plan to finalise budgets for different projects and programmes, with any necessary savings decided through that process. The savings taken forward will be subject to the normal rigorous business planning processes and in-year financial management.

**■ Department for Education: Sikhs****Jas Athwal:** [59681]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many Sikhs are employed in her Department; and whether they are recorded as (a) an ethnic or (b) a religious group.

**Janet Daby:**

According to the latest published Civil Service Statistics, as at 31 March 2024, 140 staff in the department, including associated executive agencies, recorded their religion as Sikh. These figures are published in Table A3 of the Civil Service Statistics 2024, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/civil-service-statistics-2024>.

Updated data as at 31 March 2025 is due to be published by the Cabinet Office in July 2025.

Those who are recorded as 'Sikh' are captured in the department's HR system under 'Religion', not as an ethnic group.

**■ Department for Education: Termination of Employment****Mr Peter Bedford:** [58455]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many permanent civil servants in her Department had their contract of employment terminated as a result of poor performance in the (a) 2022-23, (b) 2023-24 and (c) 2024-25 financial years.

**Janet Daby:**

The department does not hold a central dataset of the reasons for a dismissal in respect of those years.

## ■ Further Education: Disadvantaged

**James McMurdock:**

[\[61466\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of the extent of potential regional disparities in academic post-16 provision.

**Janet Daby:**

The department publishes annually the attainment of students at the end of their 16 to 18 study in England, including for A levels and other academic level 3 qualifications. Key headline statistics are broken down by geographical areas based on school and college location.

The government is committed to ensuring that the further education (FE) sector and schools are supported to achieve continuous improvement and improved outcomes for learners. The department operates a structured model of oversight and support for FE colleges, sixth form colleges and Designated Institutions, including a range of help and support available from the Further Education Commissioner.

## ■ Relationships and Sex Education

**Sarah Gibson:**

[\[61403\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment her Department has made of the adequacy of provision of Relationship and Sex Education for young people aged 16 to 19 in post-16 education settings.

**Sarah Gibson:**

[\[61404\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make it her policy to make Relationship and Sex Education mandatory in post-16 education settings.

**Janet Daby:**

The department recognises the importance of promoting healthy relationships to young people. This is why relationships and sex education (RSE) is a standard element of the personal development tutorial system in further education.

These regular tutorials allow students to hear about and discuss subjects important to their lives as responsible, active citizens, such as British values, resilience and how to navigate the world of work.

Education in healthy relationships is at the core of each college's programme. Students participate in debates about respect, consent, misogyny, gender stereotyping, coercive control, sexual violence and sexual health, and consider the impact of negative behaviours.

Ofsted's personal development judgement evaluates a college's intent to provide for the personal development of learners, and the quality of the way in which it does this. Education in healthy relationships is one of the areas of focus.

The department has engaged an expert college leader, Polly Harrow, to develop a toolkit for colleges to drive the quality and consistency of RSE. The toolkit, to be launched in November, will provide tutorial materials and delivery advice, giving all

colleges the skills and confidence to deliver on personal development effectively, and to tackle misogyny head on.

## ■ Schools: Public Expenditure

**Dr Al Pinkerton:**

**[61392]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of increasing public expenditure on schools in Surrey Heath constituency.

**Catherine McKinnell:**

Across the spending review, core schools funding, including special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) investment, will increase from £65.3 billion in the 2025/26 financial year (including the additional funding announced in May 2025) to £69.5 billion by the 2028/29 financial year. Taken together, this grows per-pupil spending over this spending review period by 2.7% in real terms. Decisions on how that funding will be allocated across mainstream schools and high needs will be taken in due course.

The national funding formula (NFF) allocates funding for schools to local authorities based on school and pupil characteristics. The government will be reviewing the operation of the schools NFF for 2026/27 and future years. The funding impact on individual local authorities will therefore also depend on the outcome of this review. This will be announced later in the year.

Surrey is the local authority responsible for allocating funding in Surrey Heath constituency. Through the dedicated schools grant (DSG), Surrey is receiving £895.8 million for mainstream schools in the 2025/26 financial year. This represents an increase of 2.2% per pupil compared to the 2024/25 financial year, excluding growth and falling rolls funding. On top of that, schools are also receiving additional funding for National Insurance contributions increases, as well as to support with staff pay rises.

## ■ Sixth Form Education: Location

**James McMurdock:**

**[61468]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to ensure pupils do not have to travel out of their area to access suitable sixth-form options.

**Janet Daby:**

Proposed changes to mainstream sixth form provision need to improve choice and attainment for all pupils. Academies wishing to make changes to their sixth forms can do so by applying to the department to make a significant change. The distance that pupils must travel to attend sixth form as a result of any change is considered as part of that decision making process. Maintained schools must follow the statutory process for making prescribed alterations.

In the UK's Modern Industrial Strategy, published on 23 June, the government announced a further £375 million of capital investment in 2026/27 and 2029/30 to



support post-16 capacity to accommodate additional learners entering the system. Further details on this funding will be announced in due course.

## ■ Sixth Form Education: Qualifications

**James McMurdock:**

**[61467]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to support (a) schools and (b) trusts to (i) establish and (ii) expand sixth forms offering academic qualifications in (A) areas with unmet demand and (B) other areas.

**Janet Daby:**

New or expanded school sixth form provision needs to improve choice and attainment for all pupils. Academies wishing to add sixth form places can do so by applying to the department to make a significant change, demonstrating a clear need for additional places in the area. Maintained schools must follow the statutory process for making prescribed alterations.

In the UK's Modern Industrial Strategy, published on 23 June 2025, the government announced a further £375 million of capital investment between 2026/27 and 2029/30 to support post-16 capacity to accommodate additional learners entering the system. Further details on this funding will be announced in due course.

## ■ Skilled Workers: Huddersfield

**Harpreet Uppal:**

**[61386]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether her Department is taking steps to promote green skills programmes as part of the national skills strategy in Huddersfield.

**Janet Daby:**

Green skills are crucial to economic growth and the government's net zero by 2050 target. Clean energy industries have been identified as a priority sector in the Industrial Strategy, alongside other sectors fundamental to clean energy like advanced manufacturing.

Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) are employer-led plans setting out priorities to better meet local skills needs. LSIPs must consider the skills needed to meet net zero, climate adaptation, and wider environmental goals. The West Yorkshire LSIP identifies clean energy and green construction as priority sectors. West Yorkshire's Local Growth Plan reinforces the green economy as a local priority, embedding sustainability as a core principle and setting out actions to achieve net zero.

The government will set out a comprehensive strategy for post-16 education and skills later this year, including steps to strengthen the skills pipeline in key sectors. The strategy will set out how the skills system will support the delivery of the Plan for Change.

**■ Special Educational Needs: Tribunals****Mark Garnier:** [\[61170\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions she has had with (a) tribunal judges and (b) local authorities on the future of the SEND tribunal.

**Mark Garnier:** [\[61171\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Justice on the adequacy of the jurisdiction of the SEND Tribunal.

**Catherine McKinnell:**

Most education, health and care (EHC) plans and assessments are concluded without a Tribunal hearing, but, increasingly, many families are having to go to Tribunal to get the support they think they need.

The special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) Tribunal is an important legal backstop for cases where families disagree with a local authority about the support needed and where disagreements cannot be resolved early through collaborative early dispute resolution.

The department wants to ensure we have a collaborative redress system where families and local authorities resolve disputes early, enabling children and young people to access the support they need quickly.

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education regularly meets cabinet colleagues to discuss SEND system improvements. We will work with government colleagues and the Tribunal, to ensure the best outcomes for children and families.

**■ Teachers: Pay****Helen Morgan:** [\[61295\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of awarding teachers a 4 per cent pay increase on schools' ability to (a) afford education supplies and (b) carry out building repairs.

**Catherine McKinnell:**

School funding is increasing by £3.7 billion in the 2025/26 financial year, meaning that core school budgets will total £65.3 billion compared to £61.6 billion in 2024/25.

This includes the £2.3 billion announced at the October Budget and £1.4 billion in additional funding being provided to support schools and high needs settings, with the increases to employer National Insurance contributions from April 2025 and the 2025 staff pay awards.

As part of that, the department is providing schools with £615 million in additional funding in the 2025/26 financial year to support them with overall costs, including the costs of the 4% schools teacher pay award and the 3.2% local government support staff pay offer in 2025/26. Schools, like other parts of the public sector, are being asked to do their part and to fund the first 1% of the staff pay awards. The

circumstances will be different for individual schools, because they have autonomy over their spending, including staffing and educational supplies.

The government has increased capital investment to improve the condition of school buildings across England to £2.1 billion for the 2025/26 financial year. We have also given a long term commitment to increase annual capital maintenance investment per year through to 2034/35. This is in addition to investment of almost £20 billion in the School Rebuilding Programme through to 2034/35, delivering rebuilding projects at over 500 schools across England within the existing programme, with a further 250 schools to be selected within the next two years.

## ENERGY SECURITY AND NET ZERO

### ■ Boiler Upgrade Scheme: Heat Pumps

**Mark Garnier:**

[\[61172\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of including hybrid heat pumps in the Boiler Upgrade Scheme.

**Miatta Fahnbulleh:**

The Boiler Upgrade Scheme does not support hybrid heat pumps, as we want to direct the available funding towards the technologies that offer the greatest carbon savings, rather than those which would continue to involve the burning of fossil fuels for space heating and hot water.

The Government is committed to incentivising all properties to transition to cleaner heating and will keep its position on alternative heating technologies under review. In the Raising Product Standards for Space Heating consultation, the Government set out that hybrids may be able to play a role in heat decarbonisation. The Government will publish a response in due course.

### ■ Carbon Emissions: Taxation

**Claire Coutinho:**

[\[61343\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of aligning with the EU Emissions Trading System on the price of carbon in the UK.

**Sarah Jones:**

The price of carbon allowances in the UK Emissions Trading Scheme is set by the market.

Linking the UK and EU ETSs is expected to create a larger, more stable market, which will lower the costs of decarbonisation for UK businesses. Many industry stakeholders, including Make UK, UK steel, and Energy UK, have voiced support for linking the two schemes, citing that linkage would align carbon prices and support

business investment and certainty, by creating a larger and more liquid carbon market.

## ■ Department for Energy Security and Net Zero: Public Expenditure

**James Wild:**

[\[61226\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, pursuant to the Answer of 17 June 2025 to Question 59412 on Government Departments: Reviews, if his Department will publish the line by line review of its spending conducted for the Spending Review 2025.

**Michael Shanks:**

DESNZ is committed to meeting the 5% savings and efficiency target, with SR funding allocations agreed on this basis.

These funding allocations – informed by the findings of the ZBR – are the first step in a wider plan to finalise budgets for different projects and programmes, with any necessary savings decided through that process. The savings taken forward will be subject to the normal rigorous business planning processes, and in-year financial management.

## ■ Energy Ombudsman: Standards

**Rebecca Paul:**

[\[61372\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what recent discussions his Department has had with Ofgem on the performance of the Energy Ombudsman.

**Rebecca Paul:**

[\[61373\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of the recent performance of the Energy Ombudsman.

**Miatta Fahnbulleh:**

The Department has regular discussions with Ofgem on a range of issues. Ofgem is required to review the performance of the Energy Ombudsman on a biennial basis to ensure it still meets the approval criteria under which it was appointed. The Department also sought views on the role of the Energy Ombudsman in the Ofgem Review Call for Evidence, which closed earlier this year.

On 19 June the Government announced that we will consult on strengthening the Energy Ombudsman to ensure that suppliers comply with its final decisions or pay compensation to their consumer. This consultation will also look at introducing automatic referrals to the Ombudsman instead of consumers having to do this themselves, and also to explore the reduction of referral waiting times from 8 weeks to 4 weeks.

We hope that these changes will ensure that consumers can access the free Energy Ombudsman service quicker and easier and help any customer who has received a

poor quality service from their supplier to receive the compensation and resolution they deserve.

## ■ **Energy Performance Certificates: Rented Housing**

**Juliet Campbell:**

**[61353]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of current EPC rating assessment criteria on landlords' ability to meet those criteria.

**Miatta Fahnbulleh:**

The Government is reforming Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs), including the current EPC rating assessment criteria and the methodology that underpins this, with new and amended metrics due to be introduced for domestic buildings under the Home Energy Model (HEM). More information, including the consultation stage impact assessment, can be found in the consultation 'Reforms to the Energy Performance of Buildings regime' on gov.uk.

## ■ **Energy: Prices**

**Mr Andrew Snowden:**

**[61359]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what assessment he has made of the impact of rising energy prices on the disposable income of pensioner households in the North West.

**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.

We recognise that we need to support households struggling with bills whilst we transition to clean power by 2030. The Government is continuing to deliver the Warm Home Discount, which provides £150 to eligible households including those where the bill payer is on Pension Credit.

The Government will also increase the level at which Winter Fuel Payments are means-tested in England and Wales from winter 2025-26 so that the vast majority of pensioners benefit from them. Individuals over the State Pension age in England and Wales with an income below or equal to £35,000 will benefit from a Winter Fuel Payment. Winter Fuel Payments will be payable in England and Wales at £200 for households including someone between State Pension age and 79, and £300 for households including someone aged 80 or over.

## ■ Heat Pumps

**Mark Garnier:** [\[61173\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of hybrid heat pumps on (a) consumer energy bills and (b) UK greenhouse gas emissions.

**Miatta Fahnbulleh:**

The specific greenhouse gas emissions and running costs of a hybrid heat pump are impacted by a range of factors including the proportion of heating met by the heat pump. However, the Government noted in the recent 'Raising product standards for space heating' consultation that hybrids could reduce fossil fuel usage and reduce a consumer's bills, depending on wider energy pricing and other factors.

The Government will publish a response to this consultation in due course and will continue to gather and assess evidence and monitor market developments in relation to hybrid heat pumps.

## ■ Hydrogen

**Claire Coutinho:** [\[61345\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of the Gas Shippers Obligation on energy bills.

**Sarah Jones:**

The Department consulted on the design of the Gas Shipper Obligation (GSO) earlier this year and published an analytical annex focusing on its impact on gas users, based on Hydrogen Allocation Round 1 estimated costs.

The affordability of energy bills remains a key priority for the government and the design of the GSO will consider energy bill affordability, value for money, and fairness.

**Claire Coutinho:** [\[61346\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of the target for 10GW of hydrogen production capacity on energy bills by 2030.

**Sarah Jones:**

The Government believes that the only way to guarantee our energy security and protect billpayers permanently is to speed up the transition away from fossil fuels and towards homegrown clean energy. Low carbon hydrogen is a key option for decarbonising hard to electrify industrial processes, heavy transport, and deliver clean power. Government support is a temporary bridge to unlock private investment and reduce costs, with all supported projects having to deliver value for money. As production scales and costs fall, future projects will need less support. Our Hydrogen Strategy, which we intend to publish this Autumn, will set out more on expected hydrogen supply and demand.

**Claire Coutinho:**

[\[61347\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, if he will make an estimate of (a) the cost to the public purse and (b) the potential impact on energy bills of Hydrogen Allocation Round 2.

**Sarah Jones:**

In April 2025, the Government announced a shortlist of 27 projects across the UK to progress to the next stage of the Second Hydrogen Allocation Round (HAR2) process. Value for money and the affordability of energy bills will be central to decisions regarding capacity allocation and contract award. We expect final decisions on successful projects to be made in early 2026.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### ■ **Animal Housing: Registration**

**James McMurdock:**

[\[61457\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to ensure animal shelters are (a) appropriately registered and (b) operating ethically.

**Daniel Zeichner:**

Rescue and rehoming establishments in England must comply with statutory welfare requirements set out in the Animal Welfare Act 2006.

Defra engages regularly with stakeholders across the animal welfare sector, including on issues relating to rescue and rehoming practices.

### ■ **Coastal Erosion: Flood Control**

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

[\[61181\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Written Statement of 3 June 2025, HCWS680, on Consulting on a reformed approach to investing in flood resilience and coastal erosion, how much of the £2.65 million in funding was originally allocated by the previous Government.

**Emma Hardy:**

Delivering on the Government's Plan for Change, this Government is investing a record £2.65 billion over 2024/25 and 2025/26 for the construction of new flood schemes, and the maintenance and repair of existing ones. With this funding, 1,000 flood schemes have been or will continue to be supported, better protecting 52,000 properties by March 2026.

This Government has also announced the largest flood programme in history – committing a record £7.9 billion capital investment as part of its landmark 10-year Infrastructure Strategy.

## ■ Dangerous Dogs: Social Rented Housing

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[61123\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 9 June 2025 to Question 54689 on Dangerous Dogs: Social Rented Housing, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of being denied permission to take up residency by housing providers on people with legally exempted XL Bully dogs.

**Daniel Zeichner:**

Defra undertook an impact assessment when developing legislation to ban XL Bully dogs. This assessment recognised that some housing providers would not allow owners to keep XL bullies. It is for the housing provider to decide their own policies on whether they permit tenants to keep exempted banned breed types.

## ■ Dogs: Animal Breeding

**James McMurdock:**

[\[61451\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of regulations on dog breeding licenses.

**Daniel Zeichner:**

We know climate change presents challenges to the agricultural sector. The government is offering a New Deal for Farmers to help address this.

We are providing farmers and land managers with the support needed to help restore nature, which is vital to safeguard our long-term food security and build resilience to climate change. In the recent spending review we committed to carrying on the transition towards paying to deliver public goods for the environment, with over £7 billion directed into nature's recovery between 2026 and 2029. This includes environmental farming schemes (£5.9 billion), tree planting (£816 million) and peatland restoration (£85 million).

To address the impacts of flooding on farmers and rural communities, we will be investing £4.2 billion over three years in flood defences across the country – an average of £1.4bn each year and a 5% increase compared to the current spending review period

## ■ Dogs: Registration

**James McMurdock:**

[\[61454\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of creating a registration system for pet dogs.

**Daniel Zeichner:**

We have no plans currently to introduce a registration system for pet dogs. Since 2016, all dogs over eight weeks old must be microchipped and registered with a compliant database. A separate registration system for pet dogs is therefore not necessary.



## ■ Drinking Water: Per- and Polyfluorinated Alkyl Substances

**Victoria Collins:**

[\[61415\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans his Department has to review the current regulatory limits for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances in drinking water.

**Emma Hardy:**

The Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI) has provided [guidance](#) on PFAS to water companies since 2007; updated in August 2024, and a consolidated version was published in March 2025.

In February 2025, the DWI published a [report](#) from the advisory group of drinking water quality recommending revisions to the drinking water regulations. One recommendation was to introduce DWI's guideline value into legislation. Defra and the DWI will work together to consider this, and other, recommendations and will update our regulations where appropriate.

The DWI monitors publications and advice provided by the World Health Organization and the UK's Committee on Toxicity in relation to PFAS. It will continue to act accordingly to use a risk-based approach to monitor test results for both raw and treated water based on the scientific evidence as it emerges, to safeguard public health from the risks from PFAS in drinking water. Work continues across government to assess levels of PFAS to safeguard current high drinking water quality and to ensure our regulations remain fit for purpose.

## ■ Droughts: Rural Areas

**Sarah Gibson:**

[\[61471\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department plans to allocate additional resources to help rural and farming communities adapt to increased drought risk.

**Emma Hardy:**

The Environment Agency (EA) has produced an updated irrigation prospects report for summer 2025. The report provides options to support irrigators now and in the longer term.

The updated irrigation prospects across England for the summer season is 'moderate'. If the dry weather continues, irrigation supplies are at risk, especially where farm reservoirs have been depleted over the spring. Reduced irrigation may impact on crops.

Options to support irrigators this summer include following good irrigation practice, signing up to managing water abstraction and impoundment licences online, and discussing short-term options with the EA for improving access to water (e.g. water rights trading).

One way to increase longer-term water supply resilience is to apply for a local water resources options screening study – for which applications are now open. The EA

also encourage the sector to establish Water Abstractor Groups to work together to plan for their future water needs.

■ **Floods: North East Somerset and Hanham**

**Dan Norris:**

[\[62154\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many reports of incidents of flooding have been made in North East Somerset and Hanham constituency in the last five years.

**Emma Hardy:**

The Environment Agency (EA) have records of 43 reports of flooding in the North East Somerset and Hanham Constituency over the last 5 years. However, property flooding is often underreported for many reasons, and this number only includes incidents of flooding that have been reported to the EA.

■ **Forests: Conservation**

**Liz Jarvis:**

[\[61351\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of his policies in tackling global deforestation.

**Mary Creagh:**

We recognise the urgency of taking action to ensure that UK consumption of forest risk commodities is not driving deforestation. Deforestation associated with UK consumption is estimated to have fallen by 55% since 2005, although progress has slowed over the last decade.

The Government recently published a Post-Implementation Review evaluating the effectiveness of the UK Timber Regulation (UKTR), which prohibits the placing of illegally harvested timber on the GB market. The review concluded that the regulation has been largely effective in reducing the risk of illegal timber entering the market and has contributed to tackling deforestation.

The Government will set out its approach to addressing UK consumption of forest risk commodities in due course. We are committed to ensuring that any regulatory framework is robust, proportionate and effective in addressing deforestation in UK supply chains.

■ **Horticulture: Surrey Heath**

**Dr Al Pinkerton:**

[\[62517\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to support horticulture businesses in Surrey Heath constituency.

**Daniel Zeichner:**

The Government is committed to our horticulture sector and the vital role it plays in strengthening food security by ensuring a reliable and sustainable supply of home-grown fresh produce.

Underlining this commitment to our growers is our farming roadmap which will set out a 25-year vision and blueprint to make our farming and food production more sustainable and profitable.

**Litter: Codes of Practice****Kevin Hollinrake:**[\[61180\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will place in the Library a copy of the consultation document on making the Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse statutory guidance.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**[\[61182\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what his Department's planned timetable is for responding to the consultation on making the Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse statutory, which closed in April 2024.

**Mary Creagh:**

A copy of the consultation document on publishing statutory litter enforcement guidance will be deposited in the Library.

This consultation was run in March 2024 under the previous Government. This Government has yet to make a decision on whether to publish statutory guidance. Any decision will be announced in the usual way. Following this, we would expect to release a consultation response.

**Per- and Polyfluorinated Alkyl Substances****Victoria Collins:**[\[61416\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department plans to establish a national chemicals regulator to improve the (a) monitoring and (b) management of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances contamination.

**Emma Hardy:**

Defra and the Scottish and Welsh Governments work closely with regulators and government agencies to prioritise issues for regulatory action in the UK relating to chemicals. We are working across government to help us assess levels of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) occurring in the environment, their sources and potential risks to inform policy and regulatory approaches. The revised Environmental Improvement Plan, which will be introduced in 2025, will set out the Government's approach to managing PFAS.

## ■ Plants: Import Controls

**Dr Al Pinkerton:** [\[62515\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of reviewing the plant health inspection regime.

**Daniel Zeichner:**

Plant Health inspection uses a risk-based approach to understand global plant health threats and the Department carries out horizon scanning for new and emerging risks to the UK.

The Department undertakes systematic, proactive screening of new and emerging plant health risks, which are listed in the UK Risk Register. The register contains details of over 1400 plant pests and pathogens which have been screened for their potential to be damaging in the UK.

Risks are reviewed monthly by an expert groups and Ministers, and prioritised for actions such as surveillance, enhanced inspection, regulation, national measures, import controls, research and awareness raising.

## ■ Recycling

**Zöe Franklin:** [\[61444\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of the Circular Economy Taskforce on the development of the repair and reuse economy.

**Mary Creagh:**

This Government is committed to transitioning towards a circular economy. We have convened the Circular Economy Taskforce to help develop the first ever Circular Economy Strategy for England, which we plan to publish for consultation in the coming autumn. The strategy will be accompanied by a series of roadmaps detailing the interventions that the government and others will make on a sector-by-sector basis.

Defra recognises that repair and reuse are fundamental tenets of any circular economy, and a successful transition aims to eliminate waste and promote sustainability through reuse and resource efficiency. The Circular Economy Taskforce will consider the evidence for appropriate action right across the economy throughout the development of the strategy.

## ■ Rivers: Pollution Control

**Harpreet Uppal:** [\[61388\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of enforcement mechanisms to reduce pollution by water companies in local rivers.

**Emma Hardy:**

The Water (Special Measures) Act (WSMA) provides the most significant increase in enforcement powers for the regulators in a decade, giving the teeth they need to take tougher action against water companies.

A record 81 criminal investigations into water companies have been launched in England since the election, and the Environment Agency has increased inspections into sewage pollution by nearly 400% since last July.

Furthermore, the regulators will be bolstered by at least £55 million additional per year through water company permit charges and implementation of the new cost recovery powers in the WSMA, ensuring that polluters are held to account for breaches of their obligations.

The Independent Water Commission will consider the roles and responsibilities of the water industry regulators and how we can ensure our regulators operate as effectively as possible. The Commission's Interim Report was published on 3 June, and the final report and recommendations will be published later in the summer.

**Rivers: Sewage****Ellie Chowns:**[\[61447\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of excess sewage sludge on river pollution.

**Emma Hardy:**

Sludge (Use in Agriculture) Regulations 1989 (SUiAR) supported by the Sewage Sludge Code of Practice provide environmental and health protections from sludge spreading.

The Government is continuing to work with the Environment Agency to assess the regulatory framework for spreading sludge. We recognise that effective and proportionate regulations are an essential tool to improve the water environment.

The Independent Water Commission's Call for Evidence, published in February 2025, highlighted the Environment Agency's recommendation to strengthen the regulatory framework for sludge application on land by incorporating the Sludge Use in Agriculture Regulations 1989 into the Environmental Permitting Regulations 2016.

A set of recommendations will be delivered by Q3 of this year. The UK Government will then respond and consult on proposals we intend to take forward.

**Sheep: Animal Welfare****James Wild:**[\[61241\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a minimum price for fleece that covers the cost of animal welfare requirements for sheep farmers.

**Daniel Zeichner:**

British Wool is a public body, responsible for the collection, sale and marketing of wool from across the UK. Sales are conducted by auction throughout the year and reflect global market developments in price and availability. Payments to British Wool's producer members are calculated at year end once the full value of that member's clip is known.

Farmers have a duty to care for the animals they keep and sheep shearing in preparation for the summer is key to ensuring welfare and preventing suffering from, for example, heat stress. The Government is already supporting sheep farmers to improve the health and welfare of their flocks. Schemes currently offered by the service and available to sheep farmers include the 'Get funding to improve animal health and welfare service' launched in June 2024 as part of the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway, the Animal Health and Welfare Review and the Endemic Disease Follow-up. These schemes give eligible livestock keepers access to a series of funded vet visits which include bespoke advice and testing for key endemic diseases and conditions. Funding contributes to the cost of vet time, farmer time and testing. Eligible sheep farmers can claim £436 in the Review, and additional £639 in the Follow-up for a single flock.

Details about this funding can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/funding-to-improve-animal-health-and-welfare-guidance-for-farmers-and-vets>. Animal health and welfare is a devolved matter, and the information provided therefore relates to England only.

**■ Soil: Contamination****Ellie Chowns:****[61448]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of land-spreading sewage sludge on soil contamination.

**Emma Hardy:**

The Sludge (Use in Agriculture) Regulations 1989 (SUiAR) supported by the Sewage Sludge Code of Practice provide environmental and health protections from sludge spreading.

The Government is continuing to work with the Environment Agency to assess the regulatory framework for spreading sludge. We recognise that effective and proportionate regulations are an essential tool to improve the environment.

The Government has been working with water companies under their Chemical Investigations Programme (CIP), to improve the evidence base on the behaviour and fate of contaminants in during treatment processes. CIP phase 4 will include a Groundwater, Soil and Biosolids investigation. This will be looking at the fate and behaviour of multiple chemical compounds, including PFAS substances, to establish whether detected substances pose a risk to long-term soil health, groundwater quality and the wider environment.

## ■ Water Companies: Fines

**Aphra Brandreth:** [\[61673\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the press release entitled Government to invest over £100m in water company fines to local environmental projects, published on 19 June 2025, when he decided to use fines for water restoration projects.

**Aphra Brandreth:** [\[61674\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much and what proportion of funding through the Water Restoration Fund will be used to support water (a) quality and (b) infrastructure projects.

**Aphra Brandreth:** [\[61676\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how long discussions have been taking place within government on the allocation of water company fines towards water restoration and infrastructure projects.

**Aphra Brandreth:** [\[61677\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what options were considered by his Department for the use of water company fines before the decision to direct them towards water projects was taken.

**Aphra Brandreth:** [\[61678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether any fines levied on water companies are being used to support water quality improvements at Lake Windermere.

**Aphra Brandreth:** [\[61679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, which rivers have been identified by his Department as priority sites for improvement using funds raised through fines on water companies.

**Aphra Brandreth:** [\[61681\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether funds raised through fines on water companies will be allocated to support (a) water quality and (b) infrastructure improvements in the same areas where breaches occurred.

**Aphra Brandreth:** [\[61683\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what options his Department considered for the use of fines collected from water companies.

**Emma Hardy:**

Following the Spending Review, the Government has confirmed water company fines will be allocated to local environmental projects and programmes to clean up our rivers, lakes and seas.

Over £100 million in fines has been levied against water companies since October 2023, which will be reinvested into local environment projects and programmes to address pollution and improve water quality.

More information on this announcement can be found on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk). A further announcement on the details on the projects and programmes that this funding will go towards will be set out in due course.

Water company fines that accumulated between April 2022 and October 2023 will be invested through the Water Restoration Fund. Up to £11 million of funding was made available on a competitive basis to support a range of water restoration projects to improve the water environment. Successful applicants have been notified, and an official announcement will follow in due course.

## FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

### ■ AUKUS

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[61164\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his US counterparts on the AUKUS defence pact.

**Stephen Doughty:**

AUKUS is a landmark partnership which enhances UK deterrence, supports UK growth, and strengthens Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific security. The Foreign Secretary regularly discusses AUKUS with his US counterparts. He most recently raised AUKUS with Secretary Rubio when he visited Washington DC in June. In April at the NATO Foreign Ministers Meeting, he and Secretary Rubio both mentioned Indo-Pacific security as a challenge our countries are working together to address, including through AUKUS. In January, the Foreign Secretary discussed the partnership in his very first call with Secretary Rubio.

### ■ Chagos Islands: Sovereignty

**Priti Patel:**

[\[61142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential implications for his policies of public statements from representatives of (a) China, (b) Russia and (c) Iran supporting the agreement with Mauritius on the Chagos Islands.

**Stephen Doughty:**

The agreement has been backed by key allies and international partners, including the US and all of our 5 EYES allies. India, Japan and South Korea have all also made clear their support for the deal. As US Defence Secretary Hegseth said, the UK's "very important deal with Mauritius secures the operational capabilities of the base and key US national security interests in the region. We are confident the base is protected for many years ahead."



## ■ Gibraltar: British Nationals Abroad

**Mr Richard Holden:**

**[61876]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential impact of time spent in Gibraltar counting towards the 90-day limit for Schengen short stays on British citizens with (a) residential, (b) family and (c) personal times to EU countries.

**Stephen Doughty:**

To unlock the benefits of a fluid border, everyone arriving at Gibraltar's airport will undergo dual immigration controls, allowing them to move freely into the EU if they wish to. As visitors will be free to cross into Spain without checks, time spent in Gibraltar will count towards the EU's 90 in 180 requirement. This approach reflects the unique situation in Gibraltar, ensuring a fluid border and delivering certainty for Gibraltar's people and businesses.

## ■ Gibraltar: Immigration Controls

**Priti Patel:**

**[60853]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to his Statement on Gibraltar on 12 June 2025, what estimate he has made of the number of UK nationals who will enter Gibraltar each year who are (a) eligible for entry to Gibraltar under Gibraltarian controls and also (b) ineligible to enter the Schengen area.

**Stephen Doughty:**

As today, there is no automatic right of entry to Gibraltar for non-resident British nationals. Under the agreement announced on 11 June, immigration and entry to Gibraltar will remain the responsibility of the Gibraltarian authorities. Spain, on behalf of the EU, will be responsible for granting or refusing entry to the Schengen area. The Government of Gibraltar have taken the decision to mutually recognise decisions taken by Spain to refuse entry to Schengen. As is the case today when UK nationals arrive at either a Gibraltar or a Schengen checkpoint, we expect the overwhelming majority of travellers to proceed without difficulty through the checks, which are carried out in the mutual public safety interest. British nationals who are resident in Gibraltar will not be refused entry to Gibraltar.

## ■ Gibraltar: UK Relations with EU

**Dr Al Pinkerton:**

**[61391]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what his expected timeline is for the ratification of the UK-EU treaty on Gibraltar.

**Stephen Doughty:**

All parties are committed to finalising the text of the UK-EU Treaty in respect of Gibraltar as soon as possible. The final text will be brought before the House for scrutiny in the normal way pursuant to the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010.

## ■ Refugees: International Assistance

**Sarah Hall:**

**[60336]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking with international partners to (a) help tackle the (i) humanitarian and (ii) security conditions that cause displacement and to (b) strengthen refugee protection in conflict-affected regions.

**Stephen Doughty:**

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office tackles forced displacement through a wide range of interventions which aim to: reduce the drivers of displacement; protect people once they are displaced; support host communities; find long term solutions; and create the conditions that allow people to return home.

This includes working closely with international partners to provide humanitarian assistance in key situations of displacement and using all the diplomatic, development and security levers available to prevent conflict and conflict-related displacement. Our work includes focusing on improving early warning systems, reforming multilateral institutions, and supporting regional mediation and peacebuilding.

## ■ Russia: China and Iran

**Priti Patel:**

**[61143]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what information his Department holds on assistance provided to Russia by (a) China and (b) Iran to resource military action against Ukraine.

**Stephen Doughty:**

Chinese companies continue to provide military and dual-use goods to Russia's military industrial complex. This is enabling Putin's invasion of Ukraine. We have repeatedly urged China to take all measures to investigate and to prevent Chinese companies from supplying Russia's military, including when the Foreign Secretary last spoke with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on 22 April. To date, the UK has sanctioned 35 China-based entities for supplying Russia's defence industry under the Russia sanctions regulations.

Iran has supported Russia through its large-scale supply of drones, munitions, and ballistic missiles. In response to Iran's supply of ballistic missiles, the UK and its partners took actions including terminating our air services agreement with Iran Air and implementing new sanctions.

## ■ St Helena: Politics and Government

**Andrew Rosindell:**

**[61130]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 18 June 2025 to Question 58607 on Saint Helena: Politics and Government, how many of those constitutions include a provision for special

responsibility for finance being vested in the Governor; and for what reason such wording is retained in the Constitution of Saint Helena in the context of its ministerial system of government.

**Stephen Doughty:**

Each Overseas Territory's constitution is unique. In relation to the 2021 amendment to the Constitution of Saint Helena, the Governor, in concert with the Legislative Council, commissioned an independent review of governance arrangements by the Westminster Foundation of Democracy. The findings are now with the Legislative Council for consideration and to determine if further constitutional amendment is required.

■ **Ukraine: Armed Conflict**

**Priti Patel:**

[\[61145\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what medical facilities he plans to make available to Ukrainians injured in the war with Russia.

**Stephen Doughty:**

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office has supported medical practitioners and the provision of medical services through funding partners, such as the World Health Organization, in Ukraine. We have supported the strengthening of Ukrainian rehabilitation systems through training and capacity building of Ukrainian healthcare staff; the provision of rehabilitation equipment to facilities across Ukraine; and support on health and social policy. Last year, the UK contributed to £320,000 of funding to the Superhumans War Trauma Centre in Ukraine. The clinic provides innovative rehabilitation services to people who have been impacted by war, including training surgeons on prosthetics. In addition, the Ukraine Red Cross Society, funded by UK assistance channelled through the British Red Cross, provides specialised training at the Burns Unit in Kyiv.

■ **Ukraine: Development Aid**

**Priti Patel:**

[\[61144\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much bilateral aid he plans to make available to Ukraine in 2025-26.

**Stephen Doughty:**

We are proud of our fast, flexible, and responsive support to Ukrainians living through Russia's invasion. The UK has provided £5 billion of non-military support to Ukraine since the start of the full-scale invasion. The Prime Minister has said in Parliament that we will continue to support Ukraine, including for humanitarian purposes. On 9 May, the Foreign Secretary announced almost £25 million in new funding to support local Ukrainian organisations to protect the most vulnerable who continue to suffer from Russia's ongoing aggression. This forms part of our funding for 2025-2026 - final funding allocation decisions for the current financial year are ongoing and will prioritise support for those most in need.

**■ USA: British Nationals Abroad****Martin Wrigley:**[\[61244\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 18 June 2025 to Question 58701 on USA: British Nationals Abroad, if he will make representations to his US counterpart on the potential merits of protecting the green card data of British citizens in line with GDPR standards, in the context of the work of the US Department of Government Efficiency.

**Stephen Doughty:**

The Foreign Secretary regularly discusses a range of bilateral issues with his US counterpart, and officials are regularly in touch with US authorities on consular and immigration issues which may affect British Nationals living in the US. Data collected by the US Government as part of their own processes is subject to US law, which is a sovereign matter for the US.

**HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE****■ Blood tests: Children****Freddie van Mierlo:**[\[57531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the availability of phlebotomy services to perform blood tests for children in (a) Oxfordshire and (b) nationally.

**Karin Smyth:**

*[Holding answer 10 June 2025]:* The Government is committed to putting patients first. This means making sure that patients are seen on time and ensuring that patients have the best possible experience during their care.

Community diagnostic centres (CDCs) offer local populations a wide range of diagnostic tests closer to home as well as greater choice on where and how they are undertaken. This reduces the need for hospital visits, reduces pressure on hospitals, and speeds up diagnosis. CDCs are expected to offer their services to children and young people where it is safe and appropriate to do so. The Oxfordshire, Oxford CDC in Cowley delivers a range of diagnostic services, including phlebotomy services.

Phlebotomy services are also provided by general practices (GPs). Where services are provided by GP, they are commissioned locally by integrated care boards (ICBs), based on local population need, and are funded as part of their annual funding allocations.

In Oxfordshire, the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West ICB has commissioned GPs to deliver phlebotomy services for all ages, including children. Services must be led by suitably trained professionals.

Guidance communicated to GPs from the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Local Medical Committee, the body representing all NHS GPs practising in the Buckinghamshire,

Oxfordshire, and Berkshire area, is that GPs should not perform blood tests for patients under 12 years old and instead that these should be performed by specialist paediatric trained staff. Where GPs have clinical staff with the training, competence, and experience to perform blood tests on patients under 12 years old, these services may be available. However, at practices that do not have these staff, they will instead refer the child to alternative providers, such as in a children's hospital clinic.

## ■ Consultants: Cheshire and Merseyside

**Derek Twigg:**

**[61489]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many consultant posts are vacant in the each of the acute hospital trusts in the Cheshire and Merseyside ICB.

**Karin Smyth:**

*[Holding answer 26 June 2025]:* The Department does not hold information on the number of consultant vacancies at hospitals in the Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board. NHS England publishes regular high-level statistics on vacancies across National Health Service trusts, which are available at the following link:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/nhs-vacancies-survey>

## ■ Dermatology: Waiting Lists

**Jim Shannon:**

**[60854]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to reduce NHS dermatology waiting lists.

**Karin Smyth:**

Cutting waiting lists is a key priority for the Government. The Department is committed to ensuring that the proportion of patients waiting no longer than 18 weeks from Referral to Treatment, including for dermatology services, returns to 92% by March 2029, and to 65% by March 2026.

NHS England's Getting It Right First Time (GIRFT) programme is working to improve waiting times through its established Further Faster programme to transform patient pathways and improve access and waiting times for patients. Dermatology is one of 24 specialties in focus for GIRFT's Further Faster work.

A Further Faster handbook for dermatology has been produced to share best practice, and the GIRFT team is carrying out regular visits to, and meetings with, challenged departments in order to provide support in improving performance across dermatology.

## ■ Endometriosis: Diagnosis

**Mr Andrew Snowden:**

**[60973]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he has taken to reduce average diagnosis times for endometriosis; and what plans he has to meet the Women's Health Strategy targets.

**Karin Smyth:**

It is unacceptable that women can wait up to 10 years for an endometriosis diagnosis and the Government is committed to improving the diagnosis, treatment, and ongoing care for gynaecological conditions, including endometriosis.

Tackling waiting lists is a key part of our Health Mission. We have now exceeded our pledge to deliver an extra two million operations, scans, and appointments, having now delivered over three million more appointments.

In November 2024, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence updated its guideline on the diagnosis and management of endometriosis to make firmer recommendations on referral and investigations, which will help women receive a diagnosis and effective treatment faster. This includes updated recommendations that for women with symptoms of endometriosis, initial pharmacological treatment should take place in primary care, and that this can take place in parallel with additional investigations and referral to secondary care if needed. The guideline is available at the following link:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng73>

The Government's focus is on turning the commitments in the Women's Health Strategy into tangible action, such as providing emergency hormonal contraception free of charge at pharmacies on the National Health Service from October 2025, taking urgent action to tackle gynaecology waiting lists through the Elective Reform Plan, and setting out how we will eliminate cervical cancer by 2040 through the new cervical cancer plan.

## ■ Givinostat

**Luke Taylor:**

**[60997]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to help ensure that Givinostat is made available in for people with Duchenne muscular dystrophy across all NHS trusts areas.

**Karin Smyth:**

The Department understands the impact that Duchenne muscular dystrophy has on those living with it and their families, and the urgent need for new treatment options.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) makes recommendations for the National Health Service on whether new licensed medicines should be routinely funded by the NHS independently based on an assessment of their costs and benefits. The NHS in England is legally required to fund medicines recommended by NICE, normally within three months of the publication of final

guidance. NICE is currently evaluating givinostat for the treatment of Duchenne muscular dystrophy and its independent Appraisal Committee will meet to consider the evidence in July 2025.

Ahead of NICE's evaluation, ITF Pharma UK, the United Kingdom's marketing authorisation holder for givinostat, is providing access to givinostat through a type of compassionate use scheme called an Early Access Programme (EAP). The delivery of timely and equitable access to new treatments for Duchenne muscular dystrophy under company-sponsored EAPs is not the responsibility of NHS England.

Participation in company-led schemes is decided at an individual NHS trust level and under these programmes, the cost of the drug is free to both the patients taking part in it, and to the NHS, although NHS trusts must still cover administration costs and provide clinical resources to deliver the EAP.

NHS England has published guidance for integrated care systems (ICS) on free of charge medicines schemes, providing advice on potential financial, resourcing, and clinical risks.

ICSs should use the guidance to help determine whether to implement any free of charge scheme, including assessing suitability and any risks in the short, medium, and long term. The guidance is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/free-of-charge-foc-medicines-schemes-national-policy-recommendations-for-local-systems/>

## ■ Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust: Repairs and Maintenance

**Max Wilkinson:**

**[60959]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what funding his Department is allocating to reduce the maintenance backlog at sites owned by Gloucestershire NHS Foundation Hospitals Trust.

**Karin Smyth:**

The Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is set to receive £9.7 million in funding through the Estates Safety Fund 2025/26. This funding will help deliver vital safety improvements at the Gloucestershire Royal Hospital and the Cheltenham General Hospital, enhancing patient and staff environments, and reducing the levels of critical maintenance backlog.

In addition, the Gloucestershire Integrated Care Board has also been provisionally allocated £53.1 million in operational capital funding, including primary care business as usual capital, for 2025/26 to allocate to local priorities, including maintenance backlogs.

## ■ Health Professions: Regulation

**Daisy Cooper:**

**[60872]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 9 June 2025 to Question 56880 on Health Professions: Regulation, whether the



consultation expected by the end of this year will be open to submissions from Members of Parliament and the public.

**Karin Smyth:**

We are aiming to commence consultation on a draft legislative framework for the General Medical Council by the end of this year. This will be a statutory three-month public consultation which anyone will be able to respond to, including Members of Parliament and the public.

■ **Health Services: Expenditure**

**Clive Lewis:**

**[60528]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of his Department's spending was on (a) community, (b) acute and (c) primary care services in (i) Norfolk and Waveney and (ii) the rest of England by ICB area in the latest year for which statistics are available.

**Karin Smyth:**

In 2023/24, the Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board (ICB) spent £1,275.5 million on acute services, £240.9 million on community services, and £258.7 million on primary medical services. As a proportion of the Department's Resource Departmental Expenditure Limit outturn of £182,819 million, as per the Department's 2023/24 Annual Report, this is equivalent to approximately 0.7% for acute services, approximately 0.1% for community services, and approximately 0.1% for primary medical services. Further information on the Department's 2023/24 Annual Report is available at the following link:

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/676150ef26a2d1ff18253415/dhsc-annual-report-and-accounts-2023-2024-web-accessible.pdf#page=331>

The following table shows a full breakdown of spend across these three service areas by ICB in 2023/24:

INTEGRATED CARE BOARD	ACUTE (MILLIONS OF POUNDS)	COMMUNITY (MILLIONS OF POUNDS)	PRIMARY MEDICAL SERVICES (MILLIONS OF POUNDS)
Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes ICB	1,115.9	190.4	217.8
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough ICB	1,026.2	183.3	220.4
Hertfordshire and West Essex ICB	1,725.5	302.7	326.0
Mid and South East Essex ICB	1,427.6	230.1	254.6



INTEGRATED CARE BOARD	ACUTE (MILLIONS OF POUNDS)	COMMUNITY (MILLIONS OF POUNDS)	PRIMARY MEDICAL SERVICES (MILLIONS OF POUNDS)
Norfolk and Waveney ICB	1,275.5	240.9	258.7
Suffolk and North East Essex ICB	1,140.2	216.0	230.4
Nort East London ICB	2,498.7	470.5	488.0
North Central London ICB	1,891.5	362.2	358.2
North West London ICB	2,798.4	459.6	518.9
South East London ICB	2,309.6	457.6	419.3
South West London ICB	1,928.2	280.0	344.9
Birmingham and Solihull ICB	1,612.5	314.2	339.7
Coventry and Warwickshire ICB	1,142.1	174.4	221.3
Herefordshire and Worcestershire ICB	861.5	195.9	186.8
Derby & Derbyshire ICB	1,268.2	191.0	252.9
Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland ICB	1,147.1	231.6	252.9
Lincolnshire ICB	928.0	180.6	189.4
Northamptonshire ICB	912.8	124.0	174.3
Nottingham and Nottinghamshire ICB	1,363.0	257.3	248.3
Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin ICB	612.2	126.0	115.2

INTEGRATED CARE BOARD	ACUTE (MILLIONS OF POUNDS)	COMMUNITY (MILLIONS OF POUNDS)	PRIMARY MEDICAL SERVICES (MILLIONS OF POUNDS)
Staffordshire & Stoke on Trent ICB	1,210.5	311.9	264.3
Black Country ICB	1,610.8	277.6	258.0
Cumbria & North East ICB	3,768.9	724.4	743.4
Humber, Coast and Vale ICB	2,019.4	358.3	388.4
Sth Yorkshire ICB	1,611.8	267.4	329.0
West Yorkshire ICB	2,776.8	536.7	571.6
Cheshire & Merseyside ICB	3,404.8	648.2	637.8
Gtr Manchester ICB	3,738.3	665.2	729.7
Lancashire & Sth Cumbria ICB	2,374.5	399.2	411.9
Bucks, Oxfordshire & Berks West ICB	1,831.3	392.1	383.8
Frimley ICB	753.1	152.3	178.3
Hampshire and Isle of Wight ICB	2,032.0	433.0	372.4
Kent and Medway ICB	2,228.3	460.0	407.8
Surrey Heartlands ICB	1,210.2	190.4	217.0
Sussex ICB	2,045.6	381.1	415.3
Bath & NE Somerset, Swindon & Wiltshire ICB	1,010.6	209.3	218.3
Bristol, Nth Somerset & South Gloucs ICB	1,110.5	226.2	222.5
Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly ICB	651.9	166.7	144.1

INTEGRATED CARE BOARD	ACUTE (MILLIONS OF POUNDS)	COMMUNITY (MILLIONS OF POUNDS)	PRIMARY MEDICAL SERVICES (MILLIONS OF POUNDS)
Devon ICB	1,479.2	339.5	273.3
Dorset ICB	952.3	198.9	172.1
Gloucestershire ICB	641.1	123.1	161.4
Somerset ICB	703.2	114.6	143.1

### ■ Health Services: North East Somerset and Hanham

**Dan Norris:**

**[60817]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the Spending Review 2025 on NHS waiting lists in North East Somerset and Hanham constituency.

**Karin Smyth:**

No formal assessment has been made of the potential impact of the 2025 Spending Review on National Health Service waiting lists in the North East Somerset and Hanham constituency.

The 2025 Spending Review, announced by my Rt. Hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer in June 2025, prioritises health with record investment in the health and social care system. Until 2028/29, the Government is providing £29 billion for more day-to-day funding in real terms compared to 2023/24, along with the largest ever health capital budget, with a £2.3 billion real terms increase in capital spending over the Spending Review period, until 2029/30.

This funding will support delivery of our commitment that 92% of patients return to waiting no longer than 18 weeks from Referral to Treatment by March 2029, including in the North East Somerset and Hanham constituency.

### ■ Hospitals: Waiting Lists

**Helen Morgan:**

**[61009]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish quarterly reports on the steps he has taken to meet targets set out in the Elective Reform Plan.

**Karin Smyth:**

There are no formal plans to publish quarterly reports on the steps taken to meet targets set out in the Elective Reform Plan.

The Department is committed to ensuring that 92% of patients return to waiting no longer than 18 weeks from Referral to Treatment by March 2029 and that 65% of

patients wait for 18 weeks or less by March 2026. The Department and NHS England regularly monitor progress against these targets.

Monthly statistics on the size of the elective waiting list and performance against the 18-week target is published and available at the following link:

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

## ■ Joint Replacements

**Helen Morgan:** [61007]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help support people waiting for joint replacement surgery.

**Helen Morgan:** [61008]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he made of the correlation between BMI levels and referrals for joint replacement surgery.

**Karin Smyth:**

Cutting waiting lists is a key priority for the Government. We have committed to achieving the NHS Constitutional standard that 92% of patients should wait no longer than 18 weeks from Referral to Treatment by March 2029, including patients waiting for joint replacement surgery.

We also want to improve patients' experience while waiting, to ensure their experience of planned National Health Service care is as supportive and convenient as possible. In our Elective Reform Plan, published in January 2025, we committed to giving patients more choice and control, including choice of their provider, and whether they want routine follow up appointments. We are upgrading the NHS app, so patients can book and rearrange appointments, choose which hospital to be treated at, receive test results, and choose if they want to be seen in person or remotely. We will also work with patients and carers to establish minimum standards for experience.

The My Planned Care app gives people advice and support while they wait and helps them to prepare for their hospital consultation, treatment, or surgery. This includes giving people information about waiting times at their hospital and other supporting and local services. There has been no formal assessment on the correlation between body mass index levels and referrals for joint replacement surgery.

## ■ Midwives: Recruitment and Training

**Max Wilkinson:** [60960]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding he plans to allocate to midwife (a) training and (b) recruitment in the next 12 months.

**Karin Smyth:**

The NHS Education and Training tariff funds clinical midwife placements at approximately £5,000 per full time equivalent post. The rate is adjusted by the Market

Forces Factor and varies by region. In addition, eligible midwifery students can apply for the NHS Learning Support Fund (LSF). The LSF provides a non-repayable grant of at least £5,000 per student per academic year. We review the funding arrangements for both schemes annually.

Funding for midwife training is demand led and is not capped by the Government. The total amount of funding depends on the number of students in the system.

National Health Service trusts manage their recruitment at a local level. This includes allocating funding to ensure they have the right number of staff in place with the right skills mix, to deliver safe and effective care.

To reform the NHS and make it fit for the future, we will publish a 10-Year Health Plan as part of the Government's five long-term missions. Ensuring we have the right people, in the right places, with the right skills will be central to this vision. We will publish a new workforce plan to deliver the transformed health service we will build over the next decade and treat patients on time again.

## ■ NHS: Managers

**John Whitby:**

[\[61086\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of moving non-clinical service delivery decision-making from managers to (a) consultants and (b) specialist doctors.

**Karin Smyth:**

Integrated care boards (ICBs) are the strategic commissioners of health and care services in England. NHS England has asked the ICBs to reduce the duplication of functions, to achieve efficiencies and reduce their running costs, with the aim to direct the cost savings towards front line National Health Service health and care services.

No assessment has been made in regard to moving any non-clinical services to clinical staff. We expect the ICBs to review their functions whilst acting as strategic commissioners, and this includes where multiple assurance and regulatory functions are being done by different organisations, wider performance management, and comms and engagement, which similarly exists in local authorities, providers, and regions, with a view of delegating these functions appropriately.

## ■ Nurses

**Grahame Morris:**

[\[61755\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many newly qualified nurses were employed in the NHS as a band 5 nurse after three months of being a qualified in (a) 2024, (b) 2023 and (c) 2022.

**Grahame Morris:**

[\[61757\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many newly qualified nurses were employed in the NHS as a band 5 nurse after six months of being a qualified in (a) 2024, (b) 2023 and (c) 2022 .

**Karin Smyth:**

The Department does not hold the information requested.

**Grahame Morris:** [\[61756\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many nurses qualified to work in the NHS (a) 2024, (b) 2023 and (c) 2022.

**Karin Smyth:**

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) publishes information on the number of nurses joining their register for the first time, who are resident in England. It is important to note that newly registered nurses may choose to work in a range of settings, including National Health Service trusts, private or third sector bodies, who may undertake NHS work, or social care settings.

The following table shows the number of nurses joining the NMC register in England for the first time by financial year:

FINANCIAL YEAR	NUMBER OF REGISTERED NURSES JOINING THE NMC REGISTER FOR THE FIRST TIME IN ENGLAND
2022/23	24,108
2023/24	28,049
2024/25	29,210

Source: Nursing and Midwifery Council, March 2025 Annual Data Report, available at the following link:

<https://www.nmc.org.uk/about-us/reports-and-accounts/registration-statistics/>

The information may slightly undercount first time register joiners in England as it is based on the address registered with the NMC.

■ **Nurses: Employment**

**Grahame Morris:** [\[61754\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy for newly qualified nurses to be guaranteed a job in the NHS.

**Karin Smyth:**

Decisions on the employment of newly qualified nurses are a matter for individual National Health service trusts, which manage their recruitment at a local level, ensuring they have the right number of staff in place, with the right skill mix, to deliver safe and effective care.

We are working closely with NHS England, employers, and educators to ensure support is in place to help graduating nurses transition into the workforce.

## ■ Nurses: Schools

**Rachel Gilmour:**

**[61065]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether training is available through the NHS for school nurses on managing allergies and administering adrenaline auto-injectors.

**Karin Smyth:**

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) sets the standards for education preparation for school nurses, who are registered nurses that undertake a post-graduate Specialist Public Health Nurse qualification with an NMC-approved university. School nurses will then also undertake any mandatory training required by their employer, as appropriate to their role.

Section 100 of the Children and Families Act 2014 places a duty on schools to make arrangements for supporting pupils with medical conditions. Schools should ensure they are aware of any pupils with medical conditions, and should have policies and processes in place to ensure these can be well managed. This includes allergies. The policy should also set out how staff will be supported in carrying out their role to support pupils, including how training needs are assessed and how training is commissioned and provided. Any member of school staff providing support to a pupil with medical needs should have received suitable training.

NHS England has also produced the Healthy School Child e-learning programme, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/healthy-school-child/>

This programme is designed for healthcare professionals, including school nurses, working with children aged between five and 12 years old. Module 5 of the e-learning programme includes sessions on asthma, eczema, and other allergies.

## ■ Oxygen: Medical Treatments

**James Naish:**

**[61028]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help ensure equal geographic access to NHS hyperbaric chamber services.

**Karin Smyth:**

NHS England is committed to ensuring equitably accessible, high-quality services, for anyone who requires hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT). This will be achieved through the commissioning of six geographically dispersed services across England. Three preferred providers have been identified to date, and a further procurement exercise will take place to identify the three remaining centres.

The contract for HBOT services, also known as recompression, was reviewed in 2024, as existing contract terms expired. This included an update of the service specification using the published full methods process, and a public consultation on the proposal to reduce the number of commissioned providers in England from eight to six centres. Further information on the service specification, the published full

methods process, and the consultation is available, respectively, at the following three links:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Hyperbaric-oxygen-therapy-services-all-ages-Service-specification-January-2025.pdf>

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/methods-national-service-specifications/>

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/reviewing-hyperbaric-oxygen-services-consultation-guide/#:~:text=Background-.Background,Manual%20of%20Prescribed%20Specialised%20Services>

The updates to the specification seek to ensure timely access to treatment for the most acutely unwell patients with the specification requiring:

- the delivery of care that is integrated with other services, including the emergency department, critical care, and other healthcare professionals as required; and
- that facilities should be capable of receiving patients in any diagnostic category who may require advanced life support either immediately or during HBOT.

The geographical scope of the six services will ensure that there are no more than four hours travelling time by road from coastal locations, from the furthest borders, or between neighbouring commissioned HBOT centres, which is in line with good practice guidelines. The published Equality and Health Inequalities Impact Assessment sets out an evaluation, including access to services and where appropriate action was taken to ensure fair access to any patient who requires this service. Further information on the Equality and Health Inequalities Impact Assessment is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/2.1-Hyperbaric-oxygen-therapy-equality-and-health-inequalities-impact-assessment.pdf>

## ■ Radiology: Training

**Derek Twigg:**

**[61487]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many radiographers will be trained in each year until 2030.

**Karin Smyth:**

*[Holding answer 26 June 2025]:* Later this year, we will publish a new workforce plan to deliver the transformed health service we will build over the next decade, and will ensure the National Health Service has the right people, in the right places, with the right skills to deliver the care patients need when they need it.

## ■ Surgical Hubs: Injuries and Orthopaedics

**Helen Morgan:**

**[61006]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of surgical hubs on (a) waiting times for (i) trauma and (ii) orthopaedic treatment and (b) equity in access to treatment.



**Karin Smyth:**

No formal assessment has been specifically made on the potential impact of surgical hubs on clinical speciality waiting times or equity in access to treatment.

A mixed methods evaluation of the surgical hub programme is currently underway, led by the University of York, and is expected to complete in 2027.

Surgical hubs transform the way the National Health Service provides elective care by focusing on providing high volume low complexity surgery, as recommended by the Royal College of Surgeons of England. Hubs separate elective care facilities from urgent and emergency care, improving outcomes for patients and reducing pressures on hospitals.

**■ Warrington and Halton Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust: Radiology****Derek Twigg:****[61488]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many radiographers have been in post at Warrington and Halton University Hospitals Trust in each year since 2015.

**Karin Smyth:**

*[Holding answer 26 June 2025]:* The following table shows the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) diagnostic radiographers employed by the Warrington and Halton University Hospitals Trust in each year since 2015:

DATE	FTE DIAGNOSTIC RADIOGRAPHERS
March 2015	85
March 2016	82
March 2017	83
March 2018	77
March 2019	80
March 2020	83
March 2021	92
March 2022	88
March 2023	78
March 2024	82
March 2025	92

Source: NHS Workforce Statistics, NHS England, available at the following link:  
<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/nhs-workforce-statistics/february-2025>

The trust has not employed therapeutic radiographers for the dates shown.

## HOME OFFICE

### ■ Abortion

**Sammy Wilson:** [57623]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many (a) charges, (b) prosecutions and (c) convictions for unlawful abortion there have been in England and Wales in each of the last ten years.

**Jess Phillips:**

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer I gave to MP Mr Gregory Campbell East of Londonderry, Democratic Unionist Party on 5 June 2025.

### ■ Crime and Policing Bill

**Apsana Begum:** [61191]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what pre-legislative consultation she undertook on amendments 61 to 63 at Report Stage of the Crime and Policing Bill.

**Apsana Begum:** [61192]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the adequacy of the time allowed for consideration of amendments 61 to 63 of the Crime and Policing Bill.

**Apsana Begum:** [61193]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions she has had with (a) the police, (b) women's groups, (c) representatives of the legal profession, (d) human rights organisations and (e) civil liberties organisations on amendments 61 to 63 of the Crime and Policing Bill.

**Dame Diana Johnson:**

The Home Office engaged with law enforcement and third sector partners prior to introduction of the Bill. The Home Office continues to engage with these stakeholders to ensure that the measures meet the needs of operational colleagues as well as victims and survivors.

An equality impact statement for the new offence has been published alongside the Bill and is available at: [EIA](#). The Government also published on introduction a memorandum addressing issues arising under the ECHR in respect of measures in the Bill.

The programme motion agreed by the House on 17 June extended from one to two days the normal time available for the remaining stages of the Bill.

## ■ Crime and Policing Bill: Impact Assessments

**Apsana Begum:**

[61190]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will conduct an equality impact assessment for new offences created by amendments 61 to 63 at Report Stage of the Crime and Policing Bill.

**Dame Diana Johnson:**

The Home Office engaged with law enforcement and third sector partners prior to introduction of the Bill. The Home Office continues to engage with these stakeholders to ensure that the measures meet the needs of operational colleagues as well as victims and survivors.

An equality impact statement for the new offence has been published alongside the Bill and is available at: [EIA](#)

The Government also published on introduction a memorandum addressing issues arising under the ECHR in respect of measures in the Bill.

The programme motion agreed by the House on 17 June extended from one to two days the normal time available for the remaining stages of the Bill.

## ■ Domestic Abuse: Children and Young People

**Sarah Gibson:**

[61405]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to reduce the incidence of domestic abuse among 16 to 19 year-olds.

**Sarah Gibson:**

[61406]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent data her Department holds on the prevalence of intimate partner violence among young people aged 16 to 19.

**Jess Phillips:**

Acknowledging the complex nature of domestic abuse, the ONS recently revised a question module in the Crime Survey for England and Wales to improve the accuracy and depth of data collected on domestic abuse. According to the new survey module, 18.7% of 16 to 19-year-olds experienced domestic abuse in the year ending March 2024.

The Home Secretary has been clear that teenage relationship abuse is an extremely important issue the government is tackling. Current CPS guidance applies to all cases of domestic abuse, irrespective of the age of the perpetrator or victim, meaning that protective orders such as Restraining Orders can be implemented to protect victims.

In the upcoming VAWG Strategy, we will also outline steps we are taking to respond to teenage relationship abuse - including through prevention and supporting victims further.

**■ Home Office: Public Expenditure****James Wild:****[61219]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 17 June 2025 to Question 59412 on Government Departments: Reviews, if her Department will publish the line by line review of its spending conducted for the Spending Review 2025.

**Dame Diana Johnson:**

I refer the Hon Member to the answer he was given on 17 June to Question 59412.

**■ Housing: Disability and Vulnerable Adults****Will Stone:****[61931]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking with Cabinet colleagues to help protect (a) disabled and (b) vulnerable people from people who seek to take over their homes for illegal activities.

**Jess Phillips:**

The Government recognises the appalling harm caused by criminals who take over vulnerable people's homes for illegal activities. This is why we are introducing a new offence of 'cuckooing' in the Crime and Policing Bill to target criminals who exploit vulnerable people to take over their homes for criminal purposes. The new offence will be supported by statutory guidance for police, as well as non-statutory guidance for other agencies, to provide information on how to identify, protect and support vulnerable people at risk of cuckooing.

It is a matter of deep regret that His Majesty's Official Opposition chose to vote against these measures at the Third Reading of the Crime and Policing Bill on 18 June.

**■ Personation****Claire Hazelgrove:****[61398]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will (a) take steps to make identity theft a police-recordable crime and (b) make an assessment of the adequacy of support given to victims of identity theft.

**Dame Diana Johnson:**

The act of stealing personal information, and using it for criminal means and gains, is already outlawed. This includes through legislation such as the Fraud Act 2006, Computer Misuse Act 1990 and the Data Protection Act 2018.

The most effective way of preventing identity theft is to improve the safety and security of the identity systems we use and empower people to protect themselves from identity theft, particularly online.

We have introduced a checklist providing advice and steps on how to prevent the misuse of identities which can be found here:

<https://data.actionfraud.police.uk/cms/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Identity-theft-victims-checklist.pdf>

Further information about staying safe online and to avoid identity theft-enabled fraud can be found at: <https://stopthinkfraud.campaign.gov.uk/>

## HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### ■ Local Government: Apprentices

**Blake Stephenson:**

[61256]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if she will make an estimate of the number of Level 7 apprenticeships offered by local authorities.

**Jim McMahon:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to Question UIN [58023](#) on 13 June 2025.

### ■ Local Government: Codes of Practice

**Martin Wrigley:**

[61314]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of the enforcement of the local government code of conduct.

**Martin Wrigley:**

[61315]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many complaints were referred to local standards committees in the last year; and what proportion of those complaints led to sanctions.

**Martin Wrigley:**

[61316]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what statutory powers are available to local standards committees to investigate and sanction councillors for breaches of the Nolan Principles.

**Martin Wrigley:**

[61317]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what what steps she is taking to help ensure consistency in standards of (a) ethics, (b) training and (c) reporting in (i) parish, (ii) town and (iii) district councils.

**Jim McMahon:**

The government's December 2024 consultation set out the government's views on the adequacy of the current local government standards regime. The consultation also set out what sanctions are currently available and that government considers that, in key aspects, the current system is ineffectual, inconsistently applied, and lacking in adequate powers to effectively sanction members found in serious breach of their codes of conduct.

This consultation sought views on proposed measures to strengthen the standards and conduct framework for local authorities in England, including the introduction of the sanction of suspension, to empower local authorities of all types and tiers to deal appropriately member misconduct where it arises. The government response will be issued in due course. The government does not collect data on local authority complaints.

■ **Local Government: Pension Funds**

**John Glen:**

[\[61140\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, under what circumstances she would direct Local Government Pension Funds to a specific asset pool.

**Jim McMahon:**

The government's firm preference is for pool membership to be determined on a voluntary basis at a local level. In the Pension Schemes Bill, the government has made provision for a power to protect the Local Government Pension Scheme over the long term. The power could be used to direct an administering authority to participate in a specific pool in the event that an authority is left without a pool to participate in or that a pool's governance intractably breaks down. The government would intend only to use this power as a backstop in these circumstances.

■ **Perinatal Mortality: Cemeteries**

**Sarah Gibson:**

[\[61097\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what support his Department is providing to local authorities and families wishing to install memorials or markers on sites of historic communal graves of stillborn babies.

**Sarah Gibson:**

[\[61098\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether her Department holds data on how many local authorities have complete and accessible records of historic stillbirth burials.

**Jim McMahon:**

The government understands that tracing a baby's grave or a record of cremation can be a very difficult time for people both mentally and emotionally. It is important, therefore, that parents searching for the final resting place of their child's remains are given as much help as possible.

We know some councils are actively engaged with providing markers and memorials in cemeteries where stillborn babies were laid to rest in communal graves, and I would encourage members to contact their local authority directly. We anticipate councils will be open to suggestions from MPs on how best to support families affected in the way she describes.

The government expects all hospitals and burial and cremation authorities to assist by providing all information and records available to them, to any parents that enquire about what happened to their stillborn babies and their final resting place, in a timely manner.

## ■ **Police and Crime Commissioners: Combined Authorities**

**Nick Timothy:**

[\[61263\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 18 June 2025 to Question 58747 on Police and Crime Commissioners: Combined Authorities, whether she plans to transfer police and crime commissioner powers to combined authorities where the mayoral geography aligns with the geography of two police force areas.

**Jim McMahon:**

In the English Devolution White Paper we committed to exploring whether a single Mayor can take responsibility for Police and Crime Commissioner functions across two or more police forces, where this would result in coterminous boundaries, and bring forward any legislative changes as part of the English Devolution Bill. We will announce further details in due course.

## SCIENCE, INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY

## ■ **Department for Science, Innovation and Technology: Public Expenditure**

**James Wild:**

[\[61224\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, pursuant to the Answer of 17 June 2025 to Question 59412 on Government Departments: Reviews, if his Department will publish the line by line review of its spending conducted for the Spending Review 2025.

**Feryal Clark:**

The Department for Science, Innovation and Technology is committed to meeting the 5% savings and efficiency target, with SR funding allocations agreed on this basis.

These funding allocations – informed by the findings of the ZBR – are the first step in a wider plan to finalise budgets for different projects and programmes, with any necessary savings decided through that process. The savings taken forward will be subject to the normal rigorous business planning processes, and in-year financial management.

## ■ **Digital Technology: Infrastructure**

**Mr Andrew Snowden:**

[\[61357\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what guidance is his Department provides to local planning authorities on balancing the need for digital infrastructure with environmental and heritage considerations.

**Chris Bryant:**

Local planning authorities are responsible for determining applications for digital infrastructure, including telecommunications, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework which requires that planning decisions take account local environmental and heritage considerations.

In addition, the Department has published a Code of Practice for Wireless Network Development in England, and the Cabinet Siting and Pole Siting Code of Practice 2016 which provide practice on siting and design and encourages early engagement with communities and relevant local authorities to help balance the need for network deployment with environmental factors.

**Local Government: Artificial Intelligence****Blake Stephenson:**[\[61257\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, with reference to the press release entitled AI experiments see “Humphrey” help townhalls cut costs and improve services, published on 23 May 2025, if he will publish the quality assurance data her Department receives from its trial of Minute.

**Feryal Clark:**

Minute is currently undergoing Alpha trials across the public sector, including a discovery with 25 local authorities. After this concludes in July, we will publish a summary of the findings and set the direction for the project.

**Mobile Phones: Children****Sadik Al-Hassan:**[\[61465\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on protecting children from the potential impacts of excessive use of smartphones.

**Feryal Clark:**

Creating a safer online world is a priority for the government and we are focused on implementing the Online Safety Act so that children can benefit from its wide-reaching protections.

The Government is reviewing the evidence base on children’s smartphone use, social media and their wellbeing.

DSIT works closely with other government departments on a range of online safety matters with work on child online safety being a particular priority across government.



## SCOTLAND

### ■ Offshore Industry: Scotland

**James Naish:**

[\[61936\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero on support for oil and gas workers in Scotland.

**Ian Murray:**

This Government recognises that oil and gas will continue to play a central role in the UK's energy mix for decades to come. We recently published guidance on Scope 3 emissions in response to the Finch judgment, and soon we will publish our consultation response on the future of North Sea oil and gas licensing. Nonetheless, clean energy is our future, and many oil and gas workers have transferable skills for offshore renewable jobs. The Government's commitment to investing in clean energy industries will ensure opportunities are created for oil and gas workers to thrive. Recently, we committed development funding to the Acorn carbon capture and storage project in Aberdeenshire, which, subject to business case, will prepare the project for delivery.

Scotland Office Ministers remain in regular contact with DESNZ Ministers regarding this issue. We also continue to engage with a variety of stakeholders from across the energy sector, including oil and gas producers.

## TRANSPORT

### ■ Bus Services: North Shropshire

**Helen Morgan:**

[\[61267\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what data her Department used to assess the adequacy of bus services in specific communities in North Shropshire.

**Helen Morgan:**

[\[61268\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if she will publish a list of areas in North Shropshire which are underserved by bus services.

**Simon Lightwood:**

The government recognises the importance of accessible, frequent and affordable bus services in keeping communities connected, although has not assessed the adequacy of bus services in specific communities in North Shropshire and does not have plans to publish a list of areas which are underserved by bus services in North Shropshire.

The government introduced the Bus Services (No.2) Bill on 17 December as part of its ambitious plan for bus reform. The Bill puts the power over local bus services back in the hands of local leaders and is intended to ensure bus services reflect the needs of the communities that rely on them, including in North Shropshire.

In addition, the government has confirmed £955 million for the 2025 to 2026 financial year to support and improve bus services in England outside London. This includes £243 million for bus operators and £712 million to local authorities across the country, of which Shropshire County Council has been allocated £4.4 million. Local authorities can use this funding to introduce new bus routes, make services more frequent and protect crucial bus routes for local communities.

The government has reaffirmed its commitment to bus services in this Spending Review by confirming continued funding each year from 2026/27 to maintain and improve vital bus services, including taking forward bus franchising pilots in areas including York and North Yorkshire, and extending the £3 bus fare cap until March 2027.

### ■ Gobowen-Oswestry Railway Line: Economic Growth

**Helen Morgan:**

[\[61320\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if she will take steps with the Secretary of State for Business and Trade to make an assessment of the potential impact of establishing the Oswestry-Gobowen railway line on the economy of the local area.

**Simon Lightwood:**

The previous government's Restoring Your Railway programme funded the development of a Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) for the Oswestry-Gobowen rail link. Feedback on the SOBC was provided to the promoters (Cambrian Heritage Railway Ltd) during 2023.

In July 2024, the Chancellor announced that the Restoring Your Railway programme would be closed. Any further assessment of the potential impact of this proposal should now be progressed as part of Shropshire Council's Local Transport Plan.

### ■ South West Main Line: Dawlish

**Martin Wrigley:**

[\[61272\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 18 June 2025 to Question 59834 on South West Main Line: Dawlish, if she will set out a timescale for when a decision on whether Stage Five of the rail resilience programme for Dawlish will receive funding will be reached.

**Lilian Greenwood:**

We are currently working to determine which rail enhancement projects will be taken forward following the conclusion of the Spending Review on 11 June. More information will be made public shortly.

**TREASURY****■ Life Sciences: Finance****John Glen:****[61139]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Spending Review 2025, published on 11 June 2025, how much and what proportion of the additional British Business Bank funding will be allocated to the life sciences sector.

**Emma Reynolds:**

This Government is committed to ensuring high-potential life sciences businesses can access the finance they need to innovate, grow, and boost the UK economy.

As part of the Industrial Strategy, the British Business Bank will invest £4 billion across key sectors, including life sciences, supporting both the expansion of the Life Sciences Investment Programme and direct investment in R&D-intensive companies.

This funding is not hypothecated by sector, allowing the Bank to back the most promising opportunities, including through specialist fund managers.

The percentage of Bank supported deals in life sciences was 7.2%, compared to 4.9% for the overall equity market and 6.1% for the wider PE/VC market from 2022-2024.

**■ Life Sciences: Venture Capital****John Glen:****[61138]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the British Business Bank's publication Small Business Equity Tracker 2024, if she will make a comparative assessment of (a) venture capital investment in the life sciences in the UK and the US and (b) the implications for companies in each jurisdiction seeking to scale-up.

**Emma Reynolds:**

The UK remains Europe's leading destination for life sciences venture capital (VC) investment, according to the British Business Bank's Small Business Equity Tracker 2024.

The US market is larger in scale, supporting late-stage growth with deeper capital pools and larger fund sizes. While the UK VC market is competitive with the US at the seed stage, UK companies face a widening funding gap as they scale.

At the recent Spending Review, the Government increased the British Business Bank's financial capacity to £25.6 billion, a two-thirds increase in investment activity. Alongside reforms to give the British Business Bank greater flexibility to deploy funding responsively, this expanded capacity will enable more substantial support for SMEs and scale-ups, including life sciences companies, and move the UK market closer to the scale of late-stage financing seen in the US.

## ■ New Businesses: Advisory Services

**Lewis Cocking:** [\[61280\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of the Entrepreneurship Advisor role on small businesses.

**Emma Reynolds:**

Reducing barriers for business, entrepreneurs and investors is key to boosting economic growth and delivering the government's Plan for Change.

Alex Depledge has been appointed as the government's Entrepreneurship Advisor and brings extensive entrepreneurship experience, having successfully built several businesses from the ground up.

Over the coming months, Alex will advise the Chancellor on the government's entrepreneurship landscape, focusing on addressing the key barriers faced by businesses seeking to start up and scale up in the UK. The impact of any policy decisions taken by the Chancellor as a result of this advice will be assessed in the usual way.

## ■ Small Businesses: Business Rates

**Ben Coleman:** [\[61459\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of changes to business rates on small independent businesses in Chelsea and Fulham constituency.

**Ben Coleman:** [\[61460\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps her Department is taking to support small businesses in (a) high-rent areas and (b) Chelsea and Fulham constituency, in the context of recent changes to business rates.

**Ben Coleman:** [\[61461\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether her Department plans to introduce additional support measures for small businesses affected by increases in business rates in London boroughs.

**Ben Coleman:** [\[61462\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if she will make an assessment of the potential impact of changes to business rates on the long-term viability of high streets in Chelsea and Fulham constituency.

**Ben Coleman:** [\[61463\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether she plans to hold discussions with (a) the Mayor of London and (b) local authorities in London on the potential impact of changes to business rates on (i) small and (ii) independent retailers.

**Ben Coleman:**

**[61464]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what progress she has made on reforming the business rates system.

**James Murray:**

The Government is committed to creating a fairer business rates system that supports small businesses and protects the high street.

To deliver our manifesto pledge, we intend to introduce permanently lower tax rates for retail, hospitality, and leisure (RHL) properties, with rateable values below £500,000, from 2026-27, which will provide permanent support to the sector.

When the new multipliers are set at Budget 2025, HM Treasury intends to publish overall analysis of the effects of the new multiplier arrangements.

Ahead of these changes being made, the Government recognises that businesses will need support in 2025-26. As such, we have prevented the current RHL relief from ending in April 2025, extending it for one year at 40 per cent up to a cash cap of £110,000 per business, and we have frozen the small business multiplier.

Currently, Small Business Rate Relief (SBRR) is available to businesses with a single property below a set rateable value. Eligible properties under £12,000 will receive 100 per cent relief, which means over a third of businesses in England (more than 700,000) pay no business rates at all. There is also tapered support available to properties valued between £12,000 and £15,000, which an additional c.60,000 businesses benefit from.

At Autumn Budget 2024 the Government published a Discussion Paper setting out priority areas for reform, including SBRR.

The Government is committed to retaining SBRR, which is a permanent relief set down in legislation. As highlighted in the Discussion Paper, the Government is interested in hearing stakeholders' views on the extent to which the current system acts as a barrier to investment and specifically, whether the current eligibility criteria for SBRR impacts businesses' incentives to invest and expand into a second property.

The Government has engaged extensively with stakeholders, both face-to-face at roundtables and through written representations.

In summer, the Government will publish an interim report that sets out a clear direction of travel for the business rates system, with further policy detail to follow at Budget 2025.

HM Treasury releases a quarterly record of Minister's meetings with external individuals and organisations. This can be found online:

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

■ **Taxation: Domicil****Andrew Griffith:****[61930]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the answer of 23 June to Question 61021 on Taxation: Domicil, how many P85 forms have been submitted in each month in the last five years.

**James Murray:**

The table below shows the number of P85 forms submitted to HMRC electronically each month between May 2020 and May 2025.

P85 forms are submitted by taxpayers who are not intending to submit a self-assessment tax return. Individuals who file through Self-Assessment (e.g. those with other sources of income such as self-employment or those claiming non-domiciled status) do not need to submit a P85 form.

Counts of submitted P85 forms in March 2024 and September 2024 are labelled as [x] due to incomplete data.

MONTH	P85 iFORMS
May 2020	2,900
Jun 2020	2,800
Jul 2020	3,200
Aug 2020	4,100
Sep 2020	5,300
Oct 2020	4,400
Nov 2020	4,600
Dec 2020	4,100
Jan 2021	4,000
Feb 2021	2,800
Mar 2021	3,200
Apr 2021	3,000
May 2021	2,500
Jun 2021	2,300
Jul 2021	2,600
Aug 2021	2,800

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MONTH	P85 IFORMS
Sep 2021	3,300
Oct 2021	3,300
Nov 2021	2,900
Dec 2021	2,400
Jan 2022	3,200
Feb 2022	2,300
Mar 2022	2,500
Apr 2022	2,200
May 2022	2,000
Jun 2022	1,900
Jul 2022	2,200
Aug 2022	2,700
Sep 2022	2,900
Oct 2022	3,000
Nov 2022	2,800
Dec 2022	2,300
Jan 2023	3,700
Feb 2023	2,800
Mar 2023	3,200
Apr 2023	3,100
May 2023	2,900
Jun 2023	2,800
Jul 2023	3,400
Aug 2023	3,400
Sep 2023	3,800
Oct 2023	4,100

MONTH	P85 iFORMS
Nov 2023	3,700
Dec 2023	3,200
Jan 2024	4,500
Feb 2024	3,400
Mar 2024	[x]
Apr 2024	4,100
May 2024	3,400
Jun 2024	3,400
Jul 2024	3,900
Aug 2024	4,300
Sep 2024	[x]
Oct 2024	5,800
Nov 2024	3,400
Dec 2024	5,000
Jan 2025	6,400
Feb 2025	4,900
Mar 2025	5,500
Apr 2025	5,300
May 2025	4,500

Individuals can either use the online system to submit a P85 iForm or fill in a paper form and submit it by post. Postal form data for the last five years is not available. The data provided in the table above contains only customers who have submitted iForms.



## WORK AND PENSIONS

### ■ **Asbestos: Ovarian Cancer**

**Charlotte Nichols:**

[\[61211\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will require the Health and Safety Executive to collect data on asbestos-related ovarian cancer cases.

**Sir Stephen Timms:**

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is responsible for collection of data of workplace injury and illness. Under Regulation 9 of the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR), it requires the responsible person to report a diagnosis of any cancer attributed to an occupational exposure to a known human carcinogen in their current job. When reporting, the responsible person must provide details on the affected person's occupation or job title and a description of the work that led to the disease.

Estimated numbers of cases of certain kinds of cancer other than mesothelioma and lung cancer that are attributable to past exposure to asbestos are available from previous HSE sponsored research into the burden of occupational cancer in Great Britain. However, ovarian cancer in relation to asbestos was not considered at the time this research was carried out, and so estimates are not currently available and HSE has no plans to collect this data.

### ■ **Personal Independence Payment and Universal Credit: Veterans**

**Lee Anderson:**

[\[61195\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many veterans will be impacted by proposed changes to (a) Universal Credit and (b) Personal Independence Payment.

**Sir Stephen Timms:**

No such assessment has been made.

However, as we develop proposals further, we are carefully considering the potential impacts, including on veterans and their families, as part of our broader response to the Green Paper consultation. We would encourage organisations supporting and representing veterans, such as the Royal British Legion, the Soldiers', Sailors', and Airmen's Families Association (SSAFA), and many others, to contribute their views on how best to support wounded, injured, and sick veterans.

### ■ **Social Security Benefits: Veterans**

**Ben Lake:**

[\[61197\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of automatically exempting armed forces veterans with severe, long-term PTSD from repeat disability assessments.

**Sir Stephen Timms:**

Currently, Work Capability Assessment re-assessments are prioritised for customers on Employment and Support Allowance and the health element of Universal Credit who report a change in their health condition. Routine department-led reassessments are scheduled according to expected prognosis length for recovery and subject to available assessment capacity.

Individuals who have Limited Capability for Work- and Work-Related Activity (LCWRA), with the most severe and lifelong health conditions or disabilities, whose level of function means that they will always have LCWRA and are unlikely ever to be able to move into work, are not routinely reassessed.

Our wide-ranging package of reforms to health and disability benefits, set out in the Pathways to Work Green Paper, will improve experiences of the system for those who need it. The functional impact and severity of a condition can significantly vary across individuals, which is why we will continue to ensure that those with the most severe, life-long health conditions, who will never be able to work, will not need to be reassessed.

## MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

### HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

#### ■ Blood tests: Children

**Freddie van Mierlo:**

**[57531]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the availability of phlebotomy services to perform blood tests for children in (a) Oxfordshire and (b) nationally.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 27 June 2025. The correct answer should have been:**

**Karin Smyth:**

The Government is committed to putting patients first. This means making sure that patients are seen on time and ensuring that patients have the best possible experience during their care.

Community diagnostic centres (CDCs) offer local populations a wide range of diagnostic tests closer to home as well as greater choice on where and how they are undertaken. This reduces the need for hospital visits, reduces pressure on hospitals, and speeds up diagnosis. CDCs are expected to offer their services to children and young people where it is safe and appropriate to do so. The Oxfordshire, Oxford CDC in Cowley delivers a range of diagnostic services, including phlebotomy services.

Phlebotomy services are also provided by general practices (GPs). Where services are provided by GP, they are commissioned locally by integrated care boards (ICBs), based on local population need, and are funded as part of their annual funding allocations.

In Oxfordshire, the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West ICB has commissioned GPs to deliver phlebotomy services for all ages, including children. Services must be led by suitably trained professionals.

Guidance communicated to GPs from the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Local Medical Committee, the body representing all NHS GPs practising in the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire area, is that GPs should not perform blood tests for patients under 12 years old and instead that these should be performed by specialist paediatric trained staff. Where GPs have clinical staff with the training, competence, and experience to perform blood tests on patients under 12 years old, these services may be available. However, at practices that do not have these staff, they will instead refer the child to alternative providers, such as in a children's hospital clinic.

■ **Consultants: Cheshire and Merseyside**

**Derek Twigg:** **[61489]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many consultant posts are vacant in the each of the acute hospital trusts in the Cheshire and Merseyside ICB.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 27 June 2025. The correct answer should have been:**

**Karin Smyth:**

The Department does not hold information on the number of consultant vacancies at hospitals in the Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board. NHS England publishes regular high-level statistics on vacancies across National Health Service trusts, which are available at the following link:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/nhs-vacancies-survey>

■ **Radiology: Training**

**Derek Twigg:** **[61487]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many radiographers will be trained in each year until 2030.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 27 June 2025. The correct answer should have been:**

**Karin Smyth:**

Later this year, we will publish a new workforce plan to deliver the transformed health service we will build over the next decade, and will ensure the National Health Service has the right people, in the right places, with the right skills to deliver the care patients need when they need it.

■ **Warrington and Halton Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust: Radiology**

**Derek Twigg:** **[61488]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many radiographers have been in post at Warrington and Halton University Hospitals Trust in each year since 2015.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 27 June 2025. The correct answer should have been:**

**Karin Smyth:**

The following table shows the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) diagnostic radiographers employed by the Warrington and Halton University Hospitals Trust in each year since 2015:

DATE	FTE DIAGNOSTIC RADIOGRAPHERS
March 2015	85

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DATE	FTE DIAGNOSTIC RADIOGRAPHERS
March 2016	82
March 2017	83
March 2018	77
March 2019	80
March 2020	83
March 2021	92
March 2022	88
March 2023	78
March 2024	82
March 2025	92

Source: NHS Workforce Statistics, NHS England, available at the following link:  
<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/nhs-workforce-statistics/february-2025>

The trust has not employed therapeutic radiographers for the dates shown.