



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 7 July 2025 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:58 P.M., 07 July 2025). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ Attorney General's Office: Remote Working

Sir John Hayes:

[\[63982\]](#)

To ask the Solicitor General, how much her Department has spent on equipment to enable staff to work from home in each of the last three years.

Lucy Rigby:

The Attorney General's Office operates 60% minimum office attendance for most staff and hybrid working. To support staff working at home the department offers a contribution to equipment. The cost to the department in each of the last three years is £284.00 in 2023, £578.32 in 2024, and £214.94 in 2025.

BUSINESS AND TRADE

■ British Steel

Andrew Griffith:

[\[64504\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, whether he has had discussions with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the ONS's classification of British Steel as part of the public non-financial corporations subsector.

Sarah Jones:

The Secretary of State for Business and Trade meets with the Chancellor regularly on a range of issues, including steel. Following the passing of emergency legislation in the Steel Industry (Special Measures) Act 2025 on 12 April, the ONS informed my departmental officials that it would undertake a classification assessment of British Steel Limited.

British Steel Limited has been classified to the public non-financial corporations subsector. Further information on this decision can be obtained directly from ONS's website.

■ British Steel: Scunthorpe

Andrew Griffith:

[\[64503\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what assessment he has made of the lifespan of the blast furnaces at British Steel in Scunthorpe.

Sarah Jones:

British Steel's remaining blast furnaces were built in 1938 and 1954 respectively and are approaching the end of their operational life.

An independent assessment was undertaken in late 2024 to help inform decision-making on their future use.

■ Company Directors (Duties) Bill

Martin Wrigley: [\[63365\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, if he will hold discussions with the hon. Member for Newton Abbot on the Company Directors (Duties) Bill.

Martin Wrigley: [\[63366\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, if he will hold discussions with the hon. Member for Newton Abbot on the Corporate Governance Bill.

Justin Madders:

I would be pleased to meet with the Honourable Member to discuss his Private Member's Bill (the Company Directors (Duties) Bill) and the Government's plans to publish a draft Audit Reform and Corporate Governance Bill.

■ Department for Business and Trade: Carbon Emissions

Dame Harriett Baldwin: [\[62952\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what programmes in his Department were not (a) renewed and (b) cancelled as a result of the zero-based budget review.

Dame Harriett Baldwin: [\[62953\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what the value was of his Department's activities which (a) lapsed and (b) were cancelled as a result of the 2025 zero-based budget review.

Justin Madders:

DBT conducted a comprehensive zero-based review as part of SR25 to identify a range of savings and efficiencies, including agreeing bespoke technical efficiency targets and delivery plans for day-to-day budgets with the Office for Value or Money. Through this work, DBT has committed to meeting the 5% savings and efficiencies target.

The department is now setting multi-year budgets, through which final decisions will be made on any activities which will be cancelled, or allowed to lapse.

■ Economic Growth: Dudley

Sonia Kumar: [\[63413\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what steps his Department is taking to increase economic growth in Dudley constituency.

Gareth Thomas:

The recently announced Industrial Strategy and Trade Strategy, forming part of our wider Growth Mission, aim to support businesses across the country by creating the conditions for companies to invest, employ and grow.

Dudley, with its rich manufacturing heritage, will benefit from a range of new interventions, including measures to reduce energy costs and, assistance to develop and attract the right skills.

As part of the West Midlands Combined Authority, Dudley has and will continue to benefit from enhanced support targeting the region including devolved funding for local leaders, to continue delivering the right support.

We will also be publishing our Small Business Strategy soon which will set out further measures to increase economic growth in Dudley and across the country.

■ Employment Rights Bill

Alison Griffiths:

[64633]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what discussions he has had with business representatives on the feasibility of the commencement dates set out in the Employment Rights Bill implementation roadmap.

Justin Madders:

We have listened to and incorporated views from business, trade unions, and others in our timings to make sure implementation works for workers and employers alike. We have collaborated directly with over 190 stakeholders, working in partnership to deliver on our Plan. We have also worked closely with delivery partners such as Acas, to determine onward steps needed to implement the measures in the Bill. We will ensure employers, workers, trade unions and other stakeholders are given time to prepare for change.

Alison Griffiths:

[64634]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of the measures scheduled for implementation in the Employment Rights Bill on businesses in (a) 2026 and (b) 2027.

Justin Madders:

My department has published a set of Impact Assessments that provide a comprehensive analysis on the potential impact of the Employment Rights Bill, including on businesses. This analysis is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/employment-rights-bill-impact-assessments>

This represents the best estimate for the likely impacts given the current stage of policy development. We are refining our analysis as policy development continues, working closely with external experts, businesses and trade unions.

Alison Griffiths:

[64635]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, whether the Employment Rights Bill roadmap includes contingency measures if key stakeholders report insufficient capacity to meet implementation requirements.

Alison Griffiths:

[64637]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what resources her Department provides to employers to help them meet compliance obligations during each stage of the Employment Rights Bill roadmap's implementation.

Justin Madders:

The Government will continue working with businesses and trade unions throughout policy development and subsequent delivery. The timelines in our Roadmap have been carefully considered to ensure implementation works for workers and businesses of all sizes, and in all sectors. We understand that adjusting to these new reforms will take time and we are committed to ensuring that all stakeholders receive appropriate time to prepare for these changes ahead of their commencement. We will continue to work hard, including with Acas and other delivery partners to provide guidance and support so that employers aren't left in the dark. This is the work of years, not months, and businesses will have lots of time to prepare for the changes.

Alison Griffiths:

[64636]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what criteria will be used to evaluate the phased implementation approach outlined in the Employment Rights Bill roadmap.

Justin Madders:

Our phased approach to implementation provides clarity and time to prepare, while raising standards across the board—creating a level playing field, improving staff retention, leading to a happier, more secure and productive workforce.

The Government's Impact Assessments outline plans for monitoring and evaluating the impact of the Bill and subsequent secondary legislation. This will allow us to evaluate the effectiveness of the Bill's measures in achieving its stated objectives and influence future policy making. It is important to note that many of the final impacts will depend on further policy decisions that are for secondary legislation.

■ Hospitality Industry: Regulation

Dame Harriett Baldwin:

[64430]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, with reference to the oral contribution of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business and Trade of 1 July 2025 in the debate on Hospitality Sector, Official Report, column 81WH, what the membership of the licensing taskforce is.

Gareth Thomas:

The Taskforce Terms of Reference and membership is published: [Terms of Reference and taskforce member list - GOV.UK](#)

Dame Harriett Baldwin:

[64431]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, with reference to the oral contribution of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business and Trade of 1

July 2025 in the debate on Hospitality Sector, Official Report, column 81WH, if he will publish reports produced by the licencing taskforce.

Gareth Thomas:

The taskforce was co-chaired by Nick Mackenzie, Chair of the British Beer & Pub Association and CEO of Greene King, one of the UK's leading pub retailers and brewers, and I as Minister for Services, Small Business and Exports. Other members include industry representatives and experts, police and local authority representatives. It concluded on 23 March 2025 and provided Government with ten key licensing recommendations to consider.

Government is currently in the process of reviewing these recommendations and will respond in due course.

Dame Harriett Baldwin: [\[64432\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, with reference to the oral contribution of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business and Trade of 1 July 2025 in the debate on Hospitality Sector, Official Report, column 81WH, when he plans to make an announcement on his Department's response to the licensing taskforce's recent report.

Gareth Thomas:

The Department for Business and Trade is working across Government to review the recommendations put forward in the licensing taskforce report. This review is currently being finalised, we plan to publish the report alongside the Government's response this summer.

■ **Industry: Trade Competitiveness**

Perran Moon: [\[64244\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, if he will set out the terms of reference for the consultation on the British industrial competitiveness scheme.

Perran Moon: [\[64310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what his planned timetable is for the consultation on the British industrial competitiveness scheme.

Sarah Jones:

From 2027, the new British Industrial Competitiveness Scheme (BICS) will reduce electricity costs by c.£35-40/MWh for thousands of eligible businesses. These firms will be exempt from paying levies on the Renewables Obligation, Feed-in Tariffs and the Capacity Market.

We announced that we would consult on eligibility and design of the scheme. We recognise the need to work quickly and we will publish the consultation and Terms of Reference as soon as we can. We have committed to ensure that the scheme is ready to launch in 2027.

■ New Businesses

Mark Garnier:

[63566]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what data her Department holds on the number of high-growth businesses in the UK in each year since 2005.

Gareth Thomas:

Data on UK high-growth businesses is published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). These data are published on an ad-hoc basis and cover the period back to 2010. The ONS defines a business as high-growth if it experiences 20% annual growth rate of either employment or turnover for three consecutive years.

Ad-hoc publications are among the 'user requested data' published [here](#).

■ Small Businesses: Parental Leave

Andrew Griffith:

[64505]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of proposed changes to parental leave entitlements on small and medium-sized enterprises, as part of the ongoing review.

Andrew Griffith:

[64506]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, whether the parental leave review will examine options for reducing administrative burdens on employers in managing statutory parental leave and pay.

Justin Madders:

The Parental Leave and Pay Review launched on 1 July fulfilling our manifesto commitment. It will explore how the system can better support working families while still balancing the needs of businesses.

As part of this, the review will consider opportunities to make the process surrounding parental leave simpler for both businesses and parents.

The Department has not made an assessment at this stage of any impacts. We will be engaging with groups representing small and medium businesses throughout the review. Any reforms proposed following the conclusion of the review will consider the impact on small and medium-sized enterprises.

■ Supply Chains: Human Rights

Martin Rhodes:

[R] [63485]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, with reference to the United Nations' framework entitled Protect, respect and remedy and the United Nations document entitled Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, published in June 2011, what steps his Department is taking to fulfil the UK's duty to (a) protect against business-related human rights abuses in supply chains and (b) provide access to remedy for victims of such abuses.

Mr Douglas Alexander:

The UK has a range of measures in place to promote responsible business conduct (RBC) across the economy. The Government expects all UK companies to respect human rights, workers' rights and the environment throughout their operations and supply chains in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Human Rights and the OECD Guidelines for RBC.

In the Trade Strategy, the Government launched a review into the UK's approach to RBC, focused on tackling human rights and labour abuses, modern slavery, and environmental harms in global supply chains. The FCDO will also be carrying out a National Baseline Assessment (NBA) on the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights to inform this review.

We have also established the Office for RBC, to replace the UK's National Contact Point. This enhanced office will support industry to integrate responsible business practices and help victims of corporate malpractice through continuing to operate a non-judicial complaints mechanism for alleged violations of the OECD Guidelines.

CABINET OFFICE**■ 10 Downing Street: Remote Working****Sir John Hayes:**[\[63521\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how much 10 Downing Street spent on equipment for (a) civil servants and (b) special advisers to work from home in each of the last three years.

Ms Abena Oppong-Asare:

This information is not centrally held. All staff are issued with a laptop and mobile to allow remote working where necessary. Heads of departments have agreed that 60% minimum office attendance for most staff continues to be the best balance of working for the Civil Service.

■ Admiralty House: Energy Performance Certificates**Kevin Hollinrake:**[\[63624\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the Energy Performance Certificate rating is of the Deputy Prime Minister's residence in Admiralty House.

Georgia Gould:

The residences at Admiralty House are not separately measured for Energy Performance. The Energy Performance Certificate Rating for Admiralty House is B.

■ Admiralty House: Ministers

Mr Richard Holden:

[\[63334\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 4 June 2025 to Question 53528 on Admiralty House for what reason the offices in Admiralty House are no longer used for a Minister and Ministerial private office.

Ms Abena Oppong-Asare:

I refer the Rt Hon Member to the answer of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Cabinet Office, Official Report, PQ 43478.

■ Advisory Committee on Business Appointments: Public Appointments

Mike Wood:

[\[64064\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what progress has been made on appointing the new Conservative political member for the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments.

Ms Abena Oppong-Asare:

The appointment of political members to the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (ACOPA) is a decision for the Prime Minister following nomination from the relevant Party with a vacancy. A decision on the appointment of a Conservative member to the Committee will be confirmed as soon as possible.

■ Armed Forces Day: Flags

Mr Richard Holden:

[\[63325\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what his Department's policy is on flying the Armed Forces flag on Armed Forces Day.

Georgia Gould:

The Government Property Agency takes instruction from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport for when to fly flags as part of events, ceremonies and celebrations such as Armed Forces Day.

■ Arms Length Bodies: Equality

Mr Richard Holden:

[\[64566\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 9 June 2025 to Question 54781 on Arm's Length Bodies: Equality, whether there is any monitoring of the EDI spending exemptions authorised by Arm's Length Bodies; and whether there is any requirement on Arm's Length Bodies to publish details of the exempted expenditure as Whitehall departments are required.

Georgia Gould:

The Civil Service Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Expenditure Guidance published on 14 May 2024 applies to all Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs) who employ civil servants. As such, those ALBs are required to publish details of the exempted expenditure as Whitehall departments are required.

■ Cabinet Office: Civil Servants**Sir Mark Hendrick:**[\[63279\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether his Department plans to have further phases of civil service relocation; and whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of relocating civil servants to (a) Preston and (b) other host cities.

Georgia Gould:

The next phase of Places for Growth will move thousands more roles out of London to bring the Civil Service closer to the communities it serves. Preston will continue to have a thriving Civil Service community as part of the North West Digital and Cyber Security corridor. Government departments can also continue to build on the existing Civil Service presence there if it aligns with their business needs.

■ Cabinet Office: Directors**Mr Richard Holden:**[\[63327\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Government's Lead Non Executive Director is a member of any Government (a) board and (b) committee.

Georgia Gould:

The Government Lead Non Executive is not currently a member of any Government board or committee. Baroness Casey oversees non-executives from across government to support the delivery of the Plan for Change. She works closely with the Prime Minister, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, the Cabinet Secretary, the Civil Service Chief Operating Officer, and other ministers and senior civil servants across government.

■ Cabinet Office: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution**Mr Richard Holden:**[\[63329\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to his Department's publication entitled Government Procurement Card spend over £500 - April 2025 (Spending by Business Units no longer part of Cabinet Office), published on 29 May 2025, what the spending at Total Conflict Mgmt was for.

Georgia Gould:

The expenditure was for a training course for a member of the Government Commercial Function.

Mr Richard Holden:[\[63330\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the transparency data entitled Cabinet Office: Government Procurement Card spend over £500 - December 2024, published on 30 January 2025, what the spending on PYM ARTEMISPLUS EXPRE was for.

Georgia Gould:

The spend on Pym Artemisplus Expre was for catering for an event delivered as part of the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office's funded "Green Cities and Infrastructure Programme".

Mr Richard Holden:[\[63331\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to his Department's publication entitled Cabinet Office: Government Procurement Card spend over £500 - March 2025, published on 24 April 2025, what the spending to Made by Cooper was for.

Georgia Gould:

The spend referred to was for the GREAT campaign, with the invoice dated 27 February 2025.

The items procured were pin badges and associated branded packaging in support of GREAT events.

Mr Richard Holden:[\[63332\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to his Department's publication entitled Cabinet Office: Government Procurement Card spend over £500 - March 2025, published on 24 April 2025, what the spending to the House of Commons was for.

Georgia Gould:

The spending in question was incurred by the Civil Service Commission, and entailed room hire and catering for an event to recognise the award of Civil Service Commission's Commissioners' Mark of Excellence (CME), held on 6 March 2025.

Mr Richard Holden:[\[63333\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to his Department's publication entitled Government Procurement Card spend over £500 - April 2025 (Spending by Business Units no longer part of Cabinet Office), published on 29 May 2025, how many (a) virtual and (b) physical Government Procurement Cards are held by his Department.

Georgia Gould:

The Cabinet Office has 37 staff who have access to raise virtual cards and has 214 physical Government Procurement cardholders. Approximately half of the physical cards are held by the Government Car Service, which was transferred to the Cabinet Office in April 2025.

■ Cabinet Office: Freedom of Information**Mr Richard Holden:**[\[64559\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will publish the response to the Freedom of Information Act request reference FOI2025/05753 of 12 June 2025.

Ms Abena Oppong-Asare:

The request document will be deposited in the House Libraries.

■ Civil Servants: Location

Mr Richard Holden: [63340]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 9 June 2025 to Question 54760 on Civil Servants: London, if he will publish his Department's relocation policy; and whether voluntarily relocated civil servants continue to receive a London weighting.

Georgia Gould:

This policy has not been previously published, and as with many internal staff policies, there are no current plans to publish it.

■ Civil Servants: Pay

Mr Richard Holden: [63341]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 4 June 2025 to Question 53899 on Cabinet Office: pay, what the median salary is of a civil servant in (a) the Civil Service and (b) the Cabinet Office averaged across all grades.

Georgia Gould:

Data on median salaries for the Civil Service, also aggregated by department, can be found in the Civil Service Statistics publication. The latest data published on 31 July 2024 can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/civil-service-statistics-2024>

■ Civil Servants: Recruitment

Rebecca Paul: [64180]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of the requirement for applicants to demonstrate three years of continuous residence in the UK to be considered for civil service roles on the ability of British nationals who have spent periods residing abroad to join the civil service.

Ms Abena Oppong-Asare:

To join the Civil Service, individuals must pass pre-employment checks contained within the Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS). As part of the Right to Work check conducted within the BPSS, organisations need to assure themselves through obtaining documentation if individuals have resided overseas for six months or more within the last three years.

For Civil Service roles that require National Security Vetting (NSV), in order for meaningful NSV checks to be carried out, individuals will need to have lived in the UK for a sufficient period of time. This period varies depending on the level of clearance required, to enable appropriate checks to provide the required level of assurance. For the Counter Terrorism Check (CTC), the recommended UK residency is three years preceding the NSV application.

These NSV policies are long standing and are kept under regular review.

■ Civil Service: Equality

Mr Richard Holden:

[63335]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 4 June 2025 to Question 53888 on Civil Service: Equality, how many civil servants work in the CSIP Team; and what the annual operating cost is of that business unit.

Georgia Gould:

For the year 2024-2025, the CSIP Team had 11.16FTE; the annual operating cost including non-pay costs for that business unit the same year was £1,092,548.37. This includes all staff costs and overheads as well as operational non-pay costs and overheads (such as Estates, IT and Shared Services).

■ European Parliament Members: Workplace Pensions

Mr Richard Holden:

[64565]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 10 June 2025 to Question 57737 on European Parliament Members: Workplace Pensions, which public body holds information on the pension scheme liabilities for UK MEPs from 2009 up to the date the UK left the EU.

Georgia Gould:

The European Parliamentary (United Kingdom Representatives) Pension Scheme closed to new members in 2009. Active members were able to continue contributing to this scheme or to join a new European Union (EU) Members of the European Parliament (MEP) scheme. HMT holds information on the pension scheme liabilities for this scheme and the information is available in the Consolidated Fund Accounts 2023 to 2024 page 37 section 7:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consolidated-fund-account-2023-to-2024>

In 2009, the EU implemented a uniform pension scheme for all MEPs, replacing the previous system where MEPs received pensions and salaries from their respective member states.

MEPs elected from 2009 onwards are members of the EU pension scheme and the UK's share of the pension liabilities are covered by the EU Exit agreement.

Information about the EU scheme liabilities can be found at the following link on the UK Parliament website: <https://committees.parliament.uk/work/3906/exiting-the-eu-the-financial-settlement-inquiry/#:~:text=As%20part%20of%20the%20ongoing,the%20estimated%20settlement%20and%20why.>

■ Fujitsu: Contracts

Dame Harriett Baldwin:

[62954]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what new Government contracts have been awarded to Fujitsu since 5 July 2024; and what the value was of those contracts.

Georgia Gould:

In January 2024, Fujitsu said it would withdraw from bidding for contracts with new Government customers until the Post Office Horizon inquiry concludes – and it would only bid for work with existing Government customers where it already has an existing customer relationship with them, or where there is an agreed need for Fujitsu's skills and capabilities. Fujitsu's bid approach is detailed in correspondence deposited in the Houses of Parliament libraries on 4 March 2024 (DEP2024-0247).

Details of public sector awards are publicly available on Contracts Finder & Find a Tender services. In addition to extensions available under Fujitsu's existing contracts, Contracts Finder and Find a Tender provide details of twelve new Fujitsu contracts since July 2024. These awards are compliant with Fujitsu's commitment not to bid for work with new customers. The majority are for services already provided by Fujitsu and were put in place as a direct award to ensure continuity of services whilst competitive procurements are being set up.

The Government is determined to hold those responsible for the Horizon scandal to account, and will continue to make rapid progress on compensation and redress. Fujitsu's role in Horizon is one of the issues which is being reviewed by Sir Wyn Williams's statutory inquiry. The Cabinet Office has been monitoring the situation, in addition to continuing its usual monitoring of Fujitsu as a strategic supplier. The Government will carefully consider volume 1 of the report, to be published on 8 July, which is limited in scope. Once the inquiry establishes the full facts, we will review its final report and consider any further action, as appropriate.

■ Government Departments: Press Conferences**Mr Richard Holden:**[\[64564\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 9 June 2025 to Question 54800 on Government Departments: Press Offices, if he will publish the guidance on the use of party political commodities at Government press conferences.

Ms Abena Oppong-Asare:

I refer the Rt Hon Member to my answer of 21 March 2025, Official Report, PQ 47333.

■ Government Departments: Sanitation**Kevin Hollinrake:**[\[63625\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 9 June 2025 to Question 55304 on Government Departments: Sanitation, whether the Government Property Agency plans to repurpose more gender-neutral toilets into separate male and female toilets.

Georgia Gould:

The Government Property Agency continues to monitor the requirements of its estate. Changes are made as necessary to provide the best delivery for our clients and in line with legislative requirements.

■ GREAT: Cost Effectiveness

Blake Stephenson: [\[63749\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will make it his policy to request that the National Audit Office perform a value for money analysis of the GREAT campaign.

Blake Stephenson: [\[63750\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will make an estimate of the contribution of the GREAT campaign to the economy in the 2023-24 financial year.

Ellie Reeves:

GREAT has a robust evaluation framework which has been independently assessed by the National Audit Office, Ipsos and Deloitte and was recently commended by the joint Cabinet Office / HM Treasury Evaluation Task Force.

The independent GREAT Strategic Review conducted in November-December 2024 recognised the effectiveness of the GREAT Campaign in supporting the government's strategic aims and its role in delivering the economic growth mission.

In 2023/2024, GREAT contributed returns to the UK economy of over £900 million foreign direct investment, £631 million additional expenditure from international students, £210 million additional expenditure from international tourism and over £90 million export wins for UK companies.

■ Housing: Statistics

Kevin Hollinrake: [\[63628\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Office for National Statistics holds comparative data on new dwellings in each nation of the UK in each year since 2008-09.

Georgia Gould:

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

A response to the Hon gentleman's Parliamentary Question of 30th June is attached.

Attachments:

1. [Letter from the National Statistician \[PQ63628.pdf\]](#)

■ Import Duties: Falkland Islands

Wendy Morton: [\[63666\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what progress his Department has made on securing integrated tariff treatment for the Falkland Islands, in the context of the UK-EU reset.

Nick Thomas-Symonds:

We recognise the challenges these tariffs pose for the Falkland Islands. They stem from the fact the previous Government's Brexit deal does not cover the Overseas Territories. The EU has been clear that they are not willing to re-open the fundamental terms of that deal. However, the UK and Falkland Islands governments

have been working together on supporting the seafood sector, including securing US agreement to consider reducing tariffs on Falklands exports.

■ **Infected Blood Compensation Scheme: Hepatitis**

Graeme Downie:

[\[63799\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will make an estimate of the number of people with Hepatitis B who are entitled to compensation from the Infected Blood Compensation Authority.

Nick Thomas-Symonds:

While there is no way of knowing exactly how many people were infected as a result of this scandal, the findings of the Statistical Expert Group, established by the Infected Blood Inquiry, has provided valuable insight into the numbers of infections from blood and blood products in the UK between 1970 and 1991. In their September 2022 Report, they noted that, due to the limitations in the data available, it is not possible to answer the question of how many people were infected with Hepatitis B due to infected blood “with any reasonable accuracy when compared to other infections.”

Therefore, the final number of eligible people infected with Hepatitis B will ultimately depend on the number of victims who come forward to the Infected Blood Compensation Authority, who are responsible for the delivery of the Compensation Scheme. There is no limit or target on the amount announced for the scheme and each eligible person will get the compensation they are due.

■ **National Security Adviser: Meetings**

Mr Richard Holden:

[\[64919\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will require the National Security Adviser to publish details of meetings with external organisations other than senior media executives.

Ms Abena Oppong-Asare:

As a special adviser, the National Security Adviser is bound by the transparency obligations set out in the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers.

■ **Prime Minister: Aviation**

Mr Richard Holden:

[\[63005\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many and what proportion of the Prime Minister’s international flights on (a) the Envoy IV, (b) Voyager and (c) GB-NI have been carbon offset since July 2024.

Ms Abena Oppong-Asare:

Official Prime Ministerial flights are carbon offset where that is possible.

Mr Richard Holden:

[\[63326\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answers of 18 June and 6 March 2025 to Questions 54778 and 34454 on Prime Minister: Aviation, whether the Carbon Offsetting Reduction Scheme offsets other domestic flights; and if the Government will make it their policy to ensure that all the Prime Minister's flights are carbon offset.

Ms Abena Oppong-Asare:

Official Prime Ministerial flights are carbon offset where that is possible.

■ TotalEnergies

Mike Wood:

[\[62991\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether TotalEnergies Gas & Power and its subsidiaries supply gas to 10 Downing Street; and what assessment he has made of whether TotalEnergies' LNG gas is sourced from Russia.

Ms Abena Oppong-Asare:

The UK has ended all imports of Russian fossil fuels in response to Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine. This contract started under the previous government.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

■ Church of England: Slavery

Neil O'Brien:

[\[63009\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Battersea, representing the Church Commissioners, for what reason the Church Commissioners have spent £5 million on Project Spire prior to approval from the Charity Commission.

Marsha De Cordova:

The Church Commissioners has not spent that sum in connection with its response to historic links to African chattel enslavement (known by the project name Spire). Expenditure on this work to date has been limited to proportionate research into the Church Commissioners' source of funds and consideration of its response to that history, with a view to maintaining public trust in the charity; and in connection with proper steps to explore regulatory authorisation by the Charity Commission.

Neil O'Brien:

[\[63010\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Battersea, representing the Church Commissioners, what the source of the £100 million fund for healing, repair and justice as part of Project Spire is.

Marsha De Cordova:

I refer the Hon. Member for Harborough, Oadby and Wigston to the written answer to his question published on 21st March 2025 ([UIN 29047](#)). Subject to Charity Commission authorisation the Church Commissioners intends to settle income from

its general fund on a new charitable fund through which the Church Commissioners intends to deliver Project Spire.

■ Churches: Flags

Mr Richard Holden:

[62998]

To ask the hon. Member for Battersea, representing the Church Commissioners, what the Church's policy is on the flying of flags from churches.

Marsha De Cordova:

The Church of England has specific rules regarding the flying of flags from its buildings. These policies relate to exterior flagpoles, and the display and the laying up of military standards or regimental colours.

Policies and advice relating to the flying of flags or the laying up of flags can be found on the Church of England website, in the Resources section, under 'ChurchCare', and 'Advice and guidance for church buildings':

<https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/churchcare/advice-and-guidance-church-buildings/flags-and-military-colours>

The Government issues its own guidance on flying flags, which also covers churches, and the Flag Institute offers guidance on when and how flags should be flown from churches and other buildings.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ BBC: Glastonbury Festival

Suella Braverman:

[63659]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions she has had with the BBC in relation to its coverage of Glastonbury music festival.

Suella Braverman:

[63660]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, whether she plans to take steps to enforce media law on the BBC following its recent broadcast of the Glastonbury music festival.

Suella Braverman:

[63661]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, whether she plans to bring forward new legislation on television broadcasting following the BBC coverage of the Glastonbury music festival.

Suella Braverman:

[63662]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, whether her Department plans to make an assessment of the effectiveness of the BBC's compliance with media laws following their broadcast of the Glastonbury Music Festival.

Suella Braverman:

[\[63663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, whether her Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of amending existing legislation on television broadcasting.

Cat Eccles:

[\[63860\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions she has had with the BBC on the balance of political views in their programming.

Gregory Stafford:

[\[63927\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions her Department has had with the BBC Board on the broadcasting of (a) Bob Vylan and (b) Kneecap during the coverage of the Glastonbury Festival 2025.

Stephanie Peacock:

The Secretary of State was clear in her statement to Parliament that the scenes from the Bob Vylan performance at Glastonbury were utterly appalling and unacceptable. This Government will not tolerate antisemitism – it has absolutely no place in our society and we will be unrelenting in our work to root it out and it should not be given a platform.

The BBC is editorially independent, and decisions on what content to broadcast, and how they broadcast that content, are a matter for the BBC. However, it is right that the BBC has acknowledged that the livestream of the performance should have come off air and that they are reviewing their guidance. There remain very serious questions at the highest levels of the BBC about operational oversight and the way in which editorial standards are implemented.

As set out to Parliament, the Secretary of State has spoken to both the BBC Director General and Chair directly and has written to the Chair to ask for an urgent and detailed explanation about what immediate steps they intend to take. We expect answers to these questions without delay and expect lessons to be learned and rapid action to be taken.

Ofcom is also in the process of obtaining further information from the BBC as a matter of urgency, including what procedures were in place to ensure compliance with its own editorial guidelines.

Charter Review will consider editorial standards for the BBC. The Government will also build on the Media Act and Ofcom's Public Service Media review by taking action to support public service media and the wider television ecosystem. As set out in the Creative Industries Sector Plan, the Government will update the policy and regulatory framework to respond to the changing market and promote a more level playing field, while maintaining universal access to distinctive and trusted public service content. This work will complement the BBC Charter Review.

■ Cricket: Schools**Paula Barker:****[63090]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment her Department has made of the adequacy of cricket participation rates among state school pupils.

Stephanie Peacock:

Sport England's Active Lives Children and Young People Survey for Academic Year 2023-24 shows that 252,500 (6.6%) children in academy schools have participated in cricket at least once a week or more, and 253,000 (7.3%) children in maintained schools have participated in cricket at least once a week or more.

The Government is committed to protecting time for physical education in schools. The Prime Minister recently announced a new School Sport Partnerships approach and a new Enrichment Framework for schools to ensure all young people have equal access to high-quality sport and extracurricular activity. The ongoing independent expert-led review of the curriculum will ensure that all children can engage with a broad range of subjects, including PE and sport.

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB), the National Governing Body for cricket, has committed to making the sport as inclusive as possible for children and young people through their new strategy and state school action plan. I have also seen the work of their charitable arm, Chance to Shine, to encourage more children to take up cricket, at the Mill Academy in Worsbrough last year.

We provide the majority of support for grassroots sport through our Arm's Length Body, Sport England, which annually invests over £250 million of National Lottery and government money. The ECB receives £10.2 million funding from Sport England across up to five years to help deliver strategic objectives, including tackling inequalities and improving access to sport.

■ Cricket: Urban Areas**Paula Barker:****[63089]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions her Department has had with the England and Wales Cricket Board on increasing levels of access to cricket in cities.

Paula Barker:**[63091]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the potential implications for her policies of (a) the long-term viability, (b) the financial position and (c) levels of participation in cricket clubs in cities.

Stephanie Peacock:

This Government is committed to ensuring everyone, no matter their age, background or ability, should be able to play sport and be active.

The Government provides the majority of support for grassroots sport through Sport England, which annually invests over £250 million in Exchequer and Lottery funding.

This includes long term investment to the England and Wales Cricket Board, the National Governing Body for cricket, which receives up to £11.6 million for five years to invest in community cricket initiatives. This includes programmes that will benefit everyone, including people who live in cities, as set out in their “Inspiring Generations” strategy for 2025-2028.

On 20 June 2025, the Culture Secretary announced at least £400 million is going to be invested into new and upgraded grassroots sport facilities in communities right across the UK following the Spending Review, supporting the Government's Plan for Change. We will work closely with sporting bodies and local leaders to establish what each community needs and then set out further plans.

■ Culture: Lancashire

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[\[62534\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what funding her Department has allocated to local authorities to provide arts and culture in (a) Preston and (b) Lancashire over the next three years.

Chris Bryant:

Typically, DCMS does not directly fund local authorities, nor their arts and cultural organisations, which are commonly funded by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government and Arts Council England.

In last month's spending review, the government committed to providing an additional £3.4 billion of grant funding to local government in 2028-29 compared to 2024-25. This equates to an average annual real terms increase in overall local authority core spending power of 3.1% across the spending review period.

Whilst individual decisions on how to invest departmental resources will be determined in due course, there will be significant investment into Arts and Culture over the spending review period, including to Arts Council England (ACE) which will continue to support local arts programmes and projects across the country.

In the 2024-25 financial year, ACE provided over £450k of funding to arts projects in Preston, and almost £6.5 million to arts organisations and projects across Lancashire. Details of this funding can be found on the ACE website here <https://culture.localinsight.org/#/map>

■ Department for Culture, Media and Sport: Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[61743\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, how many times their Department has accepted in full the position of the Parliamentary Ombudsman's (a)

findings and (b) recommendations on (i) issuing an apology and (ii) other forms of redress in the last 10 years.

Stephanie Peacock:

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

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

Jas Athwal:

[\[59680\]](#)

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

Stephanie Peacock:

The number of DCMS Civil Servants who are recorded as Sikh is below 5.

In line with Civil Service Statistics guidance, DCMS records Sikh under the classification of Religion.

■ **Gambling: Advertising**

Kirith Entwistle:

[\[64242\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment she has made of the potential impact of gambling adverts on people living in Bolton North East constituency.

Kirith Entwistle:

[\[64247\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, how many gambling adverts were published in each year from 2019 to 2025.

Kirith Entwistle:

[\[64248\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of the number of gambling adverts on people living in Bolton North East constituency.

Stephanie Peacock:

Gambling adverts can appear across a significant range of channels from out of home billboards and social media, to complex dynamic or targeted adverts online. As such, the Department does not hold data on the number of gambling adverts published.

This government recognises that while advertising is a legitimate advantage which licensed operators have over unlicensed gambling firms, increased exposure to gambling advertising can have an impact on gambling participation. There are existing robust rules and regulations in place to ensure that advertising and marketing, whenever it appears, is socially responsible.

However, we recognise that more can be done to improve protections. We have set the gambling industry a clear task to raise standards and this work will be monitored closely.

■ Journalism

Claire Hanna: [\[63344\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, if will meet with Media Strong.

Claire Hanna: [\[63345\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to support mental health services in journalism.

Stephanie Peacock:

Ministers and officials regularly meet stakeholders to discuss a range of issues which affect media organisations and journalists. Officials in my department would be pleased to meet with Media Strong.

The Government is not currently taking specific steps to support mental health services in journalism. However, we are taking steps to strengthen our national, regional and local press, which includes action aimed at supporting journalists.

I also chair the National Committee for the Safety of Journalists, together with the Minister for Safeguarding and Violence against Women and Girls. It brings together representatives from government, journalism, policing, prosecution services and civil society to make sure that journalists in the UK are able to operate free from threats and violence. Its National Action Plan for the Safety of Journalists sets out how the safety of journalists in the UK can be protected.

■ Listed Events: Streaming

Andy MacNae: [\[63462\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to paragraph 7.17 of the Ofcom consultation paper entitled Listed events: Implementing the Media Act, published on 13 June 2025, if she will make an assessment of the potential implications for her policies of the growth of digital platforms on the listed events regime.

Andy MacNae: [\[63464\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to paragraph 7.17 of the Ofcom consultation paper entitled Listed events: Implementing the Media Act, published on 13 June 2025, whether she plans to take steps to help support public service broadcasters to acquire listed events.

Stephanie Peacock:

While the Government wants to see sporting events of national interest shown on free-to-air so that they can be enjoyed by a wide audience, decisions made around the coverage of specific listed events are commercial ones made between public service broadcasters (PSBs) and the rights holders independent of Government.

We recognise that the media landscape is going through a period of rapid change which means both challenges and opportunities for our PSBs.

We will support PSBs by building on Ofcom's Public Service Media review and take action to support them, as we set out in the Creative Industries Sector Plan.

■ Local Press: Lancashire

Maya Ellis:

[63270]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, if her Department will make an assessment of the sustainability of local news outlets in (a) Ribble Valley and (b) Lancashire.

Stephanie Peacock:

Sustainability of local journalism across the country is an area of particular concern for this Government, including in Ribble Valley and Lancashire. The Government understands the important work that local news does across the UK, including outlets such as the Lancs Live and the Lancashire Telegraph. We are developing a Local Media Strategy, in recognition of the importance of this vital sector. Our vision is a thriving local media that can continue to play an invaluable role as a key channel of trustworthy information at local level, reporting on the issues that matter to communities, reflecting their contributions and perspectives, and helping to foster a self-confident nation in which everyone feels that their contribution is part of an inclusive national story.

We are working across Government and with other stakeholders as the Strategy develops, and we recently held a roundtable discussion with local news editors to discuss our planned approach and collaboration with industry on the Strategy. An industry working group has now been set up to consider the issues in more detail and we will announce more in the coming months.

■ Sports: Young People

Bradley Thomas:

[62318]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to increase participation in sport for (a) adolescent girls and (b) all adolescents.

Stephanie Peacock:

The Government believes that opportunities to play sport and get physically active should be available to everyone and we recognise that there are barriers which prevent some people from getting active, with women and girls less likely to be active than other groups.

The Government provides the majority of funding for grassroots sport through our arm's length body, Sport England, which invests over £250 million in Exchequer and Lottery funding each year. One of the key pillars in their "Uniting the Movement" strategy is to focus on positive experiences for children and young people. Their "This Girl Can" campaign, which recently celebrated its ten year anniversary, has promoted women's sport, challenged prejudice and made clear that sport is for everyone.

The Government is committed to ensuring as many people as possible have access to high quality grassroots sports facilities, with a particular focus on providing for under-represented groups, such as women and girls.

That is why we are investing £100 million through the Multi Sport Grassroots Facilities Programme to build and upgrade high-quality grassroots sports pitches and facilities in the communities across the UK that need it most, including children and young people.

On 20 June 2025, the Culture Secretary announced that following Spending Review, at least £400 million is going to be invested into new and upgraded grassroots sport facilities in communities right across the UK, supporting the Government's Plan for Change. We will work closely with sporting bodies and local leaders to establish what each community needs and then set out further plans. I also attended a roundtable in Parliament this week on getting girls active.

■ Swimming Pools

Caroline Voaden:

[63369]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to support the viability of public swimming pools.

Stephanie Peacock:

The Government recognises that sports clubs and facilities, including swimming pools, are important to communities up and down the country. Everyone, no matter who they are or where they live, should have access to them and opportunities to participate in sport and physical activity. That is why we have committed another £400 million to transform facilities across the whole of the nation following the Spending Review. We will now work closely with sporting bodies and local leaders to establish what each community needs and then set out further plans.

The ongoing responsibility of providing access to public leisure swimming facilities lies at local authority level. We are committed to supporting Local Government and ensuring that funding goes to the places that need it most through the Local Government Finance Settlement.

The Government encourages local authorities and local leaders to make investments which offer the right opportunities and facilities (including swimming pools) for the communities they serve, investing in sport and physical activity with a place-based approach, to meet the needs of individual communities. This is complemented by the support and guidance available through the Government's Arm's Length Body, Sport England. We will continue to engage with a full range of stakeholders to explore how we can work towards securing a vibrant future for swimming pools, enabling them to continue delivering their full potential for public health, economic growth, and the wellbeing of our communities.

■ Tennis: Finance**Esther McVey:** [\[63302\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what funding her Department plans to provide for tennis during the Spending Review period.

Esther McVey: [\[63303\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to her Department's press release entitled Game changer for the nation, published on 19 June 2025, how much of the £900 million investment in major sporting events and grassroots sport will be spent on tennis.

Esther McVey: [\[63304\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to her Department's press release entitled Game changer for the nation, published on 19 June 2025, whether the investment in grassroots sports facilities will fund the development of covered tennis courts in (a) Tatton constituency and (b) in areas which lack indoor facilities across the UK.

Stephanie Peacock:

The Government is determined to ensure that everyone has access to quality sport and physical activity opportunities. That is why we have committed another £400 million to transform facilities across the whole of the nation following the Spending Review.

We will now work closely with sporting bodies - including the Lawn Tennis Association - and local leaders to establish what each community needs and then set out further plans.

The Government provides the majority of support for grassroots sport through Sport England - which annually invests over £250 million in Exchequer and Lottery funding. Sport England provides long term investment to the LTA, which receives up to £10.2 million for 5 years from 2022 to invest in tennis and padel initiatives that will benefit as many people as possible.

■ Youth Services**Sonia Kumar:** [\[63358\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, whether her Department plans to make an assessment of the adequacy of the (a) accessibility and (b) range of youth facilities in areas where the population is expanding.

Stephanie Peacock:

We will not be making an assessment of youth facilities based on areas where populations are expanding. Local Authorities have a statutory duty to secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient provision of educational and recreational leisure-time activities for young people in their area.

The government has committed to introducing simpler and fairer allocations for councils, using the most up-to-date data and taking account of growing demand. As part of the [Fair Funding Review 2.0 consultation](#), which is open until Friday 15 August, we are inviting views on using projections to increase the accuracy of allocations across the multi-year Settlement.

DCMS recognises the importance of ensuring that Local Authorities are appropriately supported to deliver accessible and effective youth provision. In 2025/26, we will commit £8m to launch the Local Youth Transformation Pilot which will test a new way of working and supporting local authorities to deliver for young people.

■ Youth Services: Lancashire

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[\[62533\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what funding her Department has allocated to local authorities to provide youth services in (a) Preston and (b) Lancashire over the next three years.

Stephanie Peacock:

Local authorities hold the statutory duty to secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient provision of educational and recreational leisure-time activities for young people. Local Authorities fund youth services from their Local Government Finance Settlement in line with local need.

This Spending Review provides over £5 billion of new grant funding over the next three years for local services that communities rely on. This includes £3.4 billion of new grant funding which will be delivered through the Local Government Finance Settlement within financial years 2026-27 to 2028-29.

DEFENCE

■ Armed Forces: Cadets

Carla Lockhart:

[\[63401\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department plans to expand (a) Army, (b) Navy, and (c) Air Cadet programmes in Northern Ireland.

Al Carns:

Given the fantastic benefits which can be gained from the Cadet experience this Government is committed to getting more young people to become Cadets. The Strategic Defence Review has recommended an expansion of in-school and community-based Cadet Forces across the country by 30% by 2030.

Expanding the Cadet Forces, which provide skills and qualifications to young people from diverse backgrounds across the country, and support economic growth, will benefit all four nations of the UK including Northern Ireland. Planning for this expansion is currently underway, and more detail will be provided in due course.

Robin Swann:

[64683]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much funding his Department allocated for cadet services in (a) each of the last three financial years, (b) the 2025-26 financial year and (c) the 2026-27 financial year.

AI Carns:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 30 May 2025 to Question 55117 to the hon. Member for Fylde (Mr Andrew Snowden).

Attachments:

1. [Armed Forces: Cadets \[55117 - Armed Forces Cadets.docx\]](#)

■ **Armed Forces: Children**

Amanda Martin:

[63841]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is planning to take to improve the (a) quality and (b) availability of data on the educational (i) outcomes and (ii) experiences of armed forces children; and if he will make it his policy to develop a national dataset to help inform evidence-based (A) policy and (B) practice in this area.

AI Carns:

We are committed with counterparts in Government to maintaining robust data around the educational outcomes of all children to inform future strategic and policy development. It is important to remember that education is a devolved matter, and caution should be applied in considering the feasibility of a UK-wide dataset, where very different education systems would be compared. The Ministry of Defence (MOD) recognises the importance of the devolved administrations maintaining their own datasets to inform where their resources should be targeted.

The Department for Education (DfE) continues to provide the MOD updated datasets on how Service children perform in state schools in England across key measures of academic attainment; this information is published in the Armed Forces Covenant Annual Report. The DfE and the MOD have also recently published joint guidance to schools and local authorities on how best to support Service children in education.

In Scotland, the Additional Support for Learning (ASL) Act places duties on education authorities, who retain the statutory responsibility for the delivery of education in Scotland. These duties require Scottish authorities to identify, provide for and review the additional support needs of pupils. This includes Service children and young people, who may require extra support, short or long term and for whatever the reason. Delivery of ASL is a joint endeavour between the Scottish Government and Scottish Local Authorities.

The Welsh Government are currently exploring the potential to broaden the definition of Service children in Wales to ensure the maximum number of children can benefit from the support available. Linked to this they are considering how they collect data on Service children in Welsh schools to ensure that policy and support is based on robust evidence.

Amanda Martin:

[\[63842\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of increasing funding for support for education professionals working with armed forces children; and what steps he is taking to ensure that funding in this area is (a) informed by research, (b) supported by evaluation and (c) aligned with improving outcomes for armed forces families.

AI Carns:

Understanding that education is a devolved matter, the Secretary of State for Defence does not issue core funding to educational settings for Service children.

However, the Ministry of Defence's (MOD) Armed Forces Families Fund provides additional funding opportunities for schools and local authorities across the UK. Since 2023, £4.5 million has supported the Service Pupil Support Programme (SPSP) in schools and local authorities across the UK. The sub themes of the SPSP align with the aims of the Armed Forces Families Strategy and include elements focusing upon the educational outcomes of Service children and supporting Service children with additional learning needs. The SPSP is evaluated externally and is also presently funding three university research projects in areas of specific interest.

In England the Department for Education continues to allocate additional funding in the form of the Service Pupil Premium (SPP) to state funded schools with Service children among their pupils. Service Pupil Premium funding helps schools to provide pastoral and academic support to current and former Service children. Schools are allocated SPP funding for each pupil aged 5 to 16 who is currently recorded as a Service child in the autumn school census or who has held this status in the last six years via 'Ever 6', or who receives a child pension from the MOD. The SPP is now worth £350 per eligible pupil annually. For example, more than £26 million has been paid to schools in the financial year 2023 to 2024, benefiting more than 78,000 pupils.

■ **Armed Forces: Housing**

James Cartlidge:

[\[64518\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he plans to publish the Defence Housing Strategy.

AI Carns:

The Defence Housing Strategy will be published later this year and will set out wider plans to improve the standard of Service family homes.

The Ministry of Defence is currently undertaking an extensive review of its entire estate, including how the Department will make best use of the properties that have been reacquired from Annington, and which homes and locations can most benefit from investment.

■ Army: Recruitment**Dr Simon Opher:****[64120]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he plans to review the criteria for which applications to join the British Army are rejected on medical grounds.

Luke Pollard:

This Government inherited a recruitment crisis, with targets being missed every year for the past 14 years, and is taking decisive action to get recruitment back on track. This has included the largest pay rise to personnel in decades and scrapping 100 outdated policies that slow recruitment down.

Defence is committed to a diverse workforce and is seeking to 'select in' rather than 'select out' and is focused on work to review the current policies for Armed Forces recruiting.

An update to Joint Service Publication (JSP) 950 Leaflet 6-7-7, which outlines the medical entry standard for the Armed Forces, was published in August 2024 following an intensive period of review undertaken by clinical experts, Defence personnel staff and the recruiting agencies. Recent updates to policy include; new regulations for a range of conditions including asthma and eczema, and candidates with Autism Spectrum Disorder may now be able to join the Armed Forces providing they meet certain criteria.

■ Defence: Finance**Blake Stephenson:****[63752]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he has had recent discussions with his US counterpart on spending 5% of gross national income on defence.

Maria Eagle:

The Secretary of State for Defence has regular engagements with the US Secretary of Defense where they discuss a range of topics including defence spending. At the Hague Summit, Allies committed to investing 5% of GDP annually on defence and security, which will build an Alliance that is stronger, fairer and more lethal than ever before.

■ Defence: Space Technology**Carla Lockhart:****[63390]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 14 May 2005 to Questions 50084 on Defence: Space Technology, what role Northern Ireland will play in the delivery of a refreshed Defence Space Strategy.

Luke Pollard:

As the Strategic Defence Review highlights, Space is critical for the UK's national infrastructure and central to future defence operations. In line with the Government's wider industrial strategy, Defence is collaborating closely with partners across

Government, industry, academia, and civil society to build a strong and resilient UK space sector.

Northern Ireland contributes significantly to the UK's space technology sector through its advanced manufacturing and cybersecurity capabilities. These strengths contribute to the UK's capacity for space innovation, security, and industrial excellence.

The forthcoming Defence Industrial Strategy will highlight capabilities deemed critical to national security, supply chain resilience, and economic growth for the UK more broadly. Space has been identified as an important area of strategic interest to Defence.

■ F-35 Aircraft

Neil Duncan-Jordan: [\[63222\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the total cost of the 12 new F-35 A jets will be.

Maria Eagle:

Final prices will be identified during contract negotiation.

Neil Duncan-Jordan: [\[63225\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what his planned timeline is for manufacturing 12 new F-35 A jets.

Maria Eagle:

The UK will purchase 12 new F-35A fighter jets and join NATO's dual capable aircraft nuclear mission in a major boost for national security. The Secretary of State for Defence has said he expects those F-35As to start being delivered before the end of the decade.

■ Military Bases: Closures

Blake Stephenson: [\[63753\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 9 June 2025 to Question 55488 on Military Bases: Closures, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of reviewing the site disposal guidelines due to increasing risks to (a) global and (b) national security.

Maria Eagle:

Both global and national security risks are already continually assessed as part of the military requirement for sites that shape the disposal position.

■ Ministry of Defence: Written Questions

Mr Mark Francois: [\[64407\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he plans to answer Question 59988, tabled on 16 June 2025.

Maria Eagle:

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

■ **Uncrewed Systems: Contracts**

Paul Holmes: [\[62259\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which (a) UK and (b) non-UK companies have been awarded contracts for drones; and what the value is of each contract.

Paul Holmes: [\[62260\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which contracts for drones have been awarded by (a) competitive tender and (b) single source.

Maria Eagle:

In total since January 2024, The Department can identify 48 'drone' related contracts valuing £3.6 billion that have been active within the Ministry of Defence.

Nine of these are marked as having a primary supplier address outside the UK.

24 of these contracts were competitively tendered, 23 were single source tenders and one unknown.

■ **Veterans First Point: Finance**

Dr Scott Arthur: [\[64374\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he has had discussions with the Scottish Government on the withdraw funding for Veterans First Point Lothian.

Al Carns:

I engage regularly with the Scottish Government and with the Scottish Veterans' Commissioner on issues affecting veterans who live in Scotland. Health is a devolved matter, so it is for the Scottish Government to decide on funding allocations.

■ **Veterans: Housing**

Carla Lockhart: [\[63400\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to improve housing options for veterans in Northern Ireland.

Al Carns:

On 26 June 2025, I was delighted to announce £300,000 of funding for wraparound housing support for veterans in Northern Ireland. This will sit alongside VALOUR, the Government's new UK-wide initiative to ensure easier access to essential care and support. This regional approach, based on a network of VALOUR support centres providing multiple services in one place, together with regional field officers coordinating the provision of local services, will ensure that services are designed to meet the needs of their local communities.

■ Veterans: Radiation Exposure

Sir Julian Lewis:

[\[64386\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Written Statement of 30 June 2025 on Nuclear Test Veteran Records Exercise and the Merlin Database, HCWS748, for what reason the Individual Medical Records of military personnel who participated in the nuclear testing programme are not being examined as part of the search for relevant medical data.

Al Carns:

This Government has reset our relationship with nuclear test veterans and the organisations that support them, and we remain committed to listening to their concerns and working collaboratively to address them.

I understand that many are eager for an update on progress on the records exercise. Our focus has been to start by reviewing all surviving policy records and instructions related to blood and urine testing, as well as policies relating to the retention of these records. We have begun with the policy files to ensure there is an understanding of the policy procedures and instructions for medical tests that were given at the time. Doing this first helps us to understand whether policies and instructions were followed. The Ministry of Defence has begun the process of looking at Nuclear Test Veterans' service and medical records.

I will update the House when I am in a position to share the findings of this exercise.

Sir Julian Lewis:

[\[64387\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Written Statement of 30 June 2025 on Nuclear Test Veteran Records Exercise and the Merlin Database, HCWS748, if he will publish the findings gathered from the 43,000 files which have already been reviewed, in the context of the (a) age and (b) infirmity of the remaining Nuclear Test Veterans.

Al Carns:

This Government has reset the relationship with nuclear test veterans and the organisations that support them, and we remain committed to listening to their concerns and working collaboratively to address them.

As of 30 June 2025, officials have reviewed over 43,000 files, including files from the Merlin Database, as part of the exercise that is looking at concerns raised with me about some Nuclear Test Veterans' medical records. The contents of the Merlin database will be transferred to The National Archives (TNA) as formal public records under the Public Records Act. Records will be held in perpetuity and made available via the public facing online catalogue at TNA called "Discovery". As the records are digital they will be free to download and there will be no limit on the number that can be downloaded.

I will update the House when I am in a position to share the findings of the exercise that is looking at concerns raised with me about some Nuclear Test Veterans' medical records.

■ Veterans: South East**Josh Babarinde:****[64905]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to support veterans in (a) Eastbourne and (b) the South East.

Al Carns:

This is a Government of service that will always stand up for those who serve our country, no matter which community they are based in. Across the country, including in Eastbourne and across the South East, a wide range of support is available for Armed Forces personnel as they transition into civilian life. The Veterans Welfare Service is a first port of call for veterans and their families if they are facing challenges and provides support on a wide range of issues.

For support with employment, the Career Transition Partnership is the initial point of provision for those leaving military Service and Op ASCEND is the employment pathway for veterans. Across England, Op RESTORE and Op COURAGE provide physical and mental health specialist services. Housing support is available across the United Kingdom via Op FORTITUDE, a single referral pathway connecting veterans with support.

We recently announced VALOUR, a new commitment to establish the first-ever UK-wide approach to veteran support, which will ensure easier access to essential care and support for veterans across the country. A new regional approach, based on a network of VALOUR recognised support centres and regional field officers, will help to ensure that services are designed to meet the needs of their local communities. Further details on VALOUR will be announced in due course and more information can be found at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/valour-information-and-next-steps>

EDUCATION**■ Home Education: Standards****Mr Andrew Snowden:****[63476]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to help improve educational outcomes for young people educated at home.

Stephen Morgan:

All children deserve an education that allows them to achieve and thrive, whether they are educated at school or otherwise.

The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill includes a package of measures to support children not in school, including those who are home educated. Mandatory Children Not in School registers in every local authority in England and Wales, will help improve outcomes for home educated children by supporting local authorities to identify all children not in school in their areas. Measures to make the School Attendance Order process more efficient will minimise the length of time that any

child may spend receiving an unsuitable education, thus improving outcomes for children where home education is not working.

The Bill also introduces the first ever duty on local authorities to provide support for home educating families on their registers, upon request ensuring those families have access to reliable advice and information on their child's education.

■ Nurseries: Accidents

Sonia Kumar:

[63410]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether her Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of publishing records of incidents and fatalities at nurseries.

Stephen Morgan:

The department's priority is to grow high-quality, affordable and flexible education and care for children, whilst ensuring their safety, giving every child the best start of life and delivering on our Plan for Change.

The department is responsible for setting the standards which early years settings such as nurseries must follow, these are set out in the early years foundation stage statutory framework. The department has responsibility for policy on inspection and registration but how it is implemented is for Ofsted to decide and to be held to account by Parliament.

Given the sensitivity and quality of the information around incidents, Ofsted do not publish incident data as routine statistics. However, their annual report and accounts include some national level data on notifications that may relate to incidents. The latest is accessible at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67e575d987cebda7c4ca4cde/31795_Ofsted_Annual_Report_and_Accounts_2023-24_-_Accessible.pdf.

Ofsted can only commit to publishing national headline data about the number of complaints or notifications relating to incidents.

■ Schools: Admissions

Noah Law:

[64359]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will take steps with local authorities to that ensure travel distance is taken into account when (a) calculating school catchment zones and (b) offering school places.

Catherine McKinnell:

Admission arrangements are set and applied locally by a school's admission authority, which for academies is the academy trust and for maintained schools is either the governing body or the local authority.

Admission authorities must determine the criteria that they will use to allocate places if a school receives more applications than it has places available. These must be fair, clear and transparent, and comply with the statutory School Admissions Code.

Admission authorities are already able to prioritise applications on the basis of distance to the school, including through the use of designated catchment areas. In setting such criterion, admission authorities must ensure they are reasonable and clearly defined, including making clear how distance from the child's home to the school will be measured.

Where a school is not oversubscribed, every applicant must be offered a place.

■ Schools: Finance

Dr Neil Hudson: [\[63346\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that schools are adequately funded to meet the full cost of the 2025-26 teachers' and support staff pay awards in Essex.

Dr Neil Hudson: [\[63347\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether her Department has provided an increase in funding to schools for the 2025-26 teachers' pay award in Essex.

Catherine McKinnell:

The department is providing schools with £615 million in additional funding in financial year 2025/26 to support them with overall costs, including the costs of the 4% schools teacher pay award and the 3.2% local government pay offer in respect of school support staff. This is on top of the funding increases which the government has already provided to support schools and means that the overall Core Schools Budget will total £65.3 billion in 2025/26, compared to £61.6 billion in 2024/25.

Through the Dedicated Schools Grant, Essex is receiving £1.25 billion for mainstream schools in 2025/26. This represents an increase of 2.3% per pupil compared to 2024/25. These figures do not include growth funding, falling rolls funding or the additional funding for schools announced alongside the teacher pay award this year. Allocations of that additional funding, at local authority level, will be announced in October 2025.

■ Special Educational Needs: Finance

Sonia Kumar: [\[63355\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what comparative assessment she has made of the adequacy of the level of funding for EHCP plans in (a) the UK, (b) the West Midlands and (c) Dudley constituency.

Catherine McKinnell:

The department is providing an increase of £1 billion for high needs budgets in England in the 2025/26 financial year, following the Autumn Budget 2024. This brings total high needs funding for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to over £12 billion.

Of that total high needs funding, the West Midlands region is being allocated over £1,228 million through the high needs funding block of the dedicated schools grant

(DSG), an increase of over £95 million on their 2024/25 DSG high needs block, calculated using the high needs national funding formula. Dudley Council specifically is being allocated over £62 million through the high needs funding block of the DSG, an increase of over £5 million on 2024/25.

Local authorities allocate this funding to schools, colleges and other settings, to help them with the costs of SEND provision, including for those children and young people with education, health and care plans. The department provides operational guidance for local authorities to support their allocation of high needs funding:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/high-needs-funding-arrangements-2025-to-2026>.

ENERGY SECURITY AND NET ZERO

■ Coal: Mining

Matt Bishop:

[\[63470\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what progress his Department has made on bringing forward legislative proposals to amend the Coal Industry Act 1994 to prohibit new coal extraction licences; and if he will ensure that those legislative proposals protect the rights of freeminers in the Forest of Dean.

Michael Shanks:

On 14 November 2024 we announced that we will introduce new legislation as soon as possible to restrict the future licensing of new coal mines. Under our plans, the historic rights of Freeminers in the Forest of Dean will be exempted and can continue.

■ Electricity: Prices

Chris Hinchliff:

[\[63188\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of the British Industrial Competitiveness Scheme on electricity bills for non-exempt consumers.

Michael Shanks:

The government is looking to fund this support by bearing down on levies and other costs in the energy system, alongside revenues from the strengthening and expansion of carbon pricing.

■ Energy Supply: Northern Ireland

Carla Lockhart:

[\[63398\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what steps his Department is taking to improve energy security and grid resilience in Northern Ireland.

Michael Shanks:

Whilst energy policy and electricity system resilience of Northern Ireland remains a devolved competence for the Northern Ireland Executive, the Department has

maintained a close working relationship with the Department for the Economy to support them in managing energy security.

■ **Environment Protection: West Midlands**

Sonia Kumar: [\[63415\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what steps his Department plans to take to support green projects in the Black Country.

Kerry McCarthy:

The Government supports local places to drive action to deliver green projects and help realise our national net zero targets. Great British Energy will partner with community energy groups and local government, including Mayoral Strategic Authorities, to support the development of clean energy projects. Government also funds the Local Net Zero Accelerator pilot programme (including in West Midlands Combined Authority) to test how to support local places to leverage in commercial net zero investment at scale, alongside five Local Net Zero Hubs (including the Midlands Net Zero Hub) to support local government to develop net zero projects and attract commercial investment.

■ **Insulation: Housing**

Martin Wrigley: [\[63477\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what recent meetings he has had with people who have had spray foam installation in their homes in Devon.

Miatta Fahnbulleh:

Details of Ministers' and Permanent Secretaries' meetings with external individuals and organisations are published quarterly in arrears on GOV.UK.

■ **Offshore Industry: North Sea**

Grahame Morris: [\[64423\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, when he plans to respond to the consultation entitled Building the North Sea's energy future which closed on 30 April 2025.

Michael Shanks:

DESNZ is currently analysing the responses received. We will publish a government response setting out our next steps in due course.

■ **Offshore Industry: Wood Group**

Grahame Morris: [\[64421\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what recent assessment he has made of the viability of the Wood Group's North Sea oil and gas contracts.

Michael Shanks:

Wood Group's North Sea oil and gas contracts are a commercial matter for the company.

■ **Self-employed: Wood Group****Grahame Morris:**[\[64422\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, if he will discuss the position of contractor employees at Wood Group with trade union signatories to the Energy Services Agreement.

Michael Shanks:

Ministers and officials regularly engage with trade union representatives to discuss a variety of issues.

■ **Solar Power: Prisons****Nigel Huddleston:**[\[63315\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of siting solar farms near Category A prisons on the security of (a) communications, (b) wi-fi and (c) energy supplies.

Michael Shanks:

No such assessment has been made.

Maintaining security of energy supplies is a key priority and critical energy operators are required to meet a minimum standard of cyber security and resilience, through the Network and Information Systems Regulations 2018. The Department works continually with Ofgem and the National Cyber Security Centre to ensure that these regulations continue to capture all the most critical operators of energy generation systems.

■ **UK Emissions Trading Scheme: Construction****Sonia Kumar:**[\[63357\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of the emissions trading scheme on the clay brick and rooftile industry.

Sarah Jones:

UK Emissions Trading Scheme (UK ETS) participants, including the clay brick and rooftile sector, are provided with free allocations, reducing their exposure to the carbon price and mitigating their risk of carbon leakage whilst continuing to provide an incentive to decarbonise at the least cost route. This approach is currently being reviewed to ensure we can better target support for sectors most at risk of carbon leakage.

We are very mindful of the impact of the ETS on industrial participants, and have committed to an ongoing assessment of the scheme's effectiveness – outputs of this

review will be published in 2026. Interim outcomes of this review can be found on gov.uk.

■ **Warm Homes Plan: Finance**

Ellie Chowns: [\[63367\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, with reference to the Spending Review 2025, CP 1336, published on 11 June 2025, how much and what proportion of the £5 billion funding for the Warm Homes Plan identified as financial transactions will be in the form of (a) loans, (b) equity investments and (c) guarantees.

Miatta Fahnbulleh:

The Government has committed £5 billion funding as financial transactions. We will work with the UK's expert public finance institutions, including the NWF (National Wealth Fund), to agree ways to support the delivery of the Warm Homes Plan through this. Further details will be confirmed by October.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ **Agriculture: Water**

Ellie Chowns: [\[61446\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to publish updates to the Farming Rules for Water.

Emma Hardy:

The updated and amended Farming Rules for Water were published on 18 June and we are continuing to support the EA to work with farmers to meet their legal obligations.

■ **Badgers: Conservation and Ecology**

Mr Angus MacDonald: [\[63491\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department plans to work with devolved Administrations to improve the sharing of data on badger (a) ecology and (b) population health.

Mary Creagh:

Chief Veterinary Officers from all four devolved administrations of the United Kingdom, along with policy officials, meet routinely to discuss shared priorities. This includes the TB Liaison Group, which provides a platform for coordination and updates on policy developments. This includes sharing data on badger population health, particularly in relation to TB.

■ Biodiversity: National Landscapes

Blake Stephenson:

[\[63767\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of National Landscape status on biodiversity.

Mary Creagh:

Natural England has the statutory responsibility for identifying areas for new or extended National Landscape designations.

National Landscapes have a statutory purpose to conserve and enhance natural beauty, and biodiversity is a key consideration within this purpose.

The Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework is supporting delivery of our EIP and statutory biodiversity targets in Protected Landscapes, empowering Protected Landscape bodies, relevant authorities, farmers, land managers and other organisations to work together in planning and targeting resources and activity.

We have also extended our Farming in Protected Landscapes programme, providing £30 million to support nature recovery and other projects in our National Landscapes and National Parks, until March 2026.

■ Bluetongue Virus: Disease Control

Alicia Kearns:

[\[63675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the report by the National Audit Office entitled Resilience to Animal Diseases, published on 4 June 2025, whether his Department has made an assessment of the adequacy of the existing (a) contingency plans and (b) preparedness for a bluetongue virus outbreak.

Daniel Zeichner:

The Government has published the [Contingency plan for exotic notifiable diseases of animals in England](#) which provides an overarching framework for response to all exotic disease and defines the roles, responsibilities, and command structures employed. The Plan is updated annually; the 2025 version is undergoing extensive due diligence before it is laid with parliament this autumn.

Defra's published [Bluetongue virus serotype 3 \(BTV-3\) Control Framework for England](#) sets out our approach to disease control, aiming to limit the spread of BTV infection through proportionate and evidence-based control measures. The Framework aims to balance the burdens of controls against the benefits of eradication of bluetongue, whilst minimising the cost of any outbreak both to government and farmers. Defra will keep the approach to bluetongue control under review in 2025 and is grateful for the continued engagement of Devolved Governments and industry stakeholders.

■ Chilterns: Reviews

Blake Stephenson:

[\[63774\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate his Department has made of the potential savings to the public purse from ending the Chilterns National Landscape Boundary Review project.

Mary Creagh:

Natural England has the statutory responsibility for identifying areas for new or extended National Landscape designations. Defra had provided £1.1 million RDEL a year from 22/23 to 24/25 for Natural England to accelerate their National Landscapes pro-programme and wider work on alternative approaches to statutory designations

Given the pressures on public finances, Defra has had to make difficult decisions about funding. It was not affordable to continue Defra funding to Natural England to continue the new National Landscapes designations programme in 25/26. As such, Natural England have made the decision to stop work on some of the planned programme – including the Chilterns boundary review. We have not made any assessment regarding potential savings relating to this specific decision.

■ Coastal Erosion

Josh Babarinde:

[\[63771\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to help protect seaside towns from coastal erosion.

Emma Hardy:

We are committed to supporting coastal communities and ensuring flood risk management is fit for the challenges we face now and in the future.

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.

The Government launched a consultation 3 June on proposals to reform the way we fund flood and coastal defences. We want to ensure funding for flood defences is distributed more effectively across the country – to protect properties across all communities including in rural, coastal, and poorer areas. The 8-week consultation is open to everyone and all stakeholders, including organisations that play a role in flood resilience, community groups and members of the public, are invited to be part of the consultation.

■ Deer: Conservation

Mr Angus MacDonald:

[\[63370\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions he has had with the devolved Administrations on sustainable red deer management.

Mary Creagh:

The Secretary of State regularly meets colleagues in the Devolved Governments through the Interministerial Group. No specific discussions on sustainable red deer management have taken place.

Mr Angus MacDonald:

[\[63488\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with land managers in Inverness, Skye and West Ross-shire constituency on the (a) management and (b) conservation of red deer.

Mary Creagh:

As this is a devolved matter, any conversations with Scottish landowners on management of red deer would be conducted by the Scottish Government.

■ Fisheries

Jayne Kirkham:

[\[63827\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to (a) support and (b) incentivise the adoption of (i) lower impact and (ii) highly selective fishing methods in UK waters; and whether he plans to reform the gear approval process to reduce barriers to innovation.

Daniel Zeichner:

We strongly support the use of gear that is more selective and which lowers the environmental impacts. We have been promoting this through a number of routes, including fisheries funding, measures introduced through annual consultations and negotiations with the EU and other coastal states, and through our Fisheries Management Plan programme. The Seafish Industry Authority ("Seafish") are currently looking at how to overcome barriers to the adoption of new gear. In order to achieve maximum conservation benefits, and to be in line with international best practice, it is crucial that any approval processes are robust and are based on the best available scientific evidence.

■ Flood Control: International Cooperation

Blake Stephenson:

[\[63772\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he has had recent discussions with his international counterparts on best practice in flooding mitigation.

Emma Hardy:

The Secretary of State and Ministers regularly speak to international partners on a range of topics, including climate change risks and how to mitigate them.

The Environment Agency (EA) has worked with international partners such as the Dutch flood agency - Rijkswaterstaat, and the United States Army Corps of Engineers for many years. This work includes exchanging knowledge, research, and technical expertise in flood and coastal risk management.

The EA also regularly contributes to broad, multi-partner international networks such as KRING, I-STORM, ICold (the international conference on dams) and the International Nature Based Solutions Working Group. These enable partners to share knowledge and experience on common issues such as responding to climate change, sea level rise, and innovating flood warning systems.

■ Hedgehogs: Conservation**Mr Angus MacDonald:**[\[63499\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he has had recent discussions with the devolved Administrations on collaborative efforts to halt hedgehog decline.

Mary Creagh:

Yes, Defra works collaboratively with devolved administrations on efforts to halt hedgehog decline.

In 2024, Britain's first National Hedgehog Conservation Strategy was published. The strategy highlights the factors causing a decline in our native hedgehog populations, and is supported by Natural England, Natural Resources Wales and NatureScot.

In addition, Natural England is co-funding the National Hedgehog Monitoring Programme. The information gathered will also produce insights into the factors causing hedgehog population decline, leading to the implementation of practical conservation measures to address this challenge.

Mr Angus MacDonald:[\[63501\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to encourage data sharing on hedgehog populations between governments and wildlife organisations.

Mary Creagh:

In 2024 the first National Hedgehog Conservation Strategy was published with contributions from Natural England, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee and the Forestry Commission. The strategy, which has identified several actions to facilitate and encourage data sharing on hedgehog populations, involves collaboration with stakeholders to include leading conservation NGOs, academics, and organisations within the transport and farming sectors.

In addition, Natural England is co-funding the National Hedgehog Monitoring Programme. The information gathered will produce insights into the factors causing

hedgehog population decline, leading to the implementation of practical conservation measures to address this challenge.

■ **Marine Protected Areas**

Barry Gardiner: [\[64391\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what his planned timeline is for implementing measures in Inshore Marine Protected Areas.

Emma Hardy:

The responsibility for developing byelaws lies with the ten Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs). We are encouraging the IFCAs to complete as soon as possible the good work they have already done to ensure our MPAs are effectively protected.

Inshore MPAs located between 6 and 12 nautical miles from the coast are the responsibility of the Marine Management Organisation and it launched a consultation in June 2025 on stage 3 of its programme of MPA fisheries management measures.

■ **Marine Protected Areas: Bottom Trawling**

Barry Gardiner: [\[64389\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what proportion of England's waters would be closed to bottom trawling when the proposed stage 3 byelaws are implemented.

Emma Hardy:

We cannot pre-judge the outcome of the stage 3 byelaw consultation, which is currently in progress.

■ **Marine Protected Areas: Byelaws**

Barry Gardiner: [\[64388\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department adopted the features-based approach for the assessment method for the stage 3 Marine Protected Area byelaws.

Emma Hardy:

The Marine Management Organisation uses a feature-based approach for developing fisheries management measures in England's Marine Protected Areas, including the proposed stage 3 byelaws. Sometimes these management measures will involve restrictions across the whole of a site, where the features to be protected cover the whole site.

Barry Gardiner: [\[64390\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what his planned timeline is for the implementation of the stage 3 offshore MPA byelaws once the consultation has been concluded.

Emma Hardy:

We aim to implement any necessary byelaws quickly. However, this will depend on the number and complexity of responses received to the consultation.

■ **Nature Conservation: Job Creation****Ms Polly Billington:**[\[63177\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department has made an estimate of the potential number of jobs that can be created from nature restoration projects.

Mary Creagh:

The Government is committed to supporting job creation through nature restoration initiatives. In our policy-making process, we carefully consider a range of factors, including the potential for economic growth and employment. Our Nature for Climate Fund—which supports tree planting and peatland restoration—plays a vital role in generating green jobs across the country. These projects are expected to create a substantial number of employment opportunities, particularly in rural and environmentally sensitive areas.

■ **Peatlands: Conservation****Blake Stephenson:**[\[63769\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of peatland recovery on the level of flood risk in Mid Bedfordshire constituency.

Mary Creagh:

The improvement of peatlands brings multiple benefits for biodiversity, reduction in carbon emissions and also flood-risk management.

In the Mid Bedfordshire constituency, Defra is currently funding a Lowland Agricultural Peat Water Discovery Pilot project in the Flit Valley. It is one of a series of projects supporting local partnerships to understand how water can be better managed to rewet and preserve peat soils and to collaborate on development of costed water plans, and this project includes flood risk within its scope.

Defra is also funding research to investigate the relationship between rewetting peat and flood-risk mitigation in lowland peat areas.

Both projects are due to complete in March 2026.

■ **Pine Martens: Conservation****Mr Angus MacDonald:**[\[63496\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he has had recent discussions with the devolved Administrations on monitoring European pine marten populations.

Mary Creagh:

Yes, Natural England engages with devolved administrations through the national pine marten networking group. This group meets quarterly, and discussions include topics such as monitoring European pine marten populations.

■ Pine Martens: Conservation and Ecology**Mr Angus MacDonald:**[\[63495\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the population status and ecological role of European pine martens across the UK.

Mary Creagh:

There are approximately 100-200 pine marten in England. This estimate is based on a recent pine marten reintroduction in the Forest of Dean and monitoring of records in Northumberland and Cumbria. There are also a few other scattered and sporadic records across the country, some of which are a result of unofficial releases. In 2024 two further pine marten reintroductions took place in Devon and Cumbria. However, as this was very recent and populations are not yet established, they have not been included in this population estimate.

Mr Angus MacDonald:[\[63497\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to support UK-wide research into European pine marten ecology and conservation.

Mary Creagh:

A [Long-term strategic recovery plan for pine martens in Britain](#) was produced in 2021, which presents a summary of what has been achieved so far and sets out a continuing strategic recovery plan for pine martens across Britain, while emphasising the importance of conserving recovering populations in Scotland.

■ Plants: Import Controls**Dr Al Pinkerton:**[\[62514\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment his Department has made of the operational impact of the Border Target Operating Model on plant imports in Surrey Heath constituency.

Daniel Zeichner:

The general impact of the Border Target Operating Model (BTOM) to the cut flower trade is likely to be minimal since only a limited group of EU cut flowers (such as chrysanthemum and carnations and orchids), are medium risk goods. All other EU cut flowers are low risk and will not be subject to border checks.

EU Medium risk cut flowers have been subject to prenotification since 1st January 2022. EU Medium risk cut flowers have required a Phytosanitary Certificate (PC)

since 31 January 2024, and inspections for EU Medium Risk goods at the border since 30th April 2024.

GB plant health services have significantly increased the number of plant health inspection staff to service the demand for import checks in England and Wales of EU plants and plant products. Inspector levels are being monitored to ensure these meet demand and deliver checks in line with set Service Level Agreements (SLA) and ensure minimal trade disruption.

■ Pollution Control

Steve Barclay:

[61156]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the Environment Agency is taking steps to (a) control and (b) report on the potential risk of toxic contamination from the use of (i) recycled Energy Recovery Facilities incineration ash residue and (ii) Air Pollution Control Residue in building materials.

Mary Creagh:

As was the case when he was Secretary of State for Defra, the ash residue from energy recovery facilities is normally processed into incinerator The bottom ash aggregate (IBAA). IBAA can only be used under the terms of a regulatory position statement (RPS) or a permit issued by the Environment Agency (EA).

The EA have risk assessed the use of IBAA. The RPS sets out placement limitations which allows use of IBAA whilst retaining protection of the environment. If the RPS cannot be met, a site-specific permit and risk assessment is required. Where a permit is issued there is a requirement to report.

Air Pollution Control Residue can only be used as a building material when that material has met the criteria for end-of-waste, which is assessed on a case-by-case basis. This requires that the material must be of no significantly greater risk to the environment or human health than the non-waste-derived equivalent.

■ Rivers: Flood Control

Patrick Spencer:

[63893]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 10 June 2025 to Question 57090 on Rivers: Flood Control, how much of the £200 million funding for river asset management will be allocated to preserve the River Deben in Suffolk.

Emma Hardy:

Of the £4 million that the Environment Agency is allocating for the management of flood and coastal risk management assets within Suffolk County Council's boundaries in 2025/26, approximately £300,000 has been allocated to asset management along, or close to, the River Deben.

■ Rivers: Sewage

Victoria Collins:

[\[63419\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of excess sewage sludge on river pollution in (a) Harpenden and Berkhamsted constituency and (b) Hertfordshire.

Emma Hardy:

Sewage sludge is a by-product of the wastewater treatment process which can be spread on fields as a fertiliser.

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.

■ Sewage: Pollution

Ben Maguire:

[\[63847\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the number of people who fall ill from sewage pollution-related causes in Cornwall.

Emma Hardy:

We are putting water companies under special measures through our landmark Water (Special Measures) Act. The Act has introduced new powers to ban the payment of bonuses for polluting water bosses and bring criminal charges against law breakers and made it mandatory for water companies to publish plans to reduce pollution incidents.

The upcoming Progress Report on the Storm Overflow Discharge Reduction Plan (SODRP), scheduled for publication later this year, will include assessment of South West Water's progress toward the Plan's Human Health (bathing water) target. The Plan also priorities action at 81 sites impacting bathing water in Cornwall, with improvements phased by 2030.

As part of Price Review 24 (2025-2030), South West Water will be investing £764 million to reduce the use of storm overflows, which will see an expected 62% reduction in storm overflow spills compared to its performance in 2023-24.

The Independent Water Commission will recommend reforms to reset the water sector regulatory system and clean up our waterways for good.

■ Sugar Beet: Contracts

Alicia Kearns: [\[63697\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Common Market Organisation Regulation for sugar in ensuring British Sugar negotiates sugar beet contracts with the grower's mandated representative NFU Sugar.

Alicia Kearns: [\[63698\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to help ensure that British Sugar agrees the (a) price and (b) terms of future sugar beet contracts with NFU Sugar as per the terms of the Common Market Organisation Regulation.

Daniel Zeichner:

The Government recognises the importance of sugar beet farmers who are vital to UK sugar production. Also, that sugar beet itself, used in crop rotations, is beneficial to soil and crop health and allows arable farms a season of "rest" from cereal production.

We are committed to promoting fairness across the food supply chain. That includes seeing a price agreed for sugar beet that benefits both growers and processors, in the context of the global market. There is a well-established process in place to agree the sugar beet price; designed to be independent between both parties. An Inter Professional Agreement is agreed each year between both parties and sets out the process for negotiating and agreeing price, terms and conditions for the upcoming crop year, as well as any dispute resolution process.

This process has been effective over many years, and we are committed to this process.

■ Waste Disposal

Wendy Morton: [\[63306\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to help ensure compliance with the waste carriers, brokers and dealers registration regime.

Mary Creagh:

The Environment Agency (EA) adopts a risk-based approach to monitoring compliance by conducting targeted audits and roadside checks with partners and identifying and auditing high-risk brokers. The EA uses a range of proportionate actions to secure compliance in line with its Enforcement and Sanctions Policy.

However, it is acknowledged that the current waste carriers, brokers and dealers regulatory regime is not fit for purpose. We recently announced plans to tighten up the regulation of those who transport and manage waste services, moving them from a light-touch registration system into environmental permitting. This will give the EA a greater range of powers and more resources to be able to take action against those

operating illegally. It will also introduce the possibility of up to 5 years imprisonment for those who breach these new laws.

■ **Water: Eastbourne**

Josh Babarinde:

[63775]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to monitor the water quality on beaches in Eastbourne constituency.

Emma Hardy:

The Environment Agency (EA) is responsible for monitoring the water quality of designated bathing water sites, reporting bathing water quality, informing the public of pollution which could affect bathing waters and investigating and identifying actions to improve bathing water quality. Throughout the bathing season (May to September), the EA takes up to 20 water samples at each of England's designated bathing waters and tests them for two bacteria, E. coli and intestinal enterococci, which can indicate pollution that can pose a risk to bathers' health.

There is one designated bathing water in the Eastbourne constituency – Eastbourne bathing water, which is currently classified as 'Good'. The EA [SWIMFO](#) website, shows the latest water quality sample results for all the bathing waters in England. So far this season, all results have been within the excellent threshold for Eastbourne bathing water.

■ **Water: Standards**

Chris Webb:

[62356]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department plans to collaborate with (a) VisitBritain, (b) local authorities and (c) tourism boards to measure the impact of water quality on destination attractiveness.

Emma Hardy:

This Government has reset the water sector; we are stopping the sewage scandal and transforming the water industry from one of decline to one of opportunity. The Government has frequent discussions with a wide variety of stakeholders on its policies. For example, various Local Authorities and local tourist office responded to the consultation process for the Reform of the Bathing Waters Regulations 2013. Our bathing waters bring important social and health benefits to the local communities surrounding them, and help coastal towns prosper by attracting tourists from across the UK and the world.

Chris Webb:

[62357]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many bathing waters were classified as poor in each of the last ten years, and what estimate his Department has made of the potential impact on domestic tourism trends.

Emma Hardy:

The following table shows the number of bathing waters classified as poor over the previous 10 years.

YEAR	NUMBER OF BATHING WATERS CLASSIFIED AS POOR AND NOTES.
2015	12
2016	6
2017	7
2018	9
2019	7
2020	Classifications were not produced in 2020 due to the pandemic
2021	4
2022	12
2023	18
2024	37

■ **Wildlife: Disease Control**

Mr Angus MacDonald:[\[63490\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department is providing funding for UK-wide research into (a) badger conservation and (b) non-lethal wildlife health management.

Mary Creagh:

As part of the ongoing work on a comprehensive new bovine TB strategy, the Department is programme funding the establishment of a new badger vaccinator field force. This initiative aims to increase delivery of badger vaccination as a non-lethal method to reduce TB transmission rates and protect badgers.

No UK-wide Government funding is currently provided specifically for badger conservation.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**■ Bosnia and Herzegovina: Politics and Government****Joe Morris:**[\[63865\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent support he has offered to Bosnia and Herzegovina on the rule of law.

Stephen Doughty:

The UK remains committed to peace, stability and the rule of law in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). Our embassy in Sarajevo provides support politically and through our programmes to help BiH's domestic institutions deliver their mandates and combat corruption and serious organised crime. In response to actions by Republika Srpska's leadership which undermine the rule of law, we have worked with the High Representative and international partners to bolster domestic institutions against threats to the constitution and independence of the judiciary. I and the Foreign Secretary underlined this commitment to Presidency Members Becirovic and Komsic on 17 June.

I recently convened members of the quint to discuss these issues, and am closely following developments with partners. We look forward to hosting the Berlin Process in the UK later this year, which also provides an opportunity to discuss a range of issues in the Western Balkans with partners.

■ Brazil: Indigenous Peoples**Anna Gelderd:**[\[62911\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with (a) his Brazilian counterpart and (b) Indigenous Brazilian representatives on (i) protecting and (ii) recognising the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities' ahead of COP30 in Belem; and what steps he is taking to collaborate with (A) his European counterparts and (B) other donors on this issue.

Catherine West:

On 24 June 2025, the Minister of State for International Development, Latin America and the Caribbean met Brazil's Minister for Indigenous Peoples, Sonia Guajajara. They agreed on the importance of ensuring meaningful inclusion of Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs) in COP processes. Sonia Guajajara has spoken publicly about the importance of COP30 as a "COP of implementation" and securing concrete benefits for IPLCs. The UK collaborates with European and international partners on this issue through multilateral funds and initiatives such as the Amazon Fund and the REDD+ Early Movers programme, which support IPLC-led forest protection and sustainable livelihoods. Through the Forest and Climate Leaders' Partnership (FCLP), which the UK co-chairs with Guyana, we are working to promote greater recognition of IPLCs as vital stewards of critical forest ecosystems.

■ British Council**Wendy Morton:**[\[63626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to paragraphs 2.48 and 2.56 of the Spending Review Departmental Efficiency Plans 2025, what operational reforms will be delivered by the British Council; and what the cost of those reforms will be.

Catherine West:

No decisions have been taken for the British Council's Grant-in-Aid funding for the next three years (2026/27 and beyond). This was not settled in the Spending Review and will be determined in the round, alongside our other Official Development Assistance (ODA) and Non-ODA allocations, in the autumn.

In the Spending Review, the Treasury asked the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) (along with most departments) to identify efficiency savings and model certain budget scenarios. The request we made of the British Council, to model scenarios equivalent to flat cash and a 2 per cent per year budget reduction, was in line with that Treasury request. No decisions on the British Council's global footprint have been taken.

The FCDO is supporting the British Council to deliver a financial turnaround plan to ensure the British Council's finances are returned to a stable footing.

■ British Virgin Islands: Companies**Steff Aquarone:**[\[64355\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 13 March 2025 to Question 36916 on British Overseas Territories: Companies, what discussions he has had with the British Virgin Islands government on the reasons why it did not implement a register of beneficial ownership by the end of June 2025.

Stephen Doughty:

At the Joint Ministerial Council (JMC) in November 2024, the British Virgin Islands (BVI) committed to implement a register of beneficial ownership accessible to those with a legitimate interest offering the maximum possible degree of access and transparency, whilst containing the necessary safeguards to protect the right to privacy in line with its constitution, by June 2025.

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office officials have been in regular contact with the BVI to press for improvements to its register and to ensure that it meets its JMC commitment. The BVI published an updated policy on its register on 23 June. In my discussions with Premier Wheatley, I will continue to make clear the importance of further improvements in the BVI's proposal, as well as timely delivery of the register. My Written Ministerial Statement of 3 July provides further details of the next steps.

I have raised this issue on a number of occasions recently with the Premier both bilaterally and in the context of wider meetings with OT leaders. I look forward to meeting him again in person soon to raise this and other matters. Our expectations remain the same.

■ **Business: Cybercrime**

Mr Gregory Campbell: [\[63282\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what information the National Cyber Security Centre holds on the number of cyber attacks that were carried out against UK-based businesses between 2022 and 2024.

Stephen Doughty:

The cyber threat picture in the UK is diverse. Cyber security incidents can be reported into several different agencies within the UK depending on the type and severity of the incident. The UK's National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) provides practical, expert guidance tailored to help businesses of all sizes build resilience against evolving cyber threats. NCSC also addresses a wide range of national cyber threats, from protecting citizens against online harm to responding to major cyber incidents. I recently met with NCSC colleagues to discuss the trends in threats and attacks and how we ensure high levels of resilience.

Since September 2024, NCSC have managed more than 200 incidents, with a significant proportion impacting businesses across the UK. This includes twice as many nationally significant incidents as the same period a year ago. As published in the NCSC Annual Review (https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/files/NCSC_Annual_Review_2024.pdf) the breakdown of incidents managed by the NCSC Incident Management team is as follows:

DATE	NUMBER OF INCIDENTS
Sept 21 - Aug 22	355
Sept 22 - Aug 23	371
Sept 23 - Aug 24	430

Other credible reports on cyber incidents include the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology's Cyber Security Breaches survey from each of the last three years: 2022 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/cyber-security-breaches-survey-2022/cyber-security-breaches-survey-2022>), 2023 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/cyber-security-breaches-survey-2023/cyber-security-breaches-survey-2023>) and 2024 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/cyber-security-breaches-survey-2024/cyber-security-breaches-survey-2024>). The Information Commissioner's Office also has an Incident Trend Report (<https://ico.org.uk/action-weve-taken/complaints->

and-concerns-data-sets/data-security-incident-trends/) on cyber incidents reported to them.

■ **Chagos Islands: Sovereignty**

Priti Patel: [\[62644\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the UK/Mauritius Agreement concerning the Chagos Archipelago (CS Mauritius No.1/2025), whether there is an agreed definition between the UK and Mauritius of what is an artificial island.

Stephen Doughty:

The term "artificial island" will be interpreted in accordance with the rules of international law on the interpretation of treaties.

Priti Patel: [\[62646\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the UK/Mauritius Agreement concerning the Chagos Archipelago (CS Mauritius No.1/2025), whether Mauritius can permit (a) vessels, (b) submarines and (c) facilities provided by other countries for research purposes to be (i) established and (ii) based in the Chagos Archipelago; and whether Mauritius can undertake joint research operations with other countries in the Chagos Archipelago.

Stephen Doughty:

I refer the Right Honourable Member to the answer of 2 July 2025 to question 62645.

Ben Obese-Jecty: [\[63176\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 24 June 2025 to Question 61044 on Chagos Islands: Sovereignty, under what description in his Department's annual accounts will expenditure relating to the UK/Mauritius: Agreement concerning the Chagos Archipelago including Diego Garcia [CS Mauritius No.1/2025] be listed.

Stephen Doughty:

Any expenditure by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office relating the Diego Garcia Treaty between the UK and Mauritius would be recorded as Grant Expenditure in the Annual Report and Accounts.

Mr Mark Francois: [\[63530\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 26 June 2025 to Question 61738 on Chagos Islands: Sovereignty, which Department will fund costs arising from the function of the Joint Commission; and whether his Department has discussed appointment to the Commission with potential candidates.

Stephen Doughty:

The payments will be split between the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and the Ministry of Defence.

As is clear from paragraph 2 of Annex 3, both the UK and Mauritius shall appoint one senior representative as co-chair of the Joint Commission and four additional representatives. The terms of reference of the Joint Commission will be finalised in the coming months, well ahead of entry into force.

■ **Cyprus: Overseas Trade**

Nesil Caliskan:

[\[64360\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of lifting the trade embargo on the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

Stephen Doughty:

In accordance with the rest of the international community, with the sole exception of Turkey, the UK does not recognise the self-declared 'Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus' as an independent state. Several UN Security Council Resolutions, other multilateral agreements and domestic and international court rulings limit links between the UK and the north. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) has not made a formal assessment of the merits of lifting the trade embargo. However, within the constraints outlined above, we support measures to reduce the isolation of the Turkish Cypriot community and, in the interests of working towards a just and lasting Settlement, to promote intercommunal contact. Increasing intra-island trade is an important part of such efforts and we urge both sides to continue to work to remove obstacles to it. FCDO officials have previously facilitated discussions between the Department for Business and Trade and the Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce about the onwards export to the UK of products crossing the Green Line.

I recently met with the Turkish Cypriot leader to discuss the next round of talks at the United Nations later this month. I also met a range of business and civil society representatives from Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities on my visit to Cyprus.

■ **Cyprus: Politics and Government**

Nesil Caliskan:

[\[64358\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what diplomatic steps his Department is taking to support a political solution in Cyprus .

Stephen Doughty:

The UK is fully committed to supporting ongoing UN efforts to reach a Cyprus Settlement. I represented the UK at the informal talks in Geneva in March chaired by the UN Secretary General, where I encouraged all sides to engage constructively towards a Settlement. I welcome the outcomes of the Geneva meeting, notably the Secretary General's appointment of a Personal Envoy on Cyprus and the agreement to six initiatives to build trust between the two communities. Ahead of the New York meeting, I am continuing to encourage all sides to engage constructively. I am in regular contact with the Republic of Cyprus' Foreign Minister Constantinos Kombos. I

also both met Turkish Cypriot leader Ersin Tatar and spoke to opposition leader Tufan Erhürman on 25 June. On 1 July, I met the Secretary General's Personal Envoy, María Ángela Holguín Cuéllar, and we discussed how the UK can best support her efforts to bring progress towards a Settlement. The UK also continues to contribute to peace and stability in Cyprus through our deployment of military personnel to the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP).

■ Developing Countries: Health

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[62543\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he has taken to support developments in (a) women's health and (b) reproductive health services in developing nations.

Stephen Doughty:

The UK uses multiple levers - policy, health and development diplomacy, as well as its Official Development Assistance budget to support developments in women's health and reproductive health services. In April 2025 at the UN Commission on Population and Development, the UK cosponsored the launch of the Global Midwifery Accelerator, encouraging partnerships and investment to end preventable maternal and neonatal deaths. In September 2024, the Government also signed the SheDecides Champion Statement on Safe Abortion Day alongside nine countries to commit to supporting comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights, including safe abortion.

In December 2024, the Prime Minister announced the Grassroots and Counter Rollback Programme. This will strengthen grassroots and national civil society organisations and movements to expand access to women's health and reproductive health services, and counter the rollback on sexual and reproductive health and rights. It focuses on neglected issues, such as safe abortion, and marginalised groups whose rights and access to services are denied or curtailed.

■ Developing Countries: Infectious Diseases

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[62542\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will take steps with Cabinet colleagues to help reduce the prevalence of infectious diseases in developing nations through (a) vaccinations, (b) antiretroviral therapy and (c) other measures.

Stephen Doughty:

The government is committed to global health. It is one of our top priorities in our modernised approach to international development.

Our partnership with Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, is an essential part of that. On 25 June at the Gavi Replenishment Summit, the Foreign Secretary announced a new investment which will support the immunisation of 62.5 million children and save 1.25

million lives. Our partnership with Gavi - £1.25 billion from 2026 to 2030 - will support the UK's health security and jobs in research and development.

The UK is also a founding member of the Global Fund. It has saved 65 million lives and reduced combined deaths across HIV, TB and malaria by 63 per cent since 2002. The UK's current pledge to the 7th replenishment (2023-25) is expected to save approximately 1.3 million lives and avert 28 million new infections across the three diseases. Amongst other things, this £1 billion funding is expected to provide antiretroviral therapy for 1.8 million people, provide Tuberculosis treatment and care for 1.1 million people and distribute 86 million mosquito nets to protect children and families from malaria.

■ Development Aid: Health

Dr Beccy Cooper:

[\[61071\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of the 6.9% reduction in the FCDO's resource budget on the ability to respond to global health threats.

Stephen Doughty:

Over the coming months, we will work through detailed decisions on how the Official Development Assistance budget will be used in future years, informed by internal and external consultation and impact assessments.

The Minister for Development was delighted to attend the Gavi Global Summit in Brussels on 25 June 2025 and announce that the UK will invest an additional £1.25 billion in support of Gavi's 2026 - 2030 programme. This commitment, alongside contributions from international partners, will help deliver Gavi to partner with countries such as yours to immunise up to 500 million more children, save up to 9 million more lives, and generate over \$100 billion in economic benefits.

The UK's commitment to supporting both humanitarian aid and development across the world remains steadfast, despite the reduction to the UK's aid budget. We continue to work across Government and with international partners to deliver on our global health agenda, including how we best mitigate the risks of a range of global health threats. The UK's role in helping secure consensus in May this year on a legally-binding Pandemic Agreement underlines our commitment to tackling these threats.

■ Development Aid: Maternity Services

Monica Harding:

[\[62841\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he plans to take to support global maternal and newborn health initiatives; and whether he plans to change the level of support in the next five years.

Stephen Doughty:

Healthy Women, Children and Newborns (HWCN) is the UK government's approach to help end preventable maternal, child and newborn deaths, supporting global efforts

in line with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets to reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, and to end preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age by 2030. The approach works to strengthen health systems; promote gender equality and comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights; and support improved nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene and climate resilience in health.

The Spending Review 2025 confirmed the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's (FCDO) Official Development Assistance (ODA) budget from 2026/27 onwards. Over the coming months, the Department will undertake detailed planning to determine how this budget will be allocated. The FCDO is reviewing how these allocations will support existing and future commitments, with a continued focus on ensuring all ODA spending delivers value for money and advances the UK's development priorities, including global health.

ODA has always been only one element of the UK's approach, alongside policy and diplomatic efforts. In April 2025, at the UN Commission on Population and Development, the UK cosponsored the launch of the Global Midwifery Accelerator, which aims to shift the dial on midwifery, encouraging partnerships and investment to end preventable maternal and neonatal deaths.

■ Development Aid: Women

Wendy Morton:

[\[62987\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department is taking steps to increase the proportion of official development assistance that is being delivered through grassroots women-led delivery partners.

Stephen Doughty:

Following the Spending Review, detailed decisions on how the Official Development Assistance (ODA) budget will be used are being worked through as part of ongoing resource allocation processes. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) is committed to empowering women and girls around the world through our international work. We remain focused on supporting and partnering with women's rights organisations and movements, recognising that there is strong evidence that grassroots women-led delivery partners play a significant role in securing and advancing women's rights as well as driving social accountability and enhancing public services for marginalised groups. For example, the Grassroots and Counter Rollback Programme (2024-29) announced by the Prime Minister in December 2024 will strengthen local and national civil society organisations and movements to expand access to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), and counter rollback, within their own communities and countries. We will publish the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's final 2025/26 ODA programme allocations in the Annual Report & Accounts in July.

Catherine Fookes:

[\[63956\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that UK ODA spending supports women and girls internationally.

Stephen Doughty:

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) is committed to supporting women and girls around the world. We are strengthening the integration of gender equality across the full breadth of FCDO work and will use our convening power and diplomacy to maximise our impact, including through encouraging multilateral organisations to deliver on their commitments to women and girls.

Following the Spending Review, detailed decisions on how the Official Development Assistance (ODA) budget will be used are being worked through as part of ongoing resource allocation processes. We will publish the FCDO final 2025/26 ODA programme allocations in the Annual Report & Accounts in July.

■ **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Afghanistan**

Wendy Chamberlain:

[\[63052\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the (a) Special Envoy to Afghanistan and (b) Afghanistan department will be located within the Whitehall premises of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

Mr Hamish Falconer:

The Special Envoy to Afghanistan and the Afghanistan department operate from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's headquarters in the UK. This arrangement ensures the UK can continue to engage effectively on Afghanistan policy, including with a broad range of Afghan stakeholders, while maintaining flexibility in how and where that engagement takes place.

■ **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Annual Reports**

Wendy Morton:

[\[63664\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 24 June 2025 to Question 59016 on Development Aid: Education, what his target date is for the publication of the Annual Report and Accounts.

Stephen Doughty:

We expect to publish the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's Annual Report and Accounts on the 21 July.

■ **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Japan**

John Cooper:

[\[63228\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions his Department had with the Scottish Government on the planned visits of

the Scottish Government's (a) Minister for Business and Employment to China and Japan in April 2025 and (b) Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care to Japan in June 2025.

Catherine West:

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and our Embassies in Beijing and Tokyo engaged with Scottish Government officials in support of the visit of the Scottish Government's Minister for Business and Employment to China and the visits of Minister Lochhead and the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care to Japan. Such support is common practice supporting Devolved Government Ministerial visits overseas.

■ **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Pay**

Wendy Morton:

[\[63635\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to address pay grade inflation.

Catherine West:

All roles advertised in the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) are systematically, objectively, and consistently evaluated to ensure there is a fair basis for determining the grading of a role relative to other roles in the organisation and other government departments. Job evaluation and grading conducted by the FCDO supports high-quality and consistent job design, based on objective evidence. Although 'titles' of roles may vary, grading of a position is determined by the responsibilities and job weighting of the role.

We are also looking at ways of incentivising staff to stay in grade longer by financial and learning and development means. This will allow staff to develop deep knowledge and expertise and ensuring they are ready for promotion and able to perform a full range of roles at the higher grade.

■ **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Written Questions**

Mr Mark Francois:

[\[63531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when his Department plans to answer Question 60828, tabled on 18 June 2025.

Stephen Doughty:

My response to Question 60828 was returned on 02 July.

■ **Forests: Conservation and Indigenous Peoples**

Anna Gelderd:

[\[62910\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of his policies to (a) protect global forests, (b) protect and (c) recognise the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities.

Catherine West:

Globally, rates of forest loss are declining but climate change is making forests more vulnerable to threats from wildfire and pests. The UK is committed to the goals of halting and reversing deforestation and supporting the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLC). Through diplomacy, partnerships and development programming, we are working to improve forest governance, sustainable trade and investment, and to mobilise finance to protect and restore the world's major tropical forest basins.

At the Glasgow Climate Conference (COP26) in 2021, the UK mobilised the \$1.7 billion IPLC Forest Tenure Pledge and committed £163 million to advance IPLC tenure rights. UK programmes such as the Amazon Catalyst for Forest Communities (AMCAT) and the Global Land Governance Programme, work with partner governments and IPLCs to strengthen forest governance and national land governance systems. These initiatives have contributed to policy reforms, capacity building, and land registration efforts in multiple countries.

■ Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance: Finance**Wendy Morton:**[\[63668\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he made of the potential impact changes to the level of UK funding for Gavi on vaccine access in low-income countries.

Stephen Doughty:

At the Gavi Summit on 25 June, the Foreign Secretary announced that the UK will invest an additional £1.25 billion in Gavi's 2026 - 2030 programme. This commitment will help deliver Gavi to partner with countries to immunise up to 500 million more children and save up to 8 million more lives. With a smaller aid budget, we are prioritising global health, humanitarian response, and climate and nature - areas where the UK can drive the greatest impact. We are also pushing for multilateral reform to ensure every pound delivers the best outcomes for the world's most vulnerable people.

■ Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria: Finance**Wendy Morton:**[\[62961\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 18 June 2025 to Question 59018 on Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria: Finance, what funding his Department has allocated for the financial year 2025/26.

Stephen Doughty:

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's (FCDO) initial 2025/26 Official Development Assistance (ODA) allocations aim to maximise the FCDO's flexibility ahead of setting final ODA allocations, while meeting legally binding commitments

and existing live contracts and agreements. We will publish our final 2025/26 ODA programme allocations in the Annual Report & Accounts in July.

■ International Assistance: Women

Wendy Morton:

[\[62988\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he taking is to encourage (a) large humanitarian aid donors, (b) multilateral organisations and (c) other partner nations to provide funding for women-led grassroots organisations in official development assistance-recipient countries.

Stephen Doughty:

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) is putting women and girls at the centre of our international work. We remain focused on supporting and partnering with women's rights organisations and movements, recognising that there is strong evidence that grassroots women-led delivery partners play a significant role in securing and advancing women's rights as well as driving social accountability and enhancing public services for marginalised groups.

We will use our convening power and diplomacy to maximise our impact in these areas. This includes by increasing the use of expertise to provide technical assistance to partner governments, and by using our voice to hold multilateral organisations to account on delivery for women and girls.

■ Israel and Occupied Territories: British Nationals Abroad

Daisy Cooper:

[\[60904\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of facilitating repatriation flights for UK nationals in (a) Israel and (b) the Occupied Palestinian Territories, in the context of similar arrangements being make by (i) Czech Republic and (ii) Slovakia.

Mr Hamish Falconer:

The Government has been working around the clock to provide charter flights for those who wished to leave, as soon as it was safe to do so and once airspace reopened. Two charter flights for UK nationals wishing to leave Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories have departed from Tel Aviv and landed safely in the UK. Further flights are being considered, taking into account the demand from British nationals. We urge British nationals in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories to register their presence, follow our travel advice for the latest updates, and follow local authorities' advice.

■ Journalism and Press Freedom: Finance

Rebecca Long Bailey:

[\[63312\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much funding his Department has allocated to (a) the global Media Freedom Coalition

and (b) other country-specific programmes to support (i) media freedom and (ii) the protection of journalists in the 2025-26 financial year.

Rebecca Long Bailey:

[\[63313\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of his Departmental spending plans on the work of the (a) Media Freedom Coalition and (b) other country-specific programmes to promote (i) media freedom and (ii) the protection of journalists.

Rebecca Long Bailey:

[\[63314\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much funding his Department plans to provide to (a) the Media Freedom Coalition and (b) other country-specific programmes to promote (i) media freedom and (ii) the protection of journalists in each of the next four financial years.

Stephen Doughty:

The United Kingdom remains steadfast in its commitment to media freedom internationally, including the protection of journalists. We recognise the vital role journalists play in upholding human rights, supporting effective, accountable and inclusive governance and democratic resilience.

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) supports media freedom initiatives across the world to foster diverse media landscapes. For the 2025-26 financial year, this includes £114,000 to the Media Freedom Coalition (MFC), to finance its secretariat operations. In October 2024 we launched a new media development programme Public Interest Media and Healthy Information Environments (PIMHIE), which helps local media outlets develop new business models and strengthens wider information environments through support for advocacy and policy initiatives to improve the media eco-system. This programme will be supported with £2.25 million in funding this financial year. The FCDO is currently working through future spending plans, including final allocations for this year. It is not yet possible to clarify the exact amount that will be committed to these initiatives in the next four financial years.

The UK also plays a critical role promoting media freedom and the protection of journalists through our multilateral and bilateral diplomacy. We have negotiated resolutions to protect international standards on media freedom and freedom of expression, including in the Human Rights Council and upholding OSCE commitments. The UK co-founded the MFC which has issued a wide range of public statements highlighting situations of concern, as well as issues such as journalists in conflict and journalists in exile. Journalists are protected under international humanitarian law, and the UK actively promotes adherence to these protections.

■ Mexico: Journalism

Fabian Hamilton:

[\[62535\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to to Amnesty International's report entitled No one guarantees my safety: the urgent need to strengthen Mexico's federal policies for the protection of journalists, published in March 2024, what discussions he has had with his Mexican counterpart on (a) strengthening Mexico's Protection Mechanism for Human Rights Defenders and Journalists and (b) the need for its effective implementation.

Catherine West:

The UK is committed to Media Freedom, and to championing democracy and human rights around the world. Independent media is essential to a healthy democracy. The danger facing journalists in Mexico is highly concerning and Amnesty International's report rightly raises concerns about the effectiveness of the Federal Protection Mechanism for Human Rights Defenders and Journalists. Our Embassy in Mexico City works closely with the Mexican Government and civil society organisations on understanding and reducing the risks faced by journalists and human rights defenders due to their professions. Representatives from the UK Government and the Mexican Government held their second Multilateral and Human Rights Dialogue on 13-14 May 2025 where both Governments reaffirmed their commitment to human rights. Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office officials met with representatives of Amnesty International on 17 June in London to understand their concerns around the mechanism.

■ Serbia: Human Rights

Joe Morris:

[\[63866\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with the Serbian government on (a) human, (b) civil and (c) political rights in that country.

Stephen Doughty:

The Foreign Secretary and I underlined the UK's strong support for fundamental rights and the rule of law, and the important role of civil society in Serbia during our respective visits to Belgrade earlier this year. In the context of continuing protests, we continue to stress to the Serbian leadership that, in any society, it is important that the rights to peaceful freedom of expression and assembly are respected. We continue to raise these issues via our Ambassador in Belgrade, and discussions with ministerial counterparts.

■ Torture

Ellie Chowns:

[\[62500\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will take steps to mark UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture; and what

steps he plans to take at the UN General Assembly 2025 to press for international regulations on goods that could be used for torture.

Stephen Doughty:

The UK Government remains committed to preventing torture and tackling impunity for those who torture others. It is essential for safeguarding our security and integral to a fair legal system and the rule of law.

At the UN General Assembly, we will continue to work with allies to encourage all states to uphold their international human rights obligations. As a member of the Global Alliance on Torture Free Trade, the UK supports the initiative to stop the trade of goods used for capital punishment and torture. Goods are subject to export restrictions if they can be used for torture, capital punishment, or cruel and inhuman treatment. Export licence applications are considered against the Strategic Export Licensing Criteria. The Government will not grant a licence for items where we determine there is a clear risk that the items might be used to commit or facilitate internal repression.

■ **Uzbekistan: Religious Freedom**

Carla Lockhart:

[\[63387\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to raise concerns about the treatment of (a) Christians and (b) other religious minorities in Uzbekistan at the United Nations.

Stephen Doughty:

The UK is committed to championing freedom of religion or belief for all. In Uzbekistan's most recent UN Universal Periodic Review, the UK raised concerns regarding upholding freedom of religion or belief amongst other human rights issues. We continue to seek opportunities to raise concerns at the United Nations and in other international fora where appropriate. Our Embassy in Tashkent also regularly raises human rights with the relevant authorities in Uzbekistan and maintains a dialogue with human rights groups in the region.

■ **Western Sahara: Trade Agreements**

Kim Johnson:

[\[61880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make it his policy to hold discussions with Polisario on forthcoming discussions on trade agreements that affect Western Sahara.

Mr Hamish Falconer:

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and The Department for Business and Trade (DBT) frequently engage on how best to deliver the Government's growth mission, including by supporting UK exports and investment across North Africa. DBT's team in Morocco focuses on the business opportunities that will create the most value for the UK economy. Trade agreements negotiated by the UK are conducted with sovereign states and in accordance with international law.

The UK-Morocco Association Agreement, for example, is applied in a manner consistent with the UK's position on the status of Western Sahara. Senior officials meet regularly with Sahrawi representatives to discuss UK policy on Western Sahara, including trade.

On 1 June, the Foreign Secretary endorsed Morocco's autonomy proposal as the most credible, viable and pragmatic basis for a lasting resolution of the Western Sahara conflict. In that context, we continue to support the UN-led process to achieve a just, lasting and mutually acceptable solution, based on compromise, which conforms with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, including the principle of respect for self-determination.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Activated Phosphoinositide 3-kinase Delta Syndrome

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[63528\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what data his Department holds on the current number of people with Activated P13K-delta syndrome.

Ashley Dalton:

[Holding answer 4 July 2025]: NHS England does not hold data on the current number of patients diagnosed with activated P13K-delta syndrome.

■ Breast Cancer: Tomography

John Milne:

[\[64650\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that people diagnosed with invasive lobular breast cancer are routinely offered MRI scans for follow-up monitoring.

Ashley Dalton:

The National Health Service is committed to ensuring that all cancer patients in England, including those with lobular breast cancer, have access to personalised care, including a needs assessment, a care plan, and health and wellbeing information and support.

Treatment for cancer is highly individualised and decisions about cancer treatment, including ongoing monitoring and follow up care, are typically made by clinicians and multidisciplinary teams of healthcare professionals. These decisions are based on medical assessments and what's best for the individual's overall health and wellbeing.

■ Building Alterations and Disability Aids: Finance

Mr Andrew Snowden:

[61908]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to work with the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to improve access to funding for people whose homes require adaptations for health reasons.

Stephen Kinnock:

In England, we continue to fund the locally administered Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) which helps eligible older and disabled people on low incomes to adapt their homes. We have provided an additional £172 million across this and the last financial year to uplift the DFG, which could provide approximately 15,600 home adaptations to give older and disabled people more independence in their homes. This brings the total funding for the DFG to £711 million in 2024/25 and 2025/26.

The Department of Health and Social Care and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government share policy responsibility for the DFG. We also work with other Government departments more widely on relevant issues.

We continue to keep all aspects of the DFG under consideration. Recently, we carried out a review of the upper limit for the DFG and are currently considering the findings.

■ Childbirth: Migrants

Rupert Lowe:

[59206]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what information his Department holds on the number of births in NHS hospitals to mothers not born in the UK in 2023, broken down by the (a) region of the hospital and (b) mother's country of birth.

Karin Smyth:

The Department does not hold data on the number of births in National Health Service hospitals to mothers not born in the United Kingdom.

However, the Office for National Statistics publishes statistics on live births in England and Wales in 2023 by parent's country of birth and area of usual residence. These statistics include live births to the 2.2% of women who did not give birth in an NHS hospital and instead gave birth at home, in a non-NHS establishment, or elsewhere, and are available at the following link:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/livebirths/bulletins/parentscountryofbirthenglandandwales/2023>

■ Department of Health and Social Care: National Security

Ben Obese-Jecty:

[63352]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Number 10 press release entitled UK to deliver on 5% NATO pledge as Government drives greater security for working people, published on 23 June 2025, if he will list his

Department's (a) projects and (b) programmes by directorate that will contribute to the resilience and security element of national security spending for each year between 2025-26 and 2034-35 inclusive; and if he will list the amount of spending for each item (a) in real terms (b) as a proportion of concurrent forecast GDP.

Ashley Dalton:

We will set out detailed plans for meeting this new target at the appropriate time. The Government will continue to report to NATO on delivery against the headline investment pledge and the split, in line with NATO's reporting schedule.

■ **Department of Health and Social Care: Public Expenditure**

James Wild:

[\[61217\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, 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.

Karin Smyth:

The Government has used this Spending Review to maximise the value from every taxpayer pound. Phase 2 of the Spending Review marks the first zero-based review in nearly 18 years, with every line of Government spending scrutinised, to make sure it is delivering value for money.

The Government published robust delivery plans that set out exactly how departments will achieve their efficiency targets. HM Treasury published an overview of departmental efficiency targets and delivery plans for the 2025 Spending Review on 11 June 2025. These are available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/departmental-efficiency-delivery-plans>

■ **Department of Health and Social Care: Translation Services**

Rupert Lowe:

[\[61617\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much their Department has spent on (a) translation and (b) interpretation for languages other than (i) British Sign Language and (ii) languages native to the UK for people contacting (A) their Department and (B) its agencies in 2025.

Karin Smyth:

The Department's expenditure with external suppliers of translation or interpretation services for the 2025 calendar year to date was £7,196, excluding British Sign Language expenditure. In addition, there was no expenditure for languages native to the United Kingdom. This was expenditure mainly for providing accessible, easy to understand versions of technical and legal documents for patients and the public, commissioned by different directorates within the Department.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Written Questions

Helen Morgan:

[\[63701\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to Questions (a) 61929 tabled on 23 June, (b) 61928 tabled on 23 June and (c) 61005 tabled on 18 June 2025.

Karin Smyth:

[Holding answer 4 July 2025]: I refer the hon. Member to the answers I gave on 1 July 2025 to Questions 61005 and 61928, and to the answer I gave on 7 July 2025 to Question 61929.

■ Eating Disorders: Children and Young People

Dr Luke Evans:

[\[61899\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when his Department expects NHS England to publish updated guidance on children's and young people's eating disorders; and which third party bodies were consulted on updates to that guidance.

Stephen Kinnock:

NHS England is in the process of refreshing its guidance on children and young people's eating disorders, which includes increasing the focus on early identification and intervention across the care pathway, including in settings such as schools and primary care. The guidance focuses on community provision of care, whilst ensuring swift access to specialist support as soon as an eating disorder is suspected. It is not yet known when the updated guidance will be published.

The updated guidance is being produced in partnership with a task and finish group comprising of internal and external clinical, academic, and policy stakeholders, including from royal colleges, regional and system children and young people and eating disorder leads and children, young people, and parents with lived experience.

■ Endometriosis: Health Professions

Jim Shannon:

[\[64078\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many endometriosis specialist practitioners there are in the NHS.

Karin Smyth:

The Department does not hold information on the number of endometriosis specialists working in the National Health Service.

■ Eyes: Prosthetics

Tom Morrison:

[\[63959\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that regulatory frameworks at (a) Manchester Royal Eye Hospital and (b) other hospitals do not inhibit patients in obtaining (i) prosthetic eyes and (ii) novelty prosthetics through the National Artificial Eye Service.

Karin Smyth:

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is responsible for the development and implementation of regulations for medical devices placed on the United Kingdom's market, irrespective of the specific hospital in which they are used. All devices, including prosthetic eyes, must meet the relevant requirements of the UK Medical Devices Regulations 2002 (MDR 2002).

The MHRA is developing a future regulatory framework for medical devices that will ensure patients have access to the safe and effective medical devices they need, including prosthetic eyes and other custom-made devices. The first step is the introduction of new Post-Market Surveillance regulations, which came into force in June, putting in place strengthened legal requirements for how manufacturers monitor and report on their devices once they are being used in the real world. We intend to follow this with updates to the MDR 2002, which will enter into force next year, bringing further risk-proportionate improvements to ensure device traceability and patient safety. This will include additional measures that must be taken before a product can be placed on the market, including enhanced requirements for custom-made devices. To support patient access to medical technologies, the MHRA recently consulted on proposals to introduce an international reliance scheme to enable swifter market access for certain devices that have already been approved in a comparable regulator country. The agency will publish a response to that consultation in due course.

■ Fertility: Medical Treatments**Dr Al Pinkerton:**[\[60789\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure equitable access to NHS-funded fertility treatment in Surrey Heath constituency.

Karin Smyth:

We expect integrated care boards to commission fertility services in line with National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines. NICE is currently reviewing the fertility guidelines and will consider whether the current recommendations for access to National Health Service-funded treatment are still appropriate.

In the light of broader pressures on the National Health Service and on-going changes within NHS England, we have been looking again at achievable ambitions to improve access to fertility services and fairness for all affected couples.

Mr Andrew Snowden:[\[61706\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure access to NHS-funded fertility treatment for people in Fylde constituency.

Karin Smyth:

We expect integrated care boards to commission fertility services in line with National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines. NICE is currently reviewing the fertility guidelines and will consider whether the current recommendations for access to National Health Service funded treatment are still appropriate.

In the light of broader pressures on the NHS and on-going changes within NHS England, we have been looking again at achievable ambitions to improve access to fertility services and fairness for all affected couples.

■ Gambling: Mental Health Services**Kirith Entwistle:****[64243]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the proposals on gambling outlined in the letter sent to him by the Health and Social Care Committee on 8 May 2025.

Ashley Dalton:

The Department has responded to the letter from the Health and Social Care Committee in full. A copy of the Department's response is attached.

Attachments:

1. [PQ64243 Document \[DHSC's letter from the Health and Social Care Committee.pdf\]](#)

■ General Practitioners: Finance**Mr Peter Bedford:****[61978]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to conduct a review of the Carr-Hill formula in Primary Care Networks.

Stephen Kinnock:

[Holding answer 1 July 2025]: On 25 June 2025, we announced that the Government's 10-Year Health Plan would address the inequalities in general practice (GP) services across England. We know that the Carr-Hill formula is considered outdated and recognise the importance of ensuring funding for core services is distributed equitably between practices across the country.

The Government will review how health need is reflected in the Carr-Hill funding formula for GPs. Details of the review, including timeframes, will be confirmed in due course.

Sarah Gibson:**[62108]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of GP funding relative to the proportion of NHS patient contact delivered in primary care.

Stephen Kinnock:

The Carr-Hill formula, which underpins capitation payments to general practices (GPs), is designed to ensure that resources are directed to practices based on an estimate of their patient workload and unavoidable practice costs.

It is a workload-based formula, introduced in 2004, that is designed to ensure that practices are reimbursed for their expected workload. Practices are paid more if their registered patients are expected to use services more based on past usage patterns of patients with similar characteristics. It takes into account factors, such as the sex and age of patients, morbidity and mortality, patient list turnover, and unavoidable costs based on geographical area.

We recognise the importance of ensuring that funding for core services is distributed equitably between practices across the country, and will therefore review the Carr-Hill formula. Details of the review, including timeframes, will be confirmed in due course.

We are investing an additional £889 million in GPs to reinforce the front door of the National Health Service, bringing total spend on the GP Contract to £13.2 billion in 2025/26. This is the biggest increase in over a decade, and we are pleased that the General Practitioners Committee England is supportive of the contract changes.

■ General Practitioners: Pay**Michael Payne:**[\[60937\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of whether the 7.4 per cent global sum uplift for 2024-25 will sufficiently cover the accepted recommendation of a 6 per cent pay rise for GP partners and salaried staff.

Stephen Kinnock:

The Government looks to the independent pay review bodies for a pay recommendation for National Health Service staff, including both contractor and salaried general practitioners (GPs). They consider a range of evidence from organisations including the Government, the NHS, and trade unions to reach their recommendations.

The independent review body on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration recommended an uplift of 6% to the pay ranges for salaried GPs, and to GP contractor pay for 2024/25. This recommendation was accepted and a 6% uplift was applied to the pay element of the GP Contract.

■ Hay Fever: Health Services**Carla Lockhart:**[\[63393\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with relevant professional bodies on the (a) clinical management and (b) treatment of hay fever.

Ashley Dalton:

No recent discussions have taken place on the clinical management and treatment of hay fever specifically, however, as part of the Expert Advisory Group for Allergy, Department policy officials meet regularly with the National Allergy Strategy Group, which includes the professional body, the British Society for Allergy and Clinical Immunology. The most recent meeting was in April 2025.

The Expert Advisory Group for Allergy, which was established in 2023, is co-chaired by the Department and the National Allergy Strategy Group, and brings stakeholders together to inform policymaking and to identify key priorities in relation to the holistic care of people with allergies, including those with hay fever. The National Allergy Strategy Group is developing the UK National Allergy Strategy 2025-2035. The Department will carefully consider, and respond to, recommendations in the strategy when we receive it later this year.

Health Services and Social Services: Vaccination**Mr Andrew Snowden:****[63463]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of making frontline health and social care workers eligible for the autumn 2025 covid-19 vaccination programme.

Ashley Dalton:

The Government is committed to protecting those most vulnerable to COVID-19 through vaccination as guided by the independent Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI). On 13 November 2024, the JCVI published advice on the COVID-19 vaccination programme for spring 2025, autumn 2025, and spring 2026. This advice is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccination-in-2025-and-spring-2026-jcvi-advice/jcvi-statement-on-covid-19-vaccination-in-2025-and-spring-2026>

On 26 June 2025, the Government accepted the JCVI's advice that for autumn 2025, a COVID-19 vaccination should be offered to adults aged 75 years old and over, residents in care homes for older adults, and the immunosuppressed aged six months old and over.

In line with JCVI's advice, frontline health and social care workers (HSCWs) and staff working in care homes for older adults will not be eligible for COVID-19 vaccination under the national programme for autumn 2025. This is following an extensive review by the JCVI of the scientific evidence surrounding the impact of vaccination on the transmission of the virus from HSCWs to patients, protection of HSCWs against symptoms of the disease, and staff sickness absences.

In the current era of high population immunity to COVID-19, additional COVID-19 doses provide very limited, if any, protection against infection and any subsequent onward transmission of infection. For HSCWs, this means that COVID-19 vaccination likely now has only a very limited impact on reducing staff sickness absence.

Therefore, the focus of the programme is now on those at greatest risk of serious disease and who are therefore most likely to benefit from vaccination.

HSCWs who are otherwise eligible, for example because of their own health conditions, will continue to be offered the vaccine as part of the National Health Service programme.

■ Health Services: Essex

James McMurdock:

[\[64241\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that people living in Essex who are digitally excluded have full access to the healthcare services they need.

Karin Smyth:

We are working to improve access to digital services, outcomes, and experiences for the widest range of people, based on their preferences. Digital health tools should be part of a wider offering that includes face-to-face support, with appropriate help for people who struggle to access digital services.

NHS England has successfully run a number of programmes to support patients, carers, and health service staff with their digital skills. These include:

- the Digital Health Champions programme, a proof of concept to support citizens who have no or low digital skills with understanding how to access health services online;
- the Widening Digital Participation programme, aimed to ensure more people have the digital skills, motivation, and means to access health information and services online; and
- the NHS App 'Spoken Word' Pilot project, designed to test the efficacy of promoting National Health Service digital health products and services in languages other than English.

NHS England has published a framework for NHS action on digital inclusion and is developing further resources to support practical actions. All programmes are actively considering how they can contribute to improvements in healthcare inequalities and digital inclusion.

■ Health Services: Public Consultation

Joe Robertson:

[\[63456\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the NHS10-Year Health Plan whether discussions have been held with (a) higher socio-economic groups and (b) working people.

Ashley Dalton:

We launched the Change NHS website to ensure that as many people as possible could have their say. As part of this, we asked participants to provide demographic

information to help us hear from a representative cross-section of the public across the engagement as a whole. In tandem, we launched two nationally representative surveys, mirroring the Change NHS website content, to enable us to sense check against the insights from online participants.

At our public deliberative events, we used two channels to recruit the 755 participants to ensure the attendees were representative of the region the event was in. Firstly, two-thirds of the sample were recruited through Sortition, a method of selection designed to be representative of the population with respect to age, gender, ethnicity, location, disability, highest level of education attainment, and by index of multiple deprivation. Secondly, one third of the sample was recruited through specialist recruiters to boost audiences who are typically seldom heard in engagement. This included participants living in the 20% most deprived areas of England and those from ethnic minority backgrounds. We also held deliberative events with health and social care staff.

■ **Hospices: Finance**

Harpreet Uppal:

[61390]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to provide multi-year funding for (a) children's and (b) adult hospices through the forthcoming NHS 10 Year Plan.

Stephen Kinnock:

We want a society where every person receives high-quality, compassionate care from diagnosis through to the end of life. The Government is determined to shift more healthcare out of hospitals and into the community, to ensure patients and their families receive personalised care in the most appropriate setting, and palliative and end of life care services, including hospices, will have a big role to play in that shift.

The 10-Year Health Plan sets out how the Government will fix our broken National Health Service. Too many people towards the end of their lives are not receiving the support and care they deserve. We are determined to change that, by changing the way services operate, rather than by simply funding more of the same.

The plan draws directly from the extensive engagement we have undertaken with the public, patients, staff, and representatives from the palliative care and end-of-life care sector, including those working in the hospice sector. The 10-Year Health Plan reflects the Department's Spending Review settlement.

■ **Hospitals: Transport**

Sarah Bool:

[63829]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the (a) adequacy and (b) accessibility of transport services for (i) older and (ii) disabled patients attending NHS hospital appointments in rural areas.

Sarah Bool:**[63830]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that patients do not (a) miss and (b) cancel hospital appointments due to a lack of (i) affordable and (ii) accessible transport options.

Karin Smyth:

As set out in the Plan for Change, we will ensure that 92% of patients return to waiting no longer than 18 weeks from referral to treatment by March 2029, a standard which has not been met consistently since September 2015. The Government is clear that reforming elective care must be done equitably and inclusively for all adults, children, and young people.

We know there is also geographical variation in waiting times. It is important that patients, including older and disabled patients, do not miss or cancel hospital appointments due to a lack of affordable and/or accessible transport options in their area.

This is why the Elective Reform Plan, published January 2025, committed to reviewing existing national health inequalities improvement initiatives to develop them and increase their uptake. Specifically, the plan committed to reviewing local patient transport services and improving the signposting to and the accessibility of them for patients, to make it easier for vulnerable groups to travel to and access appointments.

This includes improving the accessibility, awareness, and efficiency of The Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme, with a focus on reducing health inequalities and improving the patient experience.

■ Insulin

Katie White:**[64379]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve access to insulin for people who need it.

Karin Smyth:

We are aware of supply issues with a limited number of insulin products, some of which are affected globally, including the discontinuation of Levemir pens and cartridges. We are working intensively with manufacturers of alternative insulin products to help mitigate these issues, including expediting deliveries where possible and ensuring there are sufficient volumes of alternative products to support the market during this time. We have issued communications to National Health Service healthcare professionals, providing comprehensive management guidance and information to allow them to support their patients as well as advise on alternative recommended insulin products. We are continuing to closely monitor the insulin market to ensure access to insulin for patients who need it.

The production of medicines is complex and highly regulated, and materials and processes must meet rigorous safety and quality standards. Medicine supply

problems can occur for a number of reasons, for example due to manufacturing difficulties, regulatory problems, problems with the supply of raw materials, sudden demand spikes, or from issues which are related to the distribution of the product.

While we can't always prevent supply issues from occurring, we have a range of well-established processes and tools to manage them when they arise, to mitigate risks to patients. These include close and regular engagement with suppliers, use of alternative strengths or forms of a medicine to allow patients to remain on the same product, expediting regulatory procedures, adding products to the restricted exports and hoarding list, and issuing NHS communications to provide management advice and information on the issue to healthcare professionals including general practitioners and pharmacists, so they can advise and support their patients.

■ Integrated Care Boards: Redundancy

Helen Morgan:

[\[61929\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 12 June to Question 56902 on Integrated Care Boards: Redundancy, (a) how the costs of restructuring will be met and (b) when the national redundancy scheme will be launched.

Karin Smyth:

[Holding answer 27 June 2025]: Following the Prime Minister's announcement of the abolition of NHS England, we have been clear on the need for a smaller centre, as well as scaling back integrated care board running costs and National Health Service provider corporate costs reductions, in order to reduce waste and bureaucracy. Good progress is being made, with the Department and NHS England having announced voluntary exit or redundancy schemes.

We have recently announced the Spending Review settlement, which provides an additional £29 billion of annual day to day spending in real terms by 2028/29 compared to 2023/24. We are now carefully reviewing how the settlement is prioritised, including making provision for redundancy costs ahead of announcing further redundancy schemes.

■ IVF: Eligibility

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[59758\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with ICBs on removing the need for self-funded artificial insemination before accessing NHS-funded IVF.

Karin Smyth:

We expect integrated care boards to commission fertility services in line with National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines. NICE is currently reviewing the fertility guidelines and will consider whether the current recommendations for access to National Health Service funded treatment are still appropriate.

In the light of broader pressures on the NHS and on-going changes within NHS England, we have been looking again at achievable ambitions to improve access to fertility services and fairness for all affected couples.

■ **IVF: Finance**

Navendu Mishra:

[\[62269\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of NHS Greater Manchester's proposed reduction in the number of NHS-funded IVF cycles from two to one on residents of Stockport.

Karin Smyth:

We expect integrated care boards to commission fertility services in line with National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines. The NICE's Fertility problems: assessment and treatment guideline recommends that the standard for the best outcome is offering three cycles of in vitro fertilisation for women aged between 22 and 39 years old, and one cycle for women aged 40 to 42 years old. NICE is currently reviewing the fertility guidelines and will consider whether the current recommendations for access to National Health Service funded treatment are still appropriate.

In the light of broader pressures on the NHS and on-going changes within NHS England, we have been looking again at achievable ambitions to improve access to fertility services and fairness for all affected couples.

■ **IVF: LGBT+ People**

John Whitby:

[\[60389\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that more same-sex couples can access NHS-funded IVF.

Karin Smyth:

We expect integrated care boards to commission fertility services in line with National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines. NICE is currently reviewing the fertility guidelines and will consider whether the current recommendations for access to National Health Service-funded treatment are still appropriate.

In the light of broader pressures on the NHS and on-going changes within NHS England, we have been looking again at achievable ambitions to improve access to fertility services and fairness for all affected couples.

■ **Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust: Surgery**

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[\[63987\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 30 June 2025 to Question 60419 on Surgery: Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the number of

cancellations of elective operations for non-clinical reasons at (a) Lancashire Teaching Hospitals and (b) hospitals in England.

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[\[63988\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 30 June 2025 to Question 60420 on Health Services: Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the number of cancelled appointments (a) at Lancashire Teaching Hospitals and (b) in England; and what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of missed appointments at Lancashire Teaching Hospitals in the last three years.

Karin Smyth:

As set out in the Plan for Change, we will ensure that 92% of patients return to waiting no longer than 18 weeks from referral to treatment by March 2029, a standard which has not been met consistently since September 2015. The Government is clear that to help achieve this target we must reduce the cancellation of procedures wherever possible.

The Elective Reform Plan, published in January 2025, states that systems and providers will be expected to consistently focus on the smaller aspects of service delivery that can make a big difference in reducing cancellations, including embedding theatre scheduling for elective surgery, and reviewing list allocation for past and upcoming theatre lists.

At the Lancashire Teaching Hospital, a number of initiatives are in place to reduce the number of cancelled appointments, including theatre efficiency and utilisation programmes, focused on the reduction of late starts, improved turnaround times, and reduced overruns. The opening of the new elective admissions unit, the Lancashire Elective Surgery Unit, at the Royal Preston Hospital supports improved admission processes and theatre efficiency. Investment in the Hospital Sterilisation and Decontamination Unit workforce and tracking systems within theatres helps reduce the number of cancellations due to equipment issues. This is in addition to improved administrative processes to ensure care is delivered in the most productive way.

No specific assessment has been made of the cost of cancelled appointments at Lancashire Teaching Hospitals.

■ **Maternal Mortality: Sikhs**

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[61808\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what data his Department holds on maternal mortality in Sikh women.

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[61809\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what data his Department holds on maternal mortality rates in Jewish women.

Karin Smyth:

The Department does not hold data on maternal mortality rates in Jewish or Sikh women. Maternity data broken down by several factors including maternal age and ethnicity is published by NHS England.

■ Maternity Services**Jim Shannon:****[60022]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of providing free hypnobirthing classes to pregnant women.

Karin Smyth:

The majority of trusts already offer free antenatal education services. A National Health Service online tool is available for women and families to find a class local to them. These classes include support for pregnant women to make a birth plan, considering the different arrangements for labour and birth, and the choices available to them.

The Department is working with NHS England on how to improve the quality of these classes, and to ensure that mothers receive information about their choices so they feel empowered throughout their pregnancy journey, and into motherhood.

Pregnant women can discuss additional hypnobirthing courses with their midwife if this is something they wish to explore.

■ Maternity Services: Essex**Mr Richard Holden:****[62224]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps his Department has taken to improve (a) safety and (b) other standards in maternity services at (i) Southend and (ii) Basildon Hospital.

Karin Smyth:

[Holding answer 1 July 2025]: Following the Care Quality Commission (CQC) rating of maternity services at Southend Hospital as Requires Improvement in January 2025, the trust made several changes to improve the quality of the service. These changes include ensuring qualified midwifery staff are always available to support the maternity telephone triage service, foetal monitoring equipment is regularly checked and available, and triage information is displayed in waiting areas to provide further guidance on waiting times.

Basildon Hospital's maternity services were rated as Requires Improvement by the CQC in March 2024. The trust has made several changes to improve the service, including improvements to staffing, with midwifery vacancies now at their lowest ever, ensuring staff complete training and expanding midwifery support for the birth reflections clinic, and around quality assurance, with regular audits conducted and acted upon.

Basildon Hospital maternity services are part of the national Maternity Safety Support Programme, which puts in place oversight from the integrated care board (ICB), NHS England, and the Local Maternity and Neonatal System. This includes support from two Maternity Improvement Advisors, covering all three trust maternity sites. The trust is in the Improvement phase.

While improvements have been made, further work is required. The ICB will continue to support the Trust to enhance safety, care quality, and patient experience.

■ Medical Equipment: Standards

Alex Easton:

[\[64311\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to adopt the provisions set out in Annex XVI of Regulation (EU) 2017/745 on products without an intended medical purpose.

Karin Smyth:

The Government is working to deliver a future regulatory framework for medical devices that prioritises patient and public safety, gives patients access to the medical devices they need, and ensures the United Kingdom remains an attractive market for innovators.

In 2021, the Government consulted on the future regulation of medical devices, including on proposals to bring certain products without an intended medical purpose but with similar risk profiles to medical devices into the scope of the Medical Devices Regulations 2002. We intend to conduct further consultation and engagement with trusted stakeholders on certain aspects of our proposed policy approach to the future enhancement of our regulations, including on our approach to products without an intended medical purpose.

Moreover, the Government is committed to taking action to address longstanding concerns about the safety of the cosmetics sector and is also exploring options for further regulation of cosmetic procedures, including the practitioners who perform them. We will set out the details of our approach in our response to the consultation on the licensing of non-surgical cosmetic procedures in England, which we will publish as soon as possible.

■ Medicine: Postgraduate Education

Sonia Kumar:

[\[63254\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he plans to take in the context of trends in the level of competition for training places in postgraduate medical training.

Karin Smyth:

We are aware that competition ratios for speciality training have grown in recent years, and that this is causing concern across the medical profession.

As set out in our 10-Year Health Plan published on 3 July, we will work across Government to prioritise United Kingdom medical graduates for foundation training, and to prioritise UK medical graduates and other doctors who have worked in the National Health Service for a significant period for specialty training.

We will also ensure that the number of medical specialty training places meets the demands of the NHS in the future. NHS England will work with stakeholders to ensure that any growth is sustainable and focused in the service areas where need is greatest.

We will publish a new 10 Year Workforce Plan later this year, to deliver the transformed health service we will build over the next decade, and treat patients on time again.

■ **Mental Health Services: Children and Young People**

Calum Miller:

[\[63243\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that parliamentary scrutiny of child and young people's mental health policy is supported by transparent ministerial accountability in the House of Commons.

Stephen Kinnock:

[Holding answer 3 July 2025]: Ministers in the Department take their accountability to Parliament very seriously and we welcome the role of hon. Members in championing the interests of children, young people and their families, raising awareness of the issues affecting their mental health and in scrutinising our policies and holding the Government to account.

Parliamentary scrutiny of the Government's policies on children and young people's mental health is evidenced through our written ministerial statements, including the statement made on 27 March 2025 on Mental Health: Expected Spend for 2025-26, our contributions to debates such as the one on Eating Disorder Awareness that took place on 1 April 2025, in our evidence to committees, our responses to Members' oral and written questions and through the House's scrutiny of the Mental Health Bill during its first and second readings and its recently completed committee stage.

■ **Motor Neurone Disease: Health Services**

Carla Lockhart:

[\[63383\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with Devolved administrations on improving support for people living with motor neurone disease.

Ashley Dalton:

My rt. Hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, meets regularly with counterparts across the devolved administrations. We have set up a United Kingdom-wide Neuro Forum, facilitating formal, biannual meetings across the Department, NHS England, the devolved administrations and health services, and the Neurological Alliances of all four nations. The new forum, which met for the first time

on 10 March 2025, brings key stakeholders together, to share learnings across the system and discuss challenges, best practice examples, and potential solutions for improving the care of people with neurological conditions, including motor neurone disease.

■ National Maternity and Neonatal Taskforce

Mr Richard Holden:

[\[62251\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the national investigation into NHS maternity and neonatal services announced on 23 June 2025 will be empowered to recommend (a) regulatory and (b) structural reform of the Care Quality Commission in the context of continued failings in maternity units at (i) Southend Hospital, (ii) Basildon Hospital and (iii) other hospitals rated as Requires Improvement.

Karin Smyth:

My Rt Hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care announced an independent investigation into National Health Service maternity and neonatal services to understand the systemic issues behind why so many women, babies, and families experience unacceptable care. It will look at up to 10 maternity and neonatal units, international evidence, adoption of best practice, and a system-wide investigation of maternity and neonatal care. This will include bringing together lessons from past reviews. The investigation will produce, by December 2025, one clear set of national actions, that will take primacy over previous recommendations. These actions will drive the improvements needed to ensure high quality, safe care across maternity and neonatal services, and that women and families are listened to.

The terms of reference for the investigation are still under development with stakeholders and families, and will be released in due course.

Callum Anderson:

[\[62426\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what governance arrangements will oversee the (a) reporting lines and (b) accountability mechanisms of the National Maternity and Neonatal Taskforce.

Karin Smyth:

The Government is establishing a National Maternity and Neonatal Taskforce, chaired by my Rt Hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, and made up of a panel of experts as well as family, charity, and staff representatives. Bringing family voices to the heart of this work, the taskforce will co-produce a national plan to drive improvements across maternity and neonatal care.

The terms of reference are still under development with stakeholders and families, and will be released in due course.

■ NHS: Apprentices**Blake Stephenson:** [\[64214\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many NHS employees have a level 7 apprenticeship qualification.

Karin Smyth:

The Department does not hold the information requested.

■ NHS: Charities**Mr Andrew Snowden:** [\[60641\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support his Department offers to local NHS charities.

Karin Smyth:

The Department does not provide support to local National Health Service charities.

■ NHS: Endometriosis**Alex McIntyre:** [\[63871\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to support NHS staff with endometriosis.

Karin Smyth:

The Government recognises the challenges faced by women with endometriosis and the impact it has on their lives, their relationships, and their participation in education and within the National Health Service workforce.

We are improving workplace support for women with endometriosis through a number of measures in the Employment Rights Bill. Strengthening statutory sick pay arrangements, making flexible working available to more people, and opening up conversations about women's health through employer action plans will benefit all employees managing the condition.

In terms of supporting NHS staff with endometriosis, NHS trusts are expected to have local policies and procedures in place to support staff who have long-term health conditions and should be taking a proactive approach to supporting them. NHS England has made available tools and resources to support line managers to hold meaningful conversations with staff to discuss their emotional and psychological health and wellbeing.

Staff in need of additional support can also access their employer's occupational health service or employee support programme.

■ NHS: Re-employment**Rupert Lowe:** [\[59644\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to bring retired NHS staff back into service.

Karin Smyth:

NHS England operates Return to Practice for Nurses, Midwives and Health and Care Professions Council professionals, which is for those wanting to return after their professional registration has lapsed. This includes retired National Health Service staff going back into service.

NHS Pension Scheme rules have been changed over recent years to make returning to service and contributing extra hours more attractive.

■ **NHS: Sick Leave**

Dame Harriett Baldwin: **[62630]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to paragraph 2.4 of the Spending Review Departmental Efficiency Plans, published on 11 June 2025, what the sickness absence rate was for NHS entities included in the NHS Productivity Plan as a percentage in each of the last five financial years.

Karin Smyth:

Sickness absence rates are published monthly and are available on the NHS England Digital website, at the following link:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/nhs-sickness-absence-rates>

The NHS Productivity Plan referenced includes all National Health Service hospital and community health services (HCHS), which is the same remit as the published sickness absence rates.

The following table shows the average annual sickness absence rates across all HCHS in England for the last five financial years for which full-year data is available:

FINANCIAL YEAR	ANNUAL SICKNESS ABSENCE RATE FROM APRIL TO MARCH
2023/24	4.9%
2022/23	4%
2021/22	5.4%
2020/21	4.7%
2019/20	4.5%

There are some indications that sickness absence across the economy remained high throughout 2023/24 and 2024/25, though data for individual sectors of the economy is limited. Sickness absence in the NHS, however, is lower at present compared to the heights of 2022/23.

■ NHS: Women

Mr Andrew Snowden:

[\[58090\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the Supreme Court judgement in the case of *For Women Scotland v The Scottish Ministers* of 16 April 2025 on the provision of NHS services in (a) England and (b) Fylde.

Karin Smyth:

The Supreme Court's ruling about the meaning of 'sex' in the *For Women Scotland Ltd v The Scottish Ministers* case has provided much needed confidence and clarity to service providers. We expect all public service bodies to act on the clarity that the ruling provides

We are considering the impact of the ruling. While the implementation of the ruling may generate operational challenges or have financial implications, it is not beyond the ability of the National Health Service to find a path that resolves these issues in a way that ensures the safety and dignity of all patients. We will support the NHS in England in doing so.

■ Ovarian Cancer: Research

Carla Lockhart:

[\[63399\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to increase research funding for (a) ovarian, (b) uterine and (c) other gynaecological cancers.

Ashley Dalton:

The Department invests in research through its research delivery arm, the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR). In the period 2020/21 to 2024/25, the NIHR's Academy and other programmes invested approximately £39 million across 50 gynaecological cancer research projects. The following table shows the number of awards and the value of the awards for each gynaecological cancer type:

GYNAECOLOGICAL CANCER

TYPE	NUMBER OF AWARDS	AWARDS VALUE
Cervical cancer	17	£15,200,000
Ovarian cancer	17	£6,300,000
Vulval cancer	1	£3,700
Womb (uterine) cancer	10	£3,600,000
More than 1 gynaecological type	5	£10,000,000
Grand total	50	£39,000,000

Additionally, the NIHR's Research Delivery Network, which enables the health and care system to attract, optimise, and deliver research across England, and has supported 123 commercial studies and 148 non-commercial studies for gynaecological cancers covering the same period.

The NIHR funds research in response to proposals received. The NIHR continues to welcome high quality, high impact funding applications for research into any aspect of human health and care, including all gynaecological cancers.

■ Perinatal Mortality: Ethnic Groups

Juliet Campbell:

[\[61856\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to reduce incidents of stillbirths amongst black and Asian families.

Karin Smyth:

The Government recognises that losing a baby or pregnancy loss is extremely difficult for parents and families. We are determined to make sure all women and babies receive safe, personalised, and compassionate care, regardless of their background, location, or ethnicity.

While the vast majority of births in England are safe, the stark inequalities in maternity outcomes demonstrate that there are deep-seated issues across maternity and neonatal services.

To address these and other issues within maternity and neonatal care, a rapid independent investigation into National Health Service maternity and neonatal services is being launched. This will look at the systemic issues behind why so many women, babies, and families experience unacceptable care, taking into account findings from previous maternity reviews.

This includes the Maternity Outcome Signalling System, a new system that will monitor the rates of term stillbirth, neonatal death, and brain injury. It will immediately flag unusually high rates to prompt a rapid review of any safety concerns. We have already made progress in this area, for example through the Saving Babies Lives Care Bundle, which provides maternity units with detailed guidance to reduce stillbirths, neonatal brain injury, neonatal deaths, and preterm births.

■ Pharmacy: Finance

Marie Goldman:

[\[60187\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of the Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework funding settlement for 2024-25 and 2025-26 on future levels of pharmacy closures.

Stephen Kinnock:

The Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework funding settlement for 2024/25 and 2025/26 provides the largest uplift in funding of any part of the National Health

Service representing a 19.7% increase, with the total of £3.073 billion committed to community pharmacies.

The individual financial positions of pharmacy contractors are not visible to the Government. It is therefore not possible for the impact on pharmacy closures to be quantified. However, we expect that this significant increase in funding will support contractors and begin to stabilise a sector that has been neglected for too long. This settlement was agreed with Community Pharmacy England as the representatives for the community pharmacy sector.

■ Pharmacy: Training

Helen Morgan:

[\[61367\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many foundation pharmacist training places have a named designated prescribing practitioner confirmed in the ORIEL recruitment system in 2025.

Karin Smyth:

[Holding answer 25 June 2025]: All training posts in the National Recruitment Scheme for the 2025/26 training year were required to declare that they would provide access to a Designated Prescribing Practitioner (DPP) for prescribing supervision as part of their agreement to the Terms of Participation.

NHS England requires that DPP information is submitted within 13 weeks of the trainee pharmacist starting in post. Trainee pharmacists will start in post from July 2025. NHS England is therefore, currently in the process of contacting training sites and requesting details of all supervisors, including Designated Supervisors and DPPs.

It should be noted that only the training sites hosting trainee pharmacists that have graduated from a Master of Pharmacy (MPharm) degree against the 2021 learning outcomes are required to have a DPP. Those who have completed an MPharm which meets the previous (2011) standards for education and training or are studying on an Overseas Pharmacists Assessment Programme course, must take a separate accredited independent prescribing course.

■ Physiotherapy: Staff

Jodie Gosling:

[\[64103\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the level of need for additional (a) physiotherapists and (b) rehabilitation support workers in (i) the NHS and (ii) independent sectors.

Jodie Gosling:

[\[64113\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the number of additional physiotherapists required to support people (a) with long-term health conditions and (b) who are disabled get back to work.

Karin Smyth:

The Department has made no specific assessment of the additional need for physiotherapists and rehabilitation support workers in the National Health Service and independent sectors.

The Department will publish a 10 Year Workforce Plan to create a workforce ready to deliver a transformed service. They will be more empowered, more flexible, and more fulfilled. The 10 Year Workforce Plan will ensure the NHS has the right people in the right places, with the right skills to care for patients, when they need it.

■ Primary Care: Veterans**Mr Andrew Snowden:****[63087]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what processes are in place to ensure that veterans self-identifying in NHS primary care settings are effectively referred to VALOUR centres.

Stephen Kinnock:

In May 2025, the Government announced VALOUR, a new programme which will establish VALOUR support centres and improve the coordination of services at a national, regional, and local level, making it easier for veterans to access the care and support available to them.

NHS England is working with the Office for Veterans' Affairs to develop processes to ensure that all National Health Service general practices are made aware of VALOUR centres, how referrals will work, and how veterans are able to access them.

■ Prostate Cancer: Health Education**Mr Calvin Bailey:****[63475]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of launching a prostate cancer awareness campaign for people at high risk of prostate cancer through his forthcoming National Cancer Plan.

Ashley Dalton:

The Government understands that more needs to be done to improve outcomes for people at high risk of prostate cancer.

NHS England runs Help Us Help You campaigns to increase knowledge of cancer symptoms and to address the barriers to acting on them, to encourage people to come forward as soon as possible to see their general practitioner. The campaigns focus on a range of symptoms, as well as encouraging body awareness to help people spot symptoms across a wide range of cancers at an earlier point.

The Department continues to advise patients to follow National Health Service guidance on signs and symptoms of several types of cancer, including prostate cancer. This advice is available publicly on the NHS.UK website, at the following link:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/prostate-cancer/>

The forthcoming National Cancer Plan for England is in development and will include further details on how we will improve diagnostics, access to treatments, and outcomes for all tumour types, including prostate cancer. As such, the Department has no current plans for a separate assessment of the merits of a prostate awareness campaign.

■ **Psychiatric Hospitals: Autism and Learning Disability**

Shockat Adam:

[\[62381\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether each Integrated Care System is required to reduce the number of (a) people with a learning disability and (b) autistic people from their area in mental health hospitals by 10 per cent within 2025-26.

Stephen Kinnock:

[Holding answer 1 July 2025]: National Health Service planning guidance for 2025/26 includes a focus on improving care for people with a learning disability and autistic people and contains the objective to deliver a minimum 10% reduction in the use of mental health inpatient care for people with a learning disability and autistic people in 2025/26. As part of operational planning, each integrated care board (ICB) is expected to: reduce the number of adults with a learning disability, including those who may also be autistic, in mental health inpatient care by 20% from a 31 March 2024 baseline by 31 March 2026; and reduce the number of autistic adults, with no learning disability, in mental health inpatient care by 20% from a 31 March 2024 baseline by 31 March 2026.

The baseline is from Assuring Transformation data and was extracted from 31 March 2024. The expectation is that ICBs will have been working towards achieving a 10% reduction from the 31 March 2024 baseline by 31 March 2025 and will build on this during 2025/26. They are therefore expected to achieve a 20% reduction from the 31 March 2024 baseline by 31 March 2026.

■ **Puberty Suppressing Hormones: Young People**

Jonathan Hinder:

[\[64385\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress has been made by the expert panel of clinical specialists on its review of the harms caused to young people by the provision of unregulated cross-sex hormones by private providers; and what his expected timetable is for publication of the panel's report.

Karin Smyth:

[Holding answer 7 July 2025]: The Government is continuing its work with the National Health Service to reform gender services, to ensure young people receive timely, holistic care and support, while reviewing the use of cross-sex hormones in line with recommendation eight of the Cass Review.

The Cass Review said that NHS England should review its policy on cross-sex hormones. The review noted that the option to provide cross-sex hormones is available for patients aged 16 years old and over, but that "extreme caution" was

recommended along with a “strong clinical rationale for providing hormones before the age of 18”. In line with Dr Cass’s recommendations, every case for treatment is now discussed by a national multi-disciplinary team, and NHS England is reviewing its clinical commissioning policy on cross-sex hormones. A public consultation on the evidence is anticipated to take place this summer, and an updated policy is expected to be in place by April 2026.

With regard to private prescribing, a working group has been established by NHS England to provide advice to Government officials and the Chief Pharmaceutical Officer. The remit of the working group is to provide practical advice on the operational consequences of introducing any restrictions on private prescribing and advice on how to manage any risks to patients. The working group is made up of consultant endocrinologists, pharmacy and primary care leads, and national commissioners.

It is not the working group’s role to decide whether restrictions on private prescribing should, or should not, be introduced. Neither is the group providing advice on the future use of cross-sex hormones by NHS clinicians. The Department will use the outputs of the working group to inform ongoing policy development.

■ Radioisotopes: Shortages

James Naish:

[63131]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what information his Department holds on the number of appointments in (a) Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust, (b) the East Midlands and (c) the UK that have been delayed due to a lack of availability of medical radioisotopes in 2025 to date.

Karin Smyth:

While we do not typically hold this information centrally, the Department is aware that the number of appointments delayed related to radioisotope supply issues at the Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust for the period of January 2025 to May 2025 consist of:

- 68 patients delayed for a fluorodeoxyglucose (F-18 FDG) positron emission tomography/computed tomography scan;
- 48 patients delayed for a F-18 FDG, prostate-specific membrane antigen positron emission tomography/computed tomography scan; and
- 57 patients delayed across multiple nuclear medicine tests.

We do not hold the information for the East Midlands more widely, or for the United Kingdom as a whole. The Department regularly engages with suppliers, specialist clinicians, the British Nuclear Medicine Society, and the UK Radiopharmacy Group to support the continued supply of medical radioisotopes for National Health Services. The Department continues to work with the NHS and other parts of the Government to better understand future need for medical radioisotopes.

■ Social Services: Finance

Helen Morgan: [\[61925\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the adequacy of funding provided for social care in the Spending Review 2025, in the context of estimated demographic trends in the next three years.

Stephen Kinnock:

The Government assessed the impact of the cost pressures facing adult social care as part of the wider consideration of local government spending within the Spending Review process in 2025. This assessment took account of a range of factors, including demographic pressures, that could affect the delivery of social care services.

The Spending Review process allows for an increase of over £4 billion of funding available for adult social care in 2028/29 compared to 2025/26. This includes additional grant funding, growth in other sources of income available to support adult social care, and an increase to the National Health Service contribution to adult social care via the Better Care Fund, in line with the Department's Spending Review settlement.

■ Social Services: Pay

Zöe Franklin: [\[62859\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to begin consulting with adult social care providers on proposals for a Fair Pay Agreement.

Stephen Kinnock:

[Holding answer 3 July 2025]: In England, we are committed to consulting on the design of the Fair Pay Agreement process, and we aim to begin a public consultation after the Employment Rights Bill receives Royal Assent later this year. We expect the consultation to run for 12 weeks, and we will work with partners to reach as much of the sector as possible.

We have already begun engaging with sector representatives in England through the Department's Fair Pay Agreement Working Group and policy specific task and finish groups, which will help to inform policy options for a public consultation on the design of the Fair Pay Agreement process.

■ Social Services: Reform

Helen Morgan: [\[60143\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many officials in his Department are assigned to work on the social care review.

Stephen Kinnock:

[Holding answer 20 June 2025]: There are 11 officials currently assigned by the Department to work on the independent commission into adult social care, chaired by

Baroness Louise Casey. This includes Baroness Casey's independent secretariat team and a small departmental sponsorship function.

■ Sodium Valproate and Surgical Mesh Implants

Tessa Munt:

[\[63305\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 23 July 2024 to Question 327 on Sodium Valproate and Surgical Mesh Implants, how many meetings have been held with the Patient Safety Commissioner on the recommendations of the Hughes report.

Ashley Dalton:

Departmental officials and ministers have met with the Patient Safety Commissioner on several occasions, and we are happy to continue to engage with the Patient Safety Commissioner on this matter.

The Government is carefully considering the work by the Patient Safety Commissioner and her report, which set out options for redress for those harmed by valproate and pelvic mesh. This is a complex issue involving input from different Government departments. The Government will provide a further update to the Patient Safety Commissioner's report in due course.

■ Sodium Valproate: Compensation

James Wild:

[\[63322\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether funding for valproate (a) financial redress and (b) interim payments were included in the Spending Review 2025.

James Wild:

[\[63323\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Spending Review 2025, published on 11 June 2025, what recent discussions his Department have had with HM Treasury on the provision of funds for valproate (a) financial redress and (b) interim payments.

Ashley Dalton:

The Government is carefully considering the work done by the Patient Safety Commissioner and her report, which set out options for redress for those harmed by valproate and pelvic mesh. This is a complex issue involving input from different Government departments. The Government will provide a further update to the Patient Safety Commissioner's report in due course.

■ Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme: Coronavirus

Sir Christopher Chope:

[\[64393\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer 30 June 2025 of Question 58911 on Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme: Coronavirus, if he will

set out a timetable for completion of the (a) consideration of options and (b) recommendations for change.

Ashley Dalton:

I reiterate my sincere condolences to individuals, and their families, who have experienced harm following vaccination.

At this stage, I am not in a position to comment on timelines for the consideration of options for reform or recommendations for change. Ministers continue to consider options covering both potential reforms to the Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme, and the situation of those who have suffered harm following COVID-19 vaccination.

In parallel, the Department has been working with the NHS Business Services Authority, the administrators of the scheme, to take steps to improve the Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme and process claims at a faster rate.

HOME OFFICE

■ Asylum: Employment

Lincoln Jopp:

[\[905036\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to help prevent people residing in asylum hotels from taking up illegal employment.

Dame Angela Eagle:

This Government is determined to tackle illegal working, and since coming to office, we have increased the number of raids, arrests and fines against offenders to their highest level in almost a decade.

We have also secured pledges from delivery firms to increase verification checks on their drivers, and introduced new legislation in the Border Security Bill to make employment checks mandatory in the gig economy. It remains very disappointing that the party opposite chose to vote against those crucial measures.

■ Asylum: Northern Ireland

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[63990\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answers of 30 June to Questions 60413 and 61747 on Asylum: Northern Ireland, whether she plans to purchase (a) tower blocks and (b) student accommodation to house people claiming asylum in Northern Ireland.

Dame Angela Eagle:

I refer the Hon Member to the Answer he received on 23 June 2025 to UIN 60413.

■ Asylum: Standards

Mr Will Forster:

[63265]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that asylum interviews are conducted (a) in full and (b) without unnecessary delay.

Dame Angela Eagle:

Asylum interviews are conducted in line with the published guidance available here:

[Conducting asylum interviews: caseworker guidance - GOV.UK](#).

■ Biometrics

Charlie Dewhirst:

[63441]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of the use of facial recognition cameras in public places on civil liberties.

Charlie Dewhirst:

[63471]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what guidance her Department has issued to (a) police forces and (b) local authorities on the use of facial recognition cameras in public places.

Dame Diana Johnson:

When using facial recognition technology, all police forces and local authorities must comply with data protection, equalities and human rights laws. They must also comply with the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice.

Police forces are also required to comply with any published policing policies and in the case of live facial recognition, follow the College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice.

The government wants to ensure that facial recognition operates on a firm footing, providing maximum confidence to both the public and the police on the use of these tools. To that end, I have been listening carefully to stakeholders and partners and have held a series of roundtables with policing, civil society groups, regulators and others. Formal evaluation work on the impact of the technology is also underway, and we intend to set out our plans in the coming months.

■ Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Commissioner

Martin Wrigley:

[63417]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of abolishing the Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Commissioner.

Dame Diana Johnson:

As the directly elected representative for policing in their area, Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) have an important local role acting as the voice of the public

and victims in policing, holding Chief Constables to account and leading local partnerships to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour.

In her Written Ministerial Statement of 19 November 2024 (HCWS232), the Home Secretary announced her intention to present a White Paper to Parliament this year on reforms to deliver more effective and efficient policing, to rebuild public confidence and to deliver the Government's Safer Streets mission. We will consider the role of PCCs in local accountability and preventing crime as part of wider reforms to the policing system and we will set out our plans in due course.

■ Female Genital Mutilation

Sarah Owen:

[63320]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much funding her Department has (a) allocated to and (b) spent on prevention of female genital mutilation in each financial year since 2014-15.

Jess Phillips:

The Government is tackling female genital mutilation (FGM) through its landmark mission to halve violence against women and girls in a decade.

We will not tolerate a practice that can cause extreme and lifelong physical and psychological suffering to women and girls. The Government's approach is focused on preventing these crimes from happening, supporting and protecting survivors and those at risk, and bringing perpetrators to justice.

The below outlines the annual spending allocated by the Home Office to prevent and tackle FGM in England and Wales in each financial year since 2015. The Home Office does not hold funding information for earlier than 2015/2016. This funding was used for a range of activity to tackle FGM, including victim support helplines, training courses on FGM for frontline personnel, academic research and communication campaigns:

FY 2015-2016: £2,718,000

FY 2016-2017: £1,664,000

FY 2017-2018: £2,358,768

FY 2018-2019: £2,403,768

FY 2019-2020: £1,023,768

FY 2020-2021: £334,234

FY 2021-2022: £211,020

FY 2022-2023: £259,568

FY 2023-2024: £1,170,209

FY 2024-2025: £1,108,599

■ Home Office: Written Questions

Mr Andrew Snowden:

[62767]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 25 June 2025 to Question 60629 on Undocumented Migrants: Lancashire, if she will make an estimate of the cost of answering that Question.

Dame Angela Eagle:

The Guide to Parliamentary Work, which is published online and available [here](#), sets out that there is an advisory cost limit known as the disproportionate cost threshold. The current disproportionate cost threshold is £850; the limit does not apply to oral questions.

■ Human Rights and Slavery: Supply Chains

Martin Rhodes:

[R] [63486]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Government response to House of Lords Modern Slavery Act 2015 Committee, Report of Session 2024-25, The Modern Slavery Act 2015: Becoming World-Leading Again, what progress she has made on assessing the best ways to prevent environmental harms, modern slavery and human and labour rights abuses in both private and public sector supply chains, including effective due diligence rules.

Jess Phillips:

In the recently published Trade Strategy, the Government announced a review of its approach to Responsible Business Conduct policy. The review will consider the effectiveness of the current UK regime and alternative means of supporting responsible business practices, including consideration of mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence laws and import controls on goods made by forced labour. The Department for Business and Trade will engage regularly with stakeholders to develop findings and provide updates.

Under Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, businesses who operate in the UK and who have a turnover of £36 million or more are required to report annually on how they have prevented slavery in their operations and supply chains. Alongside the broader Responsible Business Conduct policy review, we are considering how we can strengthen Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, including: the reporting requirements, the turnover threshold, and penalties for non-compliance. We will set out the next steps more broadly in due course. Significant long-term reform will take time, and in the interim the Home Office published updated Section 54 statutory guidance in March. This new guidance is more comprehensive, practical and ambitious – calling on businesses to go further and faster.

■ Neighbourhood Policing

Mr Andrew Snowden:

[63467]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to (a) help improve (i) public confidence and (ii) perceptions of fairness in policing

and (b) measure progress on the implementation of the measures set out in the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee.

Dame Diana Johnson:

This Government's Safer Streets mission is focused on restoring neighbourhood policing, halving serious violence and rebuilding trust and confidence in policing and the criminal justice system.

The Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee was developed through close working with the National Police Chief's Council (NPCC) and other policing leads, and we continue to work closely with them to ensure it is delivered across all police forces in England and Wales.

The Home Office has also worked with the College of Policing and the NPCC to develop a performance framework which outlines to forces and the public the performance measures which are being assessed to monitor the progress of the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee.

The framework is attached at the following link [Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee performance framework - GOV.UK](#)

■ **Police: Recruitment**

Mr Andrew Snowden:

[63465]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many additional (a) neighbourhood police officers, (b) police community support officers and (c) special constables have been recruited since the start of this Parliament.

Mr Andrew Snowden:

[63466]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether he plans to publish force-level recruitment figures for neighbourhood policing roles.

Dame Diana Johnson:

The Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee will deliver 13,000 additional policing personnel into neighbourhood teams by the end of this parliament, including 3000 additional neighbourhood officers by Spring 2026. All forces have agreed their delivery plans, and force-level recruitment projections are published here: [Neighbourhood policing grant allocations and projections: 2025 to 2026 - GOV.UK..](#)

The number of neighbourhood police personnel as of 31 March 2025 will be published in the Home Office's upcoming biannual 'Police Workforce Statistics, England and Wales' publication. This release will provide a comprehensive overview of force-level workforce composition.

We will publish progress against neighbourhood policing force delivery plans in due course.

■ Refugees: Community Development

Laura Kyrke-Smith:

[905037]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to support the integration of refugees.

Seema Malhotra:

The Government is committed to ensuring that refugees can integrate in the UK. The Immigration White Paper introduced reforms designed to improve integration and community cohesion. Further details will be set out in due course.

Ministers across Government, including MHCLG, DWP and DfE, are working closely together to improve outcomes for refugees, the economy and society as a whole.

■ Solar Power and Wind Power: Migrant Workers

Nick Timothy:

[61566]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many visas were issued for workers in the (a) wind and (b) solar industry in each year since 2015.

Seema Malhotra:

Available data relating to work visas is routinely published in the [Immigration system statistics](#) release.

■ Spiking

Joe Robertson:

[63457]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessments her Department has made of trends in the number of spiking incidents.

Jess Phillips:

Spiking is often underreported and this can make analysis of trends difficult.

In order to improve our understanding of trends, from April 2026 offences which involve spiking will be added to the Home Office's Annual Data Requirement. This is the formal mechanism through which the Home Office collects data from all police forces in England and Wales. This will ensure that the Home Office has access to formal, standardised and regular reporting from the police on offences involving spiking.

Joe Robertson:

[63458]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what training is provided to frontline police officers to improve the (a) identification and (b) handling of spiking cases.

Jess Phillips:

The Government have introduced through the Crime and Policing Bill a new criminal offence for spiking, to help police better respond to this crime.

The Home Office has funded specialist spiking training for staff in the hospitality industry to ensure they have the skills to better detect spiking incidents, support victims who have been spiked and support law enforcement with evidence collection.

The Home Office is currently working with the police-led National Centre for Violence Against Women and Girls and Public Protection (NCVPP) on the development of police guidance across a range of VAWG crimes, including spiking.

Joe Robertson:

[\[63459\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to improve coordination between (a) healthcare providers and (b) law enforcement in responding to suspected spiking incidents.

Jess Phillips:

It is crucial that all organisations that may be involved in supporting victims of spiking and collecting evidence (including those in the healthcare, hospitality and education sectors) do so in a joined-up way.

The Home Office is currently working with the police-led National Centre for Violence Against Women and Girls and Public Protection (NCVPP) to assess options for schemes that promote a greater joining up between the police and other stakeholders on the collection of evidence samples from victims.

■ UK Visas and Immigration: Dual Nationality

Apsana Begum:

[\[61950\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people with dual nationality have reported problems using the UK Visas and Immigration systems.

Apsana Begum:

[\[61951\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that people with dual citizenship can obtain e-visas that recognise both nationalities.

Seema Malhotra:

British citizens who are also nationals of another country (excluding Ireland), who hold and use a valid British passport for travel and status checks do not need and are not eligible for an eVisa, since they are exempt from UK immigration control.

If someone has dual nationality and neither of those nationalities is British or Irish, they must ensure that they add the passport they will use to travel to their UKVI account. If they have a passport for both nationalities, they can add both to their UKVI account.

Although a person can link more than one ID document to their UKVI account, their eVisa will display a single nationality only. This will be the nationality for the most recent ID document uploaded to their UKVI account and used to log-in to their UKVI account.

If they have already added a second ID document and want their other nationality to appear on their eVisa, they can update this through their UKVI account on GOV.UK. After logging in, they should select 'Add an identity document', then choose 'Yes, my name, nationality or date of birth has changed', and follow the remaining steps, which include posting their passport to the Home Office. Once the change is approved, the nationality from that ID document will appear on their eVisa and will be used to log in to their UKVI account.

The information requested about the number of people who are dual nationals and have reported issues with their eVisas is not currently available from published statistics, and the relevant data could only be collated and verified for the purpose of answering this question at disproportionate cost.

■ Visas: English Language

Zöe Franklin:

[\[62874\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she plans to take with Cabinet colleagues to help ensure that there is adequate (a) capacity and (b) resources for anticipated levels of demand for English-language classes, in the context of proposed requirements for English language proficiency for visa applications.

Seema Malhotra:

I refer the Hon Member to Paragraphs 244-258 of the Immigration White Paper, published on 12 May 2025, which addresses these issues in detail. Further updates will be provided in due course.

■ Visas: Families

Llinos Medi:

[\[64150\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, in reference to the Migration Advisory Committee report published on 10 June 2025, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of (a) revising and (b) lowering the family visa financial requirements.

Seema Malhotra:

On 10 June the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) published their independent review of the financial requirements across the family routes. The report is now under review, and the Home Office will respond in due course.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Affordable Housing: Finance

David Simmonds:

[\[60128\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the Spending Review 2025, CP1336, of 11 June 2025, how much (a) capital

and (b) revenue funding is being allocated to the Affordable Housing Programme, in each of the 10 years of that programme.

Matthew Pennycook:

The Spending Review 2025 policy paper (which can be found on gov.uk [here](#)) makes clear that spending on the Social and Affordable Homes Programme will reach £4 billion per year in 2029-30 and rise in line with inflation subsequently.

Government does not usually publish year-by-year spend on specific programmes in advance.

We have announced the overall funding commitment for the Social and Affordable Homes Programme and will continue to publish departmental capital spend figures on an annual basis.

■ **Affordable Housing: Rural Areas**

Mr Lee Dillon:

[\[63277\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much and what proportion of the funding allocated for affordable housing in the Spending Review 2025 will be allocated to rural areas.

Matthew Pennycook:

I refer the hon. Member to the Written Ministerial Statement made on 2 July 2025 ([HCWS771](#)).

■ **Affordable Housing: West Midlands**

Wendy Morton:

[\[62958\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much and what proportion of the funding announced for the 10-year Affordable Homes Programme at the Spending Review 2025 will be spent in the West Midlands.

Matthew Pennycook:

I refer the Rt Hon Member to the Written Ministerial Statement made on 2 July 2025 ([HCWS771](#)).

■ **Batteries: Fire Prevention**

James McMurdock:

[\[63442\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether she plans to take steps to introduce a statutory requirement for local fire and rescue services to be consulted during the planning process for BESS installations.

James McMurdock:

[\[63443\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps she is taking to ensure consistent communication between (a) developers of BESS sites and (b) local fire and rescue services during the planning and approval processes.

Alex Norris:

Planning Practice Guidance encourages developers who are promoting BESS and for local planning authorities to engage with local fire and rescue services and National Fire Chiefs Council guidance.

I also refer the hon. Member to the answers given to Question UIN [35249](#) on 12 March 2025 and Question UIN [5520](#) on 11 October 2024.

Chinese Embassy: Planning Permission**Kevin Hollinrake:**[\[62966\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether the planning decision on the called-in Chinese Embassy planning application will be delegated to a specific Planning Minister or made personally by the Secretary of State.

Matthew Pennycook:

As is longstanding practice with all decisions of this nature, the identity of the decision-making Minister will be published as part of the formal decision letter.

Civil Servants: London Allowance**Kevin Hollinrake:**[\[64088\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 12 June 2025 to Question 56482 on Civil Service: London allowances, if she will take steps to ensure that the London weighted salaries for civil servants only apply to employees that work in London.

Alex Norris:

MHCLG has separate National pay ranges and London pay ranges. The MHCLG London pay range is only applicable to colleagues formally assigned to 2 Marsham St and MHCLG's Hemel Hempstead office.

Council Tax Benefits: West Dorset**Edward Morello:**[\[63725\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if she will take steps to introduce transitional protection for people who are no longer eligible for full Council Tax support following changes to the assessment of legacy benefit recipients in West Dorset constituency.

Jim McMahon:

Councils are required to provide a Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) scheme to support low-income households. Support for working age households, including the treatment of benefits, is designed by councils in consultation with their residents, taking into account the needs and circumstances of their local communities. Each year, councils must consider whether to revise or replace their scheme.

For pension age households, councils administer a centrally prescribed LCTS scheme.

■ Fire and Rescue Services

James McMurdock: [\[63448\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps she is taking to ensure fire and rescue services keep pace with (a) international best practice and (b) technological advancements.

Alex Norris:

The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) maintains a proactive approach to identifying international best practices through its established workstreams. These workstreams encompass areas such as technological innovation, operational tactics, and strategic response, providing valuable insights that can inform the continuous improvement of Fire and Rescue Services.

Fire and Rescue Authorities are operationally independent from central government. Decisions on how resources are deployed—including the adoption of new technologies—are made locally. Each authority assesses its own risks and local circumstances to determine the most effective ways to protect its communities.

■ Fire and Rescue Services: Employers' Contributions

James McMurdock: [\[63449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment she has made of the merits of funding fire and rescue services in the same way as police and ambulance services in order to meet changes in employers' National Insurance.

Alex Norris:

As part of the 2025/26 Local Government Finance Settlement, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) announced an additional £515 million to help councils manage the impact of employer National Insurance Contributions (NICs) changes from the Autumn Budget.

Payments to councils are un-ringfenced to give Local Authorities discretion over the use of funds in their area. This funding can be used to support councils to mitigate the additional costs of employer NICs within direct, commissioned, and externally provided local services, for example.

■ Furniture: Poverty

Tom Morrison: [\[63944\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether her Department monitors trends in levels of furniture poverty in (a) England and (b) the UK.

Tom Morrison: [\[63945\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what discussions she has had with social housing providers on the (a) Decent Homes

Standard and (b) the provision of furnished tenancies in social housing, in the context of levels of furniture poverty.

Matthew Pennycook:

My Department engages actively with registered providers of social housing on all issues facing social housing tenants and with a range of stakeholders on issues facing residents and has engaged with groups such as End Furniture Poverty to understand their research on this issue.

On 2 July, we opened a consultation on a reformed Decent Homes Standard (DHS) for the social and private rented sectors. It can be found on gov.uk [here](#).

People in need may be able to get support from their local authorities via the 'Household Support Fund' and other services available locally.

The Deputy Prime Minister is also part of the ministerial Child Poverty Taskforce, which is considering the impacts of living in poor quality housing on children.

■ **Homelessness: Local Government**

Josh Babarinde:

[\[63396\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that local authorities are transparent with other Councils receiving out-of-area placements.

Rushanara Ali:

The legislation and guidance set out that in the first instance, local authorities should try to place individuals within their own area, and when this is not possible, they should place the household as near as possible to the original local authority.

On 11 November 2024 the Deputy Prime Minister wrote to all local authority Chief Executives in England about out-of-area accommodation placements, including temporary accommodation and housing offers to end a homelessness duty. This letter referred to section 208 of the Housing Act 1996, and reminded local authorities that they are required by law to notify the receiving local authority of any out-of-area placement and that this should be happening in every case.

■ **Housing Estates: Unadopted Roads**

Lee Anderson:

[\[63017\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what information her Department holds on the number of housing estates built since 2010 that still have unadopted roads in (a) Ashfield, (b) Nottinghamshire, (c) the East Midlands and (d) England.

Lee Anderson:

[\[63018\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what the average time is for roads in newbuild housing estates to be adopted after their construction.

Matthew Pennycook:

My Department does not hold data on the number of housing estates that have unadopted roads or the average time for roads in newbuild housing estates to be adopted after construction.

Any decision on whether or not to adopt roads is a matter for the local highway authority. The Department for Transport has published guidance on gov.uk on Highways Adoption: The Adoption of Roads into the Public Highway, which was last updated in August 2022. It sets out the process by which new and existing roads can be adopted by highway authorities so that they become maintainable at public expense.

The government remain committed to protecting residential freeholders on private and mixed-tenure housing estates from unfair charges.

We will consult this year on implementing the Leasehold and Freehold Reform Act's new consumer protection provisions for the up to 1.75m homes that are subject to these charges, and bring these measures into force as quickly as possible thereafter. These include ensuring that homeowners who pay an estate management charge have better access to information they need to understand what they are paying for, the right to challenge the reasonableness at the First-tier Tribunal (in England), and to go to the tribunal to appoint a substitute manager.

The government is also determined to end the injustice of 'fleecehold' entirely and we will consult next year on legislative and policy options to reduce the prevalence of private estate management arrangements, which are the root cause of the problems experienced by many residential freeholders.

Housing: Older People**Edward Morello:**[\[63197\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether her Department plans to encourage developers to build more adaptable homes for older people in (a) West Dorset constituency and (b) other rural areas.

Edward Morello:[\[63199\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent steps her Department has taken to promote early-stage retirement housing in national planning guidance.

Matthew Pennycook:

I refer the hon. Member to the answers given to Questions UIN [61360](#) on 30 June 2025, UIN [59953](#) on 23 June 2025, UIN [61666](#) on 30 June 2025, and UIN [40972](#) on 1 April 2025.

■ Housing: Sales

Tony Vaughan:

[\[63164\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment she has made of the equitability of service charge terms in TP1 documents for use by freeholders when purchasing properties from developers.

Matthew Pennycook:

My Department has not conducted a specific assessment about the equitability of service charge terms in TP1 documents for use by freeholders when purchasing properties from developers.

The level of charges that residential freeholders pay will vary based on several factors, including the types of facilities or services that estate managers need to maintain, and the number of properties required to contribute.

The government remain committed to protecting residential freeholders on private and mixed-tenure housing estates from unfair charges.

We will consult this year on implementing the Leasehold and Freehold Reform Act's new consumer protection provisions for the up to 1.75m homes that are subject to these charges, and bring these measures into force as quickly as possible thereafter. These include ensuring that homeowners who pay an estate management charge have better access to information they need to understand what they are paying for, the right to challenge the reasonableness at the First-tier Tribunal (in England), and to go to the tribunal to appoint a substitute manager.

The government is also determined to end the injustice of 'fleecehold' entirely and we will consult this year on legislative and policy options to reduce the prevalence of private estate management arrangements, which are the root cause of the problems experienced by many residential freeholders.

■ Land Use: Documents

Kevin Hollinrake:

[\[63620\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if she will make it a requirement for the new Spatial Development Strategies to be written in plain English.

Matthew Pennycook:

The government would expect strategic planning authorities to ensure that Spatial Development Strategies are clear and easy to understand.

■ Land Use: Somerset

Adam Dance:

[\[63881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps she is taking to prevent land banking in rural communities by property developers in (a) Yeovil constituency and (b) Somerset.

Adam Dance:

[63882]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps she plans to take to deter land banking in Yeovil constituency.

Matthew Pennycook:

The government wants to see homes built faster and we recognise the frustrations that stalled or delayed sites can cause to communities.

Once housebuilders have been granted permission for residential development, meeting local housing needs and preferences, we expect to see them built out as quickly as possible.

Local planning authorities already have powers to issue a completion notice to require a developer to complete their development if it is stalled. If they fail to do so, the planning permission for the development will lapse.

The revised National Planning Policy Framework published on 12 December includes policies designed to support increased build out rates, including the promotion of mixed tenure development.

On 25 May, the government published a Planning Reform Working Paper: Speeding Up Build Out (which can be found on gov.uk [here](#)) inviting views on further action the government should take to speed up homes being built.

On the same day, we launched a technical consultation on implementing measures to improve the transparency of build rates from new residential development, which includes proposals to implement provisions in Section 113 of the LURA on the power to decline to determine applications. The consultation can be found on gov.uk [here](#). Subject to the outcome of the consultation, the government intends bring forward the regulations to implement these measures at the earliest practical opportunity with the new build out reporting framework coming into force from 2026.

■ Landlords

Victoria Collins:

[63431]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing (a) tailored exemption and (b) alternative mechanism to the Renter's Rights Bill for non-profit charitable landlords.

Victoria Collins:

[63432]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether her Department has made an assessment of the potential impact of the Renters' Rights Bill on the ability of charitable landlords to offer flexible housing in areas lacking affordable private rentals.

Matthew Pennycook:

The Renters' Rights Bill delivers the government's manifesto commitment to overhaul the regulation of the private rented sector, including by abolishing Section 21 'no fault' evictions.

Upon the commencement date, the new tenancy system provided for by the Bill will apply to all private tenancies - existing tenancies will become periodic, and any new tenancies will be governed by the new rules.

We recognise that regaining possession is sometimes necessary to ensure supply of specialist types of accommodation. The Bill therefore introduces a limited number of possession grounds to ensure there is an adequate supply of properties in vital sectors such as supported accommodation, and for those offering 'stepping stone' accommodation. These grounds may be available to registered charities who provide relevant accommodation.

■ Local Government

Kevin Hollinrake:

[\[63618\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what guidance has been given to local authorities on the delegation of decisions by councillors to council officers in (a) executive, (b) mayoral and (c) committee systems of governance; and whether she has provided guidance on whether the Carltona doctrine applies to local government.

Jim McMahon:

The Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000, as amended, set out what types of decisions are to be taken by a council's executive (whether leader and cabinet or mayor and cabinet) and which are to be taken by the full council. Guidance was issued in 2000 and 2001 to assist the initial implementation of executive arrangements in local authorities; we do not consider guidance is currently required to assist authorities in their operation under the Regulations.

The Local Authorities (Committee System) (England) Regulations 2012 set out the equivalent rules on delegations for councils operating the committee system. These Regulations were considered to be self-explanatory.

The Secretary of State has not provided guidance on whether the Carltona doctrine applies to local government.

■ Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

Alberto Costa:

[\[63684\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of introducing an independent appeal or review mechanism for complainants who are dissatisfied with decisions made by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

Jim McMahon:

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's decisions on complaints are typically final, and can only be challenged through the courts on points of law. The government has no plans to change this.

Local Government: Disciplinary Proceedings

Kevin Hollinrake: [\[63617\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what guidance her Department has provided to local councils on (a) discipline and (b) grievance in local government relating to senior officers.

Jim McMahon:

Local authorities are independent employers responsible for the management of their own workforces. This includes managing their disciplinary and grievance procedures, complying with relevant legislation.

Neighbourhood Plans: Expenditure

Kevin Hollinrake: [\[62593\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much funding was allocated by her Department to support local communities to develop neighbourhood plans in the (a) 2023-24, (b) 2024-25, (c) 2025-26 financial years; and how much has been allocated for each year of the Spending Review.

Matthew Pennycook:

Details of the contracts that the Department awarded to support neighbourhood planning are available on the contracts finder website.

Funding was allocated to support contracts worth, excluding VAT, (a) £6.37m in 2023/24, (b) £6.96m in 2024/25 and c) £0.43m in 2025/26.

Following the Spending Review, my Department announced that it is unable to commission new neighbourhood planning support services for 2025 onwards.

Technical support which has already been awarded will continue to be provided but must be completed before the end of March 2026.

We will ensure that local planning authorities continue to be appropriately funded for their neighbourhood planning function, including funding for neighbourhood planning examinations.

The government remains of the view that neighbourhood plans can play an important role in the planning system. Communities can continue to prepare neighbourhood plans where they consider that doing so is in their best interests.

Park Homes: Sales

Mr Andrew Snowden: [\[63787\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether she has made a recent assessment of the effectiveness of current regulations on residential park home site operators to ensure the (a) equitable treatment and (b) protection of residents.

Mr Andrew Snowden:

[63788]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if she will make an assessment of the effectiveness of existing consumer protections of residential park home owners.

Mr Andrew Snowden:

[63789]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent steps her Department has taken to improve consumer protections for (a) pricing transparency, (b) fair valuation practices and (c) the treatment of homeowners during resale transactions for residential park home buyers .

Mr Andrew Snowden:

[63790]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if she will commission a review of the (a) fairness, (b) transparency and (c) compliance with consumer protection standards of the (i) resale, (ii) marketing and (iii) contractual arrangement practices of residential park home site operators.

Matthew Pennycook:

The Mobile Homes Act 1983 sets out the contractual obligations for park home residents and site owners and the processes for buying and selling park homes. The Act also bans the use of certain site rules including those which prevent a resident from marketing or selling their home. If a site owner breaches the legislation or fails to meet any of their obligations, a resident has a right to apply to the First Tier Tribunal for a determination.

Additional protections for consumers purchasing goods and services are set out in consumer rights legislation. We are also continuing to support park home residents with free independent advice about their rights and how to enforce them, through the government-funded Leasehold Advisory Service.

The government is committed to improving the standards of park home site management and supporting local authorities to ensure site managers are fit and proper persons. We will continue to keep the effectiveness of relevant regulations under review.

We recognise that there are longstanding concerns about the requirement to pay site owners a commission upon sale of a park home. The previous government published a report in June 2022 on the impact of a change in the maximum park home sale commission. It can be found on gov.uk [here](#). We will set out plans in due course to seek further evidence from the sector on the rationale for the commission.

■ Permitted Development Rights

Kevin Hollinrake:

[63619]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many local authorities have introduced Article 4 directions which restrict office to residential conversion permitted development rights.

Matthew Pennycook:

46 local authorities have made Article 4 Directions which remove the permitted development right which enables buildings in the Class E Commercial, Business and Service use class to change to residential use.

■ Property Management Companies**Aphra Brandreth:****[63409]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what discussions she has had with residential property management services companies on the production and details shared within the companies annual accounts to residents; and what steps her Department is taking to help ensure that residential property management services companies act transparently with residents.

Matthew Pennycook:

On 4 July, the government published a consultation on strengthening leaseholder protections over charges and services. It can be found on gov.uk [here](#).

For an overview of the proposals set out in the consultation, I refer the hon. Member to the associated Written Ministerial Statement ([HCWS780](#)).

We invite views on the proposals from leaseholders and all those involved in managing leasehold buildings.

■ Rented Housing: Construction**Kevin Hollinrake:****[63616]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of the Renters' Rights Bill on the (a) popularity and (b) take-up of Build to Rent new build.

Matthew Pennycook:

My Department has engaged with a range of organisations, including Build to Rent operators, to understand their interests in the development of the Renters' Rights Bill.

We do not expect the Bill to have a destabilising effect on the rental market or the Build to Rent sector.

We will continue to work with good landlords and their representative associations to ensure a smooth transition to the new tenancy system.

■ Rented Housing: Pets**Steve Darling:****[63707]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many civil servants are working on the communications campaign relating to pet-friendly tenancies following the Renters' Rights Bill.

Steve Darling:

[\[63708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much funding her Department has allocated for the promotional campaign on pet-friendly tenancy rights following the Renters' Rights Bill.

Matthew Pennycook:

The successful implementation of the Renters' Rights Bill is contingent on landlords, letting agents, and tenants understanding their rights and responsibilities under the new legislation.

Once the Bill has achieved Royal Assent, we intend to deliver a campaign to raise awareness of the changes made by it.

Publicising measures that allow tenants to request a pet will be an integral part of this campaign. It is not possible to break down costs or staffing numbers to indicate spend on specific messages relating to this Bill provision.

■ Supported Housing

Carla Denyer:

[\[63831\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what discussions she has had with supported housing providers on the potential (a) administrative, (b) financial and (c) homelessness impacts of the implementation of the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act.

Rushanara Ali:

The government consulted on proposals to implement the measures in the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act between 20 February 2025 and 15 May 2025.

The government is assessing the responses to the consultation and will continue to work with supported housing providers, residents and stakeholders before publishing a government response in due course.

■ Temporary Accommodation

Josh Babarinde:

[\[63397\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps she is taking to ensure that local authorities are meeting their obligation to support (a) individuals and (b) families placed in temporary accommodation.

Rushanara Ali:

The government has increased funding for homelessness services by £233 million in 2025/26, taking the total to a record £1 billion to prevent increases in the number of individuals and families in temporary accommodation.

As announced at the Spending Review, the government is providing £950 million of investment for the fourth round of the Local Authority Housing Fund to increase the supply of good quality accommodation. This follows our programme of Emergency Accommodation Reduction Pilots, which are working with 20 local authorities with some of the highest levels of B&B use, backed by £8 million to test innovative

approaches and kickstart new initiatives to provide more suitable accommodation for homeless families.

Temporary accommodation must be suitable in relation to the applicant and to all members of their household who normally reside with them.

JUSTICE

■ Children: Abduction

Mr Lee Dillon:

[\[63487\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps her Department is taking to improve access to legal support for parents involved in international child abduction cases.

Sarah Sackman:

Legal aid is available under the Legal Aid Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (LASPO), for legal advice and representation in cases of international abduction where a child has unlawfully been brought to England and Wales from another country. Both the applicant and respondent may be eligible, subject to passing the relevant eligibility tests and providing the required documentation.

For example, an applicant seeking the return of their child is eligible for non-means and non-merits tested legal aid for legal representation, where they reside in a country which has signed the 1980 Hague Convention, and have made an application to the International Child Abduction and Contact Unit. The respondent is eligible for legal aid but is subject to means and merits testing.

Legal aid is also available to an applicant who is seeking to prevent the unlawful removal of a child (if they are a parent or have parental responsibility for the child) from the United Kingdom or to secure the return of a child who has been unlawfully removed from the United Kingdom, where the relevant proceedings are taking place in England and Wales. Funding is subject to passing the means and merits tests.

The Government provides funding to Reunite International, a charity that operates a 24-hour telephone advice line offering information and practical support to parents, guardians and family members in international child abduction cases. Reunite also offer a mediation service, which can provide an alternative means of resolving an international child abduction case.

■ Employment: Sexual Harassment

Rebecca Long Bailey:

[\[63311\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prosecutions were brought for workplace sexual harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 in each of the last five years.

Sarah Sackman:

Statistics collated centrally by the Ministry of Justice on the criminal offences under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 do not separately identify perpetrators

prosecuted, convicted or sentenced to crimes involving sexual harassment, or the location of where the offence took place.

Collating such information could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ **Palestine Action: Acquittals**

Apsana Begum: [\[63640\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what information her Department holds on the number of Palestine Action members who have been acquitted by a jury for activity relating to protests against arms sales to Israel.

Apsana Begum: [\[63647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the Written Statement of 23 June 2025 on Security, HCWS729, whether any Palestine Action members have been acquitted by a jury for those activities.

Apsana Begum: [\[63652\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, in how many (a) current and b) pending court cases a Palestine Action member is facing charges for protests against arms sales to Israel.

Apsana Begum: [\[63653\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many (a) current and (b) pending court cases there are on activities listed in her Written Statement of 23 June 2025 on Security, HCWS729.

Sarah Sackman:

Data collated by the Ministry of Justice regarding the activity of the criminal court does not identify if a defendant is a Palestine Action member or if the offence was for activity relating to protests against arms sales to Israel. This information may be held in court records but to examine individual court records would be of disproportionate cost.

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ **UK Trade with EU: Northern Ireland**

Dr Al Pinkerton: [\[63889\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what recent discussions his Department has had with the Northern Ireland Executive on (a) the provision of guidance and (b) support to businesses in Northern Ireland in relation to UK-EU trade arrangements.

Hilary Benn:

The Government's renewed partnership with the EU will deliver a broader range of benefits for people and businesses across the UK. These include an SPS Agreement which, once implemented, will help facilitate the smooth flow of agrifood and plants

from Great Britain to Northern Ireland, reduce costs for businesses and improve consumer choice. The common understanding, signed on 19 May, will now be developed into a legal text.

The Government engages with the Northern Ireland Executive on an ongoing basis both formally and informally. Additionally, the Northern Ireland Executive is formally represented in a number of fora relating to the UK-EU relationship.

SCIENCE, INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY

■ Artificial Intelligence

Victoria Collins: [\[63420\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what his planned timetable is for publishing the consultation on the proposed AI Bill.

Feryal Clark:

The Government plans to publish a consultation later this year on AI legislation.

■ Artificial Intelligence: Diagnosis

Carla Lockhart: [\[63395\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of artificial intelligence on early diagnosis of (a) lung, (b) pancreatic and (c) other cancers.

Feryal Clark:

The Department for Science, Innovation and Technology invests in cancer research via UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), and the Department of Health and Social Care via the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR). UKRI and NIHR support research which explores the impact of AI on cancer diagnosis, including the £21 million AI Diagnostic Fund (using AI for faster lung cancer diagnosis). AI presents significant opportunities for improving outcomes and diagnosis for cancer patients and driving faster triage of patients with suspected symptoms. Evaluations of the impact of AI on cancer diagnosis are ongoing.

■ Artificial Intelligence: Safety

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan: [\[64456\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what steps he is taking to help ensure all signatory companies from the Seoul AI Safety Summit honour their commitments made at that summit.

Feryal Clark:

We expect all signatories to the Seoul commitments to stand by their agreements. The AI Security Institute, within DSIT, has ongoing discussions with all major developers, about the implementation of frontier AI frameworks that guide the safe development of AI.

■ Cybersecurity: Training

Carla Lockhart:

[\[63402\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what steps his Department is taking to improve access to cybersecurity training for small and medium-sized enterprises in Northern Ireland.

Feryal Clark:

Cyber security is a priority for the government. We are taking action to protect businesses, citizens and essential services against cyber threats. The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) offers a range of free cyber security training, including a free online module for small organisations called 'Top Tips For Staff', a cyber incident management training package called 'Exercise in a Box', and training for boards and directors as part of the government's cyber governance package to help organisations manage digital risks.

Cyber security training is also widely available on a commercial basis, including in Northern Ireland where there is a successful, growing cyber security sector with 128 cyber security providers supporting over £237 million direct GVA to the local economy and employing over 2,750 people.

SMEs are also encouraged to take advantage of the NCSC's Small Business Guide to improve their resilience, and to create a Cyber Action Plan for a personalised list of actions to help businesses improve their cyber security.

■ Google: Artificial Intelligence

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:

[\[64457\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what assessment he has made of Google's compliance with the AI safety commitments made at the Seoul AI Safety Summit in May 2024 in relation to its Gemini 2.5 Pro model.

Feryal Clark:

We expect all signatories to the Seoul commitments to stand by their agreements. The AI Security Institute, within DSIT, has ongoing discussions with all major developers, including Google DeepMind, about the implementation of frontier AI frameworks that guide the safe development of AI.

The government welcomes Google's recently published framework that prioritises the emerging risk of deception in AI models and their plans to publish safety cases.

■ Ordnance Survey: Software

Dr Simon Opher:

[\[64091\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, if he will hold discussions with Ordnance Survey on the potential merits of making the Ordnance Survey Maps Premium (a) service and (b) app available to the public for free.

Feryal Clark:

Ordnance Survey is a public corporation, operating on a commercial basis. Ministers meet regularly with the leadership of Ordnance Survey to discuss how the company can support the Government's priorities.

Ordnance Survey makes its authoritative geospatial data available to the public and private sectors, including individuals, directly and through commercial partners. A free version of the OS Maps app, which uses data that Ordnance Survey makes available under Open Government Licence, is used by over a million people every month. The premium subscription provides additional features and has over half a million active subscribers. It is already freely available to key users such as Mountain Rescue in Scotland, England and Wales.

SCOTLAND■ **Block Grant: Scotland****Stephen Gethins:**[\[64447\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what estimate he has made of the potential impact of a reduction in spending on asylum would have on the Scottish Government's block grant.

Ian Murray:

Phase 2 of the Spending Review confirmed that devolved expenditure by the UK Government on Justice and Home Affairs will generate £451 million of additional Barnett funding for the Scottish Government over 2026/27-2029/30.

The Spending Review set a three year envelope and guarantees that the block grant will be at least £52 billion by 2029, with an additional £9.1 billion in Barnett consequential over that time period.

■ **Flags: Scotland****Andrew Bowie:**[\[63641\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, whether his Department has had recent discussions with local authorities in Scotland on the Union Flag.

Andrew Bowie:[\[63642\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential impact of public bodies not adopting Government guidance on the Union Flag on national cohesion.

Andrew Bowie:[\[63643\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what steps he is taking to promote the Union Flag as a symbol of unity.

Andrew Bowie:

[\[63645\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what information his Department holds on the number of local authorities in Scotland which fly the Union Flag on public buildings.

Andrew Bowie:

[\[63646\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what support his Department provides to local authorities in Scotland to encourage the flying of the Union Flag.

Ian Murray:

The UK Government issues flag flying guidance for UK Government buildings across the UK. Local Government is a devolved matter in Scotland. The Scottish Government issues its own guidance for Scottish Government buildings in which it states that local authority buildings and schools in Scotland are not affected by these guidelines. The matter of flag flying remains one for individual local authorities in Scotland to determine.

■ Gender Recognition: Scotland

Euan Stainbank:

[\[63861\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what recent assessment he has made of the potential implications for his policies of the Court of Session's judgment on the Petition of the Scottish Ministers for Judicial Review of the Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill, published on 8 December 2023.

Ian Murray:

The Scottish Government confirmed in a statement to the Scottish Parliament on 22 April 2025 that it has no plans to bring back the Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill.

■ Trade Agreements: USA

Dame Harriett Baldwin:

[\[63695\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the UK-US Economic Prosperity Deal on Scotland.

Ian Murray:

In May, the UK concluded a landmark economic deal with the US. This deal protects jobs in the automotive, steel, aluminium, pharmaceutical and aerospace sectors - sectors that employ over 320,000 people across the UK. In addition, an estimated 260,000 jobs are supported by the auto industry in the wider economy.

The Government remains focused on making sure British businesses can feel the benefits of the deal as soon as possible.

The Scotland Office will continue to work with the sector to understand the impacts, including the Scotch Whisky Industry.

The Government is continuing discussions on the UK-US Economic Prosperity Deal which will look at increasing digital trade, enhancing access for our world-leading services industries and improving supply chains.

The Scotland Office will continue to support the ongoing negotiations with the US, led by the Department for Business and Trade.

■ Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment Bill: Scotland

Stephen Gethins:

[\[64448\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payments Bill on the Scottish Government's block grant.

Ian Murray:

Universal Credit is a reserved matter, while in Scotland Adult Disability Payment, a devolved benefit, replaced Personal Independence Payments.

This Government will deliver the first permanent, above-inflation rise in the Universal Credit standard allowance since the 1970s, meaning nearly 4 million households will receive an income boost worth £725 by 2029/30 for a single household 25 or over. Individual block grant adjustments linked to individual policy decisions will be published in due course.

The Spending Review set a three year envelope and guarantees that the block grant will be at least £52 billion by 2029, with an additional £9.1 billion in Barnett consequential over that time period.

TRANSPORT

■ A1: Northumberland

David Smith:

[\[63929\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the safety record of the A1 through North Northumberland, in the context of RIS3 funding.

Lilian Greenwood:

National Highways has considered the safety record of the A1 through North Northumberland, along with other priorities for this section of the route, as part of its London to Scotland (East) Route Strategy. The outputs of this work will be considered as part of final decisions on investment in the third Road Investment Strategy.

■ Airports: National Policy Statements

Kevin Hollinrake:

[\[64090\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 16 June 2025 to Question 57460 on Policy, what her planned timetable is for the revision of the National Policy Statement on airport expansion.

Mike Kane:

The government supports airport expansion and has invited proposals for a third runway at Heathrow. It expects any proposals to be brought forward by the summer and is clear that any scheme must be delivered in line with the UK's legal, climate and environmental obligations.

Once proposals have been received, the government will review the Airports National Policy Statement (ANPS), which provides the basis for decision making on granting development consent for a new runway at Heathrow.

The Secretary of State will determine the scope of a review of the ANPS and we cannot speculate on the scope nor the timings of the review at this stage.

■ Bus Services: Concessions

Josh Babarinde:

[\[63778\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether she plans to lower the age of free bus travel eligibility to 60 in (a) Eastbourne and (b) England.

Simon Lightwood:

The English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) provides free off-peak bus travel to those with eligible disabilities and those of state pension age, currently sixty-six. The ENCTS costs around £700 million annually and any changes to the statutory obligations, would therefore need to be carefully considered for its impact on the scheme's financial sustainability.

However, local authorities in England have the power to offer concessions in addition to their statutory obligations, such as lowering the age of eligibility. Additional local concessions are provided and funded by local authorities from local resources.

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 allocated to local authorities across the country. East Sussex County Council have been allocated £10.3 million of this funding. Funding allocated to local authorities to improve services for passengers can be used in whichever way they wish. This could include extending the discretionary concessions available.

Fred Thomas:

[\[64254\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions she has had with local authorities on the variances in the eligibility criteria for disabled bus passes.

Simon Lightwood:

The English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) provides free off-peak bus travel to those with eligible disabilities and those of state pension age, currently sixty-six.

The disabled eligibility criteria are set out in section 146 of the Transport Act 2000. To support local authorities, the Department maintains guidance on assessing the eligibility of disabled applicants, which is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-local-authorities-on-eligibility-for-disabled-people>. However, local authorities are responsible for administering disabled concessionary bus passes and the Department plays no role in the assessment of applications.

Helen Maguire:**[64285]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much bus companies are reimbursed per journey for disabled bus pass holders; and whether this is a fixed rate across regions.

Simon Lightwood:

Reimbursement rates under the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) are not typically split between disabled and older passholders. However, the average rate of reimbursement for both statutory and discretionary concessionary journeys in 2023/24 was £1.44 for England outside of London (£1.17 for England) but varies by area.

Bus operators must be reimbursed on a 'no better and no worse off' basis for carrying concessionary passholders. The reimbursement rate is not a fixed rate across England as it is dependent on local conditions such as fares and the cost of carrying concessionary passengers for additional journeys made under the scheme.

The Department for Transport issues reimbursement guidance and a calculator to facilitate the reimbursement rates from Local Transport Authorities to operators.

■ Bus Services: East of England**Blake Stephenson:****[64464]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the press release entitled Government pledges greater growth for the coach sector ahead of National Coach Week, published on 6 May 2025, whether she plans to take steps to support the coach sector in the East of England, in the context of the Universal UK theme park project.

Simon Lightwood:

The Department recognises the important role the coach sector plays in connecting people and supporting economic growth. The UK coach sector was deregulated by the Transport Act 1980 and as such, services are operated on a commercial basis without receiving government funding.

It is for local authorities to review the needs of people and businesses in their area, including where development is planned, and consider how all modes of transport, including coaches, can meet those needs.

■ Bus Services: Fares

Tom Gordon:

[64127]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if she will make it her policy to ensure bus fares do not increase above the rate of inflation following the bus fare cap increase.

Simon Lightwood:

On 1 January, the government introduced a £3 cap on single bus fares in England outside London until 31 December 2025. As part of the Spending Review, the government announced further funding to extend the £3 cap to March 2027. This will ensure millions of people can continue to access affordable bus fares and better opportunities all over the country. The current terms and conditions for the £3 cap already require operators to demonstrate that they have not raised fares any higher than inflation.

Tom Gordon:

[64128]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of the bus fare cap increase on passenger numbers.

Simon Lightwood:

The government is investing over £150 million to deliver the new £3 cap on single bus fares in England outside London from 1 January until 31 December 2025 to help keep bus fares affordable, and as part of the Spending Review, we announced further funding to extend the £3 cap to March 2027.

Under the plans of the previous administration, the £2 cap on bus fares had been due to expire on 31 December 2024, and prior to the Budget, there was no further funding available to maintain a cap on bus fares beyond this point.

The final monitoring and evaluation report into the impact of the £2 bus fare cap was published on 12 February. An evaluation of the £3 fare cap is due to be commissioned shortly.

■ Bus Services: Lincolnshire

Sir John Hayes:

[63523]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what information her Department holds on the number of settlements that do not have a daily bus service in (a) South Holland and the Deepings constituency and (b) Lincolnshire.

Simon Lightwood:

The Department for Transport does not readily hold this information, however local bus timetable data is available to download from the Bus Open Data Service: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/find-and-use-bus-open-data>.

The government believes that local transport authorities, working with bus operators, are best placed to determine and design local bus networks in their area. The government introduced the Bus Services (No.2) Bill on 17 December 2024 to put the power over local bus services back into the hands of local leaders and is intended to

ensure bus services reflect the needs of communities that rely on them, including in South Holland and the Deepings constituency and across Lincolnshire.

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 allocated to local authorities across the country, of which Lincolnshire County Council has been allocated £11.9 million. Local authorities can use this funding to introduce improvements to bus services and infrastructure to best meet the needs of passengers in their local area.

The government has reaffirmed its commitment to bus services in this Spending Review by confirming continued funding each year from 26/27 to maintain and improve vital bus services, including taking forward bus franchising pilots, and extending the £3 bus fare cap until March 2027.

■ **Bus Services: Rural Areas**

Dr Luke Evans:

[64096]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of demand responsive travel in rural areas in (a) the UK and (b) Leicestershire.

Simon Lightwood:

The government believes demand responsive transport (DRT) has an important role to play in ensuring communities can access transport services in areas where more traditional, regular stopping services may not be viable.

The Department has funded 17 innovative DRT pilots through the Rural Mobility Fund. Each scheme is taking part in a detailed monitoring and evaluation process. This will provide a strong base of evidence and good practice for DRT and a better understanding of both the role it can play in rural areas and the challenges associated with introducing it. The final process evaluation will be published later in 2025, and an impact and value for money evaluation is underway, with findings available in late 2026.

Some of the Rural Mobility Fund schemes have grown beyond their original pilot areas, including Fox Connect in Leicestershire. This has expanded from serving an area in south west Leicestershire into five zones around Market Harborough and two zones around Melton Mowbray. Three new zones will shortly commence in north west Leicestershire and will connect parts of Hinckley and Bosworth. These zones provide access into the local town centre and also serve train stations and East Midlands Gateway, also served by Nottinghamshire's DRT service.

■ **Buses: Hydrogen**

Laurence Turner:

[R] [64619]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what consultation her Department has undertaken with UK-based bus manufacturers on the potential impact of Section 37 of the Bus Services (No. 2) Bill [Lords] on future sales of (a) hydrogen-fuel cell and (b) hydrogen combustion engine buses.

Simon Lightwood:

Clause 37 of the Bus Services (No.2) Bill will ultimately end the use of new non-zero emission buses on English bus services. The final date will be set out in later secondary regulations, however, will be no earlier than 1 January 2030.

Hydrogen Fuel Cell electric (HFC) buses, which are used in various parts of the country, are what is commonly meant by 'hydrogen buses'. These are available from UK manufacturers and do not emit any nitrogen oxides. They are zero emission at the tailpipe, so would continue to be usable under these regulations, along with battery electric buses. Hydrogen combustion engine buses are not present in the UK. They would emit nitrogen oxides, which are harmful to human health. They would therefore not be considered to be zero emission buses and would not be usable under these regulations.

My Department has engaged extensively with bus manufacturers as we have developed and then progressed this measure through Parliament.

Central Line: Graffiti**Dr Neil Hudson:**[\[63696\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether her Department has had discussions with the Mayor of London on graffiti on the Central Line.

Simon Lightwood:

Department for Transport Ministers and officials have regular discussions with Transport for London (TfL) and the Mayor of London on a range of issues, including London Underground maintenance requirements. Transport in London is devolved to the Mayor and TfL who are responsible for the operation and maintenance of London Underground.

Department for Transport: National Security**Ben Obese-Jecty:**[\[63350\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Number 10 press release entitled UK to deliver on 5% NATO pledge as Government drives greater security for working people, published on 23 June 2025, if she will list her Department's (a) projects and (b) programmes by directorate that will contribute to the resilience and security element of national security spending for each year between 2025-26 and 2034-35 inclusive; and if she will list the amount of spending for each item (a) in real terms (b) as a proportion of concurrent forecast GDP.

Mike Kane:

We will set out detailed plans for meeting this new target at the appropriate time. The government will continue to report to NATO on delivery against the headline investment pledge and the split in line with NATO's reporting schedule.

■ Driving Tests: Edinburgh

Dr Scott Arthur:

[\[63826\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what is the average waiting time for a driving test in Currie; and when she expects the backlog to be cleared.

Lilian Greenwood:

The year-to-date average waiting time for a driving test at Edinburgh (Currie) driving test centre (DTC) is 24 weeks.

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency's (DVSA) main priority is upholding road safety standards while it works hard to reduce car practical driving test waiting times.

On the 23 April, the Secretary of State for Transport appeared before the Transport Select Committee and [announced](#) that DVSA will take further actions to reduce waiting times for all customers across Great Britain.

DVSA expects to deliver thousands of additional tests this month and is working to increase test availability further over the coming year. Over 630,000 learners across Great Britain now have a test booked. That number will rise as the DVSA increases test availability.

■ Driving Tests: Fees and Charges

Alex Mayer:

[\[63403\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the cost of a practical driving test was in each year since 1995.

Lilian Greenwood:

The table below shows the cost of a car practical driving test on weekdays (normal hours) and on evenings, weekends and bank holidays (out of hours), from 1 April 1994 to 30 March 2009. The table also shows the cost of an extended car practical driving test for disqualified drivers.

Please note that the cost of a car practical driving test has remained the same since 30 March 2009.

Car Practical Driving Tests - Cost (£)

Date Introduced	DRIVING TEST		EXTENDED TEST	
	Normal Hours	Out of Hours	Normal Hours	Out of Hours
30-Mar-09	62.00	75.00	124.00	150.00
01-Apr-08	56.50	67.00	113.00	134.00
01-Apr-06	48.50	58.00	97.00	116.00
10-Aug-05	45.50	55.00	91.00	110.00
08-Dec-04	42.00	51.00	84.00	102.00

	DRIVING TEST		EXTENDED TEST	
14-Nov-02	39.00	48.00	78.00	96.00
27-Aug-01	38.00	47.00	76.00	94.00
10-Feb-99	36.75	46.00	73.50	92.00
01-Apr-98	32.75	43.00	65.50	86.00
01-Apr-97	31.00	41.00	62.00	82.00
29-May-95	28.50	38.50	57.00	77.50
01-Apr-94	27.50	37.50	55.00	77.50

■ Lakes Line

Tim Farron:

[\[63292\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if she will include the Lakes Line Passing Loop in the next Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline.

Simon Lightwood:

We believe the Local Transport Authority can best determine whether this project meets their local needs. The Department will continue to support development work on this scheme, should local budgets be prioritised.

■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Driving Tests

Catherine Fookes:

[\[63957\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment her Department has made of the availability of (a) HGV driving test slots and (b) HGV driving test examiners.

Lilian Greenwood:

As of 30 June 2025, there were 15,918 vocational practical driving tests booked and 1,216 tests available in the 10-week booking window

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) is seeing some of the highest demand for car practical driving tests it has ever seen.

Whilst DVSA are continuing to deploy examiner resource to vocational testing, it needs to ensure this is done in a way which balances all of the demands on DVSA's examiner resource.

■ Parking: Pedestrian Areas

Martin Wrigley:

[\[63914\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if she will take steps to help tackle pavement parking in Devon.

Lilian Greenwood:

Local authorities can already make use of existing powers to restrict and enforce pavement parking. The Department for Transport has also been carefully considering the responses to the previous government's pavement parking consultation, including working through the policy options and the appropriate means of delivering them. As soon as the Government has decided its preferred way forward, we will announce the next steps and publish our formal response.

Public Transport**Dr Luke Evans:**[\[64097\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps she is taking to ensure that local leaders work across county borders to ensure the (a) development and (b) sustainability of cross-border public transport services.

Simon Lightwood:

With regard to bus services, Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) already work closely together when tendering routes that cross shared boundaries, and in delivering their Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIP). There are also requirements set out in the Transport Act 2000 for LTAs to take account of the effect of an Enhanced Partnership on neighbouring areas, and for policies on bus services in neighbouring LTA areas to be considered when developing their franchising arrangements.

The government has updated its bus franchising guidance to LTAs to make clear that they should consider cross-boundary services during any franchising assessment process. This includes as part of the commercial case, where they should set out how they intend to facilitate cross-boundary services to deliver relevant BSIP outcomes and targets in both authorities' areas.

The government introduced the Bus Services (No.2) Bill on 17 December which puts the power over local bus services back in the hands of local leaders. This Bill is intended to ensure bus services reflect the needs of the communities that rely on them right across England, including services that cross local authority boundaries.

With regard to rail, Great British Rail (GBR) will be organised to work collaboratively with devolved leaders and local stakeholders to ensure rail services meet local needs. All tiers of local government in England will benefit from empowered local GBR business units that are outward-facing and engage with local authorities on their priorities and Local Transport Plans.

Through the government's devolution agenda, Mayoral Strategic Authorities are increasingly serving rural areas. Mayors will have a role in the design of their local rail services. They will also have the power to create unified and integrated transport systems enabling local leaders to create transport networks that deliver for their areas. A single directing mind is essential to ensuring the railway serves passenger and freight interests nationally. It is also vital that mayors have the power to integrate local railways with other transport modes.

Later this year, we will publish the Integrated National Transport Strategy and set the vision for transport in England, putting people at the heart of how we plan, build and operate transport. The Strategy will aim to make public transport a more attractive option when people choose to travel and equip local leaders to make the right decisions for their areas. We want to address fragmentation and inefficiency across the transport system to ensure that public, private and third sector partners can work together to provide reliable transport services, including for cross-border journeys.

■ Public Transport: Disability

Fred Thomas:

[\[64253\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent steps her Department has taken to support disabled people using public transport.

Simon Lightwood:

The government is committed to improving public transport services so they are more inclusive and enable disabled people to travel safely, confidently and with dignity. On 17 December, the government introduced the Bus Services (No.2) Bill to put the power over local bus services back into the hands of local leaders and is intended to ensure networks meet the needs of the communities who rely on them, including for disabled people. The Bill includes measures which will make bus travel more accessible and inclusive.

On 1 October 2024, the first phase of the Public Service Vehicles (Accessible Information) Regulations 2023 came into force, meaning that newer vehicles providing local services must provide audible and visible information on stops, destinations and diversions. The majority of services will need to comply by October 2026.

Ensuring the rail network is also accessible is at the heart of our passenger-focused approach to improving rail services. We know that the experience for disabled people when traveling on rail too often falls short of what is expected and what passengers deserve. We are committed to improving the experience for disabled passengers and have committed to publishing an accessibility roadmap to explain the actions we are taking to improve accessibility ahead of Great British Rail.

■ Public Transport: Leicestershire

Dr Luke Evans:

[\[64095\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps she is taking to provide funding for public transport in Leicestershire.

Simon Lightwood:

This Government is committed to supporting public transport across the country. That is why we have confirmed £955 million for 2025/26 to support and improve bus services in England outside London. On our trains, the planned Great British Railways will have a relentless focus on driving up standards for passengers, including simpler fares and ticketing.

The Government is providing £8.1 million to Leicestershire County Council in 2025/26 that the council can use to introduce new bus routes, make services more frequent and protect crucial bus routes for local communities. We are also providing Leicestershire County Council with £12.3 million for 2025/26, and a total of £73.9 million from 2026/27 to 2029/30, in Local Transport Grant, which the council can use for maintenance and enhancements of its local transport network.

■ Railways

Tim Farron: [\[63290\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what her Department's planned timetable is for announcing the next Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline.

Simon Lightwood:

The Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline (RNEP) is an essential part of how we are kickstarting economic growth. By building a modern railway network we can make a difference to passengers, taxpayers and communities across the country, and by investing around £2bn in the RNEP portfolio is how we will do that.

I know that stakeholders and industry want to know what is in our pipeline and want more visibility of our forward plans of work. We will continue to announce details of schemes as decisions are taken, just as we did at the Budget for East West Rail and Transpennine Route Upgrade.

Tim Farron: [\[63291\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of the time taken to publish the next Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline on the timescale for future rail investment.

Simon Lightwood:

The Department is taking decisions to progress the schemes that have the greatest potential to unlock growth only once we are confident that they will deliver it. The time taken to undertake this work has no impact on the timescales for future rail investments.

I know that stakeholders and industry want to know what is in our rail investments pipeline and want more visibility of our forward plans of work. I will continue to announce details of schemes as decisions are taken, just as we did at the Budget for East West Rail and Transpennine Route Upgrade.

Mike Martin: [\[63348\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment she has made of the potential merits of reopening closed passenger rail lines.

Simon Lightwood:

This Spending Review shows the government's commitment to investment in the railways and in schemes that support economic growth. The settlement represents an increase in funding on what has been spent on rail enhancements in recent years. While some key schemes have already been referenced by the Chancellor, my

officials are now working to confirm our wider portfolio of rail enhancements, which will be published as part of the government's commitment to set out its overall infrastructure pipeline.

The Restoring Your Railway programme was closed by the government as announced by the Chancellor in July 2024 and currently has no plans to revisit this decision. Most of the Restoring Your Railway schemes that were announced by the previous government were unfunded, which is why the programme was closed.

It is possible that Local Transport Authorities may wish to press ahead with developing individual local rail enhancement projects for funding in the future as this government believes that local authorities are best placed to advocate for projects that will most benefit their local areas.

The aim is to encourage strong business cases that effectively identify the optimal transport solution supporting growth, more homes and increased job opportunities.

■ **Railways: Hertfordshire**

Victoria Collins:

[\[63421\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment her Department has made of the adequacy of passenger rail performance in (a) Harpenden and Berkhamsted constituency and b) Hertfordshire.

Simon Lightwood:

Department officials continuously monitor the performance of train operating companies across a range of measures and meet regularly with senior management to scrutinise and challenge their companies' performance. The Department will continue to engage with the operators serving the constituency to ensure that they deliver their contractual commitments.

Victoria Collins:

[\[63422\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps her Department is taking to increase railway capacity in (a) Harpenden and Berkhamsted constituency and (b) Hertfordshire.

Simon Lightwood:

Rail services in the Hertfordshire region are supported by requirements on train operators to plan services and design timetables to meet both current and future passenger demand, while also ensuring value for money for the taxpayer. Operators must continually reassess their services to ensure they provide rail timetables that provide sufficient capacity, are fit for the future, and carefully balance cost and performance.

■ **Railways: Mobile Broadband**

Alex Mayer:

[\[63451\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to her Department's press release entitled On track and online: landmark deal to end mobile dead zones, published

on 26 June, if she will list the locations of the 57 tunnels due to receive improved coverage in Project Reach.

Simon Lightwood:

The list of tunnels is shown below. Please note the exact timings are subject to commercial discussions with Mobile Network Operators:

TUNNEL	REGION	ROUTE
MONUMENT LANE TUNNEL	North West & Central	Central
BEECHWOOD TUNNEL	North West & Central	Central
NEW STREET NORTH WESTERN LINES TUNNEL	North West & Central	Central
NEW STREET MIDLAND LINES TUNNEL	North West & Central	Central
POTTERS BAR EAST TUNNEL	Eastern	East Coast
POTTERS BAR WEST TUNNEL	Eastern	East Coast
WELWYN NORTH TUNNEL	Eastern	East Coast
PEASCLIFFE TUNNEL	Eastern	East Coast
STOKE TUNNEL	Eastern	East Coast
WOOD GREEN CENTRE TUNNEL	Eastern	East Coast
WOOD GREEN EAST TUNNEL	Eastern	East Coast
WOOD GREEN WEST TUNNEL	Eastern	East Coast
BARNET WEST TUNNEL	Eastern	East Coast
BARNET EAST TUNNEL	Eastern	East Coast

TUNNEL	REGION	ROUTE
BARNET CENTRE TUNNEL	Eastern	East Coast
COPENHAGEN CENTRE TUNNEL	Eastern	East Coast
COPENHAGEN WEST TUNNEL	Eastern	East Coast
GASWORKS CENTRE TUNNEL	Eastern	East Coast
GASWORKS WEST TUNNEL	Eastern	East Coast
WELWYN SOUTH TUNNEL	Eastern	East Coast
HADLEY WOOD SOUTH EAST TUNNEL	Eastern	East Coast
HADLEY WOOD SOUTH WEST TUNNEL	Eastern	East Coast
CLERKENWELL NO 1	Eastern	Thameslink
LUDGATE TUNNEL	Southern	Kent
ARDSLEY TUNNEL	Eastern	North East
MACCLESFIELD TUNNEL	North West & Central	North West
FARNWORTH TUNNEL	North West & Central	North West
FARNWORTH TUNNEL	North West & Central	North West
PRESTBURY TUNNEL	North West & Central	North West
NEWPORT NEW TUNNEL	Wales & Western	Wales

TUNNEL	REGION	ROUTE
NEWPORT OLD TUNNEL	Wales & Western	Wales
KILSBY TUNNEL	North West & Central	West Coast
WATFORD TUNNEL SLOW LINES	North West & Central	West Coast
WATFORD TUNNEL FAST LINES	North West & Central	West Coast
PRIMROSE HILL SLOW LINES TUNNEL	North West & Central	West Coast
PRIMROSE HILL FAST LINES TUNNEL	North West & Central	West Coast
SHUGBOROUGH TUNNEL	North West & Central	West Coast
STOWE HILL TUNNEL	North West & Central	West Coast
NORTHCHURCH FAST LINE TUNNEL	North West & Central	West Coast
NORTHCHURCH UP SLOW TUNNEL	North West & Central	West Coast
NORTHCHURCH DOWN SLOW TUNNEL	North West & Central	West Coast
KENSAL GREEN FAST LINES TUNNEL	North West & Central	West Coast
KENSAL GREEN SLOW LINES TUNNEL	North West & Central	West Coast
HARECASTLE NEW TUNNEL	North West & Central	West Coast
LINSLADE UP SLOW TUNNEL	North West & Central	West Coast

	TUNNEL	REGION	ROUTE
	LINSLADE CENTRE BORE (UP FAST/DN SLOW)	North West & Central	West Coast
	LINSLADE DOWN FAST TUNNEL	North West & Central	West Coast
	SODBURY TUNNEL	Wales & Western	Western
	PATCHWAY UP NEW TUNNEL	Wales & Western	Western
	WHITEBALL TUNNEL	Wales & Western	Western
	MARLEY TUNNEL	Wales & Western	Western
	POLPERRO TUNNEL	Wales & Western	Western
	TREVERIN TUNNEL	Wales & Western	Western
	PARSONS TUNNEL	Wales & Western	Western
	ALDERTON TUNNEL	Wales & Western	Western
	WIVELISCOMBE TUNNEL	Wales & Western	Western
	BUCKSHEAD TUNNEL	Wales & Western	Western

■ Railways: Optical Fibres

Alex Mayer: [63453]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to her Department's press notice entitled On track and online: landmark deal to end mobile dead zones, published 26 June 2025, if she will publish the location of the rail lines due to get improved coverage with 1,000 of ultra fast fibre optic cable.

Simon Lightwood:

NEW HIGH-COUNT 432 FIBRE	
Routes	KMs
London Kings Cross to Newcastle	432

NEW HIGH-COUNT 432 FIBRE

Birmingham New Street to Stoke-on-Trent to Manchester Deansgate	133
London Marylebone to Birmingham Moor Street (via Chilterns)	177
London Paddington to Bristol Parkway to Cardiff	235
Other routes - Great Western Route	26
Total Km	1003

■ **Railways: WiFi****Anna Gelderd:**[\[63376\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether Project Reach will include enhancements to on-train Wi-Fi and mobile signal coverage for passengers travelling to and from Cornwall.

Simon Lightwood:

The Reach solution is focused on improving mobile signal coverage and the list of tunnels interventions includes the following locations in Devon and Cornwall:

Whiteball Tunnel

Marley Tunnel

Polperro Tunnel

Treverin Tunnel

Parsons Tunnel

Wiveliscombe Tunnel

Buckshead Tunnel.

■ **Taxis: Conditions of Employment and Pay****Lisa Smart:**[\[64062\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment she has made of the impact of (a) dynamic pricing and (a) general payments on the (i) working conditions and (ii) pay of private hire drivers.

Simon Lightwood:

Subject to any requirements under relevant legislation, pay and working conditions in the private hire vehicle sector are commercial matters between drivers and operators.

■ Taxis: Licensing

Karl Turner:

[64017]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of out-of-town (a) taxi and (b) private hire vehicle licensing on local authority enforcement capabilities and public safety; and what steps she is taking to support local councils to meet the challenges posed by drivers operating outside the area in which they are licensed.

Simon Lightwood:

Since coming into Government, I have been actively looking at safeguarding in relation to taxis and private hire vehicles. I welcome the work by Baroness Casey in her audit of group-based child sexual exploitation and abuse and her report adds valuable evidence to my department's ongoing work.

The Government will legislate to address the issues raised in the report and there are two outcomes I am clear we must achieve; the first is ensuring we have consistently high safeguarding standards and the second is that there is no unintended reduction in the availability of taxi and private hire vehicle services, which could disproportionately impact women and girls and disabled people, who rely on these services the most. That is why we are considering all options – including out-of-area working, national standards, enforcement and transferring licensing to local transport authorities.

Public safety is an utmost priority, and both the Government and licensing authorities have an important role in the effective regulation of the sector in England.

Legislation passed in 2022 places a requirement on licensing authorities in England to share safeguarding, road safety or equality concerns about drivers with the authority that issued the licence. The authority that issued the licence must then consider whether to suspend or revoke the driver's licence and must inform the authority that raised the concerns of their decision.

Statutory guidance, published by the Department for Transport in 2020, is clear that licensing authorities should, where the need arises, jointly authorise officers from other authorities so that compliance and enforcement action can be taken against licensees from outside their area. The same guidance also highlights that working in partnership with the police is vital for licensing authorities to share information as quickly as possible.

Best Practice Guidance issued in 2023 highlights how the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme can be used to increase the powers licensing enforcement officers have available. Officers authorised by the chief constables of their local force can be given powers to stop vehicles for inspection, testing and verification of licensing conditions, and the power to demand the name and address of the driver. If a driver fails to stop when directed by a CSAS-trained officer, it is a criminal offence and can be reported to the police for investigation and action.

Licensing authorities can also to carry out joint operations with other authorities and their local police force.

■ UK Bus Manufacturing Expert Panel

Euan Stainbank: [\[64808\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Bus Manufacturing Expert Panel has made an assessment of trends in the level of demand for buses; and whether they have considered the (a) location and (b) type of demand over the next 10 years.

Simon Lightwood:

A key output of the UK Bus Manufacturing Panel will be the publication of a ten-year pipeline of projected bus orders. The aim is to consolidate reliable data from Mayoral Combined Authorities and operators into a single, accessible source for all zero-emission bus stakeholders. High-quality, credible data is essential to building industry confidence, and the pipeline is expected to be published later this year to ensure that projected orders reflect realistic and deliverable commitments.

■ West Midlands Trains: Rolling Stock

Laurence Turner: [\[64666\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what information her Department holds on the dates on which the leases for West Midlands Trains' rolling stock expire; and which entity owns those trains.

Simon Lightwood:

West Midlands Trains' rolling stock leases for the Class 172/0, 172/1, 350/1, 350/3 and 350/4, which are owned by Angel Trains, are set to run until 31 March 2026. The Class 196/0, 196/1, 730/0, 730/1, and 730/2 leases also run until 31st March 2026 and are owned by Corelink. Finally, Porterbrook own the Class 139, 172/2 and 172/3, which expire on 31 March 2026, as well as the Class 350/2 fleet which expire on 30 September 2025.

TREASURY

■ Bank Services

Alex Brewer: [\[64629\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of the reduction of face to face banking options for all customers who find digital and telephone banking difficult to access.

Emma Reynolds:

Although digital banking is now widely used, with 93% of people making use of mobile or online services last year, the Government recognises that the ability to access cash and in-person banking support remains essential for many. This is why we have secured the industry's commitment to roll out 350 banking hubs by the end

of this Parliament, ensuring that access to face-to-face banking is protected. Over 230 hubs have been announced so far, and over 170 are already open.

An alternative option to access in-person banking services is via the Post Office. The Post Office Banking Framework allows personal and business customers to withdraw and deposit cash, check their balance, pay bills and cash cheques at 11,500 Post Office branches across the UK. The Government protects the Post Office network by setting minimum access criteria. These include ensuring that 99% of the UK population lives within three miles of a Post Office and 90% of the population within one mile.

More widely, ensuring individuals have access to the appropriate financial products and services they need is a key priority for the Government. That is why we have committed to publish a Financial Inclusion Strategy later this year which will examine the barriers consumers face in accessing the products they need.

■ Bank Services and Financial Services: Disability

Martin Rhodes:

[\[63484\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that people with disabilities have equitable access to services provided by (a) banks and (b) financial service providers.

Emma Reynolds:

As service providers, banks and building societies are bound under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments, where necessary, in the way they deliver their services.

In this context, the Government recognises that access to financial products and services ensures everyone can participate fully in the economy and in society.

This is why the Government has committed to publish a Financial Inclusion Strategy later this year. The strategy is being developed alongside a committee of industry and consumer representatives and will aim to tackle barriers to individuals' and households' ability to access affordable and appropriate products. As part of this, the committee is considering the cross-cutting theme of accessibility (alongside the themes of economic abuse and mental health) to ensure this informs the strategy's development.

For people with disabilities who require in-person services, the Government is also working closely with industry to roll out at least 350 banking hubs which will provide communities with critical cash and banking services. Over 230 hubs have been announced so far, and over 170 are already open. Cash Access UK, who oversee banking hub rollout, work to ensure that their physical premises are fully accessible, and their services promote an inclusive environment.

■ Banking Hubs: North East Somerset and Hanham

Dan Norris:

[\[63971\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent progress she has made with the banking industry on the roll out of banking hubs in North East Somerset and Hanham constituency.

Emma Reynolds:

The Government recognises the importance of face-to-face banking to communities and high streets in North East Somerset and Hanham, and across the country.

This is why the Government is working closely with industry to roll out 350 banking hubs across the UK. The UK banking sector has committed to deliver these hubs by the end of this Parliament.

Over 230 hubs have been announced so far, and over 170 are already open.

The location of these hubs is determined independently by LINK, the industry coordinating body responsible for making access to cash assessments. When a cash service such as a bank branch closes, or if LINK receives a request directly from a community, LINK assesses a community's access to cash needs. This assessment may lead to a recommendation for the establishment of a banking hub in that community.

A temporary banking hub is now open in Keynsham, while the search for a permanent location is underway.

■ Business Rates

Andrew Griffith:

[\[64507\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what private businesses she has consulted on the business rates system.

James Murray:

The Government published a Discussion Paper at Autumn Budget 2024 setting out priority areas for business rates reform. This paper invited industry to help co-design a fairer business rates system that supports investment and is fit for the 21st century. The Treasury received over 160 written responses to that Discussion Paper and met with over 250 stakeholders from a range of different sectors.

On 17 February, the Government published a 'forward look' of the expected timeline for reforms announced at Autumn Budget 2024, and how stakeholders should engage with the Government on business rates reform going forwards.

In the 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.

■ Business: Capital Gains Tax

Mark Garnier:

[63564]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether her Department has made an estimate of the number of individuals who intend to leave the UK following the ending of Business Asset Disposal Relief.

James Murray:

No estimate of the number of individuals who would leave the UK if Business Asset Disposal Relief (BADR) were to be abolished has been made.

The government recognises the important role that small businesses and entrepreneurs will play in boosting Britain's growth. That's why BADR has been maintained with a generous lifetime limit of £1 million, and BADR rates increases have been phased in over 18 months to give business owners time to adjust.

You can find statistics on the number of claimants, amounts of qualifying gains and tax charged at the BADR rate in table 4 of the Capital Gains Tax accredited official statistics.

[Capital Gains Tax statistics - GOV.UK](#)

You can also find an estimate for the cost of BADR in the cost of non-structural tax reliefs statistics:

[Tax relief statistics - GOV.UK](#)

■ Credit Unions: Finance

Andrew Lewin:

[64130]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of a Central Finance Facility for credit unions on the economy.

Emma Reynolds:

The Government has made clear its strong support for the credit union sector, recognising the value that credit unions bring to their members in local communities across the country in providing savings products and affordable credit.

HM Treasury is delivering on measures announced by the Chancellor in last year's Mansion House speech, including: concluding a call for evidence on potential reforms to credit union common bonds, supporting the industry-led Mutual and Co-operative Sector Business Council, and commissioning the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA) to publish a report on the mutuals landscape by the end of 2025.

The Government currently has no plans to develop a central finance facility for credit unions but continues to engage with the sector and will keep all issues, like central finance functions, under review.

■ Cryptocurrencies

Mark Garnier: [\[63565\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that stablecoin issuers maintain sufficient backing assets to protect consumers and financial stability.

Emma Reynolds:

On 29 April, HM Treasury published draft legislation for the future financial services regulatory regime for cryptoassets.

The draft legislation includes a new regulated activity for stablecoin issuance in the UK, meaning firms carrying on this activity will need to be authorised by the Financial Conduct Authority.

The Government is seeking to bring forward final legislation before the end of this year.

■ Digital Technology: Taxation

Victoria Collins: [\[63435\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of increasing the Digital Services Tax.

James Murray:

The DST is an interim solution to widely held concerns with international corporate tax, and the UK remains committed to remove it once a global solution on the taxation of the digital economy through Pillar 1 of the G20-OECD Inclusive Framework project is in place.

■ Economic Growth: Harpenden and Berkhamsted

Victoria Collins: [\[63424\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps her Department is taking to help increase economic growth in Harpenden and Berkhamsted constituency.

Victoria Collins: [\[63425\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of the autumn Budget 2024 on costs for small and medium-sized businesses in (a) Harpenden and Berkhamsted constituency, (b) Hertfordshire and (c) the rest of England.

Emma Reynolds:

The government's priority mission is to deliver strong, secure and sustainable economic growth to boost living standards in every part of the UK. The Spending Review marked a key step in the growth mission, allocating substantial new capital investment to ensure growth is felt across the country. This investment will be further bolstered in the coming months by other reforms, building on the Industrial Strategy and the 10-Year Infrastructure Strategy announced last month.

Hertfordshire will receive £38 million in Local Transport Grant funding enabling local authorities to deliver transport improvements including more zero emission buses, cycleways, accessibility and congestion improvement measures. This will deliver a four-fold increase in funding in 2029-30 compared to 2024-25.

At Autumn Budget, the Government protected the smallest businesses from the impact of the increase to Employer National Insurance by increasing the Employment Allowance from £5,000 to £10,500. The Government also froze the small businesses multiplier for 2025-26, and extended the retail, hospitality and leisure (RHL) business rates relief for 1-year at 40% (up to a cash cap of £110,000 per business).

The Government has accepted the Low Pay Commission's recommendations to increase the National Living Wage and National Minimum Wage rates, which balance the impacts on business, competitiveness of the labour market and wider economy, as well as taking into account the cost of living.

■ Gift Aid

Stuart Andrew:

[\[63297\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when she plans to amend Gift Aid legislation to ensure that charities operating on a membership subscription model can continue to claim Gift Aid while complying with the requirements of the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act 2024.

James Murray:

The government will legislate to amend the rules concerning Gift Aid due to implications of the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act (DMCCA) 2024. This Act introduces new protections for consumers who take out subscription contracts. The government will amend existing Gift Aid legislation before the DMCCA comes into force so that charities can continue to claim Gift Aid while complying with new consumer protections.

■ Help to Save Scheme

Blake Stephenson:

[\[64575\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of extending the eligibility criteria for the Help to Save scheme.

Emma Reynolds:

The Help to Save scheme promotes financial resilience among working people on low incomes by encouraging a regular, long-term savings habit and building a financial buffer to help people to plan and prepare for the future. The scheme is only available to working individuals in receipt of certain benefits. This ensures it is targeted at its intended population.

The government has recently extended the eligibility criteria for the Help to Save scheme. From April 2025 it is available to all Universal Credit claimants in work, not just those earning over a certain amount. These changes mean that around 550,000

more people will be able to take advantage of the scheme, bringing the eligible population to 3 million.

■ Income Tax

Sir Mel Stride: [\[64420\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to her Oral Statement of 30 October 2024 on Financial Statement and Budget Report, Official Report, column 821, whether it remains her policy not to extend the freeze on income tax thresholds.

James Murray:

The Government is committed to keeping taxes for working people as low as possible while ensuring fiscal responsibility. That is why, at our first Budget, we decided not to extend the freeze on personal tax thresholds.

■ Independent Review of the Loan Charge

Sammy Wilson: [\[63561\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what progress has been made on the Loan Charge Review.

James Murray:

The independent review of the Loan Charge is ongoing and will report in the summer. The Government will respond to the review by Autumn Budget 2025.

■ Individual Savings Accounts

Josh Babarinde: [\[64165\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of a reduction in the annual tax-free cash ISA allowance on people in (a) Eastbourne and (b) the UK.

Emma Reynolds:

The Government is committed to incentivising greater saving and investment. Individual Savings Accounts (ISAs) help people save for their future goals and build greater financial resilience.

The Government recognises the important role that cash savings play in helping households build a financial buffer for a rainy day. The Government also wants to see more consumers participate in capital markets and benefit from the long-term financial security and returns that investing can provide.

The impact of any changes to ISAs would be set out in a tax information impact note. The Government continues to keep all aspects of savings policy under review.

■ Insolvency: Reform

Adam Jogee: [\[64298\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether she has had discussions with the Prudential Regulation Authority on the potential impact of reforming Solvency UK on the

availability of annuity capital for investment in (a) housing, (b) transport and (c) infrastructure in (i) the UK and (ii) Newcastle-under-Lyme constituency.

Emma Reynolds:

I have regular discussions with the Prudential Regulation Authority on a range of subjects, including the potential of recent reforms to the prudential requirements for insurers to have a positive impact on investment into productive UK assets, such as housing, transport, and infrastructure.

■ **Investment: Harpenden and Berkhamsted**

Victoria Collins:

[\[63427\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps she is taking to encourage investment in Harpenden and Berkhamsted constituency.

Emma Reynolds:

This government is committed to keeping Britain economically stable to spur investment. Investment that will increase the number of good, well-skilled jobs and improve productivity across the country.

Last month the government released the Industrial and Infrastructure Strategies. These 10-year plans will create and connect people to good jobs, support new housing and neighborhoods, and ensuring people can depend on vital public services. They will also increase business investment in 8 growth-driving sectors, by making it quicker and easier for businesses to invest and providing them with the certainty and stability needed for long-term investment decisions.

To support the success of our strategies the Department for Business and Trade has a dedicated investment function in the UK and overseas, including the new expanded Office for Investment (OfI) which is the UK's investment promotion agency. This bolstered OfI redoubles UK efforts to secure investment to drive economic growth as part of Government's Plan for Change and targets investors in high-growth and foundational sectors. Since taking office over 600 individual investments have been supported by this government, and we will continue to work hard on landing more.

This government is also committed to supporting growth driving initiatives such as the Oxford-Cambridge Corridor. At the start of this year Science Minister Vallance was appointed as Oxford-Cambridge Innovation Champion. He will strengthen connections between OxCam and the wider UK, so this region is an economic engine for the entire nation.

These measures will encourage investment into Harpenden and Berkhamsted, with local organisations like Rothamsted Research able to benefit from participation in OxCam-related research and innovation. The Industrial Strategy's focus on frontier manufacturing sectors, including Agri-Tech, will further support this.

■ Members: Correspondence**Sir Christopher Chope:** [\[64392\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when the Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury plans to respond to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Christchurch of 3 April 2025, reference MC2025/08032.

James Murray:

The letter is being carefully considered and a response will be issued by 11 July.

■ Mortgages: Private Rented Housing**Caroline Voaden:** [\[63368\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps she is taking to ensure buy-to-let mortgage products are available for landlords renting to vulnerable tenants.

Emma Reynolds:

The Government welcomes innovation in the mortgage market and continues to work with the sector to improve housing provisions and the safeguards in place for the vulnerable.

The availability and design of buy-to-let mortgages is a commercial decision for lenders in which the Government does not intervene.

■ Motor Insurance**Victoria Collins:** [\[63433\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment her Department has made of the effectiveness of the Financial Conduct Authority's powers in preventing insurers from applying excessive premium increases to non-fault claimants.

Emma Reynolds:

Insurers make commercial decisions about pricing and the terms of cover they offer based on their assessment of the relevant risks. This is usually informed by the insurer's claims experience and other industry-wide statistics.

However, the Government is determined that insurers should treat customers fairly and firms are required to do so under Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) rules. The FCA requires firms to ensure their products offer fair value (i.e. if the price a consumer pays for a product or service is reasonable compared to the overall benefits they can expect to receive).

The FCA have made clear they monitor firms to ensure they provide products that are fair value, and, where necessary, it has robust powers to take action against firms that fail to comply with its rules.

■ Payment Methods

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[64405\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when she expects to receive the conclusions of the Payment Vision Delivery Committee.

Emma Reynolds:

The National Payments Vision, published in November 2024, set out the government's ambition for a trusted, world-leading payments ecosystem delivered on next generation technology, where consumers and businesses have a choice of payment methods to meet their needs.

To drive forward the activities required to achieve this, the government established the Payments Vision Delivery Committee – a senior cross-authority group, chaired by HM Treasury and comprising senior representatives of the Bank of England, FCA and PSR. The Committee is supported by the Vision Engagement Group including over 30 representatives from across the sector.

The Committee will shortly update on its first deliverable to set out an approach for the development and delivery of the UK's retail payments infrastructure needs and the required governance and funding model to achieve it. It will also publish the Payments Forward Plan by end-2025, including a sequenced plan of future initiatives, and a recommended monitoring approach.

■ Tobacco: Excise Duties

James McMurdock:

[\[63833\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment HMRC has made of the potential merits of using alternative data sources on smoking incidence to calculate tobacco tax estimates.

James Murray:

The tobacco duty forecast starts by generating an in-year estimate for receipts in the current year based on the year-to-date performance of receipts. Future tobacco duty receipts are then forecast from that starting point based on inflation (CPI and RPI), real household consumption and underlying trends in tobacco consumption. Smoking incidence rates impact receipts and are accounted for via the in-year receipts estimate and underlying trends in tobacco consumption.

The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) provide further details on the tobacco tax receipt forecast on their [Tobacco duties forecast webpage](#).

WALES■ **Trade Agreements: USA**

Dame Harriett Baldwin: [\[63694\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of the UK-US Economic Prosperity Deal on Wales.

Jo Stevens:

Within a year of coming into government, we have secured three new trade deals with India, the EU and the US. Our Trade Strategy is unambiguous in pursuing quicker, more practical deals that deliver a real impact for Welsh businesses. That is why we have prioritised deals with Wales's largest markets, including the US as our single largest country of destination with over 1000 businesses exporting from Wales.

In May, the UK concluded a landmark economic deal with the US. This deal protects jobs in the automotive, steel, aluminium, pharmaceutical and aerospace sectors - sectors that employ over 45,000 people across Wales.

The Government remains focused on making sure British businesses can feel the benefits of the deal as soon as possible.

The Government is continuing discussions on the UK-US Economic Prosperity Deal which will look at increasing digital trade, enhancing access for our world-leading services industries and improving supply chains.

My Department will continue to support the ongoing negotiations with the US, led by the Department for Business and Trade.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES■ **Conversion Therapy**

Victoria Collins: [\[64268\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what progress her Department has made towards establishing a ban on conversion practices.

Dame Nia Griffith:

I refer the Honourable member to my answer on 24 June (PQ 60396).

■ **Transgender People**

Tom Hayes: [\[64231\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what steps she is taking to improve support for young trans people under the age of 18.

Dame Nia Griffith:

It is crucial that all trans people, regardless of age, are safe, included and protected from discrimination.

There are strong protections in place for young trans people to live free from discrimination and harassment. In addition to this, work is already underway to fulfil the commitments set out in the Government's manifesto, advancing the rights and protections afforded to young trans people. This includes delivering a trans-inclusive ban on conversion practices and equalising all existing strands of hate crime to make them aggravated offences.

■ Transgender People: Conversion Therapy

Tom Hayes:

[\[63883\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, when she plans to bring forward legislative proposals to ban conversion therapy for trans people.

Dame Nia Griffith:

This Government's position is that conversion practices are abuse. Such practices have no place in society and must be stopped.

We are committed to bringing forward a comprehensive trans-inclusive ban on conversion practices. This is a complex issue, and it is imperative that we get this right. That is why, in collaboration with Ministerial colleagues, my officials and I are working hard to draft legislation that protects LGBT individuals from these harmful practices .

We will publish our draft Bill later this session for pre-legislative scrutiny.

■ Transgender People: Equality

Tom Hayes:

[\[63918\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what discussions she is having with the Equality and Human Rights Commission on ensuring that updates to the Code of Practice provides practical guidance for service providers who wish to remain trans-inclusive.

Dame Nia Griffith:

The Equality and Human Rights Commission's (EHRC) consultation on the changes made to the draft updated statutory Code of Practice following the Supreme Court ruling closed on 30 June. We will consider the EHRC's final draft Code of Practice once it has been submitted. It is important that the Code provides the clarity service providers need, in line with the Supreme Court ruling, and ensures people have appropriate access to crucial services.

Once the final draft is sent to us by the EHRC, we will follow the correct process for decision-making including considering equality impacts in line with the public sector equality duty and providing for full parliamentary scrutiny in line with the Equality Act 2006.

WORK AND PENSIONS**■ Access to Work Programme****Mike Martin:**[\[63349\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what guidance her Department issues to Access to Work case managers on reducing costs.

Sir Stephen Timms:

At present no guidance has been issued explicitly advising Access to Work Case Managers on reducing costs. There is however guidance related to:

- the banded rate information for the different types of Support Worker (SW)
- the requirement for three quotes for the Special Aids and Equipment (SAE) element when the cost of an item is £1000 or more
- the links to websites that provide suggested taxi fare rates
- and the overarching principles of Access to Work which include value for money which provide guidance to case managers on reasonable costs and to provide value for money.

■ Access to Work Programme: Self-employed and Small Businesses**Carla Denyer:**[\[62842\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 16 June 2025 to Question 58821 on Access to Work Programme: Self-employed, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of the changes to Access to Work on claimants who are (a) self-employed and (b) working for smaller employers; and whether the consultation entitled Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working Green Paper, published on 18 March 2025, includes consideration of the needs of claimants in those groups.

Sir Stephen Timms:

As announced in the Green Paper, we are consulting on the future of Access to Work and how to improve the scheme so that it helps more disabled people into and on in work. We also understand that the role of employers is key to the creation of accessible and inclusive workplaces.

This Government values the input of disabled people and people with health conditions including those who are self-employed or work for smaller employers, in addition to the representative organisations and people that support them. That is why we brought forward the Green Paper and opened a public consultation. The consultation closed on the 30 June 2025.

We will review all aspects of Access to Work, including provision for the self-employed and those working for smaller employers, as we develop plans for reform following the consultation. We will assess the impact of potential changes once they have been identified.

■ Carer's Allowance

Mr Toby Perkins:

[\[62570\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of her Department's proposed changes to the Personal Independent Payment on (a) carers in receipt of Carer's Allowance and (b) people receiving care from carers in receipt of Carer's Allowance.

Sir Stephen Timms:

As I made clear in my statement to the House, Hansard, 1 July, col 219, any changes to PIP eligibility will come after a comprehensive review of the benefit, which I am leading, and which will be co-produced with disabled people, the organisations that represent them, clinicians, experts, MPs and other stakeholders, so a wide range of views and voices are heard. This review aims to ensure that the PIP assessment is fair and fit for the future. The review is expected to conclude in autumn 2026.

Mr Toby Perkins:

[\[62571\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of claimants losing their Carer's Allowance as a result of her Department's proposed changes to Personal Independence Payments on local authorities.

Sir Stephen Timms:

As I set out in the House of Commons on 1 July 2025, this Government has listened to the concerns raised by Members from across the House regarding the proposed changes to Personal Independence Payment (PIP).

Clause 5 of the Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment Bill would have amended the legal framework underpinning PIP assessments, specifically by implementing a new requirement that claimants must score a minimum of four points in at least one daily living activity to be eligible for the daily living component of PIP.

In light of the concerns raised, I confirmed during the debate that we are going to remove clause 5 from the Bill in Committee. (Hansard, 1 July, col 219)

Any changes to PIP eligibility will come after a comprehensive review of the benefit, led by me and co-produced with disabled people, the organisations that represent them, clinicians, experts, MPs and other stakeholders, so a wide range of views and voices are heard. This review aims to ensure that the PIP assessment is fair and fit for the future.

■ Children: Maintenance

Callum Anderson:

[\[62789\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate her Department has made of the number of current Direct Pay cases in (a) Milton Keynes and (b) Buckinghamshire that will transition to the Collect and Pay service following the implementation of child maintenance reforms.

Andrew Western:

Estimates of reform impacts are not available for local areas.

Recent numbers of paying parents and arrangements in the Direct Pay service at regional level are available on Stat Xplore [[Stat-Xplore - Table View](#)].

There will be two clear options for parents following the planned reforms. One is to make a family-based arrangement, and the Child Maintenance Service (CMS) will provide parents with enhanced support to make and maintain these. Parents with a stable and compliant direct pay arrangement may well find this option meets their needs.

Where a family-based arrangement is not appropriate, or for those who prefer to be part of the statutory system, the CMS will operate a single service based on the current Collect and Pay model where it manages all payments, with an improved ability to identify and act on non-compliance.

As part of these reforms, we will halve the fees for those using the CMS, while maintaining a 20% fee for non-resident parents who refuse to pay up on time and in full. Parents currently in the Direct Pay system will have the choice of keeping their CMS case which will be moved to the new, improved service, giving them the peace of mind that payment will be monitored and any problems followed up, in return for a small fee – or have improved support to make and maintain a family-based arrangement.

Callum Anderson:**[62790]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of her Department's proposed changes to the Universal Credit deductions priority order on the (a) volume and (b) timeliness of child maintenance payments.

Andrew Western:

The Fair Repayment Rate (FRR) was implemented as a permanent change on the 30 April 2025. This measure reduces the overall deductions cap from 25% to 15% of a customer's Universal Credit (UC) standard allowance. This will enable approximately 1.2 million UC households retain more of their award, on average £420 a year or £35 per month. The FRR will impact UC assessment periods that start on 30 April 25 or after.

The FRR measure as an isolated change, would have reduced the current number of child maintenance deductions taken from a UC award, resulting in a negative impact on child poverty. Therefore, in addition to the FRR, the child maintenance deduction was moved higher up the regulated deductions priority order on the 30 April, and for a temporary period of one year.

The reason for implementing the child maintenance deduction measure on a temporary basis is to enable the Department to gather further evidence on the impact the changes will have on UC households with a child maintenance deduction. This evidence will determine the future child maintenance deduction policy.

Outturn data on the full impact of the change to the positioning of Child Maintenance is not yet available. However, modelling of the change by the Department estimates that it will increase the number of monthly Child Maintenance deductions collected from approximately 50,000 to approximately 60,000. This estimate was derived using UC household deductions data from May 2024, the latest available when the modelling was done. Actual figures may differ as a result of changes to the composition and characteristics of the UC caseload in the intervening time.

Timeliness of payments are in line with existing processes: the Universal Credit (UC) deduction is transferred to Child Maintenance Service (CMS) CMS on the Saturday following the UC award payment date and immediately paid out the receiving parent. The payment is subject to usual bank processing and is received in the parent's bank account in 3-5 working days .

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Apprentices

Stuart Anderson:

[63013]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to increase apprenticeship opportunities within her Department.

Andrew Western:

We remain committed to supporting the use of apprenticeships across all government departments to break down barriers to opportunity.

A new cross-Government Level 3 apprenticeship programme in Business Administration, the 'Civil Service Career Launch Apprenticeship' (CLA), will see new apprentices kickstart their careers, across various departments, starting from January 2026. The Department for Work and Pensions has been supporting Cabinet Office with the development of this new scheme, sharing learning from our own school leaver Social Mobility Apprenticeship pilot, which has run successfully for the last two years, with our first cohort of school leavers all securing permanent employment within the Department.

In addition, in the Department for Work and Pensions we are developing an internal apprenticeship strategy, which will utilise the flexibility provided by the new Growth and Skills Levy to develop skills and support the future needs of the Department. Expansion of opportunities to recruit new apprentices are being explored, including continued use of our Social Mobility Apprenticeship schemes and direct recruitment of apprentices into entry level roles. We have recently run two Civil Service Jobs campaigns for Level 3 apprentices in Counter Fraud and Compliance across eight locations, with our latest campaign currently at sift stage and our first learners now starting on programme. Internally, we have also recently launched new apprenticeship opportunities for existing staff, including the Level 3 Data Technician apprenticeship designed to build digital and data skills within our workforce.

We are committed to Getting Britain Working, driving growth through employment. Our plan includes a new Youth Guarantee for all young people aged 18-21 in England to ensure that they can access quality training opportunities, an

apprenticeship or help to find work. The Department for Work and Pensions and the Department for Education are working closely with the eight Mayoral Strategic Authorities in England who have commenced phased delivery of the Youth Guarantee Trailblazers announced in the Get Britain Working white paper from May 2025. The Department is committed to offering high quality apprenticeships for all and working with professions to identify opportunities to fulfil business needs.

■ Employment Schemes: Young People

Andrew Cooper:

[62847]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to support young people into sustained employment after education.

Alison McGovern:

As part of our plan to Get Britain Working, we are launching a new Youth Guarantee for all young people aged 18-21 in England to ensure that they can access quality training opportunities, an apprenticeship or help to find work. The Department for Work and Pensions and the Department for Education are working closely with the eight Mayoral Strategic Authorities in England which began mobilising the Youth Guarantee Trailblazers in April 2025. The eight areas delivering Trailblazers are: the West of England, Tees Valley, East Midlands, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, Liverpool City Region, West Midlands and two areas within the Greater London Authority. The trailblazers will run for 12 months, and we will use the learning to inform the future design and development of the Youth Guarantee as it rolls-out across the rest of England.

This is part of a broader package of reforms, including introduction of a new jobs and careers service to help get more people into work, the development of work, health and skills plans for the economically inactive, and the launch of Skills England to open up new opportunities for young people. We will work in partnership with organisations and businesses at the national and local level to offer exciting and engaging opportunities to young people. This could include work experience, training courses or employability programmes.

In addition, DWP provides young people aged 16-24 with labour market support through an extensive range of interventions at a national and local level. This includes flexible provision driven by local need, nationwide employment programmes and support delivered by work coaches based in our Jobcentres and in local communities working alongside partners.

At Jobcentres, young people receive tailored support from youth work coaches. Those facing multiple barriers to employment are assisted by a Youth Employability Coach.

■ Employment: Autism

Mr Angus MacDonald:

[\[63504\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to support autistic people into work.

Alison McGovern:

We are committed to supporting neurodivergent people, including autistic people, get into and thrive in work. Our Jobcentres have a range of support available, including Disability Employment Advisors. On 6th March 2025 we announced that we will deploy 1000 work coaches to help people with health conditions and disabled people towards and into work. This will build and expand on existing measures like additional work coach support which delivers personalised support for some customers on the health journey.

In January this year we launched an independent panel of academics with expertise and experiences of neurodiversity. The panel will consider the reasons why neurodivergent people have poor experiences in the workplace, and a low overall employment rate, making their recommendations to government later this summer.

The Secretaries of State for Work and Pensions and Business and Trade have asked Sir Charlie Mayfield to lead an independent review. While not specific to neurodiversity, this review is considering how best to support and enable employers to recruit and retain more disabled people and people with health conditions, promote healthy and inclusive workplaces, and how to support more people to stay in or return to work. Sir Charlie Mayfield will deliver his final report in the autumn.

Our voluntary, locally led Supported Employment Programme, Connect to Work, is rolling out across England and Wales, as we agree local delivery plans with lead delivery authorities. The programme will provide specialist employment support to over 300,000 disabled people, people with health conditions and those with complex barriers to employment over the five-year duration of the programme. Connect to Work follows the Local Supported Employment programme, where £12.3 million has already been invested into 27 lead Local Authority areas to provide support to autistic, neurodivergent people and people with learning disabilities.

We are also supporting employers to be more inclusive in their workplace practices. Our support to employers includes a digital information service, called Support with Employee Health and Disability, which provides tailored guidance on supporting employees in common workplace scenarios involving health and disability, and the Disability Confident scheme, which as of May this year has 19,000 members employing approximately 12 million paid employees in total.

■ Employment: Disability

Sir Mel Stride:

[\[64419\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether it remains her Department's policy to spend an additional £1 billion on employment support for people

with health conditions and disabilities by 2029-30 relative to pre-Spring Statement plans, following the changes to the Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payments Bill; how the further £300 million of funded announced on 30 June 2025 is to be allocated across financial years; and what the total planned spending on employment support for people with health conditions and disabilities was in each financial year to 2029-30 (a) before the Spring Statement and (b) as of 2 July 2025.

Alison McGovern:

We will spend an additional £1 billion on employment support for people with health conditions and disabilities by 2029-2030 relative to pre-Spring Statement plans, with no impact following changes made to the Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payments Bill.

Further details were given by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions' [statement on Welfare Reform](#) given on 30 June.

■ **Employment: Sexual Harassment**

Rebecca Long Bailey:

[63309]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps the Health and Safety Executive is taking to help tackle incidents of workplace sexual harassment; and what procedures it follows to identify workplace sexual harassment during workplace inspections.

Sir Stephen Timms:

Whilst the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 could apply to harassment offences in the workplace, the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) long standing position is that it does not seek to regulate or apply health and safety at work legislation where another regulator has specific responsibility or there is more directly applicable legislation.

A specific purpose of The Equality Act 2000 is to tackle sexual harassment in the workplace and from 26 October 2024, employers are under a new legal duty to take reasonable steps to prevent the sexual harassment of staff at work.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission and the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service have published extensive guidance on sexual harassment in the workplace, provide advice to individuals and organisations, and will help individual people with their legal cases in seeking civil remedies to instances of sexual harassment. HSE works closely with other regulators to promote co-operation, share intelligence and where appropriate, co-ordinate on joint regulatory activities.

Workplace sexual harassment is unlawful under legislation such as the Equality Act 2010, the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, and the Sexual Offences Act 2003. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) directly addresses incidents of discrimination and sexual harassment under the Equality Act 2010, ensuring that employers meet their obligations to prevent these issues.

As there are other better placed regulators, HSE inspectors do not raise the issue during workplace inspections.

■ **Equal Pay: Disability**

Jim Shannon:

[\[64042\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what discussions she has had with Cabinet colleagues on the disability pay gap.

Sir Stephen Timms:

Equalities Ministers have been engaging with Ministerial colleagues as we develop the policy on disability pay gap reporting, including on the proposals in our recent consultation, and will continue to do so.

■ **Health and Safety**

Rebecca Long Bailey:

[\[63310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, which enforcement body is responsible for ensuring that employers are in compliance with Regulation 3 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999; and what steps her Department has taken to assess the effectiveness of that body.

Sir Stephen Timms:

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) (alongside Local Authorities) is responsible for ensuring that employers are in compliance with Regulation 3 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) assesses the effectiveness of HSE by various means, including quarterly accountability reviews, at which HSE's performance measures are considered. Furthermore, DWP has carried out a full review of each of its arm's-length bodies, employing an independent reviewer. This review examines in detail how the body is performing across various areas, and is published on gov.uk. The last review was completed in 2023.

■ **Housing Benefit**

Afzal Khan:

[\[62680\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much her Department has spent on enhanced housing benefit in each year since 2010.

Sir Stephen Timms:

We interpret 'enhanced housing benefit' as Housing Benefit payable for exempt accommodation (a category of specified accommodation in Housing Benefit regulations). The time series information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur a disproportionate cost.

The estimated annual cost to the benefits system for all accommodation costs associated with supported housing in 2023 is £4.1 billion per year; estimated at just

over 10% of total housing support (AME); of which £2.72 billion is for Specified Accommodation through Housing Benefit.

Afzal Khan:

[62681]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what proportion of enhanced housing benefit was paid to (a) for-profit landlords, (b) not-for-profit landlords and (c) charities in each year since 2010.

Sir Stephen Timms:

We interpret 'enhanced housing benefit' as Housing Benefit payable for exempt accommodation (a category of specified accommodation in the Housing Benefit regulations). For Housing Benefit claims assessed as exempt accommodation, we do not hold data on whether a landlord is a not-for-profit organisation or a charity.

DWP does not form contractual relationships with supported housing landlords or charities in relation to Housing Benefit expenditure. Housing Benefit for specified accommodation is typically paid directly to the landlord at the request of the customer.

Housing Benefit regulations for specified accommodation outline that Housing Benefit cannot be paid for claims where the landlord is for-profit.

■ Jobcentres

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:

[63054]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of expanding Jobcentre access to people not in receipt of benefits.

Alison McGovern:

[Holding answer 1 July 2025]: We are reforming Jobcentre Plus and creating a new service across Great Britain that will enable everyone to access support to find good, meaningful work, and support to help them to progress in work, including through an enhanced focus on skills and careers. The new Jobs and Careers Service will offer employment and careers support for all - not just those on benefits - who want support to find or progress in work.

Supporting our 'Get Britain Working' agenda, we have funded several measures to help unemployed people not in receipt of benefits to find employment:

- £115 million funding for 2025/26 for the Connect to Work programme, a voluntary, locally led Supported Employment programme in England and Wales, which will support disabled people, people with health conditions and those with complex barriers to employment.
- £125 million for 2025/26 to deliver 9 place-based economic inactivity trailblazers across England and Wales, of which £45 million is for NHS England Health Accelerators. Tailored to the needs of local areas, these trailblazers are testing different ways of reducing economic inactivity.

- Working with the Department for Education, £45 million for 2025/26 for our 8 Youth Guarantee trailblazers which are testing a cohesive education, training and employment support offer for young people aged 18-21.
- £34m funding for 2025/26 for WorkWell pilots for 15 areas to design and deliver integrated work and health support.
- Continuing with the Employment Advisers in NHS Talking Therapies programme to provide people with common mental health conditions the support they need to enter, re-enter or return to work and improve mental health.

■ Offshore Industry: Repairs and Maintenance

Brian Leishman:

[\[64613\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, which oil and gas (a) duty holders and (b) installations on the UK Continental Shelf were subject to enforcement action by the Health and Safety Executive in relation to the management of safety critical maintenance work in each year between 2022-23 and 2024-25.

Sir Stephen Timms:

As a result of the review of maintenance backlog data and targeted offshore installation and HQ interventions over the recent years Improvement Notices have been served on the following installation operators (for both single and multiple installations). These are accessible on Health and Safety Executives's enforcement database:

For 2022/23:

Ithaca Alba

Eni Douglas

CNR multiple installations

Perenco multiple installations

Total Gryphon

Harbour Armada

For 2023/24:

Repsol Auk

Total Dunbar

Apache multiple installations

For 2024/25:

Total Culzean

Dana Triton

Brian Leishman:

[\[64614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of the potential impact that the Principles of Process Safety Leadership for the offshore UK Continental Shelf energy industry agreed between the Health and Safety Executive and offshore oil and gas industry representatives on the management of safety critical maintenance programmes at contractor level.

Sir Stephen Timms:

The Principles of Process Safety Leadership programme for the offshore UK Continental Shelf energy industry was focused on improving process safety leadership for offshore oil and gas installation operators. Safety critical maintenance programmes at contractor level are managed by these oil and gas operators.

There has been sustained focus on offshore oil and gas operators since the pandemic including an annual request to report to Health and Safety Executive, their overall maintenance backlog position, including deferred worksopes. There has been an improving trend in these backlog numbers over the past four years. An agreed set of industry KPIs is now in place and a Maintenance Backlog Task/Finish Group was established to address the challenges including sharing good practice in the delivery of maintenance work.

■ Pension Credit: Publicity

Dr Luke Evans:

[\[64105\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she plans to launch a campaign to increase pension credit uptake before winter 2025-2026.

Torsten Bell:

The Government wants all pensioners to get the support to which they are entitled. That is why since Autumn 2024 we have been running the biggest ever Pension Credit take-up campaign.

The Department's campaign to raise awareness of Pension Credit has continued in numerous stages between January and July 2025 and has included radio, print and social media adverts as well as continuing work with stakeholders. We plan to continue promotional activity from Autumn through to the end of the financial year with the campaign aimed at eligible pensioners who are not yet claiming, and their friends and family, as we work to increase the take up of Pension Credit.

■ Pension Credit: Take-up

Dr Simon Opher:

[\[64136\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans her Department has to raise awareness of the availability of Pension Credit this winter.

Torsten Bell:

The Government wants all pensioners to get the support to which they are entitled. That is why since Autumn 2024 we have been running the biggest ever Pension Credit take-up campaign.

The Department's campaign to raise awareness of Pension Credit has continued in numerous stages between January and July 2025 and has included radio, print and social media adverts as well as continuing work with stakeholders. We plan to continue promotional activity from Autumn through to the end of the financial year with the campaign aimed at eligible pensioners who are not yet claiming, and their friends and family, as we work to increase the take up of Pension Credit.

■ Personal Independence Payment**Chris Hinchliff:****[62850]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make an estimate of the number and proportion of Personal Independence Payment claimants who use some of their Personal Independence Payment to pay for housing costs.

Sir Stephen Timms:

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is intended to provide a financial contribution towards the extra costs faced by disabled people and people with long-term health. Claimants are free to use PIP according to their own needs and priorities. Information on how claimants spend their benefit is published in [The Uses of Health and Disability Benefits](#), and, for a subset in receipt of the Support Group rate of Employment and Support Allowance and its Universal Credit equivalent, in chapter 3.4 of [The work aspirations and support needs of claimants in the ESA Support Group and Universal Credit equivalent](#).

Lola McEvoy:**[63077]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to auto-enroll people who lose their PIP payments into suitable appropriate support programs within 13 weeks of the decision.

Sir Stephen Timms:

As I set out in the House of Commons on 1 July 2025, this Government has listened to the concerns raised by Members from across the House regarding the proposed changes to Personal Independence Payment (PIP).

Clause 5 of the Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment Bill would have amended the legal framework underpinning PIP assessments, specifically by implementing a new requirement that claimants must score a minimum of four points in at least one daily living activity to be eligible for the daily living component of PIP.

In light of the concerns raised, I confirmed during the debate that we are going to remove clause 5 from the Bill in Committee. (Hansard, 1 July, col 219)

Any changes to PIP eligibility will come after a comprehensive review of the benefit, led by me and co-produced with disabled people, the organisations that represent

them, clinicians, experts, MPs and other stakeholders, so a wide range of views and voices are heard. This review aims to ensure that the PIP assessment is fair and fit for the future.

■ Personal Independence Payment and Universal Credit

Damian Hinds:

[\[63294\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what data her Department provides to HM Treasury for the purposes of forecasting future numbers of claims for (a) PIP and (b) the (i) Limited Capability for Work Element and (ii) Limited Capability for Work and Work-Related Activity Element of Universal Credit; and whether her Department is responsible for any of the assumptions underpinning those forecasts.

Sir Stephen Timms:

Forecast number of claims for PIP and health components of Universal Credit are produced by the Department as part of overall expenditure forecasts provided to the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) at each fiscal event. DWP provides forecasts of benefit payments based on DWP assumptions agreed by OBR, alongside economic determinants, judgments and assumptions provided by the OBR. These forecasts are shared with HM Treasury in parallel with the Office for Budget Responsibility.

Full details of the relationship between DWP, OBR and HMT can be found within the Memorandum of understanding between the Office for Budget Responsibility, HM Treasury, the Department for Work & Pensions, and HM Revenue & Customs.

■ Personal Independence Payment: Blue Badge Scheme and Carer's Allowance

Mr Angus MacDonald:

[\[63503\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of uncoupling Carer's Allowance and Blue Badges from PIP.

Sir Stephen Timms:

It is a long-established principle that in order for an unpaid carer to receive Carer's Allowance the person they are caring for should be receiving a "trigger" disability benefit. This link acts as a proxy for establishing that care needs exist. We have no plans to break this link. Support for unpaid carers is, of course, a devolved matter to the Scottish Parliament.

Access to Blue Badges is a matter for the Department for Transport and the Devolved Administrations.

■ Personal Independence Payment: Homelessness

David Smith:

[\[63101\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of her Department's proposed changes to Personal Independence

Payment eligibility on the number of people experiencing homelessness; and whether she has shared that assessment with the Ministerial Group on homelessness and rough sleeping.

Sir Stephen Timms:

The Department is working closely with the Inter-Ministerial Group on Homelessness and Rough Sleeping, to get the country back on track to ending homelessness.

As I made clear in my statement to the House, Hansard, 1 July, col 219, any changes to PIP eligibility will come after a comprehensive review of the benefit, which I am leading, and which will be co-produced with disabled people, the organisations that represent them, clinicians, experts, MPs and other stakeholders, so a wide range of views and voices are heard. This review aims to ensure that the PIP assessment is fair and fit for the future. The review is expected to conclude in autumn 2026.

■ **Personal Independence Payment: Medical Examinations**

Lola McEvoy:

[\[63074\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when the guidance on people who will be protected from reassessment of PIP due to their long term severe conditions will be published.

Sir Stephen Timms:

The Government is committed to providing security and dignity for those who will never be able to work, and removing unnecessary stress, anxiety and uncertainty from the Social Security System. Subject to Parliamentary approval, the Welfare Bill legislates to formally protect those with the most severe, lifelong health conditions, who meet the Severe Conditions Criteria, from being called for reassessment for Universal Credit. The Severe Conditions Criteria applies to eligible customers in receipt of Universal Credit rather than those in receipt of Personal Independence Payment (PIP).

If a customer's condition changes, they will continue to have the ability to request a reassessment via the existing change of circumstances process.

Regarding PIP, we are launching a wider review of the PIP assessment to ensure that it is fair, fit for the future and helps support disabled people to achieve better health, higher living standards and greater independence. There is no equivalent SCC in PIP, however we are considering how to protect those people who meet the SCC when the WCA is abolished and PIP becomes the passport to the new UC Health element.

Sir Mel Stride:

[\[64011\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department has made a comparative assessment of award rates for (a) in-person and (b) other modes of PIP assessment.

Sir Stephen Timms:

The Health Assessment Channels Trial, conducted by the department between May 2022 and March 2023, compared the monetary impact of each PIP assessment channel, focussing on initial claimants eligible for all channels (in-person, telephone or video). The trial found that the award rates of PIP claimants allocated an in-person assessment did not differ considerably from the proportion of claimants awarded PIP after being allocated a remote channel. We are working on publishing the full results of the trial in due course.

As part of the Functional Assessment Service (FAS) process, a paper-based assessment is always considered first. Where a paper-based review is not possible the claimant will be invited to an assessment.

Before sending an invitation, the assessment supplier considers whether a specific assessment channel is needed due to the claimant's health or circumstances. Otherwise, claimants are offered the next available appointment, which can be changed if the claimant informs us that a reasonable adjustment is appropriate in their circumstances.

While suppliers recommend awards, the final decisions are made by case managers who may alter these recommendations.

We have also announced a wider review of the PIP assessment to make it fair and fit for purpose, which I am leading. We are bringing together a range of experts, stakeholders and people with lived experience to consider how best to do this. We will provide further details as plans progress. The review is expected to conclude in autumn 2026.

■ Personal Independence Payment: Mental Illness**Lola McEvoy:****[63103]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will list the number of people in receipt of the personal independence payment due to a psychological disorder by (a) psychological disorder and (b) constituency in (i) January 2020 and (ii) in the most recent period for which data is available.

Sir Stephen Timms:

Information on Personal Independence Payment (PIP) claimants by psychiatric disorder and constituency for January 2020 and April 2025 can be found on [Stat Xplore](#).

The requested data can be found in the 'PIP Cases with Entitlement from 2019' dataset. You can use the 'Month' filter produce figures for January 2020 or April 2025. You can expand the 'Disability' filter to narrow to 'Psychiatric disorders'. You can use the 'Geography' filter to produce a breakdown by parliamentary constituency.

You can log in or access Stat-Xplore as a guest user. [Guidance](#) on how to use Stat-Xplore is also available here: [Personal Independence Payment data on Stat-Xplore: user guide - GOV.UK](#).

■ Social Security Benefits: Reform

Dr Scott Arthur:

[63098]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to (a) simplify the benefits system and (b) increase its accessibility for claimants.

Sir Stephen Timms:

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.

We are simplifying the system by abolishing the WCA and instead using the PIP assessment to determine what financial support people receive on Universal Credit. Going through the WCA is complex, time consuming and stressful for customers, especially if they also have to go through the PIP process. It is right that we move to one assessment and do not put millions of people through two, similar and lengthy functional assessments.

We are taking further action to get the basics right and improve the experience for people who use the system of health and disability benefits. This includes exploring ways to improve trust and transparency in Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and Work Capability Assessments through reviewing our approach to safeguarding, recording assessments to increase trust in the process, and moving back to having more face-to-face assessments while continuing to meet the needs of people who may require different methods of assessment.

We have also launched a review of the PIP assessment, which I am leading. Through the review, we want to make sure the PIP assessment is fair and fit for the future in a changing world and helps support disabled people to achieve better health, higher living standards and greater independence. We have committed to co-produce the review with disabled people, the organisations that represent them, clinicians, experts, MPs and other stakeholders, so a wide range of views and voices are heard.

Sir Mel Stride:

[64008]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to her Oral Statement of 30 June 2025 on Welfare Reform, columns 23-25, whether (a) the cost of changes to her welfare reform proposals include the cost of the new severe conditions group, (b) how many people are expected to qualify for that group in each financial year up to and including 2029-30 and (c) what estimate she has made of the additional cost to the exchequer for the creation of that group relative to the spending forecasts produced at Spring Statement 2025.

Sir Stephen Timms:

We published Impact Assessments alongside this Bill in the usual way. These set out who will be impacted, the financial implications of the changes and equality analysis.

To account for the proposed changes to the Bill, the Impact Assessment will be revised and republished. We will provide and update an Impact Assessment to

support Commons Committee, as is the usual process when a Bill is amended at this stage.

■ Social Security Benefits: Young People

Dr Scott Arthur:

[63100]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to ensure that under-25s are adequately supported by the benefits system.

Sir Stephen Timms:

Subject to Parliamentary approval, the Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment Bill legislates for the first sustained above inflation rise in the basic rate of Universal Credit since it was introduced. This increase will be for new and existing customers and will benefit millions of households.

DWP provides young people aged 16-24 with labour market support through an extensive range of interventions at a national and local level. This includes flexible provision driven by local need, nationwide employment programmes and support delivered by work coaches based in our Jobcentres and in local communities working alongside partners.

As part of our plan to Get Britain Working, we are launching a new Youth Guarantee for all young people aged 18-21 in England to ensure that they can access quality training opportunities, an apprenticeship or help to find work.

■ State Retirement Pensions

Mr James Frith:

[63059]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what her planned timetable is for updating her Department's website with information on the (a) 12-month State Pension arrears payment and (b) State Pension Claims Form.

Torsten Bell:

Work to publish new guidance is well underway and we aim to have it published as soon as we can, subject to competing priorities.

With regards to the paper claim form changes, we are working to understand the value of updating given how few paper claims we now receive for State Pension.

Victoria Collins:

[63434]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential of state pension integration practices on (a) lower-paid and (b) female pensioners; and if she will take steps to review (i) guidance and (ii) legislation to help ensure (A) fairness and (B) transparency.

Torsten Bell:

The aim of "integrated" pension schemes is to provide a more predictable and stable pension income over time where a person's occupational pension comes into payment before their State Pension. This is achieved by paying a higher pension

before the person reaches State Pension age, which is subsequently reduced when their State Pension comes into payment. The Government is aware of the concerns raised by members of these schemes, especially in terms of the possible disproportionate impact on women.

The reduction applied to lower-paid and female pensioners in an integrated scheme may be a greater proportion of the overall entitlement than it is for higher-paid and male pensioners. This is due to societal and labour market issues during their working lives, which has resulted in these groups having, on average, lower earnings and therefore receiving a lower pension from the scheme.

It is extremely important that people have good, clear information about their occupational pension scheme, so that they can make informed decisions about their retirement. Trustees are required to provide relevant information to members of a pension scheme, including information about how integration will affect their pension benefits. If someone does not think that their scheme has been sufficiently clear about the way integration will affect their pension, they should use the scheme's internal dispute resolution service, which every scheme is required to have. If they are not satisfied with the outcome, they can take the matter to the Pensions Ombudsman.

The precise design of pension benefits is a matter for employers and trustees and is not covered in Department for Work and Pensions legislation. Pension scheme rules on the calculation of benefits are many and varied and are a matter for employers and scheme trustees to decide.; however, these pensions have been paid in accordance with the scheme rules and within the law.

■ State Retirement Pensions: Northern Ireland

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[63992]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 26 June 2025 to Question 62538 on State Retirement Pensions: Northern Ireland, what the total cost to the public purse was of all payments of the State Pension in Northern Ireland in 2024.

Torsten Bell:

The Department for Work and Pensions does not hold complete information on State Pension payments in Northern Ireland, as some of these are administered by the Department for Communities in Northern Ireland.

The annual cost of State Pension payments administered by DWP to people resident in Northern Ireland is estimated to be around £4.34 million in 2024. This is based on latest figures for the quarter ending November 2024. Source: [DWP Stat-Xplore](#).

This figure reflects State Pension payments made by DWP to people living in Northern Ireland and does not include any State Pension payments administered under the devolution settlement by the Department for Communities in Northern Ireland.

■ Universal Credit

Sir Mel Stride:

[64007]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to her Oral Statement of 30 June 2025 on Welfare Reform, columns 23-25, what the evidential basis was for her statement that less than 1% of people on universal credit move into work each month.

Sir Stephen Timms:

The statistics referred to in that statement related to those on Universal Credit in the Limited Capability for Work and Work-Related Activity Group.

Statistics on the Into Work Rates of Claimants on the Universal Credit Health Journey by month can be found in table T1.14 in Chapter 1 of the Pathway to Work Evidence Pack

[chapter-1-case-for-change-evidence.ods](#)

■ Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment Bill

Neil Duncan-Jordan:

[63364]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make an updated assessment of the potential impact of the Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment Bill on the number of people who will lose their entitlement to PIP.

Sir Stephen Timms:

As I made clear in my statement to the House, Hansard, 1 July, col 219, any changes to PIP eligibility will come after a comprehensive review of the benefit, which I am leading, and which will be co-produced with disabled people, the organisations that represent them, clinicians, experts, MPs and other stakeholders, so a wide range of views and voices are heard. This review aims to ensure that the PIP assessment is fair and fit for the future. The review is expected to conclude in autumn 2026.

■ Universal Credit: Disqualification

Dr Scott Arthur:

[63099]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the (a) efficacy of Universal Credit sanctions and (b) potential impact of those sanctions on claimants.

Alison McGovern:

The most relevant work was published by DWP on 6th April 2023 and can be found here: Impact of Benefit Sanctions on Employment Outcomes: draft report.

It is right that there should be conditions and consequences to labour market support. We will continue to ensure that claimants who need support receive it and consider how to best tailor this support to their individual needs.

■ Universal Credit: Havering

Andrew Rosindell:

[62946]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people receive Universal Credit in (a) Romford constituency and (b) the London Borough of Havering.

Sir Stephen Timms:

The latest available statistics on the number of people who are on Universal Credit, by Westminster parliamentary constituency and by local authority, are published in the '[People on Universal Credit](#)' dataset on [Stat-Xplore](#).

Users can log in or access Stat-Xplore as a guest and, if needed, can access [general guidance](#) on how to extract the information required. For guidance on the Universal Credit datasets on Stat-Xplore, see the [Universal Credit Official Statistics Stat-Xplore User Guide](#).

■ Universal Credit: Postural Tachycardia Syndrome

Euan Stainbank:

[63436]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many recipients of Universal Credit Health Element recipients have been diagnosed with postural tachycardia syndrome.

Sir Stephen Timms:

The specific information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

■ Work Capability Assessment

Sir Mel Stride:

[64010]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the award rate for Work Capability Assessment was (a) in-person, (b) not in-person and (c) across all modes in each of the last 10 years; and whether her Department has made a comparative assessment of award rates for (i) in-person assessments and (ii) other modes of assessment.

Sir Stephen Timms:

The information requested on decisions is not collated centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

However, relevant available information on health professional recommendations has been provided in response to a previous Parliamentary Question:

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2025-02-13/31637>

The Health Assessment Channels Trial, conducted by the department between May 2022 and March 2023, compared the monetary impact of each Work Capability Assessment channel, focussing on initial claimants eligible for all channels (in-person, telephone or video). The trial found that the proportion of claimants awarded the health element after being allocated an in-person assessment did not differ

considerably from the proportion awarded after being allocated a remote channel. We are working on publishing the full results of the trial in due course.

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Activated Phosphoinositide 3-kinase Delta Syndrome

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[63528\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what data his Department holds on the current number of people with Activated P13K-delta syndrome.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 7 July 2025. The correct answer should have been:

Ashley Dalton:

NHS England does not hold data on the current number of patients diagnosed with activated P13K-delta syndrome.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Written Questions

Helen Morgan:

[\[63701\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to Questions (a) 61929 tabled on 23 June, (b) 61928 tabled on 23 June and (c) 61005 tabled on 18 June 2025.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 7 July 2025. The correct answer should have been:

Karin Smyth:

I refer the hon. Member to the answers I gave on 1 July 2025 to Questions [61005](#) and [61928](#), and to the answer I gave on 7 July 2025 to Question [61929](#).

■ General Practitioners: Finance

Mr Peter Bedford:

[\[61978\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to conduct a review of the Carr-Hill formula in Primary Care Networks.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 7 July 2025. The correct answer should have been:

Stephen Kinnock:

On 25 June 2025, we announced that the Government's 10-Year Health Plan would address the inequalities in general practice (GP) services across England. We know that the Carr-Hill formula is considered outdated and recognise the importance of ensuring funding for core services is distributed equitably between practices across the country.

The Government will review how health need is reflected in the Carr-Hill funding formula for GPs. Details of the review, including timeframes, will be confirmed in due course.

■ Integrated Care Boards: Redundancy

Helen Morgan:

[61929]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 12 June to Question 56902 on Integrated Care Boards: Redundancy, (a) how the costs of restructuring will be met and (b) when when the national redundancy scheme will be launched.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 7 July 2025. The correct answer should have been:

Karin Smyth:

Following the Prime Minister's announcement of the abolition of NHS England, we have been clear on the need for a smaller centre, as well as scaling back integrated care board running costs and National Health Service provider corporate costs reductions, in order to reduce waste and bureaucracy. Good progress is being made, with the Department and NHS England having announced voluntary exit or redundancy schemes.

We have recently announced the Spending Review settlement, which provides an additional £29 billion of annual day to day spending in real terms by 2028/29 compared to 2023/24. We are now carefully reviewing how the settlement is prioritised, including making provision for redundancy costs ahead of announcing further redundancy schemes.

■ Maternity Services: Essex

Mr Richard Holden:

[62224]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps his Department has taken to improve (a) safety and (b) other standards in maternity services at (i) Southend and (ii) Basildon Hospital.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 7 July 2025. The correct answer should have been:

Karin Smyth:

Following the Care Quality Commission (CQC) rating of maternity services at Southend Hospital as Requires Improvement in January 2025, the trust made several changes to improve the quality of the service. These changes include ensuring qualified midwifery staff are always available to support the maternity telephone triage service, foetal monitoring equipment is regularly checked and available, and triage information is displayed in waiting areas to provide further guidance on waiting times.

Basildon Hospital's maternity services were rated as Requires Improvement by the CQC in March 2024. The trust has made several changes to improve the service, including improvements to staffing, with midwifery vacancies now at their lowest ever, ensuring staff complete training and expanding midwifery support for the birth reflections clinic, and around quality assurance, with regular audits conducted and acted upon.

Basildon Hospital maternity services are part of the national Maternity Safety Support Programme, which puts in place oversight from the integrated care board (ICB), NHS England, and the Local Maternity and Neonatal System. This includes support from two Maternity Improvement Advisors, covering all three trust maternity sites. The trust is in the Improvement phase.

While improvements have been made, further work is required. The ICB will continue to support the Trust to enhance safety, care quality, and patient experience.

■ Mental Health Services: Children and Young People

Calum Miller:

[\[63243\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that parliamentary scrutiny of child and young people's mental health policy is supported by transparent ministerial accountability in the House of Commons.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 7 July 2025. The correct answer should have been:

Stephen Kinnock:

Ministers in the Department take their accountability to Parliament very seriously and we welcome the role of hon. Members in championing the interests of children, young people and their families, raising awareness of the issues affecting their mental health and in scrutinising our policies and holding the Government to account.

Parliamentary scrutiny of the Government's policies on children and young people's mental health is evidenced through our written ministerial statements, including the statement made on 27 March 2025 on Mental Health: Expected Spend for 2025-26, our contributions to debates such as the one on Eating Disorder Awareness that took place on 1 April 2025, in our evidence to committees, our responses to Members' oral and written questions and through the House's scrutiny of the Mental Health Bill during its first and second readings and its recently completed committee stage.

■ Pharmacy: Training

Helen Morgan:

[\[61367\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many foundation pharmacist training places have a named designated prescribing practitioner confirmed in the ORIEL recruitment system in 2025.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 7 July 2025. The correct answer should have been:

Karin Smyth:

All training posts in the National Recruitment Scheme for the 2025/26 training year were required to declare that they would provide access to a Designated Prescribing Practitioner (DPP) for prescribing supervision as part of their agreement to the Terms of Participation.

NHS England requires that DPP information is submitted within 13 weeks of the trainee pharmacist starting in post. Trainee pharmacists will start in post from July 2025. NHS England is therefore, currently in the process of contacting training sites and requesting details of all supervisors, including Designated Supervisors and DPPs.

It should be noted that only the training sites hosting trainee pharmacists that have graduated from a Master of Pharmacy (MPharm) degree against the 2021 learning outcomes are required to have a DPP. Those who have completed an MPharm which meets the previous (2011) standards for education and training or are studying on an Overseas Pharmacists Assessment Programme course, must take a separate accredited independent prescribing course.

■ Psychiatric Hospitals: Autism and Learning Disability**Shockat Adam:**[\[62381\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether each Integrated Care System is required to reduce the number of (a) people with a learning disability and (b) autistic people from their area in mental health hospitals by 10 per cent within 2025-26.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 7 July 2025. The correct answer should have been:

Stephen Kinnock:

National Health Service planning guidance for 2025/26 includes a focus on improving care for people with a learning disability and autistic people and contains the objective to deliver a minimum 10% reduction in the use of mental health inpatient care for people with a learning disability and autistic people in 2025/26. As part of operational planning, each integrated care board (ICB) is expected to: reduce the number of adults with a learning disability, including those who may also be autistic, in mental health inpatient care by 20% from a 31 March 2024 baseline by 31 March 2026; and reduce the number of autistic adults, with no learning disability, in mental health inpatient care by 20% from a 31 March 2024 baseline by 31 March 2026.

The baseline is from Assuring Transformation data and was extracted from 31 March 2024. The expectation is that ICBs will have been working towards achieving a 10% reduction from the 31 March 2024 baseline by 31 March 2025 and will build on this during 2025/26. They are therefore expected to achieve a 20% reduction from the 31 March 2024 baseline by 31 March 2026.

■ Puberty Suppressing Hormones: Young People

Jonathan Hinder:

[\[64385\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress has been made by the expert panel of clinical specialists on its review of the harms caused to young people by the provision of unregulated cross-sex hormones by private providers; and what his expected timetable is for publication of the panel's report.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 7 July 2025. The correct answer should have been:

Karin Smyth:

The Government is continuing its work with the National Health Service to reform gender services, to ensure young people receive timely, holistic care and support, while reviewing the use of cross-sex hormones in line with recommendation eight of the Cass Review.

The Cass Review said that NHS England should review its policy on cross-sex hormones. The review noted that the option to provide cross-sex hormones is available for patients aged 16 years old and over, but that “extreme caution” was recommended along with a “strong clinical rationale for providing hormones before the age of 18”. In line with Dr Cass’s recommendations, every case for treatment is now discussed by a national multi-disciplinary team, and NHS England is reviewing its clinical commissioning policy on cross-sex hormones. A public consultation on the evidence is anticipated to take place this summer, and an updated policy is expected to be in place by April 2026.

With regard to private prescribing, a working group has been established by NHS England to provide advice to Government officials and the Chief Pharmaceutical Officer. The remit of the working group is to provide practical advice on the operational consequences of introducing any restrictions on private prescribing and advice on how to manage any risks to patients. The working group is made up of consultant endocrinologists, pharmacy and primary care leads, and national commissioners.

It is not the working group's role to decide whether restrictions on private prescribing should, or should not, be introduced. Neither is the group providing advice on the future use of cross-sex hormones by NHS clinicians. The Department will use the outputs of the working group to inform ongoing policy development.

■ Social Services: Pay

Zöe Franklin:

[\[62859\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to begin consulting with adult social care providers on proposals for a Fair Pay Agreement.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 7 July 2025. The correct answer should have been:

Stephen Kinnock:

In England, we are committed to consulting on the design of the Fair Pay Agreement process, and we aim to begin a public consultation after the Employment Rights Bill receives Royal Assent later this year. We expect the consultation to run for 12 weeks, and we will work with partners to reach as much of the sector as possible.

We have already begun engaging with sector representatives in England through the Department's Fair Pay Agreement Working Group and policy specific task and finish groups, which will help to inform policy options for a public consultation on the design of the Fair Pay Agreement process.

■ **Social Services: Reform****Helen Morgan:**[\[60143\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many officials in his Department are assigned to work on the social care review.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 7 July 2025. The correct answer should have been:

Stephen Kinnock:

There are 11 officials currently assigned by the Department to work on the independent commission into adult social care, chaired by Baroness Louise Casey. This includes Baroness Casey's independent secretariat team and a small departmental sponsorship function.

WORK AND PENSIONS■ **Jobcentres****Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:**[\[63054\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of expanding Jobcentre access to people not in receipt of benefits.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 7 July 2025. The correct answer should have been:

Alison McGovern:

We are reforming Jobcentre Plus and creating a new service across Great Britain that will enable everyone to access support to find good, meaningful work, and support to help them to progress in work, including through an enhanced focus on skills and careers. The new Jobs and Careers Service will offer employment and careers support for all - not just those on benefits - who want support to find or progress in work.

Supporting our 'Get Britain Working' agenda, we have funded several measures to help unemployed people not in receipt of benefits to find employment:

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- £115 million funding for 2025/26 for the Connect to Work programme, a voluntary, locally led Supported Employment programme in England and Wales, which will support disabled people, people with health conditions and those with complex barriers to employment.
 - £125 million for 2025/26 to deliver 9 place-based economic inactivity trailblazers across England and Wales, of which £45 million is for NHS England Health Accelerators. Tailored to the needs of local areas, these trailblazers are testing different ways of reducing economic inactivity.
 - Working with the Department for Education, £45 million for 2025/26 for our 8 Youth Guarantee trailblazers which are testing a cohesive education, training and employment support offer for young people aged 18-21.
 - £34m funding for 2025/26 for WorkWell pilots for 15 areas to design and deliver integrated work and health support.
 - Continuing with the Employment Advisers in NHS Talking Therapies programme to provide people with common mental health conditions the support they need to enter, re-enter or return to work and improve mental health.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Report on patient safety across the Health and Care landscape in England

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Wes Streeting): [\[HCWS785\]](#)

I would like to update the House on Dr Penny Dash's report on patient safety across the health and care landscape in England.

In September, Dr Dash completed her review of the Care Quality Commission. Her work was thoughtful and thorough, and shed a huge amount of light on how the principal regulator for quality and safety had been letting people down. The CQC is now under new management, and on a clear path to recovery.

Following this important work, I asked Dr Dash to undertake a further review – this time looking at six key organisations overseen by DHSC and how they work with the wider patient safety landscape. Today, we are publishing this review, and I am grateful to Dr Dash for her work.

Her review focused on the Care Quality Commission, the National Guardian's Office, Healthwatch England, the Patient Safety Commissioner, the Health Services Safety Investigations Body and the patient-safety-learning aspects of NHS Resolution. I asked her to assess whether the current range and combination of organisations delivers effective leadership, listening, learning and regulation of health and care systems in relation to patient safety.

She specifically addressed whether patients would be better served by a different approach or delivery model, working closely with senior leaders and directly hearing from more than 100 people or partner organisations with an interest in patient safety.

She found that there has been a shift towards safety (in comparison with other areas of quality of care) over the last five to ten years, with too much focus on inputs and structures, rather than outcomes for patients. She also found there has been limited strategic thinking on improving quality of care during this period.

The review sets out how many organisations are carrying out reviews and investigations, leading to an overwhelming number of recommendations. This causes confusion for patients and staff alike. At the same time, patient experience is not given the attention it deserves in the NHS, with few boards having an executive director dedicated to this purpose.

As a result of this analysis, Dr Dash has made nine recommendations, which the Government has accepted in full. These commitments form an important component of our 10 Year Plan for Health, published last week.

First, there should be a refreshed strategy for improving quality of care, which will be delivered by revamping and revitalising the role of the National Quality Board.

Second, the Care Quality Commission should continue to rebuild with a clear remit and responsibility and overhaul its registration and inspection processes to ensure they are “sector specific.”

Third, the Health Services Safety Investigations Body should continue as a centre of excellence for investigations, but as a discrete branch within the Care Quality Commission.

Fourth, the hosting of Patient Safety Commissioner should transfer to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) to strengthen links between the patient voice in medicines safety and the MHRA’s work to capture adverse events more effectively. The Patient Safety Commissioner’s work on wider patient safety should transfer into a new directorate of patient experience in DHSC.

Fifth, Local Healthwatch and the engagement functions of integrated care boards (for healthcare) and local authorities (for social care) should be brought together to ensure patient and community input into the planning and design of services, and the strategic functions of Healthwatch England should also be transferred into the new patient experience directorate in DHSC.

Sixth, staff voice functions should be strengthened, with the responsibilities of the National Guardian for Freedom to Speak Up incorporated into the new DHSC structure and providers.

Seventh, the responsibility for and accountability of commissioners and providers to deliver and assure high quality care should be reinforced.

Eighth, technology, data and analytics should play a much more significant role in supporting the quality of health and social care.

Finally, there should be an evidence-based national strategy for quality in social care.

Next Steps

I previously announced that Dr Dash would undertake a third review on quality and its governance, however, this work has been fully incorporated as part of the 10 Year Health Plan, and we are taking this forward with immediate effect.

Patient and staff voice should not be kept at arm's length but be at the heart of everything the NHS does. As part of the Plan, we are therefore streamlining and consolidating functions across the patient safety landscape, delivering a refreshed strategy for improving the quality of care and transforming how the NHS collects and uses patient feedback.

These changes will improve quality, including safety, by making it clear where responsibility and accountability sits at all levels of the system, and making it easier for staff, patients and users to directly feed into the system to improve quality of care.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Internal Drainage Board levy support grant 2025 to 2026

Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution (Jim McMahon):
[\[HCWS783\]](#)

Following the Local Government Finance Settlement on 3 February 2025, the government confirmed a £5 million grant to support local authorities facing significant increases in special levies from Internal Drainage Boards. This represents a £2 million uplift from the originally announced £3 million, reflecting the government's recognition of the continued financial pressures on local authorities affected by these special levies. Services provided by Internal Drainage Boards are energy-intensive and have been particularly impacted by rising energy costs and adverse weather conditions over the past three years.

Today, I am confirming the allocation of this funding to the eighteen local authorities most severely affected. Councils and Internal Drainage Boards are encouraged to continue working together to deliver services efficiently and ensure good value for money for the public.

Allocations of the £5 million IDB levy support grant for 2025-26.

LOCAL AUTHORITY	ALLOCATION
Bassetlaw	£181,000
Boston	£654,000
Broadland	£5,000
East Cambridgeshire	£182,000
East Lindsey	£1,164,000
Fenland	£520,000
Great Yarmouth	£206,000
Huntingdonshire	£35,000
King's Lynn & West Norfolk	£499,000
Lincoln	£279,000
Newark & Sherwood	£158,000
North Kesteven	£270,000
North Norfolk	£49,000
Rushcliffe	£32,000

LOCAL AUTHORITY	ALLOCATION
South Holland	£578,000
South Kesteven	£98,000
Swale	£19,000
West Lindsey	£59,000
TOTALS	£4,988,000

■ Update on measures to clear the local audit backlog in England

Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution (Jim McMahon):
[\[HCWS784\]](#)

Local audit is the bedrock of local accountability and transparency, and of trust and confidence in councils to spend taxpayer money wisely. But 14 years of neglect took the system to breaking point and damaged a key part of our early warning system over local government finances at the time we need it the most. We are determined to rebuild the foundations of local government so that it is fit, legal and decent. The government has taken swift and decisive action to clear the backlog of unaudited local authority accounts in England and put the local audit system on a more sustainable footing. This has included setting a series of statutory backstop deadlines for the publication of audited accounts. These proposals were enacted via legislation in autumn 2024, and two backstop deadlines have now passed. This failure of the system has resulted in poor value for money and additional costs – with some [£49 million of grant committed to support bodies with the cost of building back assurance](#) in 2024/25 and 2025/26.

This statement updates on the outcomes of the second backstop on 28 February 2025, confirms publication of the non-compliance list on gov.uk, gives details of the support available to bodies affected by the backstop measures, and updates on the government's longer-term plans for reform of the local audit system.

28 February 2025 backstop (for financial year 2023/24)

Local bodies, unless exempt, were required to publish their audited accounts for financial year 2023/24 by 28 February 2025. Over 92% of bodies have published audited accounts for financial year 2023/24. Just under 50% of bodies published a disclaimed opinion due to the backstop, while 41% published unmodified (clean) opinions. 13 bodies were exempt from the publication requirements; however, exemptions no longer apply for three of these bodies, and they have now published their audited accounts. Taken together, the publication figures continue to demonstrate a significant improvement in the overall publication of audited accounts, despite the proximity between the two.

Non-compliance list

I can confirm that the government has today published a [list of bodies](#) that failed to meet the publication requirements at this backstop. The list indicates whether bodies published their draft accounts by 16 January 2025 (the latest date on which the 30-working-day inspection period could commence for it to conclude by the backstop), if the audit opinion was delivered by the backstop, the date on which it was delivered, and if bodies published subsequently audited accounts by 20 May 2025.

All bodies and their auditors included on the list have been contacted, and the government will continue to engage to ensure that outstanding audited accounts for all outstanding financial years are published as soon as practicable. This includes further engagement with a small number of bodies to better understand their reasons for failing to publish draft accounts sufficiently ahead of February's backstop and the actions that they are taking to publish audited accounts as soon as practicable to be in a position to comply with future backstops. The release of funds to councils to support bodies with the cost of building back assurance will be contingent on the publication of audited accounts and audit fees being paid.

27 February 2026 backstop (for financial year 2024/25)

The deadline for publication of audited accounts for financial year 2024/25 is 27 February 2026. In line with amendments made to the [Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015](#), bodies are required to publish their draft accounts by 30 June 2025. The government will monitor compliance with this deadline with a view to ensuring improvements to the overall system of compliance and timeliness. The government continues to consider the appropriate incentives and sanctions for the overhauled local audit system and has already set out that the Local Audit Office, once established, will take on oversight in relation to the quality and timeliness of accounts preparation and publication of audited accounts.

Systemic reform

In December 2024, the government published its ambitious strategy to overhaul the broken local audit system. This strategy set out a clear purpose for local audit and its users, proposals for simplified and proportionate financial reporting, improvements to the market's capacity and capability, and ways to build strong relationships between local bodies and auditors. The establishment of a new single body, the Local Audit Office (LAO), to oversee local audit will radically simplify and streamline the currently fragmented system. The LAO will be proportionate and focussed on local audit matters, ensuring efficiency, transparency and value for money. The government also published in early April a response to its consultation, which included 16 further commitments to reform the system.