



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 29 July 2024 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:48 P.M., 29 July 2024). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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**Notes:**

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

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

## ANSWERS

### BUSINESS AND TRADE

#### ■ Department for Business and Trade: Contracts for Services

**Gareth Bacon:**

[\[834\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what services are outsourced by his Department.

**Justin Madders:**

The department outsources direct support to businesses through our Business Support Helpline and through our Export Support Service in specific international markets, alongside mediation services related to responsible business behaviour.

The department also funds outsourced legal advice and support to those postmasters affected by the Post Office IT issues.

### CABINET OFFICE

#### ■ Cabinet Office: Directors

**Steve Barclay:**

[\[1490\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many non-executive directors have had their contract of employment terminated since 5 July 2024.

**Georgia Gould:**

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster appoints Non-Executive Board Members to the Cabinet Office Board and most Non-Executive Directors to the Boards of its Arm's Length Bodies in compliance with the Governance Code on Public Appointments. Non-Executives are not employees and therefore contracts of employment are not issued, Non-Executives receive terms of agreement for their roles instead.

Since 5 July 2024, seven Cabinet Office Non-Executive Board Members have been provided with one month's written notice for the termination of their appointments before the end of the fixed period as set out in their terms of agreement.

It is normal practice for incoming Ministers to make decisions on their own departmental boards, including the skills and experience that membership brings.

**Steve Barclay:**

[\[1491\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the contract of employment for non-executive directors has been fully complied with since 5 July 2024.

**Georgia Gould:**

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster appoints Non-Executive Board Members to the Cabinet Office Board and most Non-Executive Directors to the Boards of its Arm's Length Bodies in compliance with the Governance Code on Public Appointments.

Non-Executives are not employees, therefore contracts of employment are not issued. Non-Executives receive terms of agreement for their roles instead.

The Cabinet Office has been fully compliant with the terms of agreement between its Non-Executive Board Members since 5 July 2024.

### ■ Civil Servants: Pay

**John McDonnell:** [\[795\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, when he plans to publish the civil service pay remit guidance for the 2024-25 financial year.

**Georgia Gould:**

On 29 July, the Government published the 2024/25 Pay Remit Guidance for the Civil Service on Gov.uk.

### ■ Department for Business and Trade: Procurement

**Jerome Mayhew:** [\[825\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether he has plans to issue new guidance on social value in procurement.

**Georgia Gould:**

Public procurement is a key lever for enabling delivery of the Government's missions by using procurement policy to drive economic growth, raise employment standards in business, and achieve additional social value through the life of a contract. The Government's 'Plan to Make Work Pay' sets out an ambitious programme to value organisations that create local jobs, skills and wealth and treat their workers well and equally. Ministers are considering how to take these plans forward.

## CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

### ■ Charities: Lotteries

**Tonia Antoniazzi:** [\[1019\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of a statutory gambling levy on funds available to charities who operate a charity lottery.

**Stephanie Peacock:**

We are in the early stages of the new Government and are still considering the full range of gambling and lotteries policy.

### ■ Culture, Practices and Ethics of the Press Inquiry

**Jeremy Corbyn:** [\[1459\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment she has made of the potential merits of re-establishing the Leveson Part Two inquiry.

**Ann Davies:**

[\[1613\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, whether she has had discussions with press (a) agencies and (b) publishers on the potential merits of launching the second part of the Leveson inquiry into press standards.

**Stephanie Peacock:**

Ministers and officials working in the Department for Culture, Media and Sport regularly engage with press stakeholders on a range of issues.

The Government clearly laid out its priorities in the manifesto and in the King's Speech.

#### ■ Department for Culture, Media and Sport: Public Appointments

**Mr Gregory Campbell:**

[\[1466\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, if she will take steps to ensure that Northern Ireland is represented in future appointments within her remit.

**Stephanie Peacock:**

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport is committed to drawing upon the wealth of talent and experience across the whole of the United Kingdom when making appointments to the Boards of its Public Bodies. The Secretary of State has made clear her commitment to appointing more people from outside of London and the South East; this includes increasing the number of appointments made to people in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

#### ■ Football: County Durham

**Mary Kelly Foy:**

[\[826\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, whether her Department is taking steps to (a) help build new grassroots football facilities and (b) renovate existing pitches for grassroots football in County Durham.

**Stephanie Peacock:**

This Government recognises that grassroots sports clubs are at the beating heart of communities up and down the country. High-quality, inclusive facilities help clubs to get more people active and, by backing these clubs, the Government will support more people to get onto the pitch wherever they live.

To mark the achievements of England's senior men's and women's football teams, and inspire the next generation as we look ahead to hosting UEFA EURO 2028 across the UK and Ireland, we have set out plans to strengthen our support for grassroots clubs. This includes continuing delivery of funding to build and improve pitches and facilities through the Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities Programme this year, and a commitment to work with the sector to develop a funding package that will support these plans in future years.

Currently in England, the Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities Programme is delivered through the Football Foundation. The Foundation is working with local authorities

(and local football associations and other partners) to refresh Local Football Facility Plans that identify the specific needs of local areas. These are used to inform the pipeline of projects which will receive funding from the Foundation.

The Government provides 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. Sport England's newly established Movement Fund offers crowdfunding pledges, grants and resources to improve physical activity opportunities for the people and communities who need it the most.

## ■ **Holiday Accommodation**

**Neil Duncan-Jordan:** [\[1082\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, if she will take steps to introduce a national register of short-term rented properties to help ensure that those properties are compliant with relevant safety legislation.

**Chris Bryant:**

Short-term lets are an important part of the UK's visitor accommodation offer and the government recognises the benefits to the visitor economy.

Parliament legislated for a registration scheme for short-term lets in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023. This government is exploring the introduction of such a scheme, as a statutory requirement. This will promote a level playing field in the guest accommodation sector across England, particularly in the application of existing health & safety regulations.

## ■ **Museums and Galleries: Closures**

**Ian Lavery:** [\[955\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, how many museums have closed in the last 10 years.

**Chris Bryant:**

Birkbeck University's Mapping Museums project monitors museum openings and closures across the UK. In the last ten years, data indicates that 29 Arts Council England Accredited museum sites have closed in England.

I look forward to engaging further with sector stakeholders, and across Whitehall, to promote the value of museums to society and their role in delivering our policy priorities.

## ■ **Museums and Galleries: Finance**

**Ian Lavery:** [\[954\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, whether she plans to provide additional ringfenced funding to councils for local museums.



**Chris Bryant:**

Museums and galleries play a crucial role in our civic life, and delivering central and local government priorities. Their programmes and activities promote education and wellbeing, and they are central to the vibrancy of our towns, cities and communities. We encourage all councils to continue investing in and partnering with local cultural providers, to safeguard communities' access to museums and their heritage.

The government is committed to stabilising local government funding. We look forward to engaging further with sector stakeholders, metro mayors, and across Whitehall, to promote the value of museums to society and their role in delivering our policy priorities.

**■ Prize Money****Tonia Antoniazzi:**[\[1018\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of regulating commercial free prizes draws as a gambling product.

**Stephanie Peacock:**

We are in the early stages of the new Government and are still considering the full range of gambling and lotteries policy.

**DEFENCE****■ Armed Forces: Housing****James Cartlidge:**[\[190\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing minimum standards for single living accommodation.

**Al Carns:**

Improving Service accommodation is a priority for this Government.

The Armed Forces Continuous Attitude survey shows Service personnel have low levels of satisfaction with the standard of accommodation. Ministers will consider options on accommodation as part of departmental work to address low morale and recruitment and retention challenges in our Armed Forces.

As a first step to improving service life the Government will establish an Armed Forces Commissioner as a direct point of contact for Service personnel and their families, to raise issues including housing.

**■ Armed Forces: Private Education****James Cartlidge:**[\[194\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what his policy is on the continuity of education allowance for service families.

**James Cartlidge:** [\[573\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what discussions he (a) has had and (b) plans to have with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the potential impact of VAT on private school fees on service families.

**James Cartlidge:** [\[575\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of VAT on private school fees on service families.

**Al Carns:**

The Government is committed to access to high quality education for children of service families, and all children across the UK. The policy for Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA) remains extant. The Ministry of Defence will monitor the development of legislation to deliver a VAT increase policy.

#### ■ Office for Veterans' Affairs

**Andrew Bowie:** [\[822\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of having the Office for Veterans' Affairs within his Department.

**Al Carns:**

The Government is fully committed to delivering for veterans as an integral part of our Armed Forces community. The Secretary of State for Defence will represent veterans at Cabinet, and as the Minister for Veterans and People I will look at the best ways to ensure veterans and their families get access to the health, housing, employment and other support they need. Our focus is on improving outcomes for veterans and delivering for those who serve our nation, and we believe this work will be strengthened by bringing the Office for Veterans Affairs under the Ministry of Defence.

## EDUCATION

#### ■ Assessments and Curriculum: Reviews

**Damian Hinds:** [\[886\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how the Curriculum and Assessment Review panel chaired by Professor Becky Francis will be constituted.

**Catherine McKinnell:**

The Curriculum and Assessment Review will be independently led by a group of education experts (the Review Group). My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, has appointed Professor Becky Francis CBE as the Chair of the Review who will convene the Review Group in consultation with the Secretary of State. An announcement about the membership of the group will be made in due course.

The Review Group will work in line with the Working Principles, as laid out in the 'Review Aims, Terms of Reference and Working Principles', which can be found here: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6699698f49b9c0597fdb0010/Curriculum\\_and\\_assessment\\_review\\_-\\_aims\\_terms\\_of\\_reference\\_and\\_working\\_principles.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6699698f49b9c0597fdb0010/Curriculum_and_assessment_review_-_aims_terms_of_reference_and_working_principles.pdf).

## ■ Children: Poverty

**Jacob Collier:**

[842]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she will take to help alleviate child poverty in Burton and Uttoxeter constituency.

**Catherine McKinnell:**

Tackling child poverty, everywhere, is at the heart of breaking down barriers to opportunity and improving the life chances for every child. For too many children, living in poverty robs them of the opportunity to learn and to prosper.

Child poverty has gone up by 700,000 since 2010, with over four million children now growing up in a low-income family. This not only harms children's lives now, but it also damages their future prospects, and holds back our economic potential as a country.

On 17 July 2024, my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister announced the appointment of the Secretary of State for Work and Pension and the Secretary of State for Education to be the joint leads of a new ministerial taskforce to begin work on a Child Poverty Strategy. The government is committed to delivering an ambitious strategy to reduce child poverty, tackle the root causes, and give every child the best start at life.

The proposed Children's Wellbeing Bill will ensure education and children's social care systems transform life chances for millions of children and young people in England.

The department will remove barriers to opportunity to ensure the school system is fair for every child. Every primary school, including those in Burton and Uttoxeter, will be required to provide free breakfast clubs. To ensure that every child, no matter their background, is well prepared for the school day, the department will limit the number of branded uniform items that a school can require.

In addition to free school meals and the over £2.9 billion pupil premium funding, the department has also provided over £200 million of funding this year to all local authorities across England to deliver the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme in their area. This is to ensure that over summer holidays children from disadvantaged backgrounds and low-income families are able to take up free childcare spaces, which offer healthy meals and enriching activities, benefiting their health, wellbeing and learning. This summer, the department anticipates that over 3 million HAF places will be provided young people in this country.

## ■ Education

**Mr Richard Holden:** [1573]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of children at (a) key stage one and two, (b) key stage three and four and (c) post-16 education are in (i) state-funded and (ii) privately-funded independent education in each local education authority area.

**Catherine McKinnell:**

The department publishes figures on schools and pupils, including information on state-funded and independent schools. More information can be found here:

<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-pupils-and-their-characteristics>.

Data is collected from independent schools through the school level annual school census. This does not include phase but does include the age of pupils. A table showing the number of pupils by age, school type and local authority can be found here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/f68a2ed7-d308-4e17-b82a-08dcab23a860>.

Please note that age does not necessarily directly align to state-funded sector primary, secondary and post-16 schools.

## ■ Free School Meals: Ealing

**Deirdre Costigan:** [1599]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to pages 63-65 of the policy paper entitled, King's Speech 2024: background briefing notes, published by the Prime Minister's Office on 17 July 2024, how many primary-aged children her Department expects to receive free breakfast at school in Ealing.

**Stephen Morgan:**

The government is committed to breaking down barriers to opportunity and giving every child the best start in life. Breakfast clubs will remove barriers to opportunity by ensuring every child, no matter their circumstances, is well prepared for school and can achieve their full potential by providing a supportive start to the day.

The government has taken decisive action by announcing in the King's Speech that, under the Children's Wellbeing Bill, every primary school in England will offer a free breakfast club. The department will be working closely with the sector on the details of the programme.

## ■ Islamophobia: Education

**Fabian Hamilton:** [1195]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of mandating education on islamophobia in schools.

**Catherine McKinnell:**

The department is committed to tackling all forms of prejudice, including religious prejudice, and education is a key component of building a fairer and more equal society.

As part of a broad and balanced curriculum, there are many opportunities in the existing curriculum for schools to teach about islamophobia, including through:

- Citizenship education, which is compulsory at key stages 3 and 4, and teaches about religious diversity, mutual respect and understanding.
- Relationships education, which is compulsory in all schools, and teaches about the impact of prejudice and the importance of respect.
- Religious education, which is compulsory in all state-funded schools, and educates about religious tolerance.

The department's 'Educate Against Hate' campaign also provides teachers, school leaders and parents with guidance, advice and trusted resources to help them safeguard students from radicalisation and build students' resilience to all forms of extremism. Further information can be found here:

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

The government will keep the effectiveness of this approach under review and will consider the issue further in the Curriculum and Assessment Review.

**■ Primary Education: Free School Meals****Grahame Morris:****[1481]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make an estimate of the cost for introducing free school meals for all primary school children.

**Stephen Morgan:**

This government has not made a formal assessment of the cost of providing free school meals to all primary school children.

The department is separately committed to introducing free breakfast clubs in every primary school to ensure children are set-up for the day and ready to learn.

**■ Private Education: Religion****Damian Hinds:****[892]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what her most recent estimate is of the number of pupils on roll in independent schools of a religious character of the (a) Anglican, (b) Roman Catholic, (c) other Christian, (d) Jewish, (e) Muslim, (f) Hindu, (g) Sikh and (h) other faiths in each local authority; and how many of each of those types of school there are.

**Stephen Morgan:**

The department publishes statistics on pupils and schools in England, which is available here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-pupils-and-their-characteristics>.

The number of independent schools and pupils registered at them as at January 2024, by religious character and local authority, is available here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/3d6557c3-5279-4652-b88d-08dcab23db45>. 'No data' indicates that the local authority has no independent schools associated with that faith.

**■ Pupils: Per Capita Costs****Alex Baker:****[1610]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make a comparative assessment of the adequacy of school funding per pupil in (a) Aldershot constituency and (b) the rest of the country.

**Catherine McKinnell:**

The overall core schools budget will total £61.8 billion in 2024/25. Average per pupil funding in England, as allocated through the schools block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), is £5,957.

The DSG is allocated at local authority level, and as such the equivalent figures are not available for Aldershot constituency. For Aldershot constituency, the notional national funding formula (NFF) average per-pupil funding is £5,447. That is calculated based on the notional schools NFF allocations for all mainstream schools in the constituency. The allocations that schools within a constituency actually receive are determined by the local funding formula in their area. The funding figures for Aldershot constituency are based on the constituency boundaries before the July 2024 general election.

All of the figures provided include premises funding, but exclude growth funding. The figures do not include the additional grant funding that schools in the Aldershot constituency and across the country have received to support pay and pensions increases in 2024/25.

Schools in Aldershot constituency have a lower proportion of pupils who attract deprivation funding through the NFF than the national average.

The precise funding that individual schools in Aldershot constituency and across the country receive depends on each school's unique circumstances and the decisions that it has made about how to deploy its funding.

**■ Schools: Curriculum****James Wild:****[1038]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate she has made of the proportion of state schools which teach the national curriculum.

**Catherine McKinnell:**

Maintained schools in England are legally required to follow the National Curriculum up to age 16, but academies, including free schools, are not. The department does not hold data on the proportion of academies currently following the National Curriculum, but knows that many choose to teach it.

As part of the legislative programme announced in the King's Speech, the department intends to legislate to require academies to teach the National Curriculum, once changes are made following the Curriculum and Assessment Review. This will give parents certainty over their children's education, and it will give academies time to prepare. The department will discuss with the sector the practicalities of implementing this change.

The review will recommend a core curriculum that is designed to empower, not restrict, academies and other schools. It will support the innovation and professionalism of teachers, whether in academies or maintained schools, and will enable them to adapt how they teach the curriculum to their students' lives and life experiences.

**■ Special Educational Needs: Academic Year****Rachael Maskell:**[\[974\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she plans to take to ensure there is adequate provision for children with SEND to access activities during school holidays.

**Rachael Maskell:**[\[975\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of increasing the funding for children with SEND to help provide access to (a) activities and (b) childcare during school holidays.

**Rachael Maskell:**[\[976\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will take steps to ensure that children with (a) SEND, (b) anxiety and (c) trauma can access (i) support and (ii) therapeutic services during the school holidays.

**Catherine McKinnell:**

The government is committed to breaking down barriers to opportunity and giving every child the best start in life. The holiday activities and food (HAF) programme funds free holiday club places for children in every local authority in England in the summer, Christmas, and Easter holidays. HAF clubs provide healthy meals, enriching activities and free childcare places to children from low-income families. In addition, 15% of HAF funding is available to fund places for children who may not qualify on household income, but who may have additional needs or disadvantages that mean they would benefit from a place. Thousands of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) will access inclusive and specialist HAF provision this summer.

Local authorities are responsible for delivering the HAF programme in their area. Guidance clearly sets out that they must give specific consideration to the needs of children with SEND, or additional needs, and the department encourages local authorities to engage with local and national organisations, including special schools, to draw on their expertise in how best to support these children and their families during the school holidays.

### ■ **Special Educational Needs: Attendance**

**Ben Goldsborough:**

**[1090]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many families with a child with (a) special educational needs and (b) pathological demand avoidance have been issued with a (i) parenting order, (ii) education supervision order, (iii) school attendance order and (iv) fine for poor school attendance in each of the last five years.

**Stephen Morgan:**

The information requested is not held by this department.

The department collects aggregate data on the use of parenting orders, education supervision orders and penalty notices from local authorities in England through the annual parental responsibility measures attendance census. No information is collected on characteristics of the children concerned. The available data is published here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/parental-responsibility-measures>.

The department collects aggregate data on school attendance orders issued and revoked from local authorities in England through the new collection on elective home education and children missing education. No information is collected on characteristics of the children concerned. The available data is published here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/elective-home-education>.

### ■ **Special Educational Needs: Burton and Uttoxeter**

**Jacob Collier:**

**[843]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to support SEND children and their parents in Burton and Uttoxeter constituency.

**Catherine McKinnell:**

The department has positive and open engagement with the local authority, Staffordshire County Council, through its Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Lead and wider partners. The local authority has been approached to participate in the education, health and care (EHC) plan template pilot, which is led by the Change Partnership Programme.

The department continues to prioritise:

- Implementing the improvements identified in the Accelerated Progress Plan.



- Monitoring progress and improvements made through the Enhanced Assess, Plan, Do, Review Programme, and through the Staffordshire Enhanced District Inclusion Support (SEDIS) Model.
- Monitoring 20-week timeliness on an ongoing basis.
- Providing support to improve EHC plan quality through the Research and Improvement for SEND Excellence (RISE) consortium.
- Continuing to meet regularly with the wider SEND partnership along with monthly meetings with the local authority, children's social care and schools.

## ■ Special Educational Needs: Cornwall

**Ben Maguire:**

**[1145]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of children (a) with an education, health and care plan and (b) who had previously been identified in the SEN Support category by their school were not in school in Cornwall in each of the last five years.

**Catherine McKinnell:**

The department publishes statistics on education, health and care (EHC) plans at local authority level, which can be found here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/education-health-and-care-plans>. This includes information on children and young people not in school or further education, including those awaiting provision, in elective home education, in other arrangements, having had notice of their plan to cease, or Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). The number and proportion of children and young people with an EHC plan who were elsewhere than at school in Cornwall from 2020 to 2024, which includes the last 5 years of data available, can be found here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/6066ca5a-0309-412e-6920-08dca70c1109>.

The data collection for EHC plans does not include information on previous Special Educational Needs (SEN) support identification.

Wider data on special educational needs, including information on the total number of pupils with EHC plans and SEN support at local authority level, is available here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england>.

**Ben Maguire:**

**[1146]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will review the SEND funding formula allocations for pupils in Cornwall.

**Catherine McKinnell:**

The department will take time to consider whether to make changes to the high needs national funding formula (NFF) that is used to allocate funding for children and young people with complex special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The department will consider the impact of any formula changes on local authorities,

including Cornwall County Council. It is important that there is a fair education funding system that directs funding to where it is needed.

Budgets for the 2025/26 financial year have not been set, which means that decisions on the high needs NFF and the publication of allocations for that year will not be to the usual timescales.

### ■ Special Educational Needs: Newcastle-under-Lyme

**Adam Jogee:**

[\[1088\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to support (a) children with SEND and (b) their parents, families and carers in Newcastle-under-Lyme constituency.

**Catherine McKinnell:**

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

Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) reinspected Staffordshire SEND services on their eight areas of significant weakness in February 2022.

The inspectors assessed each area of weakness and concluded that sufficient progress had been made to address six. Staffordshire produced an Accelerated Progress Plan (APP) to address the remaining two areas of significant weakness. The APP is being monitored on a 6-monthly basis and the next review is due to take place in November 2024.

The department is committed to supporting and monitoring progress of the identified areas for improvement and have put in place regular monitoring and challenge meetings with SEND advisors from the department and NHS England.

### ■ Special Educational Needs: Nottinghamshire

**Michael Payne:**

[\[R\] \[1081\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment her Department has made of the adequacy of the provision of special education needs and disability (SEND) services for children in Nottinghamshire; and what steps she plans to take to support local authorities in Nottinghamshire to help improve the delivery of SEND services.

**Catherine McKinnell:**

The last local area special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) inspection by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) for Nottinghamshire was in February 2023. Following the inspection, the department is closely monitoring the areas for priority action and improvement that were identified by inspectors and the progress made by children and young people with SEND, and has appointed a SEND adviser to support the local area SEND partnership. Nottinghamshire County Council is committed to working closely with the department to improve services and has established an independently chaired improvement board and published a SEND priority action plan to address the issues identified in the inspection report. An Ofsted

and CQC monitoring inspection will be carried out approximately 18 months after the initial inspection and the next full area SEND inspection will take place within approximately three years.

This government's ambition is that all children and young people with SEND or in alternative provision receive the right support to succeed in their education and as they move into adult life. The department is committed to taking a community-wide approach in collaboration with local area partnerships to improving inclusivity and expertise in mainstream schools, and to ensuring special schools cater to those with the most complex needs.

### ■ **Special Educational Needs: York Outer**

**Mr Luke Charters:**

[\[1441\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will meet (a) the hon. Member for York Outer and (b) the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education in City of York Council to discuss SEND provision in schools in York Outer constituency.

**Catherine McKinnell:**

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, is very keen to meet with stakeholders in the coming months. If you contact her office directly to request a meeting, they will gladly consider and respond to your request.

## ENERGY SECURITY AND NET ZERO

### ■ **British Coal Staff Superannuation Scheme and Mineworkers' Pension Scheme**

**Mary Kelly Foy:**

[\[828\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, how much his Department has received from the (a) Mineworkers' Pension Scheme and (b) British Coal Staff Superannuation Scheme since 1994.

**Sarah Jones:**

As of today, the Government has received £4.8bn from the Mineworkers' Pension Scheme and £3.1bn from the British Coal Staff Superannuation Scheme since 1994.

### ■ **Climate Change Convention: Ministers**

**Tim Roca:**

[\[862\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, which Ministers will attend COP29 in November 2024.

**Kerry McCarthy:**

COP29 will be a major moment in the international climate and diplomatic calendar. The UK will be well represented at Ministerial level – exact attendance across Government Departments is still being determined.

From the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, I look forward to attending as Minister for Climate, alongside Ed Miliband MP as Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero.

## ■ Electric Cables: Infrastructure

**Ben Goldsborough:**

[854]

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing community benefit for electricity infrastructure projects in the local community of (a) £50,000 (b) £200,000 and (c) £500,000 per electrical substation.

**Michael Shanks:**

The previous government's response to the consultation on community benefits for transmission network infrastructure was published in November 2023. This document outlines that, when combined with bill discounts and additional benefits for underground cables and substations, these levels of wider benefits could lead to benefits to society with an estimated value between £1.5bn - £7.8bn if improved acceptability reduces delays to network build. These benefits come from reduced network constraint costs and emissions savings.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/community-benefits-for-electricity-transmission-network-infrastructure>

It is important for this Government that where communities host clean energy infrastructure, they should directly benefit from it. We are currently considering how to ensure communities benefit from living near new onshore electricity transmission infrastructure.

## ■ Longannet Power Station

**Graeme Downie:**

[859]

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, whether he plans to have discussions with Scottish Power on the future potential of the site of the former Longannet Generating station near Kincardine, Fife.

**Sarah Jones:**

While I have not yet had any discussion on this matter, I welcome news of any plans that Scottish Power may have for developing projects that could help in the transition to clean power, including hydrogen production. Low carbon hydrogen can play a key role in our 2030 Clean Power Mission, as well as creating good jobs in our industrial heartlands, delivering a just transition, and achieving net zero.

## ■ **Mineworkers' Pension Scheme: North East**

**Mary Kelly Foy:**

[\[827\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, how many (a) former miners and (b) former miners' widows are in receipt of a mineworkers' pension in (i) City of Durham constituency and (ii) the North East of England.

**Sarah Jones:**

As at June 2023, there were 756 Mineworkers' Pension Scheme members in the City of Durham constituency and 17,483 members overall in the Mineworkers' Pension Scheme North East of England. The breakdown between former miners and widows is not available.

## ■ **Offshore Industry**

**Andrew Bowie:**

[\[823\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what assessment he has made of the role of industry input in the delivery of his policies on North Sea oil and gas.

**Michael Shanks:**

The government will ensure a phased and responsible transition in the North Sea. We will partner with business and workers to manage our existing fields for the entirety of their lifespan.

We will embrace the future of energy production and storage, which will make use of existing offshore infrastructure and the skills of our offshore industries.

## ■ **Solar Power: Buildings**

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[830\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, whether he has made an estimate of the amount of non-residential building roof space that is (a) available and (b) suitable for the installation of solar panels.

**Michael Shanks:**

The Government does not take a prescriptive approach to the amount of rooftop solar deployment required, nor to the mix between installation on domestic and non-domestic properties. Therefore, no such estimate has been made. However, the Government is clear that rooftop solar will play an important role in achieving its ambition of tripling existing solar capacity by 2030. Further details will be included in the upcoming publication of the Solar Roadmap.

## ■ **Solar Power: Housing**

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[829\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, if he will take steps enable households with solar panels and battery storage to receive the rate of wholesale electricity as payment for excess electricity exported to the grid for the next three years.

**Michael Shanks:**

Both rooftop solar and battery storage will play a crucial role in the Government's mission to make the UK a clean energy superpower, by saving families money on their bills and giving us energy security.

Over 1.2 million homes now have solar PV installed, and the Government believes rooftop solar on new homes and buildings will, where appropriate, play an important role in the drive for solar, delivering cleaner energy and lower bills to millions of households and businesses.

■ **Solar Power: Xinjiang****Sir Iain Duncan Smith:**[\[1457\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, whether it is his policy that solar arrays produced using polysilicon mined in Xinjiang province should not be used in the UK.

**Michael Shanks:**

No company in the UK should have forced labour in its supply chain. We will be working with colleagues across Government to tackle the issue of Uyghur forced labour in supply chains.

We are also relaunching the Solar Taskforce, which will focus on identifying and taking forward the actions needed to develop supply chains that are resilient, sustainable and free from forced labour. This will support the significant increases in deployment of solar panels needed to meet our ambition of tripling the UK's solar power capacity by 2030.

**ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS**■ **Agriculture: Food Supply****Steve Barclay:**[\[1488\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to continue the annual farm to fork summit.

**Daniel Zeichner:**

Confidence among farmers is at an all time low. We need a resilient and healthy food system, that works with nature and supports British Farmers. The only way to do this effectively is to listen to farmers and others with a stake in our food system, countryside and nature. This Government will introduce a new deal for farmers to boost rural economic growth and strengthen Britain's food security. We will: cut energy bills by switching on GB Energy; protect farmers from being undercut in trade deals; and use the Government's own purchasing power to back British produce.

## ■ Agriculture: Rain

**Helen Morgan:**

[\[1377\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of providing compensation for farming businesses impacted by the recent period of prolonged and increased rainfall.

**Daniel Zeichner:**

The Farming Recovery Fund is a contribution towards uninsured costs that have likely been incurred in re-establishing productive, farmable land in areas significantly damaged by water, caused by flooding from Storms Babet and Henk or exceptional rainfall during October 2023 to March 2024.

To date all eligible farmers identified in the original Farming Recovery Fund announced in April 2024 have been offered the payment in line with the published criteria. In May, Defra announced a further expansion to the fund and further information on that will be available soon.

## ■ Beverage Containers: Deposit Return Schemes

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[1035\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to introduce a deposit return scheme for drinks containers before October 2027.

**Mary Creagh:**

Yes. This Government is committed to creating a roadmap to a zero-waste economy – a future where we keep our resources in use for longer; waste is reduced; we accelerate the path to net zero, we see investment in critical infrastructure and green jobs; our economy prospers; and nature thrives.

We are reviewing the suite of packaging reforms and are going to work with our devolved government counterparts, industry and other stakeholders to determine the next steps for the Deposit Return Scheme. I would be happy to update the House in due course.

## ■ Birds: Death

**Sir John Hayes:**

[\[875\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what information his Department holds on the number of birds that were killed by onshore wind turbines in each of the last 10 years.

**Mary Creagh:**

The Department does not hold information on the number of birds that were killed by onshore wind turbines.

## ■ Environment Act 2021

**Mr Toby Perkins:** [\[604\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the UK's progress in meeting the targets included in the Environment Act 2021.

**Mary Creagh:**

We are committed to the Environment Act targets. This Labour government is committed to ensuring the Environmental Improvement Plan is fit for purpose and will focus on delivering our Environment Act targets.

The new government will work in partnership with civil society, communities and business to restore and protect our natural world.

We intend to publish the Annual Progress Report on implementation of the Environmental Improvement Plan this summer, which will reveal the situation labour have inherited. This will cover the April 2023 to March 2024 reporting period in accordance with section 9 of the Environment Act 2021.

## ■ Environment Protection

**Mr Toby Perkins:** [\[605\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to amend the targets included in the Environment Act 2021.

**Mr Toby Perkins:** [\[606\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to review the Environment Improvement plan 2023.

**Mr Toby Perkins:** [\[607\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of impact of the Environment Improvement plan 2023 on the targets listed in the Environment Act 2021.

**Emma Hardy:**

We are committed to the Environment Act targets. This Labour government is committed to ensuring the Environmental Improvement Plan is fit for purpose and will focus on delivering our Environment Act targets.

The new government will work in partnership with civil society, communities and business to restore and protect our natural world.

We intend to publish the Annual Progress Report on implementation of the Environmental Improvement Plan this summer, which will reveal the situation labour have inherited. This will cover the April 2023 to March 2024 reporting period in accordance with section 9 of the Environment Act 2021.



## ■ Farmers: Government Assistance

**Steve Barclay:** [1487]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to increase support for farmers to mitigate the impacts of crops (a) lost and (b) not planted due to wet weather.

**Daniel Zeichner:**

The Farming Recovery Fund is a contribution towards uninsured costs that have likely been incurred in re-establishing productive, farmable land in areas significantly damaged by water, caused by flooding from Storms Babet and Henk or exceptional rainfall during October 2023 to March 2024.

In May Defra introduced a package of temporary adjustments and easements within the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI), SFI Pilot, Countryside Stewardship and Environmental Stewardship to support farmers and land managers dealing with the impacts of severe wet weather in England.

*[Essentially, if bad weather has caused disruptions to farming activities or affected a farmer's ability to meet the mandatory requirements set out in live agreements, the adjustments allow more time to establish or defer some activity to later in the year.]* A full list of these adjustments can be found on the gov.uk website at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/wet-weather-temporary-support-for-farmers-in-2024> .

## ■ Farming Recovery Fund

**Sarah Dyke:** [1405]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what percentage of eligible applicants to the Farming Recovery Fund have received full compensation; and what his planned timetable is for delivering outstanding compensation payments.

**Daniel Zeichner:**

To date all eligible farmers identified in the original Farming Recovery Fund announced in April 2024 have been offered the payment in line with the published criteria. In May, Defra announced a further expansion to the fund and further information on that will be available soon.

## ■ Flood Control: Gedling

**Michael Payne:** [R] [452]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to support the improvement of flood (a) defences and (b) resilience in Gedling constituency.

**Emma Hardy:**

Environment Agency inspection of flood risk management assets defending the southern edge of Gedling did not identify any significant damage following winter storms. Maintenance of these assets can include blockage removal, vegetation management, and further interventions where needed, such as recent embankment

repairs in Gedling. The Environment Agency estimate that c.£121,000 was spent on maintenance in Gedling in 2023/24, with approximately £300,000 planned for 2024/25.

There are no capital schemes planned in the constituency for this 6-year programme as the River Trent is well defended, benefitting from the £45M 2012 Nottingham Trent Left Bank scheme.

The Environment Agency has several strategic programmes in the constituency which may be added to our future capital pipeline.

### ■ Fly-tipping: South Norfolk

**Ben Goldsborough:**

[\[1449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many instances of fly tipping there were in South Norfolk constituency in each of the last five years.

**Mary Creagh:**

The Windsor Framework maintains the free flow of trade from GB to NI in the UK internal market. We are committed to implementing the Windsor Framework in good faith and protecting the UK internal market.

DAERA as the responsible administration, and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) as the regulator, liaise with manufacturers and grower groups on issues around Plant Protection Products (PPPs) availability to ensure the impacts on the farming industry in both NI and GB are minimised where possible.

### ■ Food Supply

**Steve Barclay:**

[\[1489\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will introduce a legally binding food security target.

**Daniel Zeichner:**

Food security is national security. A resilient and healthy food system, that works with nature and supports British farmers is a key element of our national food security.

That is why this Government will introduce a new deal for farmers to boost rural economic growth and strengthen Britain's food security. We will: cut energy bills by switching on GB Energy; protect farmers from being undercut in trade deals; and use the Government's own purchasing power to back British produce.

Food security is not a binary issue but consists of complex and dynamic interactions. The Government will publish the triennial UK Food Security Report this year which will measure trends across the five categories of food security.

**■ Food: Waste****Wera Hobhouse:** [\[1016\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether it is his policy to introduce mandatory food waste reporting for large businesses.

**Mary Creagh:**

The Government is committed to setting a clear roadmap to a circular economy – a future where our resources are used as efficiently and productively as possible for as long as possible, and waste is reduced. As a ministerial team, we are reviewing policies to address the challenges associated with tackling food waste in the supply chain, and these will be announced in the usual way.

**■ Furs: Imports and Sales****Sarah Champion:** [\[958\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to ban the import and sale of fur.

**Daniel Zeichner:**

This Labour Government will introduce the most ambitious programme for animal welfare in a generation.

Ministers are reviewing policies, which will be announced in due course.

**■ Litter: Roads****Sir John Hayes:** [\[867\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will take steps to help reduce roadside littering.

**Mary Creagh:**

Local councils are responsible for keeping the majority of trunk roads and other minor roads clear of litter. They have enforcement powers to help them do this, such as issuing a civil penalty to the keeper of a vehicle from which litter is thrown.

National Highways is responsible for keeping motorways and certain trunk roads clean and clear of litter. They inspect and grade the Strategic Road Network in accordance with Defra's Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse and litter is picked almost every day on their roads. Their activities are reported and monitored via its corporate Performance Indicator outlined in the Roads Investment Strategy.

At this stage, the Government has not yet made an assessment of what actions to take to address the specific challenges associated with roadside litter.

**■ Sewage: Aylesbury****Laura Kyrke-Smith:** [\[1410\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to tackle illegal sewage discharges in waterways in Aylesbury constituency.

**Emma Hardy:**

The Secretary of State recently met with water company bosses, including Thames Water, to make it clear that water firms will be held accountable for their performance for customers and the environment. During the meeting, water bosses signed up to the Government's initial package of reforms to cut sewage dumping and attract investment to upgrade infrastructure.

The Government also announced a new Water (Special Measures) Bill, which will turn around the performance of water companies, in the King's Speech. The Bill will strengthen regulation, give the water regulator new powers to ban the payment of bonuses if environmental standards are not met and increase accountability for water executives. These are the first critical steps in enabling a long-term and transformative reset of the entire water sector.

**■ Sewage: Bolton West****Phil Brickell:****[1066]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate his Department has made of the number of sewage discharges into watercourses in Bolton West constituency in the last 12 months.

**Emma Hardy:**

The Environment Agency will publish the 2024 Event Duration Monitoring data, showing how long and how often storm overflows have been used, in March 2025. The data for previous years is available [here](#).

I would also refer the hon. Member to the Written Statement made by the Secretary of State on 18 July: [Written statements - Written questions, answers and statements - UK Parliament](#).

**■ Sewage: Hastings and Rye****Helena Dollimore:****[367]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to tackle sewage discharges by Southern Water in Hastings and Rye.

**Emma Hardy:**

The Secretary of State recently met with water company bosses, including Thames Water, to make it clear that water firms will be held accountable for their performance for customers and the environment. During the meeting, water bosses signed up to the Government's initial package of reforms to cut sewage dumping and attract investment to upgrade infrastructure.

The Government also announced a new Water (Special Measures) Bill, which will turn around the performance of water companies, in the King's Speech. The Bill will strengthen regulation, give the water regulator new powers to ban the payment of bonuses if environmental standards are not met and increase accountability for water executives. These are the first critical steps in enabling a long-term and transformative reset of the entire water sector.

## ■ Sewage: Poole

**Neil Duncan-Jordan:** [\[861\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to help tackle sewage discharges by Wessex Water in Poole constituency.

**Emma Hardy:**

The Secretary of State recently met with water company bosses, including Wessex Water, to make it clear that water firms will be held accountable for their performance for customers and the environment. During the meeting, water bosses signed up to the Government's initial package of reforms to cut sewage dumping and attract investment to upgrade infrastructure.

The Government also announced a new Water (Special Measures) Bill, which will turn around the performance of water companies, in the King's Speech. The Bill will strengthen regulation, give the water regulator new powers to ban the payment of bonuses if environmental standards are not met and increase accountability for water executives. These are the first critical steps in enabling a long-term and transformative reset of the entire water sector.

I would also refer the hon. Member to the Written Statement made by the Secretary of State on 18 July: [Written statements - Written questions, answers and statements - UK Parliament](#).

## ■ South West Water: Pollution

**Andrew George:** [\[8\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many (a) raw sewage and (b) other polluting discharges into (i) rivers and (ii) coastal waters were recorded by (A) the Environment Agency, (B) public and citizen science organisations and (C) South West Water in the area served by South West Water in each of the last five years.

**Emma Hardy:**

There were 3,466 incidents into a waterbody in the Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly (DCS) area over the last 5 years, of which 929 were related to untreated sewage:

REPORTED YEAR	(A) CAT 1-3 INCIDENTS WITH AN IMPACT ON WATER	(B) CRUDE SEWAGE INCIDENTS IN DCS
2019	615	183
2020	658	220
2021	595	147
2022	558	120
2023	701	173

REPORTED YEAR	(A) CAT 1-3 INCIDENTS WITH AN IMPACT ON WATER	(B) CRUDE SEWAGE INCIDENTS IN DCS
2024	339	86
<b>Total</b>	<b>3466</b>	<b>929</b>

Of these incidents, the following number of substantiated incidents were attributed to South West Water (SWW):

REPORTED YEAR	(A) SWW INCIDENTS IN DCS	(B) CRUDE SEWAGE SWW INCIDENTS IN DCS
2019	189	147
2020	233	186
2021	160	117
2022	126	75
2023	222	146
2024	111	71
<b>Total</b>	<b>1041</b>	<b>742</b>

The EA's area boundaries do not align exactly with water company catchments. This will mean that a small number of incidents will not be included in this analysis.

The use of "other polluting discharges" the EA have taken to mean all other types of pollution incidents into water.

Finally, the EA have included pollution incidents to all types of waterbodies including coastal waters and rivers.

For Part B and C of this question, we do not hold that information, the respective organisations would be best placed to answer.

I would also refer the hon. Member to the Written Statement made by the Secretary of State on 18 July: [Written statements - Written questions, answers and statements - UK Parliament](#).

#### ■ Walley's Quarry Landfill

Adam Jogee:

[1083]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will publish all correspondence between his Department and Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council on the Walleys Quarry Landfill site in each of the last five years.

**Adam Jogee:** [\[1084\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will publish all correspondence between his Department and Staffordshire County Council on the Walleys Quarry Landfill site in each of the last five years.

**Adam Jogee:** [\[1085\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will publish all correspondence between the Environment Agency and his Department on the Walleys Quarry Landfill site in each of the last five years.

**Adam Jogee:** [\[848\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will publish the correspondence received by his Department from Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council on the Walleys Quarry Landfill Site in each of the last five years.

**Adam Jogee:** [\[849\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will publish the correspondence received by his Department from Staffordshire County Council on the Walleys Quarry Landfill Site in each of the last five years.

**Mary Creagh:**

The Hon Member has requested a significant amount of information. Some of this correspondence may be subject to the conventions regarding access to papers of a previous Administration. Publishing some items of this correspondence could also risk prejudicing ongoing regulatory or criminal investigations in relation to the site. To fully review all of this correspondence would incur disproportionate cost. With this in mind I would like to offer a meeting with the Hon Member to discuss the issues at the site and actions underway.

## ■ Water Companies: Reform

**Andy McDonald:** [\[1275\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Written Statement of 18 July 2024 on First steps to reform water sector, what steps he is taking to establish customer panels; and what mechanisms for accountability to customers will the customer panels have.

**Emma Hardy:**

The Secretary of State recently announced a series of initial steps towards ending the crisis in the water sector. This included announcing consumers will gain new powers to hold water company bosses to account through powerful new customer panels. For the first time in history, customers will have the power to summon board members and hold water executives to account.

We will provide further details on these panels in the coming months.

I would also refer the hon. Member to the Written Statement made by the Secretary of State on 18 July: [Written statements - Written questions, answers and statements - UK Parliament](#).

**Andy McDonald:** [1276]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Written Statement of 18 July 2024 on First steps to reform water sector, HCWS3, under what circumstances compensation payments to customers will be triggered through the proposed strengthened protection and compensation for households and business measures.

**Emma Hardy:**

The Secretary of State recently announced a series of initial steps towards ending the crisis in the water sector. This included strengthening protection and compensation for households and businesses when their basic water services are affected through the Guaranteed Standards Schemes (GSS). Subject to consultation, the amount of compensation customers are legally entitled to when key standards are not met will more than double and payments will also be triggered by a wider set of circumstances including Boil Water Notices.

The Guaranteed Standards Scheme (GSS) covers incidents of interruption to supply, low water pressure, and customer service incidents. This includes failing to respond to written complaints, keep appointments, and sewer flooding to customer properties. Subject to consultation, the scope these standards may be broadened.

I would also refer the hon. Member to the Written Statement made by the Secretary of State on 18 July: [Written statements - Written questions, answers and statements - UK Parliament](#).

## FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

### ■ Bangladesh: Human Rights

**Sarah Owen:** [1367]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has had discussions with his counterpart in Bangladesh on (a) ending violence and unrest and (b) ensuring that (i) the right to peacefully protest is upheld and (ii) independent investigations will take place.

**Catherine West:**

The Foreign Secretary and I have publicly called for an immediate end to the violence and unrest in Bangladesh, and for all sides to find a peaceful way forward. I discussed the situation with the Bangladesh High Commissioner to London on 19 and 23 July and stressed the need for democratic freedoms and the rule of law to be protected. The British High Commissioner to Bangladesh has engaged with Bangladesh government ministers reinforcing messages on de-escalation and the



need for constructive dialogue to reduce tensions. We are monitoring the situation closely and will continue to engage with counterparts.

**Sarah Owen:**

[\[1368\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has had discussions with his counterpart in Bangladesh on (a) possible human rights violations against protestors and (b) future protection of students.

**Catherine West:**

I discussed my concerns regarding the violence in Bangladesh following protests with the Bangladesh High Commissioner to London on 19 and 23 July. The British High Commissioner has engaged with key ministers in the Bangladesh government to reinforce messages on de-escalation and the need for constructive dialogue to reduce tensions. The rights to protest, to peacefully assemble and to express different political views are rights the UK holds dear and must be protected. We will continue to raise the importance of respect for human rights and the rule of law with the Bangladesh government.

#### ■ **British Nationals Abroad: Detainees**

**Layla Moran:**

[\[1629\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent steps her Department has taken to provide consular assistance to British nationals who are detained overseas.

**Mr Hamish Falconer:**

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) consular staff endeavour to give appropriate and tailored support to British nationals overseas and their families in the UK 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. They support the c.3000 British nationals who are arrested or detained each year and are currently providing consular assistance in over 1600 cases relating to arrest or detention. Consular staff are primarily concerned with the welfare of our detained British nationals, and tailor the consular assistance they provide depending on the specific circumstances of each case.

#### ■ **Gaza: Charities**

**Melanie Ward:**

[\[765\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many British-registered charities working in Gaza have experienced (a) staff or volunteers being (i) killed and (ii) injured and (b) buildings or other infrastructure being destroyed or damaged in Gaza in the last 10 months; and how many (A) staff have been (1) killed and (2) injured and (B) incidents there have been of buildings being destroyed or damaged in Gaza in the last 10 months, by each registered charity.

**Mr Hamish Falconer:**

The UK Government does not hold this data directly. However, we are extremely concerned about the number of casualties amongst the humanitarian sector

community, including our own UK nationals. International Humanitarian Law provides for the protection of non-combatants. Whilst in Israel, the Foreign Secretary pressed Prime Minister Netanyahu to implement improved deconfliction processes to protect aid workers. I will continue to raise with my Israeli counterparts the incidents that affect the delivery of vital humanitarian work.

Israel must take concrete steps to protect civilians and aid workers in accordance with International Humanitarian Law. This includes deconfliction between military and humanitarian operations, and supporting the minimum operating requirements of the UN agencies. The World Central Kitchen (WCK) deaths on 2 April, including the death of three British Nationals, were an appalling example of Israel's failure to provide an effective deconfliction mechanism to keep humanitarian operations safe from military operations.

#### ■ **Gaza: Israel**

**Clive Lewis:** [\[811\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will publish legal advice obtained under the previous Government on its decision to challenge the International Criminal Court's jurisdiction on Israeli military action in Gaza.

**Mr Hamish Falconer:**

*[Holding answer 25 July 2024]:* As the Foreign Secretary has made clear, he is not able to look back on advice made available to previous Government Ministers. As was announced on 26 July, the Government will not be submitting observations to the ICC, in line with its position that this is a matter for the Court to decide on.

#### ■ **Occupied Territories: Development Aid**

**Chris Law:** [\[614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent estimate he has made of the number of UK-funded aid programmes in the Occupied Palestinian Territories that have been destroyed or seized by Israeli forces (a) since 7 October 2023, (b) over the last 12 months and (c) over the last five years.

**Chris Law:** [\[615\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what estimate he has made of the financial cost to UK-funded aid programmes in the Occupied Palestinian Territories as a result of having been destroyed or seized by Israeli forces (a) since 7 October 2023, (b) over the last 12 months, (c) over the last five years.

**Mr Hamish Falconer:**

The FCDO does not routinely make estimates of this information over these timescales. We are aware, however, of a number of aid organisations based in Gaza whose operations have been curtailed or damaged by Israeli military action since 7 October, including 57 organisation that had been given grants by the UK for a total amount of £600,000 through the FCDO Private Sector Support Programme.

Since 7 October the UK has also provided £19,750,000 to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Occupied Palestinian Territories pooled fund, which is used to support critical responses to emerging needs through UN agencies, INGOs and NGOs. OCHA has published data (which is publicly available) on demolitions, evictions, confiscations, and other related incidents since 2009.

#### ■ **Russia: Oil**

**Neil Coyle:** **[800]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to help ensure that oil from Russia refined in other countries (a) does not evade sanctions and (b) is used to support Russian forces during the war in Ukraine.

**Stephen Doughty:**

The action taken by the UK and partners to limit Russian energy revenues is having a significant impact, with Russia forced to shoulder a 24% reduction in oil and gas revenues in 2023 compared to 2022. We took robust action against Russia's 'shadow fleet' alongside allies at the European Political Community, and we are exploring further options to strengthen our sanctions, including in the energy sector.

### HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

#### ■ **Baby Care Units: Finance**

**David Davis:** **[31]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many NHS trusts receive funding for high-risk neonatal services.

**Karin Smyth:**

There are currently 43 Neonatal Intensive Care units in England providing care to high-risk babies.

#### ■ **Baby Care Units: Nurses**

**David Davis:** **[30]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of nurses are qualified in intensive neonatal care and work in high-risk neonatal units.

**Karin Smyth:**

Of the 3,898 registered nursing staff working in Neonatal Intensive Care Units, 2,251 have a qualification in specialty (QIS) for neonatal care. QIS-trained nurses are constantly supporting and directly supervising non-QIS-trained nurses in the day-to-day care of babies within low to high-risk neonatal units.

## ■ Doctors and Nurses

**Mr Richard Holden:** [\[1577\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many (a) nurses and (b) doctors were employed by the NHS in (i) May 2010 and (ii) the most recent month for which data is available.

**Karin Smyth:**

The following table shows the number of full-time equivalent nurses, including health visitors, and doctors employed by National Health Service trusts and other core organisations in England, as of May 2010 and May 2024:

	MAY 2010	MAY 2024
Nurses	280,950	356,581
Doctors	94,742	140,968

Source: NHS Hospital and Community Health Services workforce statistics for England, published by NHS England on a monthly basis.

The data includes staff employed by NHS trusts and other core NHS organisations. It excludes staff directly employed by general practitioner surgeries, local authorities, and other providers such as community interest companies and private providers. More detailed data can be found at the following link:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/nhs-workforce-statistics>

## ■ Gender Dysphoria: Children

**Clive Lewis:** [\[109\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential impact of the ban on puberty blockers on the mental health of trans patients under the age of 18.

**Cat Smith:** [\[87\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of restricting puberty blockers for the treatment of gender incongruence on the (a) physical and (b) mental health of young trans people.

**Cat Smith:** [\[91\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential risks of harm being caused by restrictions on puberty blockers for treatments of gender incongruence.

**Andrew Gwynne:**

The emergency banning Order, restricting the sale or supply of puberty blockers, was introduced by the previous Government. The Order enables those who were already on a course of treatment with Gonadotrophin-Releasing Hormone Analogues, before 3 June 2024 from a UK based private or National Health Service provider, to continue to have them supplied. Those who were already on a course of treatment prescribed by an EEA or Switzerland registered prescriber can legally switch to a UK based prescriber to continue their treatment.

The expert Cass Review, which is one of the most comprehensive reviews of gender identity services for children and young people to date, states that the rationale for early puberty suppressing hormones to treat gender dysphoria is unclear and the effects on cognitive and psychosexual development are unknown. This Government will always act in the interests of patient safety, which is why the Secretary of State signalled his intention to renew the Order and consult on a permanent ban (subject to the outcome of the ongoing judicial review).

We are committed to implementing the recommendations of the Cass Review to ensure that young people presenting to the NHS with gender dysphoria are receiving appropriate and high-quality care. That is why NHS England and the National Institute of Health and Care Research, the research arm of the Department, are working together to commission a study into the potential benefits and harms of puberty suppressing hormones as a treatment option for children and young people with gender incongruence. The study team is now in place and are finalising their application for funding which will be assessed by an independent scientific review study ahead of the commencement of wider approvals, including ethics, and set up.

We will continue to monitor the impacts of the Order, including on mental health. Professor Louis Appleby, Chair of the National Suicide Prevention Strategy Advisory Group, has examined evidence for a large rise in suicides claimed by campaigners. His paper, which was published on 19 July 2024, concluded that the data do not support the claim that there has been a large rise in suicide in young gender dysphoria patients at the Tavistock clinic.

Some children and young people may be concerned by these changes. If they are already under the care of a Children and Young People's mental health provider or the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, they can contact their team for advice. If they are not, their general practice team will be able to assess whether further referrals for mental health support are required. Patients can also be signposted to the advice on getting mental health support available on the NHS.UK website. Anyone in need of urgent support can contact NHS 111 and choose the mental health option, option two. Further details are available at the following link:

<https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/mental-health-services/where-to-get-urgent-help-for-mental-health/>

Professor Appleby's paper is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-suicides-and-gender-dysphoria-at-the-tavistock-and-portman-nhs-foundation-trust/review-of-suicides-and-gender-dysphoria-at-the-tavistock-and-portman-nhs-foundation-trust-independent-report>

**Clive Lewis:**

**[110]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to take steps to monitor the potential impact of the ban on puberty blockers on (a) the mental health and (b) suicide rates among trans patients under the age of 18.

**Karin Smyth:**

The emergency banning order, restricting the sale or supply of puberty blockers, was introduced by the previous government. The Order enables those who were already on a course of treatment with Gonadotrophin-Releasing Hormone Analogues, before 3 June 2024 from a UK based private or National Health Service provider, to continue to have them supplied. Those who were already on a course of treatment prescribed by an EEA or Switzerland-registered prescriber can legally switch to a UK based prescriber to continue their treatment.

We will continue to monitor the impact of the emergency order, including on mental health and suicide. All child deaths undergo a multi-agency review by a Child Death Overview Panel and that information is reported to the National Child Mortality Database. There is a monthly exercise by NHS officials to check the waiting list against NHS records to identify any deaths.

Professor Louis Appleby, Chair of the National Suicide Prevention Strategy Advisory Group, has examined evidence for a large rise in suicides claimed by campaigners. His paper, which was published on 19 July 2024, concluded that the data does not support the claim that there has been a large rise in suicide in young gender dysphoria patients at the Tavistock clinic.

This government has committed to implementing the expert recommendations of the Cass Review to ensure that young people presenting to the NHS with gender dysphoria are receiving appropriate and high-quality care. That is why NHS England and the National Institute of Health and Care Research – the research arm of the department – are working together to commission a study into the potential benefits and harms of puberty suppressing hormones as a treatment option for children and young people with gender incongruence. The study team is now in place and are finalising their application for funding which will be assessed by an independent scientific review study ahead of the commencement of wider approvals, including ethics, and set up.

Children and young people who are unable to access puberty blockers when they have previously done so are strongly advised to meet with their clinician. We expect clinicians to be working with impacted patients to consider what the best care for them is going forward. We understand some children and young people may be concerned or distressed by the changes. If they are already under the care of a Children and Young People's mental health provider or Child and Adolescent Mental

Health Services, they can contact their team for advice. If they are not, their general practice team will be able to assess whether further referrals for mental health support are required.

Professor Appleby's paper is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-suicides-and-gender-dysphoria-at-the-tavistock-and-portman-nhs-foundation-trust>

**Tim Roca:**

[443]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to Recommendation 6 on page 35 of the Cass Review, published in April 2024, what plans he has for the extent of a further clinical trial on puberty blockers; and what his planned timetable is for this.

**Cat Smith:**

[90]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his timetable is for the clinical trial being conducted on the use of puberty blockers for the treatment of gender incongruence.

**Karin Smyth:**

The expert Cass Review, which is one of the most comprehensive reviews of gender identity services for children and young people to date, states that the rationale for early puberty suppressing hormones to treat gender dysphoria is unclear and the effects on cognitive and psychosexual development are unknown. This is why NHS England and the National Institute of Health and Care Research, the research arm of the department, are working together to commission a study into the potential benefits and harms of puberty suppressing hormones as a treatment option for children and young people with gender incongruence. The study team is now in place and are finalising their application for funding which will be assessed by an independent scientific review study ahead of the commencement of wider approvals, including ethics, and set up.

**Cat Smith:**

[88]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department is taking steps to ensure that those proscribed puberty blockers for the treatment of gender incongruence will continue to receive them.

**Andrew Gwynne:**

The emergency banning order limiting the sale or supply of puberty blockers against private or non-United Kingdom prescriptions allows a child under 18 years old, who was already on a course of treatment with Gonadotrophin-Releasing Hormone Analogues before 3 June 2024 from a UK based private or National Health Service provider, to continue to have them supplied. Those who were already on a course of treatment prescribed by an EEA or Switzerland registered prescriber can legally switch to a UK based prescriber to continue their treatment.

This government has committed to implementing the expert recommendations of the Cass Review to ensure that young people presenting to the NHS with gender dysphoria are receiving appropriate and high-quality care. That is why NHS England and the National Institute of Health and Care Research – the research arm of the department – are working together to commission a study into the potential benefits and harms of puberty suppressing hormones as a treatment option for children and young people with gender incongruence. The study team is now in place and are finalising their application for funding which will be assessed by an independent scientific review study ahead of the commencement of wider approvals, including ethics, and set up.

Children and young people unable to access puberty blockers are strongly advised to meet with their clinician. We expect clinicians to be working with impacted patients to consider what the best care for them is going forward. Some children and young people may be concerned by these changes. If they are already under the care of a Children and Young People's mental health provider or the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, they can contact their team for advice. If they are not, their general practice team will be able to assess whether further referrals for mental health support are required. Patients can also be signposted to the advice on getting mental health support available on the NHS.UK website. Anyone in need of urgent support can contact NHS 111 and choose the mental health option, option two. Further details are available at the following link:

<https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/mental-health-services/where-to-get-urgent-help-for-mental-health/>

**Cat Smith:**

**[89]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made a comparative assessment of the UK's position on the prescription of puberty blockers for the treatment of gender incongruence with that of other European countries.

**Karin Smyth:**

The Cass Review is one of the most comprehensive reviews of gender identity services for children and young people to date worldwide.

The Cass review included an assessment of evidence from other countries and concluded that there was a lack of evidenced-based guidelines and, therefore, limitations for adopting these for National Health Service gender services. Informed by the Cass review, we are now reforming transgender care for young people in this country, based on the best possible evidence. That means a holistic approach, with puberty suppressing hormones only considered within a much broader needs assessment, and only then in the context of a clinical trial. We are committed to implementing the recommendations of the Cass Review, as that is the care model we believe to be the best approach in the interests of patient safety.

It is simply not possible for pharmacists to check whether prescriptions issued from overseas registered prescribers have been issued in a similarly safe and effective



way, and we know that some overseas providers who advertise their services do not follow this approach.

**Cat Smith:**

[92]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will meet with (a) young trans young people and (b) their families to discuss the prescription of puberty blockers for the treatment of gender incongruence.

**Karin Smyth:**

The emergency banning order limiting the sale or supply of puberty blockers against private or non-United Kingdom prescriptions allows a child under 18 years old, who was already on a course of treatment with Gonadotrophin-Releasing Hormone Analogues before 3 June 2024 from a UK based private or National Health Service provider, to continue to have them supplied. Those who were already on a course of treatment prescribed by an EEA or Switzerland registered prescriber can legally switch to a UK based prescriber to continue their treatment.

This government has committed to implementing the expert recommendations of the Cass Review to ensure that young people presenting to the NHS with gender dysphoria are receiving appropriate and high-quality care. That is why NHS England and the National Institute of Health and Care Research – the research arm of the department – are working together to commission a study into the potential benefits and harms of puberty suppressing hormones as a treatment option for children and young people with gender incongruence. The study team is now in place and are finalising their application for funding which will be assessed by an independent scientific review study ahead of the commencement of wider approvals, including ethics, and set up.

We recognise the value of engaging with representative groups and want to reset the relationship the department has with LGBT+ groups. My rt. Hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, will be meeting with LGBT+ stakeholders as soon as possible to hear directly about the health and care issues that are most important to them.

## ■ Genito-urinary Medicine: Finance

**Rachael Maskell:**

[985]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will maintain levels of funding for sexual health services.

**Rachael Maskell:**

[986]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the effectiveness of (a) early interventions to help tackle sexually transmitted diseases and (b) other sexual health services.

**Rachael Maskell:**

[987]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps with Directors of Public Health to ensure there is adequate funding for sexual health services.

**Andrew Gwynne:**

The Government is committed to improving the sexual health of the nation, including access to, and quality of, sexual health services for the whole population. Public health services commissioned by local authorities in England continue to be funded through a ring-fenced Public Health Grant. In 2024/25, the total Public Health Grant to local authorities has been confirmed at £3.603 billion, through which sexual health services are funded. Local authorities are best placed to commission sexual health services to meet the needs of their local population.

We will work with local government and other key partners to prevent ill health, improve the wider determinants of health, reduce the inequalities that drive poor health, and agree on the most effective interventions to achieve our shared ambitions.

**Halton Hospital****Mike Amesbury:**[\[1027\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate his Department has made of when Halton Hospital Campus will be completed.

**Karin Smyth:**

The Government is concerned by the condition of healthcare infrastructure at Halton Hospital, and across the National Health Service estate. We recognise that change is desperately needed to tackle unsuitable facilities, and to deliver an NHS that is fit for the future.

We recognise that strategic, value for money investments in capital projects are critical to providing good quality care. In line with the Government's plans to deliver an NHS fit for the future, and as part of our internal Spending Review preparations, the Department is reviewing capital requirements. Timescales associated with the Spending Review are yet to be confirmed.

However, Warrington and Halton Hospitals have received funding through NHS England's Targeted Investment Fund for the reconfiguration of theatres, wards, and the endoscopy unit, to deliver additional capacity and provide patients with the care they deserve.

**Health Services: Cramlington and Killingworth****Emma Foody:**[\[1114\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to reduce health inequalities in Cramlington and Killingworth constituency.

**Andrew Gwynne:**

As part of our health mission, the Government is committed to ensuring that people live well for longer. This includes tackling the determinants that underpin stark health inequalities in order to halve the gap in healthy life expectancy between the richest and poorest regions.

The Northumberland and North Tyneside local authorities receive a Public Health Grant which funds services, such as stop smoking, drug and alcohol treatment, and sexual health, which contribute to addressing health inequalities. For 2024/25 the Northumberland local authorities received £18.4 million, while the North Tyneside local authorities received £13.6 million. Directors of Public Health from each authority are working in partnership with the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board to support action to address inequalities in health care.

Northumberland and Newcastle upon Tyne local authorities, within the Cramlington and Killingworth constituency, are two of the 75 local authorities receiving funding as part of the Family Hubs and Start for Life Programme. In addition, the North East Mayoral Combined Authority, formed on 7 May 2024, has committed to creating a fairer North East, reducing inequalities, and improving health. Its priorities include work to address the causes of health inequalities, such as bringing investment into the region to boost economic growth, improve available housing, education, inclusion, and skills.

## ■ Health Services: Weather

**Rachael Maskell:**

[628]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to commence preparations for winter planning; and if he will make it his policy to prioritise funding for increased levels of care in the community in those plans.

**Karin Smyth:**

Guidance on winter planning for health and care services is expected to be issued by the summer recess, building on NHS England's 2024/25 operational planning guidance published in April 2024.

The Government has been clear that as part of the future reforms of the National Health Service, we must increasingly shift from a model geared towards late diagnosis and treatment, to one where the NHS focuses on prevention, and where more services are delivered in local communities.

## ■ Motor Neurone Disease

**Michael Payne:**

[1079]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department is taking steps to (a) increase research funding, (b) improve access to specialist care and (c) provide better support for (i) people living with motor neurone disease and (ii) their families.

**Andrew Gwynne:**

The Government's responsibility for delivering motor neurone disease (MND) research is shared between the Department of Health and Social Care, with research delivered by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR), and the Department of Science, Innovation and Technology, with research delivered via UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). Significant recent investments include, but are not

limited to, £12.5 million to support the best science in the UK Dementia Research Institute, £8 million for early phase clinical research and the Experimental medicine Route To Success in amyotrophic lateral sclerosis platform trial, and £6 million for the MND Translational Accelerator. In 2022, Government funders also published a joint NIHR and Medical Research Council Highlight Notice, inviting researchers across the academic and life sciences sector to submit applications via open call. The MND Highlight Notice invites proposals for research to address important health and social care questions, and seeks to increase the amount of MND research funded.

NHS England commissions the specialised care and treatment that patients with MND may receive from the 24 specialised neurology centres across England. NHS England has published a service specification setting out national standards for organisations that provide specialised neurological care. This sets out that the service should improve the quality of life and the experience of the services for patients and their carers. The support provided includes the provision of multi-disciplinary care from specialist clinicians, including neurologists, specialist nurses, speech and language therapists, dietetics and nutrition, and physiotherapy, depending on individual clinical need. Further information is available at the following link:

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

At the national level, there are a number of initiatives supporting service improvement and better care for patients with MND, including the RightCare Progressive Neurological Conditions Toolkit and the Getting It Right First Time Programme for Neurology. NHS England has also established a Neurology Service Transformation Programme, a multi-year, clinically led programme to develop a new model of integrated care for neurology services, including MND.

In addition, NHS England commissions a specialised communication aids service known as Augmentative and Alternative Communication, as set out in the published service specification. This service supports individuals with rapidly degenerative conditions, including MND, who are prioritised for this service. Further information is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/commissioning/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2016/03/aac-serv-spec-jan-2016.pdf>

## ■ Nervous System: Pain

**Jim Shannon:**

[77]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of people were medically treated for severe nerve pain in the last 12 months.

**Karin Smyth:**

The following table shows a breakdown of the Finished Admission Episodes (FAEs) in England with a primary diagnosis relevant to nerve pain, as well as the total number and proportion of FAEs with a primary diagnosis relevant to nerve pain, for 2023/24:

DIAGNOSIS	ADMISSIONS
Disorders of trigeminal nerve	3,005
Facial nerve disorders	5,405
Disorders of other cranial nerves	210
Cranial nerve disorders in diseases classified elsewhere	285
Nerve root and plexus disorders	1,660
Nerve root and plexus compressions in diseases classified elsewhere	10,510
Mononeuropathies of upper limb	47,290
Mononeuropathies of lower limb	4,225
Other mononeuropathies	1,770
Total FAEs with primary diagnosis relevant to nerve pain	74,365
Total 2023/24 FAEs	17,540,975
Proportion of admissions with primary diagnosis relevant to nerve pain	0.42%

Source: Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), published by NHS England

Notes:

- FAEs refer to the first period of admitted patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider, and are generally counted against the year or month in which the admission episode finishes, so do not represent the number of patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the period;
- the primary diagnosis is the first of up to 20 diagnosis fields in the HES data set and provides the main reason why the patient was admitted to hospital;
- the data is provisional and may be incomplete or contain errors for which no adjustments have been made, as counts produced from provisional data are likely to be lower than those generated for the same period in the final data set; and
- all counts have been rounded to the nearest five and values less than 10 have been suppressed.

**■ NHS: Finance****Mr Richard Holden:**[\[1575\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the NHS budget was in (a) cash terms and (b) adjusted for inflation in the (i) 2009-10 and (ii) 2023-24 financial year.

**Karin Smyth:**

NHS England, which is usually taken as the basis of the National Health Service budget, was established in 2013/14, and so equivalent figures for earlier years are not available. For comparisons before 2013/14, the Government usually uses the Department's overall budget, of which the NHS budget forms the vast majority. The overall budget, including the NHS and other components, was £183.6 billion in 2023/24. In 2009/10 it was £100.2 billion which, adjusting for inflation using gross domestic product deflators published on 28 June 2024, would be the equivalent of £141.5 billion in 2023/24.

**■ Nitazenes: Misuse****Rachael Maskell:**[\[984\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he plans to take to help reduce the use of (a) nitazenes and (b) other illicit substances in areas where there is growing use of such synthetic substances.

**Andrew Gwynne:**

The Department is monitoring and responding to the threat posed by the growing levels of nitazenes and other potent synthetic drugs. It is vital that steps are taken to reduce the use of these substances, including by increasing awareness of their dangers. The Government has a drug information and advice service called Talk to FRANK which aims to reduce drug misuse and its harms by providing awareness to young people and to parents. Information on synthetic opioids and the danger of their misuse is available at the following link:

<https://www.talktofrank.com/drug/synthetic-opioids>

Education on drug use is also a statutory component of relationships and sex education, and health education in England. The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities and the Department for Education have commissioned lesson plans and other resources to support teachers to deliver quality drug prevention, which are available to schools. The lesson plans target primary and secondary students, teaching them how to manage influences and pressure, and keep themselves healthy and safe. These resources are in the process of being updated and there will be increased emphasis on the risks of synthetic drugs.

The Department has also invested an additional £532 million into drug and alcohol treatment and recovery provision between 2022/23 and 2024/25, to ensure those in need can access high quality help and support. For those using opiates, treatment is the safest place to be.

## ■ Nurses

**Andrew George:**

[1]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of establishing mandatory safe registered nurse staffing levels in all forms of hospital settings.

**Karin Smyth:**

Ensuring adequate staffing levels is the responsibility of National Health Service Trusts and commissioners, supported by national guidelines. The Government will prioritise patient safety to ensure that the NHS treats people with the high quality and safe care that they deserve.

We are committed to training the staff we need to get patients seen on time. The Government will make sure the NHS has the staff it needs to be there for everyone when they need it.

## ■ Obesity: Children

**Sonia Kumar:**

[1425]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to tackle childhood obesity in Dudley.

**Andrew Gwynne:**

The Government recognises that prevention will always be better, and cheaper, than a cure. We will take action to prevent and tackle the obesity crisis head on, creating the healthiest generation of children ever.

As set out in the King's Speech, we are committed to implementing the advertising restrictions for less healthy food and drink. A 9:00pm television watershed and 24-hour ban on paid-for advertising of less healthy food and drink products are due to come into force on 1 October 2025. The Government is also committed to banning the sale of high-caffeine energy drinks to under-16-year-olds. We will also stop the targeting of school children by fast food outlets by empowering councils to block the development of new fast food shops outside schools.

Officials in the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities Midlands Region work closely with local partners, including local authorities and the National Health Service, to support them with local initiatives to promote a healthy lifestyle and tackle obesity.

## ■ Polycystic Ovary Syndrome: Semaglutide

**Jess Asato:**

[428]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of prescribing semaglutides on the NHS for patients with polycystic ovary syndrome.

**Jess Asato:**

[429]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made an assessment of the geographic disparities in the prescription of semaglutides for patients with polycystic ovary syndrome.

**Karin Smyth:**

While semaglutide is not licensed as a treatment option for polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), clinicians can prescribe medicines outside their licensed indication, known as off-label prescribing, where they consider it to be the best treatment option for their patient, and subject to funding by the National Health Service locally. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has been asked to develop a clinical guideline on PCOS which will make evidence-based recommendations for clinicians on best practice.

No assessment has been made of the geographic disparities in the prescription of semaglutides for patients with PCOS as data on the reason for a prescription is not available, and semaglutide may be prescribed for a range of conditions.

## HOME OFFICE

### ■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

**Helen Hayes:**

[900117]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ban ninja swords, zombie knives and machetes.

**Dame Diana Johnson:**

The Government has a manifesto commitment to ban ninja swords and other weapons and we will be taking this forward as soon as possible, ensuring that lethal blades which have been used to kill teenagers on our streets are no longer available to buy or sell.

We will also be implementing the ban on zombie-style knives and zombie-style machetes approved by Parliament in April.

**Wendy Chamberlain:**

[900119]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to review the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme.

**Seema Malhotra:**

As the Hon Member will be aware the Migration Advisory Committee published a Review of the Seasonal Worker Visa on 16 July.

The Government will carefully consider the MAC's recommendations and will provide a detailed response in due course.



**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:**

[\[900120\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to improve neighbourhood policing.

**Dame Diana Johnson:**

Neighbourhood policing sits at the heart of the British policing model. It is a critical building block in helping communities feel safe.

That is why we are introducing the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee, restoring patrols to town centres and recruiting thousands of extra police officers, PCSOs and Special Constables, and we will set out further details in due course.

**John Slinger:**

[\[900123\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to increase public trust and confidence in policing.

**Jess Phillips:**

For far too long, violence against women and girls has been treated as an inevitability rather than the national emergency that it is. Our mission is to halve violence against women and girls within a decade, using every tool at our disposal to protect victims and to get dangerous offenders off the streets.

That must start with drastically improving the policing and criminal justice response, ensuring that every force has the specialist capability to respond swiftly and robustly to these devastating crimes, and we will be bringing forward plans shortly to drive up standards across policing.

**Dr Kieran Mullan:**

[\[900124\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has for the Northeye detention centre in Bexhill.

**Dame Angela Eagle:**

We have got to work straight away on fixing the asylum system and protecting our border.

That has already included a surge in capacity on returning failed asylum seekers, as demonstrated by last week's flight to Vietnam and Timor-Leste. I will be considering options and will take a view on the future use of the Northeye site in due course.

## ■ Anti-social Behaviour: Community Development

**Alex Baker:**

[\[1611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to provide (a) financial and (b) other support to local community organisations to help tackle anti-social behaviour in their area.

**Dame Diana Johnson:**

Tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB) is a top priority for this Government, and a key part of our Safer Streets Mission.

We will put thousands of neighbourhood police and community support officers into local communities so that residents have a named officer they can go to when things go wrong and will set out further measures in due course.

The Safer Streets Fund is a crime prevention programme, helping to prevent neighbourhood crime, violence against women and girls (VAWG) and anti-social behaviour (ASB) in public spaces to ensure the public is better protected.

## ■ Asylum: Hotels

**Julia Lopez:** [\[1547\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has commissioned the use of any hotel accommodation in the London Borough of Havering for the purpose of housing asylum seekers since 5 July 2024.

**Dame Angela Eagle:**

No new hotels have been commissioned to accommodate asylum seekers in the London Borough of Havering in this period.

The Government is determined to restore order to the asylum system so that it operates swiftly, firmly, and fairly. This includes our accommodation sites, as we continue to identify a range of options to end the use of hotels to accommodate destitute asylum seekers.

## ■ Civil Disorder: Leeds

**Mr James Cleverly:** [\[961\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with West Yorkshire Police on the recent disorder in Harehills, Leeds.

**Dame Diana Johnson:**

The Home Secretary and I have been kept fully up to date by West Yorkshire Police following the disorder in Leeds last week. We have been briefed on the action they are taking and the progress of their investigations in response to the unacceptable scenes of disorder and criminality that we saw.

The Home Secretary visited the Leeds District Police Headquarters and also met with local community leaders on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2024. In these meetings she has been clear that those responsible should feel the full force of the law.

I am grateful to the police for their work in reassuring local residents and managing the situation on the ground.

## ■ Gender Based Violence

**Chris Vince:** [\[1402\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps the Government plans to take to tackle violence against women and girls.

**Jess Phillips:**

This Government will treat tackling violence against women and girls as a national emergency and will use every tool to target perpetrators and address the root causes of violence.

The scale of violence against women and girls in our country is intolerable, and we have set out our mission to halve it within a decade. Achieving this means overhauling every aspect of society's response to these devastating crimes.

This includes drastically improving the police and wider criminal justice response, including targeting the most prolific and harmful perpetrators to better protect victims and preventing reoffending.

Prevention and education are fundamental to our approach, and we will also tackle the root causes of these crimes, including supporting our education system to teach children about respectful and healthy relationships and consent.

**■ Money Laundering****Phil Brickell:****[1601]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the adequacy of the suspicious activity report programme.

**Dan Jarvis:**

Intelligence from Suspicious Activity Reports (SARs) enable law enforcement to identify, disrupt, and recover hundreds of millions of pounds which underpin serious and organised crime in the UK and disrupt criminals. The SARs Reform Programme was established to make several improvements, which have been delivered. These are:

- UK Financial Intelligence Unit (UKFIU) capacity uplift : An additional 74 officers for UKFIU (doubling capacity).
- UKFIU Feedback and Engagement : Provide higher quality feedback and increased engagement events to the Anti-Money Laundering regulated sector. In FY22/23, the UKFIU delivered c.575 products and events, and achieved positive satisfaction scores, with 95% (of over 800 respondents) finding the new products/events useful.
- Regional Organised Crime Units (ROCU) Uplift : The creation of a new national capability, uplifting 22 ROCU investigators, dedicated to SARs analysis.
- Defence Against Money Laundering (DAML) SARs Review : Legislative changes delivered through the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act (2023) have been implemented, designed to reduce the volume of low value (from a law enforcement effectiveness perspective) DAML SAR reports.
- IT Transformation : A new SARs Digital Service (SDS) is being implemented to replace the existing SARs IT system. The programme delivered the first release of the new Digital Service in March 2023, enabling the 14 largest SARs Reporters (primarily banking) to submit SARs in bulk through a new interface, and the

delivery of the new SARs Online Portal for the remaining reporting community to enable them to submit SARs (which 10,000 organisations have registered for). The National Crime Agency is continuing to develop and rollout the SARs Digital Service to the UKFIU and law enforcement over FY24/25 and FY25/26.

## ■ Visas: Families

**Rebecca Long Bailey:** [\[803\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of creating an emergency family reunion visa scheme for people affected by the conflict in Israel and Palestine.

**Seema Malhotra:**

Currently, those affected by the conflict in Israel and Palestine who wish to join family members in the UK can do so via the existing range of routes available.

Any application for a UK visa will be assessed against the requirements of the Immigration Rules. Immediate family members of British citizens and those settled in the UK who wish to come and live in the UK can apply under one of the existing family visa routes.

There are also routes available for dependants of those who are in the UK on a work or student route.

Individuals with protection status or settlement on a protection route may sponsor their partner or child (under 18), to join or stay with them in the UK, providing they formed part of the pre-flight family unit before the sponsor fled their country to seek protection.

When the visa application has been received consideration will be given to compelling, compassionate and exceptional circumstances.

**Sorcha Eastwood:** [\[846\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her policy is on changes to the level of the baseline minimum salary for family visas for spouses and partners.

**Seema Malhotra:**

The new Home Secretary will decide on the future of current Home Office policies in due course. Any changes will be announced to Parliament.

## ■ Visas: Skilled Workers

**Sorcha Eastwood:** [\[845\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her policy is on changes to the level of the baseline minimum salary for Skilled Worker visas.

**Sorcha Eastwood:** [\[847\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her policy is on whether social care workers should be able to bring their dependents to the UK on their visa.

**Seema Malhotra:**

The new Home Secretary will decide on the future of current Home Office policies in due course. Any changes will be announced to Parliament in the normal way.

**HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT****■ Birmingham City Council: Insolvency****Laurence Turner:**[\[1407\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 22 July 2024 to Question 216 on Birmingham City Council: Insolvency, whether (a) Ministers and (b) officials in her Department were informed that the decision would be made on 5 September 2023 prior to that notification being issued.

**Jim McMahon:**

Both officials and former Ministers in the Department were notified of the decision of Birmingham City Council to issue a Section 114 report after the report had been issued by the Council's Section 151 officer.

**■ Buildings: Solar Power****Daisy Cooper:**[\[831\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, by what date she intends to make it a requirement that all new homes and buildings should have solar panels as default except in defined cases; and by what date she will issue guidance as to those defined cases.

**Matthew Pennycook:**

As set out in our manifesto, the Government will take steps to ensure we are building more high-quality, well-designed and sustainable homes. We will publish our response to the Future Homes and Buildings Standards 2023 consultation in due course.

**■ Cornish Language****Ben Maguire:**[\[786\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if she will make it her policy to give the Cornish language protected status under the provisions of Articles 8-14 of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

**Alex Norris:**

The Government has received a request from Cornwall Council to extend the protection of the Cornish language from Part II to Part III of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages. The request is currently being considered and a formal response will be issued in due course.

**■ Fly-tipping**

**Deirdre Costigan:** [\[1412\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps she is taking to ensure local authorities are properly funded to tackle fly tipping.

**Jim McMahon:**

Future local authority funding decisions will be a matter for the next Spending Review and Local Government Finance Settlement. The department will work with local government leaders to ensure they are better able to fulfil their statutory duties.

**■ Green Belt**

**Mrs Kemi Badenoch:** [\[1319\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether (a) councils will be required to review their Local Plans in order to undertake Green Belt reviews and (b) Local Plans will be required to be updated after the Green Belt review through a public examination led by the Planning Inspectorate under proposed planning reforms.

**Matthew Pennycook:**

The Government is committed to delivering the biggest increase in social and affordable housebuilding in a generation and ensuring that every part of the country benefits from it. We will set out further details in due course.

**■ High Rise Flats: Insulation**

**Mrs Kemi Badenoch:** [\[815\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether she plans to speed up cladding remediation programmes.

**Alex Norris:**

The pace of remediation through Government funded schemes is not fast enough and we are committed to ensuring pace increases. We will continuously monitor the system, identify opportunities to increase speed, and intensify efforts to bring all remaining buildings into remediation schemes. We will address barriers within the system, including enforcing actions against uncooperative parties. We will empower regulators and local authorities to act, continue taking direct Government action, and consider new legislation as necessary.

**■ Housing: Construction**

**Mrs Kemi Badenoch:** [\[817\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent estimate she has made of the number of houses that will be built in 2024.

**Matthew Pennycook:**

I refer the Rt Hon Member to the answer I gave to Question UIN [586](#) on 22 July 2024.

**Mrs Kemi Badenoch:** [818]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether houses that were given planning permission under the previous Government but not yet built are included in her 1.5 million housebuilding target for this Parliament.

**Matthew Pennycook:**

I refer the Rt Hon Member to the answer I gave to Question UIN [586](#) on 22 July 2024.

**Mrs Kemi Badenoch:** [819]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many existing planning permissions there are where building has not yet started.

**Matthew Pennycook:**

I refer the Rt Hon Member to details on existing planning permissions and planning application statistics, which can be found at the following [link](#).

Please note that i) time lags in building can affect the number of homes built in a particular period; and ii) the methodology used in the source above cannot guarantee that all double counting of permissions is removed.

**Mrs Kemi Badenoch:** [820]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many houses will be constructed as part of the Affordable Housing Programme 2021 - 2026.

**Matthew Pennycook:**

The 2021-2026 Affordable Homes Programme was intended to deliver up to 180,000 affordable homes. The Government will publish an estimate of what it is likely to deliver in the near future.

**Mrs Kemi Badenoch:** [821]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what methodology her Department will use to set mandatory housing targets.

**Matthew Pennycook:**

The Government will set out proposed changes to national planning policy, including the current standard method for assessing local housing need, in the forthcoming National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) update.

## ■ Local Government Services: Rural Areas

**Helen Morgan:** [1378]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if she will ensure that the fair funding formula accounts for the increased cost of delivering services in rural areas.

**Jim McMahon:**

Future local authority funding decisions will be a matter for the next Spending Review and Local Government Finance Settlement. The department will work with local government leaders to ensure they are better able to fulfil their statutory duties.

**Local Government: Devolution****Mrs Kemi Badenoch:** [\[812\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to her Department's press release entitled Deputy Prime Minister kickstarts new devolution revolution to boost local power, published on 16 July 2024, how her Department defines local growth plans.

**Mrs Kemi Badenoch:** [\[816\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the press release entitled Deputy Prime Minister kickstarts new devolution revolution to boost local power, published on 16 July 2024, whether local growth plans will be put on a statutory footing.

**Jim McMahon:**

The Government has set out its intention to work with places to develop ambitious, long-term Local Growth Plans. Local Growth Plans will be delivered through partnership, and the department will write to places shortly to provide further detail on the approach to developing these Plans.

**Mrs Kemi Badenoch:** [\[813\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to her Department's press release entitled Deputy Prime Minister kickstarts new devolution revolution to boost local power, published on 16 July 2024, how she plans that the new partnership approach and scaling up of devolution will unlock economic growth and tackle regional inequality.

**Mrs Kemi Badenoch:** [\[814\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to her Department's press release entitled Deputy Prime Minister kickstarts new devolution revolution to boost local power, published on 16 July 2024, how she plans to assess the impact of the new partnership approach and scaling up devolution on unlocking economic growth and tackling regional inequality.

**Jim McMahon:**

The Government's ambition is for a new, stronger partnership between central and local Government, recognising that different parts of the country have different strengths, and it is local representatives that know their communities best.

We will work in partnership with communities, Mayors and local authorities to ensure that local areas have the tools they need to deliver local growth. Devolution is central to this mission, but only around half of the people in England currently benefit from these arrangements, and so we have asked more areas to come forward with



devolution proposals. We are also establishing a Council of Nations and Regions with First Ministers and Mayors of Combined Authorities in England, and will introduce Local Growth Plans for places to develop.

We will work with local areas to understand what works, and explore opportunities to improve alignment with the new Government's growth agenda, including through the devolution of further powers and function through a landmark English Devolution Bill which will seek to set a presumption of devolution by default.

## JUSTICE

### ■ Criminal Proceedings: Audio Recordings

**David Davis:**

[\[880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, for what reason Crown courts can refuse to release audio recordings of criminal hearings.

**Heidi Alexander:**

Access to audio recordings of proceedings in the Crown Court is at the discretion of the Court, subject to procedures and principles set out in the Criminal Procedure Rules and Criminal Practice Directions.

### ■ Marriage: Humanism

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[832\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of legally recognising humanist marriages.

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[833\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether her Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of accepting the recommendations of the report by the Law Commission on wedding law entitled Celebrating Marriage: A New Weddings Law, published on 19 July 2022.

**Alex Davies-Jones:**

We are aware that weddings are an important issue for humanists and that the Law Commission has made recommendations for wholesale change of weddings law in July 2022. We will take the time as a new Government to properly consider this issue. We will set out our next steps on our manifesto commitment to strengthen rights and protections for women in cohabitating couples in the near future.

**NORTHERN IRELAND****■ Members: Correspondence**

**Alex Burghart:** [\[1546\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, when he plans to reply to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Brentwood and Ongar of 18 July 2024 on the Court of Appeal judgment in the case of Geraldine Finucane v Secretary of State for Northern Ireland of 11 July 2024.

**Hilary Benn:**

I responded to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Brentwood and Ongar on 25 July 2024.

**■ Surveillance: Northern Ireland**

**Colum Eastwood:** [\[1584\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, with reference to figure 19.6 of the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office's annual report 2022, published on 26 March 2024, if he will hold discussions with the Department of Justice in Northern Ireland on the potential merits of launching a public inquiry on the alleged surveillance of journalists in Northern Ireland.

**Hilary Benn:**

Figure 19.6 of the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office's annual report 2022 refers to statistics for communications data authorisations involving members of a sensitive profession between 2018 and 2022. These are statistics for the whole of the UK, not specific to Northern Ireland.

Oversight of the use of Investigatory Powers is provided by the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office who ensure that such use is necessary and proportionate, and used in accordance with the law.

There are ongoing Investigatory Powers Tribunal proceedings in relation to the alleged surveillance of journalists in Northern Ireland. As such it would be inappropriate to comment further or to consider other routes of investigation until those proceedings have concluded.

**■ Water Charges: Northern Ireland**

**Jim Shannon:** [\[1273\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what discussions he has had with the Northern Ireland Executive on water charges in Northern Ireland.

**Hilary Benn:**

I have discussed with the First and deputy First Minister the urgent need to transform how public services are funded and delivered in Northern Ireland.

It is for the Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly to make decisions on how to sustainably fund public services in Northern Ireland within its Budget and to raise

revenue to support this. This Government is committed to supporting the Northern Ireland Executive to ensure better outcomes for citizens.

## SCIENCE, INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY

### ■ 4G: Standards

**Helen Morgan:**

[1589]

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what steps his Department plans to take to help improve 4G signal (a) partial not spots and (b) total not spots.

**Chris Bryant:**

The government is working in partnership with mobile network operators to deliver the Shared Rural Network, which will reduce both partial and total not spots and bring 4G coverage to 95% of UK landmass. Ofcom reports that 4G coverage currently stands at over 93%.

### ■ BioYorkshire

**Rachael Maskell:**

[804]

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what plans he has to meet with representatives from BioYorkshire.

**Feryal Clark:**

I welcome the representations from the University of York setting out the opportunities from BioYorkshire. Science and Technology is key for creating growth and prosperity across the UK. DSIT and UKRI continue to support BioYorkshire to explore opportunities for innovation-led growth in this cluster.

### ■ Broadband: North Shropshire

**Helen Morgan:**

[1592]

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, when he expects every household in North Shropshire constituency to have access to gigabit broadband.

**Chris Bryant:**

Over 72% of premises in the North Shropshire constituency can access a gigabit-capable (>1000 Mbps) broadband connection.

Project Gigabit will extend this gigabit coverage. Freedom Fibre is delivering a contract to upgrade over 12,000 additional premises in the region, including over 9,000 premises in the North Shropshire constituency. We expect the first of these premises in North Shropshire to be connected by the end of 2024 and the contract is due to be completed by 2026. We will also keep suppliers' commercial delivery plans under review and consider what else may be necessary to fulfil our ambition for gigabit coverage across the UK by 2030.

**■ Life Sciences: Government Assistance****Tim Roca:** [\[860\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what plans his Department has to support the life sciences sector (a) in the North West and (b) generally.

**Feryal Clark:**

The life sciences sector will play a crucial role in both kickstarting economic growth and building an NHS fit for the future. To support this potential, we will cement this sector's world-leading status. By ensuring the NHS works hand-in-hand with life sciences, research institutions and medical technology companies, we will drive the development of new treatments and help grow our industries across the UK.

**■ Mobile Broadband: Rural Areas****Helen Morgan:** [\[1591\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of mobile signal roaming in rural areas.

**Chris Bryant:**

Roaming already exists for 999 calls, as the Code of Practice for the Public Emergency Call Service requires that any call from a mobile phone will automatically roam onto another mobile network free-of-charge to make an emergency call if they have no signal from their own provider.

The Government is committed to improving rural coverage. The Shared Rural Network is set to increase 4G geographic coverage throughout the UK to 95% by the end of 2025. This will enable emergency calls in new areas and will reduce the digital divide between rural and urban areas of the UK, helping rural businesses and communities to thrive.

**TRANSPORT****■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Mr Clive Betts:** [\[1464\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what her planned timetable is for introducing new trains on the Midland Mainline between Sheffield and London.

**Simon Lightwood:**

Under East Midlands Railway's plan, the new Class 810 'Aurora' Bi-mode trains will commence passenger service operation during 2025, with phased introduction continuing into 2026.

**Mr Clive Betts:**

[\[1465\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if she will hold discussions with the metro mayors on the potential merits of electrifying the Midland Mainline.

**Lilian Greenwood:**

The Secretary of State is committed to working closely with metro mayors, and understands the important relationship between them and the Department. This commitment to collaboration includes on projects such as Midland Main Line electrification. Discussions on transport issues with regional and local leaders have already begun.

## ■ **Bus Services**

**Jess Asato:**

[\[735\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps her Department is taking to allow county councils to take control of their local bus services.

**Simon Lightwood:**

Buses are the most commonly used mode of public transport in Britain, and good local bus services are an essential part of prosperous and sustainable communities. The Government is determined to deliver better bus services, grow passenger numbers and drive opportunity to under-served regions. We have set out our plan to achieve this, centred around supporting local transport authorities to take back control of local bus services.

In order to give control back to local leaders, we will pass the Better Buses Bill and review existing guidance for local authorities. We want to make bus franchising quicker, easier and cheaper to deliver, for all types of local authority, as well as removing the existing ban on the creation of new municipal bus companies. We will refocus the Department to provide help and support to local authorities to make franchising – and other models where they are preferred locally – a success.

## ■ **Bus Services: Fares**

**Alistair Strathern:**

[\[1595\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the average cost of bus fares is in (a) Hitchin constituency, (b) Bedfordshire and (c) North Hertfordshire.

**Simon Lightwood:**

The information requested regarding the average cost of bus fares is not available. The Department produces quarterly bus fare statistics in the form of a local bus fares index. However, this data is not available specifically for (a) Hitchin constituency, (b) Bedfordshire and (c) North Hertfordshire.

**■ Bus Services: North East****Luke Akehurst:** [844]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans she has to improve the (a) reliability and (b) frequency of bus services in (i) County Durham and (ii) the North East in collaboration with the Mayor of the North East.

**Simon Lightwood:**

The government knows that Britain needs a modern transport network to help kickstart economic growth. Good local bus services are an essential part of prosperous and sustainable communities. As announced in the King's Speech, the government will pass the Better Buses Bill to put the power over local bus services back in the hands of local leaders right across England, to ensure networks can meet the needs to the communities who rely on them, including in County Durham and the North East.

We also plan to empower local transport authorities through reforming bus funding. By giving local leaders more control and flexibility over bus funding they can plan ahead to deliver their local transport priorities. The Department will work closely with local leaders and bus operators to deliver on the government's ambitions.

**■ Driving Licences: Health****Helen Morgan:** [1588]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if the DVLA will publish a comprehensive list of reportable medical conditions.

**Lilian Greenwood:**

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) publishes a comprehensive list of notifiable medical conditions on GOV.UK. The 'Assessing Fitness to Drive' guidance is intended for healthcare professionals and is available at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/assessing-fitness-to-drive-a-guide-for-medical-professionals](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/assessing-fitness-to-drive-a-guide-for-medical-professionals), while guidance for driving licence holders can be found at [www.gov.uk/health-conditions-and-driving](http://www.gov.uk/health-conditions-and-driving).

If a licence holder is unsure whether they need to notify the DVLA of their medical condition, or if it may impact safe driving, they should discuss it with their healthcare professional.

**■ Driving Tests: Hitchin****Alistair Strathern:** [1593]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the average waiting time was between booking and taking a driving test in Hitchin constituency in the latest period for which data is available; and how many people are waiting to take a test in that constituency.

**Lilian Greenwood:**

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency's (DVSA) priority is to reduce car practical driving test waiting times, whilst upholding road safety standards. To increase the

number of available test slots, it is conducting tests outside of regular hours, including at weekends and on public holidays, and buying back annual leave from driving examiners.

To increase the number of car driving test slots, the DVSA deployed eligible managers and administrative staff back on the front line to do driving tests from the beginning of October 2023 until the end of March 2024, which created over 145,000 additional test slots. Driving examiners from areas with lower waiting times continue to travel and test in those centres with longer waiting times. This is in addition to the DVSA recruiting additional examiners across the country into areas where waiting times are highest.

The DVSA is unable to calculate the waiting time between booking and taking a driving test.

The table below shows the June 2024 average waiting time, number of booked car practical driving tests, and available tests as of 22 July 2024 at the test centres that serve the constituency of Hitchin:

DTC	JUNE 2024 AVERAGE		TESTS AVAILABLE IN 24 WEEK BOOKING WINDOW
	WAITING TIME IN WEEKS	BOOKED TESTS	
Letchworth	16.5	1560	78
Stevenage	24	1043	53
Luton	12.5	2404	95

## ■ Motor Insurance: Fees and Charges

**Danny Beales:**

[\[1623\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if she will have discussions with the insurance industry on car insurance premiums.

**Lilian Greenwood:**

The Government is urgently exploring options to crack down on the spiralling cost of motor insurance and continues to engage with representatives of the motor insurance industry to understand the causes of increased premiums and identify potential solutions. We will announce the next steps in due course.

## ■ Railways

**Grahame Morris:**

[\[1482\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the rail network enhancements pipeline.

**Lilian Greenwood:**

The Rail Enhancements Portfolio has been managed in line with the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline policy since 2018. As part of this Government's refreshed approach to capital investment in the transport network, we expect to consider all aspects of our spending plans and principles to ensure that they deliver a unified system for railways; bringing together infrastructure with services for the benefit of passengers and the taxpayer.

**Railways: Hitchin****Alistair Strathern:**[\[1597\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether she plans to take steps to improve train services in Hitchin constituency.

**Simon Lightwood:**

Govia Thameslink Railway is introducing additional peak only services between King's Cross and Hitchin in December 2024. There is also a wider plan to increase peak time capacity on the route to King's Cross, which would benefit services out of Hitchin, however this is dependent on the future wider East Coast Mainline timetable recast.

Alongside this, Hitchin will benefit from the East Coast Digital Programme, a £1.8 billion investment in infrastructure, which will introduce digital signalling, improving punctuality and reliability of services, with the potential to further improve service frequencies, dependent on demand and business case.

**Roads: Chesterfield****Mr Toby Perkins:**[\[883\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether she has had discussions with Derbyshire County Council on a timetable for commencing investigations to ensure the viability of the proposed Chesterfield Staveley Regeneration route.

**Lilian Greenwood:**

I am grateful to the Honorable Member for his continued support for the scheme and I look forward to meeting with you to discuss it in the future if this would be beneficial to you. I can confirm that discussions on the viability of the proposed Chesterfield Regeneration route are ongoing between my officials and Derbyshire County Council. The timetable has yet to be confirmed on the commencement of the investigations; however, additional information has been submitted by Derbyshire council to help ministers with their considerations.

**Roads: Cramlington and Killingworth****Emma Foody:**[\[1108\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment she has made of the quality of road maintenance in Cramlington and Killingworth constituency.



**Lilian Greenwood:**

Maintenance of the local highway network within the constituency of Cramlington and Killingworth is shared between Northumberland County Council and North Tyneside Council. It is up to the respective highway authority to decide how best to maintain its network, based upon its local knowledge, circumstances and priorities, to fulfil its statutory duty under Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980.

The Department regularly publishes data about the condition and maintenance of roads by local authority and National Highways; this data can be found on gov.uk: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/road-condition-statistics-data-tables-rdc>.

The Department also publishes headline road condition data:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/road-conditions-in-england-to-march-2023/road-conditions-in-england-to-march-2023>.

**Roads: Hitchin****Alistair Strathern:****[1594]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps her Department is taking to fund road maintenance in Hitchin constituency.

**Lilian Greenwood:**

This Government takes the condition of local roads very seriously, and is committed to maintaining and renewing our road network as a priority; on which Ministers will say more in future.

Maintenance of the local highway network within Hertfordshire, including the constituency of Hitchin, is the responsibility of Hertfordshire County Council. For 2024/25, Hertfordshire County Council has been allocated over £ 25 million to help it maintain its local highway network.

Future funding beyond 2024/25 is a matter for the next Spending Review.

**Roads: Lincolnshire****Sir John Hayes:****[877]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps she is taking to improve road (a) maintenance and (b) conditions in (i) South Holland and the Deepings constituency and (ii) Lincolnshire.

**Lilian Greenwood:**

This Government takes the condition of local roads seriously and is committed to maintaining and renewing our road network as a priority, on which Ministers will say more in future.

Maintenance of the local highway network within Lincolnshire, including the constituency of South Holland and the Deepings, is the responsibility of Lincolnshire County Council. For 2024/25, Lincolnshire County Council has been allocated over

£43.6 million to help it maintain its local highway network. Future funding beyond 2024/25 is matter for the next Spending Review.

#### ■ Roads: Midlands

**Jacob Collier:** [840]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether she plans to provide funding for the A50/A500 corridor upgrade.

**Lilian Greenwood:**

Study work led by National Highways to improve the Uttoxeter section of the A50/A500 corridor is at an early stage of development. These proposals continue to be worked on as part of the pipeline of possible future enhancements to the strategic road network; and to be considered for funding in a future Road Investment Strategy.

#### ■ Roads: Nottinghamshire

**Michael Payne:** [R] [1078]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps she is taking to improve road (a) maintenance and (b) conditions in (i) Gedling constituency and (ii) Nottinghamshire.

**Lilian Greenwood:**

This Government takes the condition of local roads seriously and is committed to maintaining and renewing our road network as a priority, on which Ministers will say more in future.

Maintenance of the local highway network within Nottinghamshire, including the constituency of Gedling, is the responsibility of Nottinghamshire County Council. For 2024/25, Nottinghamshire County Council has been allocated over £20 million to help it maintain its local highway network. Future funding beyond 2024/25 is matter for the next Spending Review.

#### ■ Roads: Staffordshire

**Adam Jogee:** [1087]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if she will hold discussions with Staffordshire County Council on the condition of road surfaces in Newcastle-under-Lyme constituency; and if she will visit Newcastle-under-Lyme constituency to assess the condition of road surfaces.

**Lilian Greenwood:**

I welcome conversations with local authorities, including Staffordshire County Council, to better understand the challenges that they face with regards to maintenance of the local highway network. I look forward to receiving an invite and further details in due course.

## ■ Tankers: English Channel

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[1299\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of requiring that oil tankers that pass through the English Channel are adequately insured.

**Mike Kane:**

The Government recognises the importance of addressing the safety and security of vessels that transit through the English Channel, such as the possible environmental threat posed by oil tankers in the Russian 'shadow fleet'. At the recent European Political Community Summit, the UK secured agreement from 44 European countries and the European Union to work together to deter and disrupt exactly this type of dangerous activity posed by the 'shadow fleet'.

The Government will also consider further measures to deter the 'shadow fleet' from operating in the English Channel.

## ■ Transport: Hitchin

**Alistair Strathern:**

[\[1596\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent estimate her Department has made of the level of (a) car ownership, (b) bus usage (c) light rail usage, (d) train usage and (e) active travel in Hitchin constituency.

**Simon Lightwood:**

The information requested regarding (a) car ownership, (b) bus usage (c) light rail usage, (d) train usage and (e) active travel usage in Hitchin constituency is not available. Information for the Hertfordshire local authority is given below, where available. Alternative data for the former Hitchin and Harpenden Constituency is also offered where relevant.

### **Car ownership**

According to the Department's vehicle statistics, there were 56,667 licensed cars as at end March 2024 in the former Hitchin and Harpenden Constituency.

### **Bus usage**

According to the Department's annual bus statistics, in the year ending March 2023 there were 20.8 million local bus journeys taken in Hertfordshire.

### **Train usage**

According to Office of Rail and Road statistics, in the year ending March 2023 there were 17.8 million passenger rail journeys within East of England that started or ended in Bedfordshire or Hertfordshire. There were also 52.6 million journeys that started or ended in Bedfordshire or Hertfordshire that ended or started from regions other than the East of England.

### **Active travel usage**

According to the Department's annual walking and cycling statistics, between November 2021 and November 2022, 78.2% of adults walked or cycled at least once per week in North Hertfordshire (Non-Metropolitan District) and 73.8% of adults walked or cycled at least once per week in Hertfordshire (County).

## TREASURY

### ■ Bank Services

**Lewis Cocking:** [\[1431\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps her Department is taking to help preserve access to banking on high streets.

**Tulip Siddiq:**

The Government recognises the importance of banking to communities and high streets and has committed to work closely with banks to roll out 350 banking hubs over the next five years. These will provide individuals and businesses up and down the country with critical cash and banking services.

So far, 147 banking hubs have been recommended and Cash Access UK, the industry body responsible for banking hub deployment, expects 100 banking hubs to be open before the end of the year.

While not the same as a bank branch, alternative options to access everyday banking services can also include telephone banking, through digital means such as mobile or online banking, and via one of the UK's 11,500 Post Office branches.

### ■ Banking Hubs

**Michael Payne:** [\[1076\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what her planned timetable is for introducing banking hubs in communities affected by bank branch closures.

**Tulip Siddiq:**

The Government recognises the importance of banking to communities and high streets and has committed to work closely with banks to roll out 350 banking hubs over the next five years.

So far, 147 banking hubs have been recommended and Cash Access UK, the industry body responsible for banking hub deployment, expects 100 banking hubs to be open before the end of the year. These will provide individuals and businesses up and down the country with critical cash and banking services.

While not the same as a bank branch, alternative options to access everyday banking services can also include telephone banking, through digital means such as mobile or online banking, and via one of the UK's 11,500 Post Office branches.

## ■ **Childcare: Applications**

**Mr Luke Charters:**

[851]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment her Department has made on the effectiveness of the system for applying for tax-free childcare.

**Darren Jones:**

Tax-Free Childcare (TFC) provides financial support for eligible working parents in paying their childcare costs. For every £8 parents pay into their childcare account, the government adds £2.

It takes around 20 minutes for an eligible customer to open an online account. Accounts can be opened at any time of the year and can be used straight away. Money can be deposited at any time and used when needed. Any unused money that is deposited can be simply withdrawn at any time.

Approved or registered childcare providers can sign up online to accept TFC. The sign-up process takes around 10 minutes.

## ■ **Economic Growth**

**Laura Trott:**

[1369]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to her speech of 8 July 2024, whether estimates of growth were based on assumptions made by (a) special advisers and (b) Ministers; and if she will publish assumptions provided to officials to undertake those estimates.

**Darren Jones:**

The Chancellor said that, had the UK economy grown at the average rate of OECD economies over the fourteen years from 2010, it would be £143.3 billion larger. This is a comparison based on outturn data, not requiring assumptions. A methodological note setting out the data sources and analytical methods used to estimate comparative growth rates and projections was published as part of the [press notice](#) released alongside the Chancellor's speech.

## ■ **Northern Rock: Nationalisation**

**Sir John Hayes:**

[869]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if she will take steps to help compensate small shareholders impacted by the nationalisation of Northern Rock PLC.

**Sir John Hayes:**

[870]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if she will meet representatives of the Northern Rock Shareholder Action Group.

**Tulip Siddiq:**

An independent valuer determined that Northern Rock shares were of no value immediately prior to the company being taken into public ownership, and therefore no compensation was due. This independent valuation was upheld in the both the Upper

Tribunal in 2011 and the Court of Appeal in 2013. HM Treasury considers this matter settled.

## ■ Public Expenditure

**Nigel Huddleston:** [\[1284\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate she has made of the annual budget for the proposed Office for Value for Money; whether that body will be established in statute; and how its Board will be appointed.

**Darren Jones:**

As the Chancellor laid before the House in her speech, the government has established a new Office of Value for Money, with an immediate focus on identifying areas where we can reduce, stop, or improve the value of spending. The chair of the office will report directly to the Chancellor and Chief Secretary to the Treasury who will be appointed in due course.

The office will not be established in statute but will sit within HM Treasury.

Existing departmental resources will be reprioritised to fulfil the needs of the office where possible.

## ■ Public Finance

**Nigel Huddleston:** [\[1282\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to her speech of 8 July 2024, whether the Office for Budget Responsibility has played a role in her review of public finances.

**Darren Jones:**

The Chancellor presented to Parliament today an assessment of the state of our spending inheritance. The Chancellor confirmed the Budget will be held on the 30th October, alongside a full and independent forecast from the Office for Budget Responsibility.

**Nigel Huddleston:** [\[1283\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on how many occasions she had transition talks with officials in her Department in the last Parliament; and whether she had discussions on economic forecasts pertaining to the public finances.

**Darren Jones:**

The process for access talks is set out in the Cabinet Manual. Access talks are initiated with permission from the Prime Minister of the day and are confidential.

It is a long-established precedent that information about the discussions that have taken place between Cabinet ministers and officials is not shared publicly.

**Laura Trott:** [\[1370\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to her speech of 8 July 2024, whether her review of public finances has been based on assumptions made by (a)

special advisers and (b) Ministers; and if she will publish any such assumptions provided to officials to undertake that review.

**Darren Jones:**

The Chancellor has made a statement to Parliament on 29 July. The details of the spending audit are published in the Command Paper, 'Fixing the foundations'.

**Laura Trott:**

[\[1628\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether she has had access to papers produced (a) for and (b) by the previous Administration in the course of her review of public finances.

**Darren Jones:**

The guidance on access to papers of a previous administration is set out in the Cabinet Manual and the Directory of Civil Service Guidance and has been followed.

■ **Tax Avoidance**

**Peter Swallow:**

[\[1608\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether she has (a) received representations from and (b) held discussions with campaigners on the loan charge.

**James Murray:**

I know that the loan charge is a very important matter for many members and their constituents. Within my first two weeks in office, I had my first meeting with campaigners to discuss the loan charge. The Chancellor and I have been considering this matter since taking office and will provide an update in due course.

■ **Whisky: Scotland**

**Mr Alistair Carmichael:**

[\[1467\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment she has made of the impact of the increase in alcohol duty for spirits introduced in 2023 on the Scotch whisky industry.

**James Murray:**

On 1 August 2023, spirits duty rates were increased in line with inflation, after 6 years of consecutive freezes. Duty is currently frozen until 1 February 2025.

The Government is closely monitoring the impact of the recent reforms and rates that took effect on 1 August 2023.

The Chancellor makes decisions on tax policy at fiscal events.

**WORK AND PENSIONS****■ Convention on the Rights of Persons With Disabilities****Alex Easton:****[1131]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she is taking steps to incorporate the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in (a) policy and (b) legislation.

**Sir Stephen Timms:**

The rights of disabled people under this Convention are largely reflected in domestic policies and legislation, including the Equality Act 2010 in England, Scotland and Wales, and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 in Northern Ireland.

We are committed to championing the rights of disabled people. Our Equality (Race and Disability) Bill will enshrine in law the full right to equal pay for disabled people, including disability pay gap reporting for large employers. Additionally our Employment Rights Bill will support people - including disabled people - to access flexible working and break down barriers to opportunity.

**■ Social Security Benefits: Disability****Cat Smith:****[1285]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when she plans to publish her Department's response to the consultation entitled Modernising support for independent living: the health and disability green paper, published in April 2024.

**Sir Stephen Timms:**

The consultation on the Modernising Support Green Paper closed on Monday 22 July. Over 16,000 responses have been received and we will review these responses.

The proposals in this Green Paper were developed by the previous government. We will be considering our own approach to social security in due course.



## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

### BUSINESS AND TRADE

#### ■ Free Trade Agreement Negotiations Update

**Secretary of State for Department for Business and Trade (Jonathan Reynolds):**  
[\[HCWS28\]](#)

The UK is the world's 4<sup>th</sup> largest exporter with exports worth £855 billion. British businesses have unique strengths which are admired around the world.

This Government is committed to developing a trade strategy that will drive economic growth. Our approach will be underpinned by rigorous economic and geopolitical analysis, and will align with our industrial strategy, support our net zero ambitions and enhance our economic security. The strategy will be critical to forging a new partnership between an active state and dynamic open markets, both in the UK and overseas. It will also reflect our ambition to improve the UK's trade and investment relationship with the EU.

In developing our trade strategy, we are clear FTAs – while not the only tool – are an important lever for driving growth.

That's why today I am announcing our intention to deliver the UK's Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations programme, starting with the Gulf Co-operation Council, India, Israel, Republic of Korea, Switzerland and Turkey. The Government is also committed to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), ensuring UK businesses can take full advantage of the deal when it enters into force. I will be working with my officials to ensure our FTA programme delivers this Government's wider international trade and investment priorities, and puts our growth mission at its heart. We are committed to using every lever available to deliver growth.

We are now working across government to get negotiators back into the room with counterparts as soon as possible. In line with this, I have written to international partners signaling our intentions and I expect the first discussions to take place during the Autumn.

We will keep Parliament fully updated as the trade strategy and trade negotiations progress.

### CABINET OFFICE

#### ■ Civil Service Update

**Parliamentary Secretary for the Cabinet Office (Georgia Gould):** [\[HCWS33\]](#)

I am today announcing the Government's decision to accept the recommendations of the Senior Salaries Review Body (SSRB) on pay for the senior civil service (SCS) for 2024-25.

The Government received the SSRB's 2024 report on 17 June 2024. This is being laid in Parliament today and published on gov.uk.

I am grateful to the interim chair and members for their report. The Government greatly values the independent expertise and insight of the SSRB and is accepting in full its recommendations on SCS headline pay for the 2024-25 pay round.

This year, the SSRB has recommended:

That all members of the senior civil service should receive a 5 per cent consolidated increase to base pay from 1 April 2024; and

Setting the following pay ranges from 1 April 2024, based on increases to the minima of £1,000 for SCS1 to SCS3, and retaining the existing maxima:

SCS pay band 1: £76,000 to £117,800.

SCS pay band 2: £98,000 to £162,500.

SCS pay band 3: £128,000 to £208,100.

**In reaching this decision, the Government has very carefully considered the advice and justifications provided by the independent SSRB. This year's award will help us to continue to attract, retain and develop the very best senior talent for government and strikes fairness with an average 5 per cent pay award for delegated grades below the SCS.**

## DEFENCE

### ■ Armed Forces Update

**Secretary of State for Defence (John Healey):**

[\[HCWS37\]](#)

I am today announcing the Government's decision on pay for the Armed Forces for 2024-25.

Our Armed Forces are vital to protecting the nation, supporting our allies, and meeting operational commitments. The Government recognises that our Service personnel make extraordinary sacrifices as they continue to work tirelessly at home and abroad; and we are proud of their professionalism and bravery.

These are serious times – with war in Europe, conflict in the Middle East, growing Russian aggression, increasing global threats. It is more important than ever that we deliver an attractive and affordable offer to our Armed Forces. But this Government has inherited significant budget and workforce challenges while a crisis in recruitment, and cost of living pressures continue to impact Service Personnel and their families.

This Government is committed to renewing the nation's contract with our service men and women. That's why it is even more important than ever that we are investing in our people.

We have already taken steps to support our Armed Forces personnel. The Prime Minister launched a Strategic Defence Review (SDR) to place people at the heart of future

defence plans, affirming the Government's commitment to making "*sure our hollowed out armed forces are bolstered and respected*". In the recent King's Speech, the Government also announced an Armed Forces Commissioner Bill to establish an independent champion to improve service life for personnel and their families.

Along with various forms of support, accommodation, and pensions, pay plays a vital role in rewarding our people for the work they do. To recognise the commitment and service of our Armed Forces personnel, we are announcing today that we will be accepting in full the 2024 Pay Award recommendations made by the independent Armed Forces' Pay Review Body (AFPRB) and Senior Salaries Review Body (SSRB). This year's award provides a targeted and significant pay uplift for new recruits alongside a large headline increase of **6%**.

This Government has prioritised our Service men and women, despite the significant affordability challenges and scale of fiscal inheritance we have inherited – as outlined by the Chancellor.

We continue to appreciate and value the AFPRB's and SSRB's expert advice and insight and the contribution they make on behalf of Service personnel. The AFPRB report has been laid before the House today and published on GOV.UK. The SSRB 2024 report, which considers pay for our senior military of two-star rank and above, has been laid today by my colleagues in the Cabinet Office.

Today's award, which will benefit the whole of the Armed Forces, will help to ensure that we recruit and retain the high calibre of people that we need to keep our country safe. It is an important step in making Britain more secure at home and strong abroad.

The Recommendations:

The SSRB has recommended that all members of the senior military (two-star rank and above), should receive a **5%** consolidated increase to base pay. They have also recommended no change to the current pay differential arrangements for senior Medical and Dental Officers. **The Government is accepting these recommendations in full.**

The AFPRB's main pay recommendation was for a **6%** pay award to members of their remit group at pay point OR2-04 and above from 1 April 2024; that the rates of base pay at pay points OR2-02 and OR2-03 increase to £25,864 from 1 April 2024, which equates to a **6%** uplift on 1 April 2023 rates; that the rates of base pay at pay point OR2-01 remain at £25,200 as implemented from 1 April 2024, a **7.25%** increase on 1 April 2023 rates; and that the rate of Initial Pay be increased to £25,200 from 1 April 2024. **The Government is accepting these recommendations in full.**

The AFPRB has also recommended rises and changes to other targeted forms of remuneration, and increases to accommodation charges, **which have all been accepted**. Where applicable, these rate changes will also be backdated to 1 April 2024.

Accepting these recommendations, represents an annual increase of c.£2,800 in the nominal 'average' salary in the Armed Forces as well as an annual increase of c.£1,880 in the starting salary for an officer. It also ensures that our most junior sailors, soldiers and aviators continue to receive a living wage and brings the starting salary in our Armed

Forces into line with the National Living Wage for the first time, making it more attractive to a wider range of potential recruits to help address recruitment challenges:

- The starting rate of pay for Other Ranks after initial training increased to £25,200 on 1 April 2024 to ensure that they received National Living Wage increases at the same time as other public sector workforces and provided a pay rise of c.£1,700 or 7.25% for around 6,700 personnel.
- New recruits are currently paid a new entry rate for the six months or so they spend in initial training. As a result of this award, this rate will also increase to £25,200 from 1 April 2024.

The cost of this pay award will be funded through reprioritisation and savings measures, including savings generated by reducing spend on consultancy. HM Treasury have been clear that the Government's fiscal plans will be set out at the Budget.

The complete recommendations of the AFPRB for Pay Round 2024 are as follows:

#### **Main pay award**

- Recommendation 1: That rates of base pay increase by 6% for members of their remit group at pay point OR2-04 and above from 1 April 2024.
- Recommendation 2: That rates of base pay for members of their remit group at pay point OR2-01 remain at £25,200, as already implemented from 1 April 2024, a 7.25% increase on 1 April 2023 rates.
- Recommendation 3: That rates of base pay for members of their remit group at pay points OR2-02 and OR2-03 increase to £25,864 from 1 April 2024. This equates to a 6% uplift on 1 April 2023 rates.
- Recommendation 4 : That the rate of Initial Pay be increased to £25,200 from 1 April 2024.

#### **Medical and Dental Officers.**

- Recommendation 5 : The accredited Medical and Dental Officer pay scales be increased by an additional three levels, up to increment level 35.
- Recommendation 6: The removal of the policy bar to incremental progression at level ten on the non-accredited pay scale for OF3 Medical and Dental Officers.
- Recommendation 7: That rates of base pay should increase by 6% for all ranks within the Medical and Dental Officer cadre from 1 April 2024.
- Recommendation 8 : That the value of Defence Clinical Impact Awards should increase by 6% from 1 April 2024.
- Recommendation 9: Rates of Trainer Pay should increase by 6% from 1 April 2024.

**UK Special Forces.**

- Recommendation 10 : Agreed in principle to the replacement of specified Special Forces' Recruitment and Retention Payments with Special Forces Supplement Pay effective from 1 April 2026.

**Submarine Remuneration Review.**

- Recommendation 11: That 'Submarine Pay' should replace Recruitment and Retention Pay (Submarine) and the Submarine Golden Hello with transition commencing from 1 April 2026.
- Recommendation 12: That 'Nuclear Skills Pay' should replace Recruitment and Retention Pay (Nuclear Propulsion), Recruitment and Retention Pay (Weapon Engineer Submarine) and Recruitment and Retention Pay (Engineer Officers Supplement) with transition commencing from 1 April 2025.
- Recommendation 13 : That a Submarine Environmental Allowance should replace Recruitment and Retention Pay (Submarine Supplement) with transition commencing 1 July 2024.
- Recommendation 14: That a Retention Payment of £25,000 should be payable between eight and twelve years' qualification as a Submariner with effect from 1 April 2025.

**Defence Aircrew Remuneration Review.**

- Recommendation 15: Agreed to the implementation of the Ministry of Defence's pay proposals for aircrew with effect from 1 April 2025. These proposals comprise: Three Aircrew Professional Pay Spines; Aircrew Supplements; Specialist Skill Recognition; and the 'Box Option'.

**Unified Career Management Special Intelligence.**

- Recommendation 16: The introduction of a new Special Intelligence skills-based payment for Unified Career Management Special Intelligence cadre personnel.

**Recruitment and Retention Payments.**

- Recommendation 15 : That all rates of Recruitment and Retention Payments, except (Special Intelligence), should increase by 6% from 1 April 2024. The rates of Recruitment and Retention Payment (Special Intelligence) remain unchanged.

**Volunteer Reserves Training Bounty.**

- Recommendation 16 : That rates of the Volunteer Reserves Training Bounty should increase by 6% from 1 April 2024.

**Compensatory Allowances.**

- Recommendation 19 : That all rates of compensatory allowances should increase by 6% from 1 April 2024.

**Accommodation charges.**

- Recommendation 20 : That Service Families Accommodation Combined Accommodation Assessment Band A charges should increase by 6% from 1 April 2024. This will affect the rents of lower bands differently, as they are set in descending increments of 10% of the Band A rate.
- Recommendation 21 : That furniture charges (for all Service Families Accommodation types) should increase by 2.4% (in line with the Consumer Price Index furniture and furnishing element as at November 2023) from 1 April 2024.
- Recommendation 22 : That single Living Accommodation rental charges for Grade 1 should increase by 6% from 1 April 2024, and increases of 4% to Grade 2, 2% to Grade 3 and no increase to Grade 4 accommodation.

**Recommendation 23** : That, from 1 April 2024, charges for standard garages and carports should increase by 6%, with no increase for substandard garages and substandard carports.

**EDUCATION****■ Teachers Update**

**Secretary of State for Education and Minister for Women and Equalities (Bridget Phillipson):** [\[HCWS35\]](#)

This government is committed to delivering the best life chances for all children and young people. But we can only achieve our goal by working in partnership with our wonderful teachers. They have guided learners through turbulent times, and I value their expertise, dedication and experience. I am pleased to be able to share an update about teachers and leaders in our schools.

I am today announcing that we are accepting in full the independent School Teachers' Review Body's (STRB) recommendations for 2024/25, implementing a substantial pay award for school teachers and leaders of 5.5% from September. This award will apply to maintained schools across all pay points and allowances, and in practice, will also be implemented in many academies at their discretion. I want to thank the STRB members for their careful consideration of the evidence presented to them.

I am also pleased to confirm that this award will be fully funded at a national level. We are providing schools with almost £1.1 billion in additional funding in financial year 2024-25 to support them with overall costs. This matches what we have calculated is needed to fully fund, at a national level, the teacher pay award and the support staff pay offer in financial year 2024-25, over and above the available headroom in schools' existing budgets. We recognise that the picture will be different for individual schools. We are also providing an additional £97 million for schools delivering post-16 education (£63 million) and early years (£34 million) provision. Taken together, this is an increase of almost £1.2 billion. The wider fiscal context means that this was not an easy decision, but it is the right one,

and will be another important step in resetting the relationship between the government and teaching profession.

We will deliver the almost £1.1 billion for schools through the new Core Schools Budget Grant (CSBG), providing £945 million for mainstream schools, £140 million for high needs, and £11 million for centrally employed teachers. This means that the core schools budget, which includes the core revenue funding for schools and high needs, will total over £61.8 billion in 2024-25.

To help schools understand how much funding they can expect through the CSBG, we have published mainstream and high needs rates. We have also provided a calculator tool at the 'Core Schools Budget Grant' pages on Gov.uk so that mainstream schools can estimate their grant funding.

We are aware that the full impact of the teacher pay award hits across financial years 2024-25 and 2025-26. The CSBG for 2024-25, announced today, covers the financial year 2024-25 portion of the award. We want to reassure schools that we will be taking into account the impact of the full year's costs of the teacher pay award on schools when considering 2025-26 budgets.

We are also taking some early steps to improve the experience of being a teacher in our schools. In addition to the pay award, we will be making some changes to school teachers' terms and conditions to address some immediate issues, as part of our broader ambition to make work pay and ensure a more productive workforce. This includes removing the requirement for schools to use Performance Related Pay to reduce the workload burdens that this can have on some schools. We will be publishing updated guidance on appraisals, capability and pay today to support those schools that choose not to use performance related pay to inform their pay progression decisions. We will also clarify the position on Planning, Preparation and Assessment time, so schools are clear that teachers can use this time at home to provide greater flexibility for teachers.

Following delays caused by the general election, we have moved swiftly to respond to the STRB's recommendation and give schools the clarity they need, including over their budgets, which we have done by fully funding the pay award for teachers and support staff at a national level, despite the challenging state of public finances. We understand the timings of the pay round have caused significant issues for schools in recent years. We will prioritise ensuring the pay round works better for schools under our government, working across government, the STRB, unions, and the wider sector including establishing the new School Support Staff Negotiating Body (SSSNB).

Looking forward, this government will work with the sector to deliver our pledge to recruit 6,500 additional teachers across schools and colleges to raise standards for children and young people, and deliver our mission to break down the barriers to opportunity at every stage.

Unions, employers, and teachers have made clear in my first weeks in office the importance of a fair and fully funded award for school teachers, leaders and support staff. I hope that this year's pay award, funding position, and accompanying announcements,

will start to build that positive and productive partnership, resetting the relationship between government and the teaching profession.

However, we should not take for granted the substantial financial challenges this government has faced to be able to find this new funding. As the Chancellor has said, the fiscal context means that this has been a tough process, but this decision will help schools facing recruitment and retention challenges. However, this pay award is the right thing to do, to improve competitiveness of teacher pay, including against the private sector. This is the start of the process of reform and renewal of our public services.

### **STRB Process**

The 34<sup>th</sup> report of the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) is being published today. Its recommendations cover the remit issued in December 2023 by the Conservative Government, regarding the pay awards for teachers for the next academic year that is due to be implemented from September 2024. The report will be presented to Parliament and published on Gov.uk. I will place a copy of this report in the libraries of both houses.

The STRB were asked to make recommendations which assessed the adjustments that should be made to the salaries and allowances of classroom teachers, unqualified teachers, and school leaders in 2024/25. The previous Government asked the STRB to consider the exceptional nature of previous pay awards, the restrained fiscal context, and the concept of targeted remuneration.

The Department for Education will now write to all statutory consultees of the STRB to invite them to contribute to a consultation on the Government's response to these recommendations and on a revised School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document and Pay Order. The consultation will last for ten weeks, and the pay award will be backdated to September.

### **Recommendations and Response**

For 2024/25, the STRB recommended increases to teachers' pay of 5.5% at all grades, and a 5.5% increase to all allowance ranges. The Government has announced that it is accepting these recommendations in full.

The STRB also gave their observations on broader structural issues relating to teachers' pay and conditions. Department for Education officials will now consider these observations in due course.

### **Scope**

This pay award applies to all teachers and leaders in maintained schools.

Non-maintained schools, including free schools and academies, as usual, have the freedom to set their own pay policies. Such schools are therefore not obliged to follow the statutory arrangements set out in the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document although they may still choose to do so if they wish.



**FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE****■ 0.7 per cent of GNI on ODA target 2023**

**Minister of State for Development (Anneliese Dodds):**

[\[HCWS39\]](#)

The FCDO's Annual Report and Accounts 2023-24, published today, reports that in 2023, on a provisional basis, the United Kingdom did not meet its target to spend the equivalent of 0.7 per cent of Gross National Income (GNI) on Official Development Assistance (ODA).

The International Development (Official Development Assistance Target) Act 2015 ("the 2015 Act") envisages situations in which a departure from meeting the target of spending 0.7 per cent of GNI on ODA may be necessary: for example, in response to "fiscal circumstances and, in particular, the likely impact of meeting the target on taxation, public spending and public borrowing". The previous Government reduced the ODA budget to around 0.5 per cent of GNI from 2021.

This Government is committed to restoring ODA spending at the level of 0.7 per cent of GNI as soon as fiscal circumstances allow. The Government will set out its approach to the House in due course.

As required by section 2 of the 2015 Act, an Unnumbered Act Paper has been laid before Parliament and is in the same terms as this statement.

**HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE****■ Death Certification Reform and the Introduction of Medical Examiners**

**Parliamentary Under-Secretary (Department of Health and Social Care) (Andrew Gwynne):**

[\[HCWS31\]](#)

My Hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary (Department of Health and Social Care) (Baroness Merron) has made the following Written Statement:

I wish to inform the House of the Government's plan to continue with the reform to death certification and introduce a statutory medical examiner system on 9 September 2024. By law, all deaths will become subject to either a medical examiner's scrutiny or a coroner's investigation. The changes will put the existing medical examiner system's obligations, duties and responsibilities on a statutory footing. Regulations were laid on 15 April 2024 including the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death Regulations, the Medical Examiners Regulations and the National Medical Examiner (Additional Functions) Regulations and will come into force on 9 September 2024.

The changes will put the bereaved at the centre by providing an opportunity for them to raise questions or concerns with a senior doctor not involved in the care of the deceased. This will improve practice and communication, support the right deaths being referred to coroners for further investigation and help deter poor practice and criminal activity.

The introduction of medical examiners is part of a broader set of reforms to death certification, coronial and registration processes. We are working closely across

Government to ensure we are supporting the professions involved with relevant communications and guidance. This will be published on 9 September when the reforms come into force.

## HOME OFFICE

### ■ National Crime Agency Workforce Update

**The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Yvette Cooper):** [\[HCWS34\]](#)

I am today announcing the government's decision on pay for the National Crime Agency (NCA) for 2024/25.

The government received the NCA Remuneration Review Body (NCARRB) tenth report on pay for NCA officers designated with operational powers at grades lower than Deputy Director for the NCA on 20 June 2024. This will be laid before Parliament today and published on Gov.uk.

I would like to thank the Chair and members of the Review Body for their work on gathering evidence from the NCA, the Home Office, HM Treasury, and the Trade Unions, resulting in their detailed, comprehensive report. The Government values the independent expertise and insight of NCARRB and takes on board the useful advice and principles set out in response to my predecessor's remit letter of 20 December 2023.

This Government is committed to supporting the NCA in its fight against serious and organised crime (SOC). As leader of the SOC Law Enforcement system, disrupting and dismantling the most harmful organised crime groups, a strengthened NCA needs to be able to set clear strategic and operational direction and develop shared capabilities to drive efficiencies. A strong pay framework is vital to the NCA being able to deliver this role and maintaining its operational performance.

The transformation of the NCA is vital to the Agency's ability in tackling the rapidly evolving and complex SOC threats currently being faced. Part of this transformation includes empowering the Agency's ability to attract, recruit and retain the skilled workforce it needs, particularly those with technological and specialist skills, e.g. – forensic scientists and cyber security experts.

The recommendations for 2024/25 are as follows:

1. A redesign of the Agency's job architecture and an evaluation of all roles to consider which grades and posts are comparable to police officers and which are comparable to the civil service, police staff or the private sector.
1. A consolidated pay award of 5% for all NCA officers' Grades 1-6. The spot rates for Grades 1 to 5 and the minima and maxima of the standard pay ranges for Grades 1 to 6 should be raised by 5%.
1. A 5% increase to the London and South-East Weighting Allowance.

1. A review of the allowances of NCA officers in Northern Ireland, with a view to those NCA officers who are subject to similar risks to PSNI officers receiving the same allowance as PSNI officers.

After careful consideration, I have decided to take the following approach:

- Fully accept recommendations two and three : This headline 5% award and associated location allowance uplift will support and underpin the NCA's ambition to recruit and retain the skilled workforce it requires.
- Partially accept recommendations one and four : Whilst I am supportive of the central premise of these recommendations, namely reform of the existing pay structure within the NCA, measures are already underway to develop a set of comprehensive proposals which the government will seek to implement in a timely fashion.

In reaching these decisions, I have given due consideration to a number of factors including the value NCA officers give to the public by protecting them against the threat of serious and organised crime, affordability, and delivering value for the taxpaying public.

The Government endeavours to balance the need to ensure fair pay for public sector workers with protecting funding for frontline services and ensuring affordability for taxpayers. This award represents a significant increase, with this year's 5% boost building on last year's increase of 7%. The award will be funded within the NCA's existing budget, and I am confident it will greatly support the Agency's efforts to eradicate the most dangerous organised crime groups operating within and against the UK.

## ■ Police Workforce Update

**The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Yvette Cooper):** [\[HCWS36\]](#)

The tenth report of the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) was published today. The Body considered the pay and allowances for police officers up to and including the chief superintending ranks in England and Wales. The 46<sup>th</sup> report of Senior Salaries Review Body (SSRB) was also published and made recommendations on the pay and allowances for the chief police officer ranks in England and Wales. I am grateful to the Chairs and members for their reports and recommendations.

This Government values the vital contribution of police officers across the country who work tirelessly to keep us safe every single day.

Both the PRRB and SSRB recommended a consolidated increase of 4.75% to all police officer ranks and pay points with effect from 1 September 2024. The Government is accepting the recommendation in full. The Home Office will provide £175m additional funding in 2024-25 to forces to help with the cost of the pay increase.

While the recommendation for a consolidated award of 4.75% is significantly above what had been budgeted for in the 2021 Spending Review, it is right that we accept it in full. Police officers have a crucial role to play in delivering the Government's manifesto commitments to make Britain's streets safe and increase public visibility through neighbourhood policing.

The PRRB also recommended that London Weighting should increase by 4.75%; that the On-call Allowance should be increased from £20 to £25; and that the Dog Handlers' Allowance should be updated by 4.75% and the additional rate for officers with more than one dog be raised from 25% to 50% of the rate for the first dog. The SSRB recommended that the power of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) to vary a Chief Constable's starting pay should be withdrawn. The Government is accepting these recommendations in full and they will take effect on 1 September 2024.

The PRRB recommended that the chief officer of police in each force should be given the discretion to set the starting salary for new constables at either pay point 1 or pay point 2 on the constables' pay scale. This recommendation has been accepted, but implementation will be subject to detailed proposals from the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) on the circumstances in which this discretion should be used, along with transition arrangements for those constables on pay point 1, to inform amendments to the Police Regulations 2003.

The PRRB also recommended the Commissioners of the Metropolitan Police Service and City of London Police be given further discretion to set the starting salaries of new constables at pay point 3 on the constables' pay scale; and that this additional flexibility should be limited to a period of two years and be reviewed after one year. This recommendation has not been accepted. Instead, London Allowance for officers appointed on or after 1 September 1994 will be increased by £1,250. Implementation of this increase will be synchronised alongside the wider changes to constable starting salaries.

The PRRB considered annual leave entitlements for officers in the federated ranks and recommended the time it takes to reach the maximum entitlement of 30 days should be reduced from 20 to 10 years, with effect from 1 April 2025 and phased in over three years. This recommendation has been accepted, subject to the submission of a satisfactory Equality Impact Assessment by the NPCC to the Home Office. The PRRB further recommended that from September 2024, annual leave entitlement for new entrants should be increased from 22 to 25 days. This recommended has been accepted but with implementation taking effect on 1 April 2025.

The Government welcomes the PRRB's recommendations that the Home Office, NPCC and APCC work together to undertake a comprehensive review of police remuneration, in order to produce a costed plan in preparation for the next Spending Review; and that as part of this, allowances in the NPCC's schedule for review should be reviewed in their entirety in 2024-25. These recommendations will be subject to further discussions but must be aligned to a police workforce strategy.

## ■ UK response to the implementation of the European Entry/Exit System

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Immigration and Citizenship  
(Seema Malhotra):**

[\[HCWS29\]](#)

I want to update the House on the work by the UK Government to maintain border fluidity with the European Union throughout the implementation of the new Entry/Exit System, ensuring UK nationals and residents can continue to access European destinations effectively and efficiently.

The European Union is implementing a new border security system – the European Entry/Exit System (EES). EU member states are responsible for implementation of the system at Schengen area border crossings, with oversight from the European Commission.

EES will remove the requirement to manually stamp passports at the EU's external border – so called “wet-ink stamps” – and improve physical security by creating a digital file that links a travel document to a person's identity using biometrics. It will require non-EU citizens (excluding EU residents, long stay visa holders, and those protected by the Withdrawal Agreement) arriving in a Schengen destination to register their fingerprints, provide a facial scan and answer questions about their stay. On departure, travellers' details will be checked against the EES database to confirm compliance with existing rules on time limits (maximum 90 day stay in a 180-day period) and register departure.

While the UK government is supportive of the aims of EES, which complement our shared objectives on migration and secure borders, we are not content with the level of preparations put in place by the previous administration. The system will increase processing times at Schengen area border crossing points, and insufficient progress has been made on ensuring that these impacts (as well as other potential impacts) are minimised – with disruption likely when the scheme is introduced.

This is particularly true for journeys involving travel through the UK's three ports with juxtaposed frontier controls (London St Pancras, Eurotunnel in Folkestone, and the Port of Dover), where EES registration will be required on departure from the UK.

On those routes, work has been required to accommodate new equipment and infrastructure in ports and terminals in the UK ahead of the launch date, as well as minimising any disruption caused by queues at the border as much as possible.

As the European Commission plan to implement the new system in late autumn this year, I wanted to update the House on the immediate steps that we are now taking to improve preparations and levels of readiness. These include:

1) Close working with the French Government, Port of Dover, Eurotunnel, Eurostar and High Speed 1 on implementation plans at Dover, Folkestone and St Pancras, where France conducts frontier controls prior to departure from the UK.

2) Preparing communications to raise awareness amongst the travelling public, especially UK nationals and Third Country nationals resident in the UK, who will be required to undertake EES registration when travelling to the EU. It is critical British Citizens are aware of the new requirements and prepared for the additional time these will take with sufficient time to plan ahead.

3) Engaging with the European Commission and member states to lobby for a more pragmatic approach to the application of precautionary measures – these are reactive measures proposed by the EU for the first 6 months of EES implementation to be used as a safeguard in the case of excessive waiting-times e.g. collecting the biometric data of a reduced number of travellers. We believe that extending these beyond 6 months would improve throughput at the EU's external border if queues form during peak periods in early 2025 due to the additional processing time required for EES.

4) The introduction of an amendment to UK legislation to ensure that an additional French Control Zone within the Port of Dover's Western Docks can be operationalised by French border officers in the same way as they currently work in the Eastern Docks and create additional capacity. This has been laid before the House today and there will be an opportunity for further discussion on its contents separately.

5) Securing access to European Commission trial and testing programs for EES implementation to help inform the work and planning UK Juxtaposed port Operators are doing to prepare for EES.

It is in both the UK's and European Union's interest to work together on our shared objectives to ensure we maintain secure borders, while also minimising any disruption caused by EES.

## JUSTICE

### ■ Prison Workforce and Judiciary Update

**Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice (Shabana Mahmood):**  
[\[HCWS38\]](#)

I am today confirming the Government's decision on pay awards for both prison staff and the judiciary.

Prison Service Pay Award 2024/25

Having carefully considered the 14 recommendations made by the Prison Service Pay Review Body (PSPRB) for the 2024/25 pay award, I can announce that we are accepting in full the recommendations made by the PSPRB for all staff within their remit.

All Prison Service staff play a vital role in helping to rehabilitate prisoners and keep the public safe. I am grateful for their hard work and dedication. Acceptance of these recommendations reflects our priorities in ensuring the recruitment and retention of Prison Service staff to deliver this essential frontline service and recognises the valuable service they deliver every day.

The award will deliver a pay rise of at least a 5% base pay increase for all prison staff between Operational Support Grade and Governors (Bands 2-11), with a targeted focus on the lowest paid.

The award delivers headline pay increases of:

- 5% for Prison Officer grades (Bands 3-5)

- 5% for Managerial and Prison Governor grades (Bands 7-12)
- 5% increase for Operational support grades (Band 2), in addition to the National Living Wage increase that Band 2 staff received from 1 st April 2024.

This pay award will be paid this autumn and will be backdated to 1 April 2024.

This government values the vital contribution the almost 6 million public sector workers make across the UK, delivering the public services we all rely upon. Making this pay award will help to stabilise our prison services and ensure they can recruit and retain the staff they need. It recognises the unwavering dedication of our prison staff who have continued to protect the public amid the current prison capacity crisis.

I would like to thank the PSPRB for their valuable advice and response to the Government's evidence.

The report has been laid before Parliament today. I am grateful to the Chair and members of the Review Body for their report.

#### Judicial Pay Award 2024/25

I am today announcing my decision on pay for the judiciary.

The Government received the Senior Salaries Review Body (SSRB) report on 17 June 2024. This will be presented to Parliament and published on Gov.uk.

The SSRB's expertise and independent advice is invaluable in reaching a fair judicial pay award which reflects the judiciary's crucial role at the heart of the justice system. However, the Government must take a balanced view giving adequate consideration to fiscal responsibility. I have carefully considered the SSRB's advice in making my decision.

The SSRB recommended a pay award of 6% for all judicial office holders within the remit group for 2024/25. I have decided to accept this recommendation in full, which will be applied equally to all judicial office holders for whom I have responsibility and will be backdated to April 2024.

I recognise the SSRB's concerns regarding persistent recruitment and retention issues affecting parts of the judiciary. I look forward to working alongside the judiciary to understand how we can start to address these shortfalls through system-wide reforms going forwards.

I hope this increase demonstrates the value that I and the Government place on our independent judiciary and their unwavering commitment to the delivery of justice and the rule of law.

**NORTHERN IRELAND****■ Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy & Reconciliation) Act 2023****Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Hilary Benn):****[[HCWS30](#)]**

I wish to provide an update to the House on the Government's approach to the Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Act 2023 ('the Act').

The Government has today written to the Northern Ireland Court of Appeal to formally abandon all its grounds of appeal against the section 4 Human Rights Act declarations of incompatibility made by the Northern Ireland High Court in relation to the Act. The declarations of incompatibility that the Government is no longer challenging include those relating to the conditional immunity provisions, which could - had they not been struck out by the High Court - have seen individuals being granted immunity from prosecution for providing information about Troubles-related deaths and serious injuries.

This is the first step in fulfilling the Government's manifesto commitment to repeal and replace the Act. Victims and survivors have felt ignored by the previous Government's approach to legacy, which has been clearly rejected across communities in Northern Ireland. The conditional immunity provisions, in particular, have been opposed by all of the Northern Ireland political parties and by many victims and survivors, as well as being found by the Court to be unlawful.

The action taken today to abandon the grounds of appeal against the section 4 Human Rights Act declarations of incompatibility demonstrates that this Government will take a different approach. It underlines the Government's absolute commitment to the Human Rights Act, and to establishing legacy mechanisms that are capable of commanding the confidence of communities and of victims and survivors.

The Government will now begin preparations to address the incompatibility findings of the High Court, which will include laying a draft remedial order under section 10 of the Human Rights Act 1998 to remove offending provisions from the statute book. The Northern Ireland Office has begun work on this, with a view to laying the draft order in Parliament as soon as parliamentary time allows.

The Government has also been clear that it would be irresponsible to repeal the Act in its entirety without anything to replace it. The High Court found the Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery ('the ICRIR') to be independent and capable of conducting human rights compliant investigations. The success of the ICRIR will, ultimately, be determined by its ability to deliver justice, accountability, and information to victims and survivors of the Troubles. Under the leadership of Sir Declan Morgan as Chief Commissioner, the Government has confidence in its ability to do so. It is also clear, however, that to achieve these objectives, the ICRIR will need to gain the confidence of victims and survivors in its work. The Government will consult on measures to strengthen the ICRIR's independence from Government and its powers.

The Government has also committed to reverse the current prohibition on bringing new civil proceedings, and to propose measures to allow inquests previously halted to proceed. Both mechanisms, while not without their own challenges, have helped to



provide many victims and survivors with information, and a sense of justice or accountability that they might not otherwise have obtained. The Government is acutely aware of the distress that the cessation of live inquests in particular has caused those families, and will consider all possible options to ensure those cases can conclude satisfactorily. We will also consider the best way forward for those inquests involving a significant amount of sensitive information which were unable to conclude within the coronial system.

Effectively addressing the legacy of the past is hugely important, not just for those victims and survivors who continue to pursue answers, but for society in Northern Ireland to be able to move forward. The Government recognises that achieving absolute consensus on these issues is immensely difficult. That is demonstrated by the series of failed attempts since 1998 to implement effective legacy mechanisms. Indeed, even the Good Friday Agreement, which brought peace to Northern Ireland after decades of violence, was opposed by some due to the very challenging policy of releasing early from prison those individuals convicted for serious Troubles-related offences.

The Government will therefore now undertake a period of consultation with interested parties, including victims and survivors, to seek their views. This will, of course, include engagement with the Northern Ireland political parties and with the Irish Government, with whom the UK Government is committed to working in partnership in seeking a practical way forward that can command support across communities in Northern Ireland and beyond. This will include veterans, recognising the dedicated service of the vast majority of police officers, members of the armed forces, and the security services who did so much to keep people in Northern Ireland safe during the Troubles.

The Government recognises that this process will involve difficult conversations, and that many stakeholders will hold different views regarding the best way forward. It is also clear that a resolution to addressing the legacy of Northern Ireland's past will not be reached without a willingness, by all, to listen, to understand the perspectives of others, and to compromise. The Government welcomes the opportunity to have these conversations in the months ahead.

### ***Article 2(1) of the Windsor Framework***

In the course of its judgment, the High Court also found that, in relation to Article 2(1) of the Windsor Framework, primary legislation can be disapplied by the Courts where the Court considers that legislation engages provisions of EU law which no longer apply in Northern Ireland. Whilst the Government is unwavering in its commitment to the obligations under Article 2(1) of the Windsor Framework, this judgment has potentially wide-ranging implications for other UK legislation which extends to Northern Ireland. Therefore, we have asked the Court to continue with its consideration of the interpretation and effect of Article 2(1) given the profound constitutional and legal questions that have arisen from the ruling. This is a technical point of law which we hope will be clarified by an onward appeal, for the benefit of by ensuring legal certainty and in maintaining a clear human rights framework in Northern Ireland.

**Annex: List of declarations of incompatibility**

- A declaration that the immunity from prosecution provisions are incompatible with articles 2 and 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (“ECHR”).
- A declaration that section 43(1) (Troubles-related civil actions brought on or after 17 May 2022 may not be continued on or after 18 November 2023) is incompatible with article 6 ECHR.
- A declaration that section 8 of the Act (exclusion of evidence in civil proceedings) is incompatible with articles 2, 3 and 6 ECHR.
- A declaration that section 41 of the Act (prohibition of criminal enforcement action for non-serious/connected Troubles-related offences) is incompatible with articles 2 and 3 ECHR.
- A declaration that parts of sections 46 and 47 (interim custody orders) are incompatible with article 6 and Article 1, Protocol 1 ECHR.

**TREASURY****■ HM Treasury update****The Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury (James Murray):**[\[HCWS32\]](#)

The government is committed to addressing unfairness in the tax system and raising revenue for public services by closing loopholes and tackling tax avoidance.

The government is setting out next steps on its priority tax commitments to allow for technical consultation and provide taxpayers with certainty ahead of their final confirmation at Budget.

The government is also publishing draft legislation on certain measures ahead of potential inclusion in the next Finance Bill to seek stakeholder views at this stage.

**Tax announcements and associated documents**

*VAT and business rates on private schools:* The government is publishing a technical note setting out its plan to introduce 20 per cent VAT on education and boarding services provided for a charge by private schools across the UK from 1 January 2025. Twenty per cent VAT will also apply to pre-payments of fees for terms starting on or after 1 January 2025 made on or after 29 July 2024. These changes will not impact pupils with the most acute special educational needs, where their needs can only be met in private schools.

In addition, the technical note confirms that the government will remove private schools’ eligibility for charitable rates relief under business rates in England. However, the government will consider how to address the potential impact of these changes in cases where private school provision has been specified for pupils through an Education, Health and Care Plan. The government will engage with schools before setting out a final proposal in due course. This is intended to take effect from April 2025, subject to Parliamentary passage.

The government is also publishing draft VAT legislation. The legislation will be accompanied by an Explanatory Note (EN). A technical consultation on the legislation and technical note will run from 29 July 2024 until 15 September 2024.

*Abolishing the tax regime for non-UK domiciled individuals:* The government is publishing a policy note setting out its plan to remove the concept of domicile status from the tax system, and to implement a new residence-based regime. This reform will end the use of offshore trusts to keep assets outside the scope of inheritance tax and scrap the 50 per cent foreign income discount in the first year of the new regime. Full details of this reform will be provided at the Budget.

*Taking action against the carried interest loophole:* The government is publishing a call for evidence confirming its intention to take action against the carried interest loophole, and to form the basis for detailed engagement with expert stakeholders.

*Energy Profits Levy reform:* The government is publishing a policy document that confirms its intention to increase the rate of the Energy Profits Levy (EPL) to 38 per cent from 1 November 2024 and extend that levy from March 2029 to March 2030. The Energy Security Investment Mechanism will remain, helping to provide operators and their investors with confidence the levy will no longer apply if prices fall to, or below, historically normal levels for a sustained period.

The government will also remove unjustifiably generous investment allowances from the EPL, including by abolishing the levy's core investment allowance. Further details on the government's approach to all allowances in the EPL will be set out at the Budget.

The government recognises the importance of providing the oil and gas industry with long-term certainty on taxation after a period of change. The government will therefore set out a way of working with the industry and others to develop an approach for responding to price shocks after the EPL ceases.

*Tackling the tax gap:* The government will take a comprehensive approach to tackling the tax gap and making sure more of the tax revenues that are owed are correctly paid.

The government will invest in HMRC's compliance work, hiring around 5,000 additional staff to recover more tax revenues. HMRC has already started the process of recruiting additional staff into compliance roles. The government will also invest in HMRC's technology infrastructure, helping to make HMRC more efficient and improve taxpayers' experience of interacting with HMRC.

The government will reform the tax system by making policy changes to simplify tax, close loopholes and reduce non-compliance, designing out non-compliance before it happens. At the Budget, the government will provide an update on the implementation and development of measures that form its plan to close the tax gap.

*Abolishing the Furnished Holiday Lettings tax regime:* The government is publishing draft legislation to abolish the Furnished Holiday Lettings tax regime from April 2025. This will remove the tax advantages that landlords offering short-term holiday lets have over those providing standard residential properties. The legislation also contains information about the transitional arrangements that will apply.

*OECD Pillar 2:* The government is publishing draft legislation to translate an internationally agreed anti-avoidance rule into UK legislation. The draft legislation stops attempts by multinational enterprises to avoid Pillar 2 top-up tax by exploiting a temporary simplification in the rules. The legislation will apply from 14 March 2024 and will prevent multinational enterprises that enter into certain avoidance transactions from accessing the simplification.

In addition, to provide certainty for affected businesses, the government is confirming that the UK will introduce the Undertaxed Profits Rule (UTPR) of Pillar 2 for accounting periods beginning on or after 31 December 2024, and will continue efforts to ensure the UK rules are effective and up to date.

The draft legislation on abolishing the Furnished Holiday Lettings tax regime and OECD Pillar 2 legislation is accompanied by a Tax Information and Impact Note (TIIN) and an Explanatory Note.

All publications can be found on the GOV.UK website.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/finance-bill-2024-25-draft-legislation-and-technical-tax-documents>