



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 2 September 2024 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:40 P.M., 02 September 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

#### ■ **Cybersecurity: EU Law**

**John Glen:**

[\[2301\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, whether organisations in the United Kingdom are subject to assimilated EU law restrictions mandating kernel level software access.

**Justin Madders:**

Under Article 95(2) of the Withdrawal Agreement the European Commission continues to be responsible for monitoring and enforcing commitments given, or remedies imposed in, or in relation to, the United Kingdom in connection with competition concerns, unless that responsibility is transferred to the CMA.

Commitments given in relation to kernel level software access have not been transferred to the CMA and consequently, UK organisations remain bound by any commitments they have made to the European Commission, who have the power to monitor and enforce these. These commitments are not classified as assimilated EU law.

#### ■ **Industry: Isle of Wight**

**Mr Richard Quigley:**

[\[2622\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what steps he is taking to ensure that the industrial strategy applies to the Isle of Wight.

**Sarah Jones:**

This Government will introduce a modern Industrial Strategy to drive long-term sustainable, inclusive and secure growth - through securing investment into crucial sectors of the economy. To do this, we will work in partnership with local and regional leaders to support successful industries across all nations and regions of the UK.

This work will support the Government's growth mission: to drive the highest sustained growth in the G7, aligned with our missions to increase opportunities for all and make Britain a clean energy superpower.

#### ■ **Minimum Wage**

**Andy McDonald:**

[\[2338\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, with reference to the Written Statement of 30 July 2024 on Low Pay Commission Remit, HCWS43, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of increasing the floor of the National Living Wage rate to one higher than two-thirds of UK median earnings for workers aged 21 and over.

**Andy McDonald:**

[\[2339\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, with reference to the Written Statement of 30 July 2024 on Low Pay Commission Remit, HCWS43, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of increasing the National Living Wage in line with the forecast rate of CPI inflation.

**Justin Madders:**

The Government has issued a new remit to the Low Pay Commission (LPC) to recommend a National Living Wage (NLW) which takes into account the impact on business, competitiveness, the labour market, the wider economy and for the first time this year, the cost of living, including the expected annual trends in inflation.

When recommending rates, the LPC carries out extensive research and consultation, drawing on economic, labour market and pay analysis, independent research, and stakeholder evidence to inform its recommendations.

When setting new rates, the Government publishes an Impact Assessment (IA) for that year's increases this sets out the evidence base that informs the Government's decision on the rate.

#### ■ **Minimum Wage: Young People**

**Andy McDonald:**

[\[2337\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, with reference to the Written Statement of 30 July 2024 on Low Pay Commission Remit, HCWS43, by what date will 18 to 20 year olds be in receipt of the single adult National Minimum Wage.

**Justin Madders:**

The Government is committed to delivering a genuine living wage for working people, and removing the discriminatory age bands, so that all adults can benefit.

The new Low Pay Commission (LPC) remit asks the LPC to make progress on extending the National Living Wage to all adults. This will be achieved in the coming years, with the Government basing this decision on robust evidence, as well as the recommendations from the Low Pay Commission.

The new remit is clear that this ambition should be pursued while also taking into account the effects on employment of younger workers, incentives for them to remain in training or education and the wider economy.

#### ■ **Royal Mail: Universal Service Obligation**

**Chris McDonald:**

[\[2020\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what recent assessment he has made of the proposals by prospective buyers of Royal Mail.

**Justin Madders:**

The Government acknowledges the undertakings set out in the offer to shareholders which show that the prospective buyers are alert to the importance of Royal Mail and the special place it has in the UK.

We are engaging with the bidder to understand better their plans for Royal Mail and to set out the Government's expectations for its future.

■ **Summertime****Steve Darling:**[\[2580\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, if he will make an assessment as part of his next spending review of the potential economic merits of double British Summer time.

**Justin Madders:**

The Government has no current plans to change the approach to Daylight Savings.

**CABINET OFFICE**■ **10 Downing Street****John Glen:**[\[2065\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if the Prime Minister will list the job title of each special adviser appointed to 10 Downing Street.

**Georgia Gould:**

I refer the Rt Hon Member to paragraph 2 of the Model Contract for Special Advisers (Job title and duties) and which can be found at:

[Model Contract for Special Advisers December 2023.pdf](#)  
([publishing.service.gov.uk](http://publishing.service.gov.uk))

■ **Business Interests: Civil Servants and Ministers****John Glen:**[\[2296\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what is the average length of time for the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments to process a business appointment rules application from (a) ministers and (b) crown servants.

**Georgia Gould:**

The Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (ACOPA) aims to provide its advice within 15 working days of receipt of an application from ministers, and 20 working days for all other crown servants at SCS3 or equivalent and above. ACOPA noted in their latest Annual Report that in 2023-24, 79% of applications received from former ministers were advised on within 15 working days of receiving information rising to 89% within 20 working days. Similarly, ACOPA noted that in 2023-24, 58% of applications received from former crown servants were advised on within 20 working days of receiving information rising to 71% within 25 working days.



## ■ Civil Servants: Conferences

**John Glen:**

[2298]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what his policy is on allowing civil servants to speak at (a) commercial and (b) voluntary sector conferences in a (i) personal and (ii) trade union capacity.

**Georgia Gould:**

The Civil Service Code sets out the standards of behaviour expected of all civil servants. Civil servants are required to fulfil their work duties and obligations responsibly. Decisions on civil servants' speaking attendance at any conferences are made on a case-by-case basis and in accordance with the Civil Service Code. Civil servants should not engage in activities likely to call into question their political impartiality.

## ■ Civil Service: Staff

**Charlie Dewhirst:**

[2632]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to page 10 of the report published by HM Treasury entitled Fixing the Foundations: Public spending audit 2024-25, CP 1133, what the (a) headcount and (b) FTE size is of the Civil Service.

**Georgia Gould:**

Accredited Official Statistics on the number of civil servants, both overall and by government department and agency, on an FTE and headcount basis are published each quarter by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) as part of their Public Sector Employment statistical release. The latest available statistics were published 11 June 2024 and showed the number of civil servants as at 31 March 2024.

The latest statistics and all previous and upcoming releases can be found on the ONS website at

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/publicsectorpersonnel/bulletins/publicsectoremployment/previousReleases>.

## ■ Cybersecurity

**John Glen:**

[2299]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what plans he has to update the National Cyber Security Strategy.

**Ms Abena Oppong-Asare:**

The current National Cyber Strategy sets out a vision to 2030 and specific outcomes to achieve by 2025. The Government is currently reviewing a wide range of national security and resilience priorities. Any decisions on UK cyber strategy will be informed by this wider work and we will confirm plans in due course.

Our digital economy is increasingly being attacked by cyber criminals and state actors, and we need to take swift action to address vulnerabilities and protect our digital economy to deliver growth. This is why in the first session we are introducing

the Cyber Security and Resilience Bill which will strengthen the UK's cyber defences and ensure that critical infrastructure and the digital services that companies rely on are secure.

■ **Ministers: Conduct**

**John Glen:** [\[2060\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of revising section nine of the Ministerial Code on Ministers and Parliament.

**Georgia Gould:**

When meeting with the new Cabinet for the first time, the Prime Minister was clear about the standards he expects of them and their ministerial teams.

The Prime Minister will issue a Ministerial Code in due course.

■ **Pensions Increase (Pension Scheme for Keir Starmer QC) Regulations 2013**

**John Glen:** [\[2321\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to The Pensions Increase (Pension Scheme for Keir Starmer QC) Regulations 2013, what the Cash Equivalent Transfer Value of the scheme is; and if he will make an estimate of the cost to the public purse of funding the scheme.

**Georgia Gould:**

Information about this Pension Scheme, including a calculation of the cash equivalent transfer value, was included in the Crown Prosecution Service's annual report and accounts for 2013-14. There has been no change to the policy under the last Administration not to publish information about civil servants' individual pensions apart from in the remuneration reports contained in departmental annual reports and accounts.

■ **Prime Minister: Staff**

**John Glen:** [\[2064\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Prime Minister has appointed a director of trade union relations.

**Georgia Gould:**

I refer the Rt Hon Member to the answer of 31 July, Official Report, PQ 1243.

■ **Public Sector: Procurement**

**Jon Trickett:** [\[2029\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what criteria will his Department use to measure social value when undertaking procurement rounds.

**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,

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.

## EDUCATION

### ■ All Saints Roman Catholic School York: Finance

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[2381\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether All Saints School in York will receive funding for (a) repairs and (b) development.

**Stephen Morgan:**

The department has confirmed that All Saints School is in the School Rebuilding Programme. The department currently expects feasibility and procurement, planning and design to start from April 2025.

### ■ Basic Skills: High Peak

**Jon Pearce:**

[\[2180\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department has taken to improve children's oracy skills in High Peak constituency.

**Catherine McKinnell:**

The department recognises the importance of oracy. Communication skills are essential throughout life, and the foundations of these skills are developed during the early years and the first part of primary school. Delayed development of communication skills can have serious consequences for children's learning, and there is good evidence that spoken language skills are strongly associated with children's literacy, numeracy and educational attainment.

This government will fund evidence-based early-language interventions in primary schools, so that every child can find their voice. In July 2024, the department announced that funded support for the 11,100 schools registered for the Nuffield Early Language Intervention programme would continue for the 2024/25 academic year.

Spoken language is already part of the national curriculum for English for 5 to 16 year olds and is delivered in a number of different ways.

The government has established an independent review of curriculum, assessment and qualification pathways, covering Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 5. This will be chaired by Professor Becky Francis CBE, an expert in education policy, including in curriculum and social inequality. The Review will seek to deliver, amongst other things, a curriculum that ensures children and young people leave compulsory education ready for life and ready for work, building the knowledge, skills and

attributes young people need to thrive. This includes embedding digital, oracy and life skills in their learning.

English Hubs support early language through the delivery of Medium Level Support, which is a Continuous Professional Development (CPD) offer that includes targeted support, CPD programmes and workshops. English Hubs deliver the universal early language CPD programme to schools over six sessions. So far, over £90 million has been invested in the English Hubs programme overall, with a further £23 million committed for the 2024/25 academic year. High Peak's local English Hub is St Wilfrid's. More information about the Hub is available here:

<https://stwenglishhub.co.uk/>.

## ■ Carers: Health Services

**Kevin Bonavia:**

**[2573]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to help improve (a) the physical and mental health and (b) other aspects of the lives of unpaid and kinship carers.

**Janet Daby:**

Kinship carers play an extremely important role in both their kin children's lives and in the children's social care system.

The government is committed to working in partnership with local government to support children in care, whether they are being looked after by their community or kinship, foster carers and adoptive parents. The department recognises the challenges many kinship carers face. The government will consider how to most effectively transform the children's social care system so that it is better delivering for children and families. This will include considering how best to support kinship carers and children in kinship care.

The department will recruit the first ever National Kinship Care Ambassador to advocate for kinship carers and work directly with local authorities to improve services. The ambassador will be appointed in 2024 and will support government and local authorities to keep kinship carers at the heart of their services.

The government is extending the delivery of peer support groups, which will sustain over 140 peer support groups across England where all types of kinship carers, including private foster carers, can come together to share stories, support each other, and exchange advice.

The department is also funding a package of in person and online training and support that all kinship carers across England may access. The service went live in April 2024 and is being delivered by the charity, Kinship.

## ■ Childcare and Pre-school Education

**Apsana Begum:** [\[2522\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many local authority group-based providers of Ofsted registered Early Years Foundation Stage (a) education and (b) care provided childcare places in each year since 2010.

**Apsana Begum:** [\[2523\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many childcare places were provided by local authority group-based providers of Ofsted registered Early Years Foundation Stage (a) education and (b) care in each year since 2010.

**Apsana Begum:** [\[2524\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of childcare places for children aged between zero and two years were provided by local authority group-based providers of Ofsted-registered early years foundation stage education and care in each year since 2010.

### **Stephen Morgan:**

The Ofsted Early Years Register collects data on the number of providers of childcare on domestic premises, childcare on non-domestic premises, childminders, and home childcare. It does not identify local authority run provision and it is not broken down by age.

Ofsted's registered early years and childcare statistics contains granular data about providers registered with Ofsted, their places and inspection outcomes (where appropriate) and can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/early-years-and-childcare-statistics>.

Ofsted have also recently published management information aggregating registered childcare providers and inspections and their outcomes. This can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/childcare-providers-and-inspections-management-information>.

The department publishes an annual survey of childcare and early years providers. This includes school-based provision that is not required to register with Ofsted. This survey includes a category for "school, college, local authorities and 'other unclassified'" group-based providers, which includes those run by local authorities. The survey covers three broad groups of providers: group-based providers, school-based providers and childminders.

Between 2018 and 2023 in England the survey reported:

	2018	2019	2021	2022	2023
<b>Other group-based providers</b>	700	700	600	1,100	1,000

	2018	2019	2021	2022	2023
<b>Total providers</b>	66,600	66,000	62,000	59,400	56,300

This data is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-childcare-and-early-years>.

It is not possible to break the survey data down further and identify numbers of, for example, local authority run group-based providers or school run group-based providers within the other group-based providers group. The reports do not include the number of places per provider.

### ■ Class Sizes

**Rachael Maskell:** **[2375]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she plans to increase class sizes to accommodate children moving from the independent sector to the state sector.

**Stephen Morgan:**

The number of pupils who may switch schools as a result of changes in the independent sector is expected to represent a very small proportion of overall pupil numbers in the state sector. Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) research has estimated that up to 40,000 pupils may switch schools. Even this figure would represent less than 0.5% of the total UK state school pupil population, which is more than 9 million. It is therefore highly unlikely that school class sizes increase as a result of ending the VAT exemption for private schools.

The IFS's research is available here: <https://ifs.org.uk/publications/tax-private-school-fees-and-state-school-spending> and <https://ifs.org.uk/news/removing-tax-exemptions-private-schools-likely-have-little-effect-numbers-private-sector>.

### ■ Educational Visits: High Peak

**Jon Pearce:** **[2184]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many children in High Peak constituency have taken part in foreign school trips since September 2023.

**Catherine McKinnell:**

The department does not hold information on overseas school trips unless the school is successful in applying for funding from the Turing Scheme, which is the UK government's global programme for students to study and work abroad.

The department can confirm that for the 2023/24 academic year, no schools in the High Peak constituency applied to the Turing Scheme.

## ■ Musical Instruments: Education

**Jon Pearce:**

[2179]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of children in schools in High Peak constituency are learning a musical instrument at school.

**Catherine McKinnell:**

The department does not collect information from schools about the number or proportion of their pupils learning a musical instrument at school.

Schools can seek the support of their local Music Hub in providing music education, including support for instrumental teaching. Arts Council England is the fundholder for the Music Hubs programme and collects and publishes information about the activity of each of the Music Hubs. This information is about the music education activity or support the Hubs provide and does not include information on what schools provide without the support of the Hub.

The High Peak constituency is served by Derbyshire Music Education Hub, which provides opportunities to learn an instrument, including through whole class ensemble teaching across the local authority areas of Derby and Derbyshire.

In 2022/23, 47.4% of state-funded schools across Derby and Derbyshire were supported with whole class ensemble teaching. The Hub also delivered or supported lessons to 2,244 pupils in small group tuition, 5,447 pupils in individual lessons, and 6,149 pupils as part of large group lessons. In addition, 1,577 pupils participated in Hub-led or Hub-supported ensembles and group activity, and instruments were loaned to 302 schools during 2022/23.

The 2022/23 data was published on 20 May 2024 and can be accessed on the Arts Council's website, which is available here:

<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/MusicEducationHubs/music-education-hubs-survey-and-data#t-in-page-nav-2>.

## ■ Pupils: Dyslexia

**Helen Grant:**

[2285]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to help schools to support pupils with dyslexia.

**Catherine McKinnell:**

Mainstream schools have a statutory duty to use their best endeavours to ensure that provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN), such as dyslexia, is made for those who need it. Guidance on this duty is set out in the special educational needs and disability (SEND) code of practice. Schools should involve pupils and their parents throughout this cycle.

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

The government will be focusing on a community-wide approach, improving inclusivity and expertise in mainstream schools. My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, and I will work with families and education and care experts to deliver this in the best interests of all children.

■ **Pupils: York Outer**

**Mr Luke Charters:**

**[2201]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make an assessment of the potential impact of trends in the level of per-pupil funding in York Outer constituency since 2010 on educational attainment.

**Catherine McKinnell:**

The department uses the schools national funding formula (NFF) to distribute core funding for 5 to 16 year old pupils in mainstream state-funded schools in England. The NFF distributes funding based on schools' and pupils' needs and characteristics.

The department cannot provide comparable funding for the York Outer constituency back to 2010, due to the changes in the funding system since that time. The earliest we can provide data from is the 2020/21 financial year. This data is provided in the table below. The scope of the per-pupil funding before this is not directly comparable. In particular, funding for the central services provided by local authorities was split out from the schools block funding in 2018/19, and instead funded separately through the central school services block from that year onwards.

**NFF SCHOOLS BLOCK PER-PUPIL FUNDING**

<b>Year (financial year)</b>	<b>York Outer constituency</b>
<b>2020/21</b>	£4,632
<b>2021/22</b>	£4,827
<b>2022/23</b>	£4,951
<b>2023/24</b>	£5,175
<b>2024/25</b>	£5,456

Constituency per-pupil funding 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.

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 York Outer constituency have received to support pay and pensions increases in 2024/25, or the recently announced Core Schools Budget Grant funding.

The figure for 2024/25 is based on the new constituency boundaries as of July 2024.



## ■ Schools

**Anneliese Midgley:**

**[2567]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will publish, for every school in England (a) the unique reference number for that school, (b) the local government areas and their ONS codes within which the school falls, (c) the Parliamentary constituency within which the school falls, (d) the phase of education which the school provides, (e) whether the school teaches children of both sexes, (f) the number of children currently attending that school, (g) whether the school is a state school or a private school, (h) any faith or religious character to the school, including denomination information, (i) the name of the academy trust, and (j) how many schools in total are run by that trust.

**Catherine McKinnell:**

The information requested can be found in the attached files. This information has been extracted from the department's 'Get Information about Schools (GIAS)'.

GIAS is the department's register of schools and colleges in England and the information in the answer shows the position as at 1 August 2024.

The pupil numbers data used in the answer is at January 2024 and is taken from the 'Schools, pupils and their characteristics: January 2024' statistical publication, which is available here: [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2024](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2024).

**Attachments:**

1. 2567\_table\_1 [2567\_School\_List\_part\_1.xlsx]
2. 2567\_table\_2 [2567\_School\_List\_part\_2.xlsx]
3. 2567\_table\_3 [2567\_Academy\_trusts\_schools.xlsx]

## ■ Secondary Education: High Peak

**Jon Pearce:**

**[2190]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many hours of (a) mathematics, (b) English, (c) sciences and (d) modern foreign languages were taught in secondary schools in High Peak constituency by teachers without a relevant (i) A-level and (ii) higher level qualification in the last full year for which data are available.

**Catherine McKinnell:**

Information on the school workforce, including subjects taught in state-funded secondary schools, is published in the 'School Workforce in England' statistical publication, which is available here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-workforce-in-england>.

National estimates of the total number of hours taught for each subject are available at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/b9970602-8643-43bd-ba9c-08dcafcfd634>.

The proportion of those hours that were taught by teachers without a relevant post A-level or higher level qualification are available nationally at: <https://explore-education->

[statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/5b added 9e0-77ad-49e2-ba9d-08dcafcfd634](https://statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/5b added 9e0-77ad-49e2-ba9d-08dcafcfd634).

Timetabled teaching is reported for a typical week in November, as determined by the school. It does not cover an entire year of teaching. If there are variations in timetabling across the year, this is not covered in the data available to the department.

Subject taught is only collected from secondary schools that use electronic timetabling software that can produce data in the format required. Data is then weighted to provide national estimates. Breakdowns by local authority and parliamentary constituency are, therefore, not available.

## ■ Secondary Education: Teachers

**Jon Pearce:**

**[2189]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the average staff-to-student ratio was in secondary schools in (a) England and (b) High Peak constituency in (i) 2019, (ii) 2020, (iii) 2021 and (iv) 2022.

**Catherine McKinnell:**

Information on the school workforce, including the pupil to adult and pupil to teacher ratios at national, regional, local authority and individual school level, is published in the 'School Workforce in England' statistical publication, which can be found here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-workforce-in-england>.

As at November 2023, which is the latest data available, there were 468,700 full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers in state funded schools in England. This is an increase of 27,300, equivalent to 6%, since the School Workforce Census began in 2010.

The table below provides the pupil to adult ratio and the pupil to teacher ratio for state-funded secondary schools in High Peak constituency and England for the 2019/20 to 2022/23 academic years.

**Pupil to adult and pupil to teacher ratios for state-funded secondary schools in High Peak constituency and England, by year 2019/20 to 2022/23 <sup>1</sup>**

	HIGH PEAK CONSTITUENCY <sup>2</sup>		ENGLAND	
	Pupil to adult ratio <sup>3, 5</sup>	Pupil to teacher ratio <sup>4, 5</sup>	Pupil to adult ratio <sup>3, 5</sup>	Pupil to teacher ratio <sup>4, 5</sup>
<b>2019/20</b>	9.8	17.0	11.9	16.6
<b>2020/21</b>	10.2	17.6	11.9	16.6
<b>2021/22</b>	10.3	17.5	11.9	16.7
<b>2022/23</b>	10.1	17.5	12.0	16.8

Source: School Workforce Census.

1. Workforce data as at November and pupil data as at the following January. For instance, 2019/20 relates to November 2019 workforce and January 2020 pupils.
2. There are 7 secondary schools in High Peak constituency.
3. Pupil to adult ratio includes teachers and support staff (excluding auxiliary staff).
4. Pupil to teacher ratio includes all teachers.
5. The ratios are calculated using pupil numbers taken from the publication, Schools, Pupils and their Characteristics, available at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-pupils-and-their-characteristics>.

## ■ Special Educational Needs

**Daisy Cooper:**

[2493]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 26 July 2024 to Question 402 on Special Educational Needs, how many children and young people with education, health and care plans have missed (a) one year and (b) more than one year of education in the last five years because they were required by local education authorities to transfer into a year group commensurate with their age.

**Catherine McKinnell:**

The department does not hold the information requested.

**Jon Pearce:**

[2597]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to ensure that local authorities (a) adequately capture the needs of SEND children and (b) provide a local offer that adequately meets levels of demand for those needs.

**Catherine McKinnell:**

This government is committed to providing the necessary support to improve the experiences for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their families. The department is committed to taking a community-wide approach, improving inclusivity and expertise in mainstream schools and alternative provision settings, as well as ensuring special schools cater to those with the most complex needs.

A new Ofsted and Care Quality Commission area SEND inspection framework was launched in January 2023. All local areas are due to receive a full inspection within five years, supporting local areas to achieve better outcomes and standards in line with our programme of reform.

Where a council does not meet its duties, the department can take action that prioritises children's needs and supports local areas to bring about rapid improvement. The department works to monitor, support and challenge local authorities, working closely with NHS England to tackle weaknesses that sit with health partners.

**■ Special Educational Needs: Dorset**

**Jessica Toale:** [\[2647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of the adequacy of SEND provision in a) Dorset and b) the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole council area.

**Jessica Toale:** [\[2648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to improve special educational needs and disabilities provision in a) Bournemouth West constituency and b) Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole council area.

**Catherine McKinnell:**

Dorset had their Ofsted and Care Quality Commission (CQC) Local Area special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) inspection in March 2024, which identified positive experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND. The report, published on 15 May 2024, included no Areas for Priority Action (APAs), and highlighted that leaders in Dorset are ambitious and focused on improving the lives of children and young people with SEND. The report also stated that children and young people with SEND and their families are placed at the heart of all that leaders do. Effective co-production across the partnership ensures that the needs of children and young people lead decision-making.

The department has been working closely with Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole local area partnership since their Area SEND Inspection in June 2021, where Ofsted and CQC identified eight areas of significant weakness. The department has since been holding regular monitoring meetings with the local area, in partnership with NHS England, focussing on the impact of actions taken on improving the lives of children and young people with SEND and their families. The latest monitoring meeting highlighted that the local authority and partners are taking positive steps to improve services, with some evidence of early impact. However, there are still ways to go to ensure that all children and families receive the service they require and deserve.

The department has put in place a wider range of support for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council and local area partners through the appointment of a Sector Led Improvement Partner and SEND advisor support. The department will continue working with the local area to ensure they deliver further improvements in services for all children and families in the local area, including those in the constituency of Bournemouth West.

**■ Special Educational Needs: Private Education**

**Clive Lewis:** [\[2412\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to increase SEND provision for pupils moving from private to state schools.

**Catherine McKinnell:**

The department works to support local authorities to ensure that every local area has sufficient places for children that need them and to provide appropriate support where pupils with special educational needs (SEN) require a place at a state-funded school.

State-maintained schools are required to identify and address the needs of the pupils they support. Mainstream schools must use their best endeavours to make sure that a child or young person who has SEN gets the support they need and are funded to do this through their formulaic funding allocations.

**Special Educational Needs: Waiting Lists****Yasmin Qureshi:**[\[2256\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to help reduce waiting times for SEND services in schools.

**Catherine McKinnell:**

For too long the education and care system has not met the needs of all children, particularly those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Parents and carers have struggled to get their children the support they need, with many children and young people having to wait far longer than they should for the services they need.

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 will be focusing on a community-wide approach, improving inclusivity and expertise in mainstream schools, and ensuring that special schools cater to those with the most complex needs.

**Teachers: Labour Turnover****Jon Pearce:**[\[2181\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to improve the (a) recruitment and (b) retention of teachers in High Peak constituency.

**Catherine McKinnell:**

High-quality teaching is the factor that makes the biggest difference to a child's education. There are now 468,693 full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers in state-funded schools in England, but the department must do more to ensure it has the workforce needed to provide the best possible education for every child. This is why the government has set out the ambition to recruit 6,500 new expert teachers.

The first crucial step towards achieving this is to ensure teaching is once again an attractive and respected profession, and teachers receive the pay they deserve. This is why the department has accepted in full the School Teachers' Review Body's recommendation of a 5.5% pay award for teachers and leaders in maintained schools from September.

The department is providing schools with almost £1.1 billion in additional funding in the 2024/25 financial year to support schools with overall costs. This matches what the department has calculated is needed to fully fund, at a national level, the teacher pay award and the support staff pay offer in the 2024/25 financial year, over and above the overall available headroom in schools' existing budgets.

Alongside teacher pay, financial incentives are one of the most effective ways to increase teacher supply, and the department is continuing to support teacher trainees with tax-free bursaries of up to £28,000 and scholarships of up to £30,000 in shortage subjects. To help with retention, new teachers of mathematics, physics, chemistry and computing also receive retention payments if working in disadvantaged schools in the first five years of their careers. In the 2023/34 academic year, five schools in the High Peak constituency were eligible for these retention payments.

To further help teachers stay and thrive in the profession, the department is addressing teacher workload and wellbeing, and supporting schools to introduce flexible working practices. The Flexible Working Ambassador Multi-Academy Trusts and Schools Programme offers support to schools across every region in England to help implement flexible working. Schools in High Peak that are interested in receiving tailored peer support can either approach the dedicated Ambassador for the East Midlands region or contact the national delivery provider to be matched with specialist support.

The department has also established Teaching School Hubs across the country, which provide high-quality professional development to teachers at all stages of their careers. Potentia Teaching School Hub and Spencer Teaching School Hub are centres of excellence supporting teacher training and development across Amber Valley, Bolsover, Chesterfield, Derbyshire Dales, High Peak, North East Derbyshire, Derby, Erewash and South Derbyshire.

## ■ Teachers: Pay

**Caroline Voaden:**

**[2204]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to paragraph 83 of the HM Treasury's policy paper entitled, Fixing the foundations public spending audit 2024-25, published on 29 July 2024, if she will take steps to ensure the 2024 pay award for teachers is funded at a school level and takes account of existing staffing costs.

**Catherine McKinnell:**

To support schools with overall costs, the department is providing almost £1.1 billion in 2024/25 through the new Core Schools Budget Grant (CSBG). This matches what the department has calculated is needed to fully fund, at a national level, the teacher pay award and the support staff pay offer in the 2024/25 financial year, over and above the available headroom in schools' existing budgets. Guidance on the new CSBG can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/core-schools-budget-grant-csbg-2024-to-2025>.

The department understands that the picture will be different for individual schools and that funding will not always match a school's precise costs. The formula allocates funding based on schools' pupil numbers and their characteristics. Schools can then decide how to use this funding, including how many teachers and support staff to employ. When the department allocates grant funding for additional costs, it calculates the cost across the whole system and then adds that cost into the formula. This approach keeps funding fair. If grant funding was based on each schools' specific teacher costs, then funding would be disproportionately allocated to the schools that already spend the most on their teachers and support staff, rather than giving every school a fair increase in their spending power.

## ■ T-levels

**Tom Gordon:**

[1998]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how she plans to work with (a) colleges and (b) employers to ensure that there are sufficient high-quality placements for T Level study programmes.

**Janet Daby:**

This government believes all young people and adults should have access to high-quality training that meets their needs and provides them with opportunities to thrive. T Levels are high-quality qualifications which provide young people with a firm foundation for their future. The industry placement of at least 315 hours (approximately 45 days) is a key part of T Levels and helps open the door into skilled employment, further study or a higher apprenticeship.

The department provides a programme of support for colleges and other T Level providers to help them to deliver high quality industry placements. This includes workshops, webinars, continuing professional development support and online guidance. Providers also receive £550 per industry placement student as part of their wider 16 to 19 funding allocation to support the costs of sourcing and setting up industry placements. Providers are also able to use their 16 to 19 bursary funding to support disadvantaged students to access placements.

The department is working to raise awareness of T Levels amongst employers, and the benefits of industry placements to their organisations' talent pipelines. The department has launched the new Skills for Life "It all starts with skills" campaign. This national campaign underpins its activities to raise awareness of T Levels, with TV and cinema advertising tailored to young people and employers, alongside billboards and posters. The department also offers guidance, workshops and webinars to help employers understand the benefits of offering placements and how to do this successfully. Over 600 members of the T Level Ambassadors Network work across the country in their industries to champion T Levels and placements, via events, webinars and social media.

More information on the support available can be found at:

<https://support.tlevels.gov.uk/hc/en-gb> and: <https://employers.tlevels.gov.uk/hc/en-gb>.

**ENERGY SECURITY AND NET ZERO****■ Great British Energy: Location**

**Tracy Gilbert:** [\[2197\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, when his Department plans to announce the location for the headquarters of Great British Energy.

**Michael Shanks:**

Scotland is the heart of energy in Great Britain and in recognition of the leading role that it plays in the UK's clean energy revolution, Great British Energy will be headquartered and run from Scotland. We will announce the location in Scotland, of Great British Energy headquarters, in the coming months.

**■ Great British Energy: Private Sector**

**Dave Doogan:** [\[2487\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what proportion of Great British Energy's budget will be allocated to early development work to help de-risk private sector investments over the next five years.

**Michael Shanks:**

Great British Energy will be an operationally independent company capitalised with £8.3 billion over this Parliament. The exact proportion of investment allocated to different priorities will be a decision for Great British Energy and investment to support early development work on projects will be an important part of its work. The Secretary of State will set out Great British Energy's strategic priorities in due course.

**■ Great British Energy: Wind Power**

**Dave Doogan:** [\[2482\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what plans he has for (a) whole and (b) partial ownership of (i) offshore and (ii) onshore wind farms by GB Energy by 2045.

**Michael Shanks:**

Great British Energy will be a publicly-owned energy company that will invest in, own and operate projects. Great British Energy will support the Government's clean power mission by partnering with industry, local authorities and communities.

The exact detail and timeline of specific projects will be set out as appropriate by Great British Energy itself, as an operationally independent company.

**■ Great British Nuclear: Recruitment**

**Wera Hobhouse:** [\[2122\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, how many full-time permanent staff he (a) plans to recruit and (b) has recruited for Great British Nuclear; and what his planned timeline is for completing this recruitment.



**Michael Shanks:**

GBN has grown rapidly as an organisation to deliver on its mission and now has well over 100 personnel working for it ahead of permanent recruitment to help drive forward the nuclear programme. Permanent recruitment for the Executive Team is actively underway and this will be followed by recruitment for the rest of the organisation.

■ **Moorside Power Station****Josh MacAlister:**[\[2160\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, whether access has been (a) requested and (b) granted to land owned by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority at Moorside for detailed assessment to be carried out for its use for new nuclear power generation in the last ten years.

**Michael Shanks:**

Yes, requests have been made, within the last ten years, to access the land at Moorside for the purpose of undertaking detailed assessment of its suitability to be used for the development of new nuclear power generation infrastructure. These requests have been granted by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority.

■ **Natural Gas and Oil: North Sea****Mr Richard Holden:**[\[2142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what estimate he has made of the (a) amount of oil and gas that the North Sea will produce in each year until 2060 and (b) tax revenue generated from that oil and gas (i) directly from North Sea oil taxes and (ii) in taxes from employment; how much oil and gas will need to be imported each year between now and 2060; and from which countries that oil and gas will be imported from.

**Michael Shanks:**

The North Sea Transition Authority publishes [UK oil and gas production projections](#) to 2050 and the OBR's latest forecasts for oil and gas tax revenues up to 2028/29 was published in the [March 2024 Economic and Fiscal Outlook](#). Future years will be included in future forecasts. Tax revenues from oil and gas employment will be included under forecasts for Income Tax and National Insurance, which are not separated by industry.

The [Energy Security Plan Update](#), published in December 2023, included an assessment of the role of imports in meeting our domestic gas demand until 2050. The department also publishes [projections](#) of the UK's future demand for oil (under existing and near-final policy) and monitors both UK production and demand as part of the [regular departmental output](#).

These assessments will be updated in due course to reflect the new government's policy.

**■ Nuclear Power Stations**

**Josh MacAlister:** [\[2154\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, how many approval processes Great British Nuclear undertake before final decisions are made on (a) technology and (b) sites for new nuclear power plants.

**Michael Shanks:**

Great British Nuclear, the Department's arm's-length body responsible for helping deliver the Government's nuclear programme, is currently running a small modular reactor technology selection process for UK deployment. The window for submitting tenders has closed and Great British Nuclear is evaluating bids. This is a complex procurement, and it is important Great British Nuclear ensures a fair and robust process that delivers sustainable outcomes. Further updates will be made on this, as well as setting out plans for associated sites, in due course.

**Josh MacAlister:** [\[2155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, whether he will prioritise new nuclear power generation on land designated for new nuclear over other potential uses.

**Michael Shanks:**

The New nuclear National Policy Statement (EN-7) is being developed to provide updated planning guidance to developers. This will be subject to the usual public consultation and Parliamentary scrutiny. The potential sites listed in EN-6 are likely to retain many inherent advantages and it is for those landowners to decide how to manage their assets. For those sites within the wider government estate, optimal land use will be considered to best maximise public benefit.

**Josh MacAlister:** [\[2156\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, whether he will prioritise government owned land that remains (a) unused and (b) licensed for new nuclear use in siting decisions for deployment of new nuclear power plants.

**Michael Shanks:**

Government will always consider strategic land use opportunities for its estate and is committed to managing its land to best maximise public benefit.

**Josh MacAlister:** [\[2157\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, whether access to existing nuclear expertise is considered in siting decisions for new nuclear power plants.

**Michael Shanks:**

A new nuclear National Policy Statement (EN-7) is being developed which will provide updated planning guidance and set out any specific assessment criteria for the siting of new nuclear power stations.

**Josh MacAlister:**

[\[2158\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, whether the eight sites identified for new nuclear use in the 2011 National Policy Statement are intended for new nuclear use.

**Michael Shanks:**

New nuclear National Policy Statement (EN-7) is being developed to provide updated planning guidance to developers. This will be subject to the usual public consultation and Parliamentary scrutiny. The potential sites listed in EN-6 are likely to retain many inherent advantages and it is for those landowners to decide how to manage their assets. For those sites within the wider government estate, optimal land use will be considered to best maximise public benefit.

**Josh MacAlister:**

[\[2159\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, which government sites licensed for new nuclear use have been subject to further detailed assessments since designation.

**Michael Shanks:**

Land assessments for a variety of purposes will have been undertaken at those potential sites listed in EN-6 for Nuclear Power Generation, that are now owned by government arm's length bodies.

## ■ Offshore Industry: Licensing

**Andrew Bowie:**

[\[2462\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of not issuing new oil and gas licences on levels of public investment from oil and gas companies.

**Michael Shanks:**

We do not intend to issue new licences to explore new fields and will not revoke existing licences. We will ensure a phased and responsible transition in the North Sea, ensuring no community is left behind as we move towards net zero. We will share more details on our plans for oil and gas in due course.

**Claire Coutinho:**

[\[2539\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what budget he has allocated for legal costs in the event of legal action from businesses following from his decision not to issue new oil and gas licences.

**Michael Shanks:**

We do not intend to issue new licences to explore new fields and will share more details on our plans in due course. We do not speculate on possible future legal costs.

**■ Sellafield: Land****Josh MacAlister:** [\[2161\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, whether the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority have sought approval for the purchase of land in West Cumbria in the last ten years.

**Michael Shanks:**

Yes, the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority has sought, and received, approval for the purchase of land in West Cumbria in the last ten years. This includes land parcels adjacent to the Low Level Waste Repository at Drigg.

**■ Small Modular Reactors****Andrew Bowie:** [\[2463\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what his planned timetable is for approving Small Modular Reactors.

**Michael Shanks:**

Great British Nuclear, the Department's arm's-length body responsible for helping deliver the government's nuclear programme. is currently running a small modular reactor technology selection process for UK deployment. The window for submitting tenders has closed and Great British Nuclear is evaluating bids. This is a complex procurement, and it is important Great British Nuclear ensures a fair and robust process that delivers sustainable outcomes. Further updates will be made in due course.

**■ Wind Power****Andrew Rosindell:** [\[2044\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what recent assessment he has made of the potential impact of onshore windfarms on (a) the environment, (b) arable land and (c) local communities.

**Michael Shanks:**

The planning system provides important checks and balances when new onshore wind farms are built, including community engagement and consultation, environmental surveying, and statutory environmental and habitat impact assessments ensuring deployment is sustainable and has community support.

**■ Wylfa Power Station****Andrew Bowie:** [\[2464\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what his planned timetable is for the delivery of a new nuclear power plant at Wylfa.

**Michael Shanks:**

Nuclear can play an important role in helping to achieve energy security and clean power while securing thousands of skilled jobs. As a site which has previously hosted

a nuclear power station, and is now owned by Great British Nuclear, Wylfa can play an important role in new nuclear in the UK, and we will set out our plans for the site in due course.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### ■ Air Pollution: Standards

**Dr Beccy Cooper:**

[\[2668\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he has had discussions with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on meeting WHO clean air standards.

**Emma Hardy:**

Ministers and officials from Defra and the Department of Health and Social Care have regular discussions on a range of issues.

The Government is committed to meeting legal targets for air quality, including the targets recently set under the Environment Act 2021. Defra will be working closely with our colleagues across government, including at the Department for Health and Social Care, as we deliver a comprehensive and ambitious Clean Air Strategy including a series of interventions to reduce everyone's exposure to air pollution and improve public health.

### ■ Animal Products: Imports

**Bob Blackman:**

[\[2281\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what his planned timescale for introducing legislation to ban the import of hunting trophies.

**Mary Creagh:**

I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to [PQ 591](#).

### ■ Chemicals: Regulation

**Stephen Gethins:**

[\[2353\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions his Department have had with the EU on cooperation on chemicals regulation.

**Stephen Gethins:**

[\[2354\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has for greater data sharing on chemicals regulation with the European Union.

**Emma Hardy:**

The Government is committed to protecting human health and the environment. We are currently considering the best approach to chemicals regulation in the UK.

## ■ Coastal Erosion: Hemsby

**Rupert Lowe:**

[2623]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to tackle coastal erosion in Hemsby; and if he will meet the hon. Member for Great Yarmouth to discuss the criteria for his Department's funding of coastal erosion programmes.

**Emma Hardy:**

Defra knows the devastating impact flooding and coastal erosion can have on communities, including in Hemsby. That is why we are committed to supporting coastal communities and ensuring flood risk management is fit for the challenges we face now and in the future. We will establish a new Flood Resilience Taskforce to provide oversight of national and local flood resilience and preparedness ahead of and after the winter flood season.

The Environment Agency is working closely with Great Yarmouth Borough Council as they consider options for flood risk management of the area, taking into account the technical challenges. East Suffolk Council is leading on the Resilient Coasts project, part of the £200 million Flood and Coast Innovation Programme. This project includes Hemsby as a pilot location, and we look forward to hearing how this is progressing.

## ■ Dairy Products: Avian Influenza

**Jim Shannon:**

[2078]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential future impact of the H5N1 virus on dairy projects.

**Daniel Zeichner:**

Through our bulk milk testing, wider surveillance and monitoring of past infections in cattle, we are confident the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) virus strain B3.13 that has been responsible for incidents of influenza of avian origin in cattle in the USA has not been detected in Great Britain. Our national reference laboratory at the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) Weybridge laboratory has also confirmed that temperatures used in pasteurisation would be effective in destroying any live virus.

The APHA has assessed the risk to livestock in Great Britain from this outbreak of Influenza A (H5N1) of avian origin in livestock in the USA, as very low (event is very rare but cannot be excluded) ( [Avian influenza in cattle in USA \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) ). The Food Standards Agency (FSA) have assessed the risk to UK consumers from HPAI strain B3.13 in imported milk, dairy products, colostrum and colostrum-based products originating from US dairy cattle as very low with medium uncertainty ( [Rapid Risk Assessment: Risk to UK consumers from Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza \(HPAI\) H5N1 B3.13 in US dairy products | Food Standards Agency](#) ). The [Human Animal Infections and Risk Surveillance group \(HAIRS\)](#) consider that the HPAI B3.13 strain presents at most a very low risk with

regard to spread from animals-to-humans in the UK HAIRS risk statement: Avian influenza A(H5N1) in livestock - GOV.UK ( [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) ).

We do not currently anticipate any impact of influenza of avian origin on the dairy sector in the UK, nor on the supplies of milk. However, whilst the responsibility for animal health is devolved, all four UK administrations work closely together to consider and respond to animal disease threats. We remain vigilant and will continue to use our established systems to monitor for changes in risk through both [HAIRS](#) and our Veterinary Risk Group.

## ■ Farmers: Pay

**Stuart Anderson:** [\[2491\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to help ensure that farmers are fairly remunerated for their produce.

**Daniel Zeichner:**

The Government will deliver a resilient and healthy food system, with a new deal that ensures fairness in the supply chain across all sectors. Farmers should always receive a fair price for their products and the Government is committed to tackling contractual unfairness wherever it exists.

Defra will continue the work closely with stakeholders from all farming sectors on the best way to achieve this.

## ■ Food Supply

**Sir John Hayes:** [\[2226\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to publish the updated UK Food Security Report.

**Daniel Zeichner:**

Defra will publish the next UK Food Security Report later this year as required, and in accordance with, the Agriculture Act 2020. The Report will examine past, current, and predicted trends to present the best available understanding of UK food security.

## ■ Furs: Trade

**Bob Blackman:** [\[2282\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what his planned timescale for publishing a response to the consultation entitled the Fur market in Great Britain, published on 31 May 2021.

**Daniel Zeichner:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 23 July 2024 to the Rt Hon Member for Islington North, PQ [592](#).

## ■ Horses: Smuggling

**Sarah Champion:**

[\[2087\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate his Department has made of the number of (a) horses and (b) ponies smuggled from the United Kingdom in each of last five years.

**Daniel Zeichner:**

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) defines a smuggled animal as one that is illegally exported. This means the animal is one that is not travelling on appropriate paperwork, has not been declared and/or is concealed.

By its very nature, robust data on the numbers of horses and ponies illegally smuggled out of the UK in the last five years is not readily available.

APHA only holds data for the period September 2023 to date for APHA Dover. In that period the APHA Dover team inspected 328 horses/ponies being exported (this includes transits from Ireland). 102 of those were found to be non-compliant. The non-compliance figure relates to Welfare in Transport and the Trade in Animals and Related Products Regulations. 10 horses/ponies did not have the required export health certification.

## ■ Noise: Complaints

**Alex Mayer:**

[\[2195\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a minimum complaints threshold for investigating noises that could be a statutory nuisance under the Environment Protection Act 1990.

**Emma Hardy:**

The Noise Policy Statement for England aims to ensure that noise is managed effectively to promote good health and quality of life.

Defra is responsible for the domestic legislation covering statutory nuisance, although the environmental health departments in local authorities are the main enforcers of the statutory noise regime under the Environmental Protection Act, 1990.

No assessment has been made of the merits of introducing a minimum complaints threshold for investigating noises that could be a statutory nuisance.

There are currently no formal thresholds for noise in place. It is not possible to have a single objective noise-based measure which would apply to all situations without giving rise to unintended consequences, for example, restrictions to children's playgrounds. This is because people react to noise in different ways, and effect levels are likely to vary according to different noise sources and time of day. Defra, therefore, considers decisions are best taken by local authorities using their knowledge of the specific circumstances.



## ■ Pesticides: Neonicotinoids

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[2329\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to discontinue the use of the pesticide thiamethoxam, in the context of its alleged toxicity to bees.

**Emma Hardy:**

Pesticides are strictly regulated based on the risks and benefits of use. The Government will always take decisions according to these legal requirements and with full consideration of the evidence.

This government recognises that nature is at a crisis point across Britain. We will therefore change existing policies to prevent the use of those neonicotinoid pesticides that threaten our vital pollinators.

## ■ Postal Workers: Dangerous Dogs

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[2086\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking with the Secretary of State for the Home Department to help prevent dog attacks on postal workers.

**Daniel Zeichner:**

Responsibility for dog control is devolved in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

In England and Wales, owners whose dogs are dangerously out of control are breaking the law and the maximum penalty is a custodial sentence of up to 14 years. This includes in relation to attacks on postal workers.

Defra is working with the Home Office, police, local authorities and animal welfare groups to help prevent attacks by encouraging responsible dog ownership, to ensure dog control issues are addressed before they escalate and to make sure the full force of the law is applied. As part of this work, we will continue to consider whether the current dog control rules are sufficient to ensure communities are protected.

## ■ River Rom: Water

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[2043\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to improve water quality in the River Rom.

**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 reduce sewage pollution 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, [HCWS3](#).

The Environment Agency is working collaboratively with partners within the Roding, Beam, and Ingrebourne Catchment Partnership to improve the water quality and biodiversity of the River Rom.

### ■ Rivers: Mid Leicestershire

**Mr Peter Bedford:**

**[2685]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the ecological rating of rivers are in Mid Leicestershire constituency.

**Emma Hardy:**

The Environment Agency undertakes a programme of ecological, water quality and chemical monitoring on the Somerset Frome according to the requirements defined by the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017 (WFD). This provides an understanding of the overall Ecological Status of the river.

The WFD monitoring classification shows the ecological rating of rivers in the Mid Leicestershire constituency as follows:

- The Grand Union Canal, Leicester Line, summit to Aylestone is rated as Good
- The Lubbesthorpe Brook Catchment (tributary of Soar) is rated as Moderate
- The Quorn Brook Catchment (tributary of Soar) is rated as Moderate
- The Rothley Brook Catchment (tributary of Soar) is rated as Moderate
- The Eye / Wreake from Langham Brook to Soar is rated as Poor
- The Soar from Sence to Rothley Brook is rated as Poor.

This information is publicly available on [England Catchment Data Explorer](#).

### ■ Veterinary Services

**Andrew Rosindell:**

**[2039]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of bringing forward legislative proposals to (a) protect the title veterinary nurse and (b) improve regulation of veterinary practices.

**Daniel Zeichner:**

Defra is engaging with the veterinary sector to understand the needs of the industry and what appropriate government intervention might look like.

**Water Companies: Accountability****Jessica Toale:**[\[2649\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to hold water companies accountable for alleged sewage discharge.

**Jessica Toale:**[\[2650\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to improve coastal water in Bournemouth West constituency.

**Jessica Toale:**[\[2651\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to tackle sewage discharges by Wessex Water in Bournemouth West constituency.

**Jessica Toale:**[\[2652\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what data his Department holds on sewage discharges into the sea in Bournemouth in each of the last 5 years.

**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 reduce sewage pollution 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, [HCWS3](#).

There is only one permitted discharge into the sea within the area of the Bournemouth West constituency, which is a water industry pumping station at Pier Approach. The discharge for this pumping station is through a pipe out to sea and should only operate during storm conditions or in an emergency. With respect to Bournemouth, 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](#). Wessex Water now publishes its spill data in near-real time online and this can be viewed [here](#).

## FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

### ■ **British Nationals Abroad: Departmental Responsibilities**

**John Glen:** [\[2311\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if the Prime Minister will make it his policy to appoint a Minister with specific cross-Government responsibility for British citizens living overseas.

**Mr Hamish Falconer:**

I am the Minister responsible for consular and crisis operations.

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

### ■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]**

**Rebecca Smith:** [\[2215\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his Department's timetable is for the completion of the new Urgent Care and Emergency Centre at Derriford Hospital, Plymouth.

**Karin Smyth:**

The National Health Service is broken and this Government is determined to fix it. We recognise the need for investment in our estate across the country.

As the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care announced, and as subsequently confirmed in the Chancellor's statement on 29 July 2024, there is a full and comprehensive ongoing review of the New Hospital Programme, to provide a realistic and costed timetable for delivery. This will take into account the urgent need to rebuild the seven hospitals built mostly using reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete to protect staff and patient safety.

The Secretary of State will consider the findings and update Parliament on the outcome of the review reporting back to patients, clinicians, and local communities on the next steps for the New Hospital Programme. We will provide a clear and realistic timetable for delivery of the Programme and agree the investment needed to get patients the care they deserve.

### ■ **Abortion: Drugs**

**Mary Glendon:** [\[2326\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that abortion providers meet their obligations to ensure that a woman's gestational

age is accurately assessed before she may be prescribed abortion pills to be taken at home.

**Karin Smyth:**

In accordance with the Abortion Act 1967, home use of early medical abortion pills is only permitted if the pregnancy has not exceeded 10 weeks gestation, at the time the first medicine in the course is administered. Before prescribing abortion medicine for use at home, the doctor terminating the pregnancy must be of the opinion, formed in good faith, that the pregnancy is not beyond 10 weeks. This opinion is formed following a consultation with the woman concerned.

If there is any uncertainty about the gestation of the pregnancy, the woman should attend an in-person appointment. If she does not attend in-person when there is any uncertainty about the gestation, the doctor leading the termination would not be able to form an opinion in good faith that the pregnancy is below 10 weeks gestation, and therefore would not be able to prescribe abortion pills for home use.

■ **Air Ambulance Services: Rural Areas**

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[2080\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of air ambulance response times in rural areas.

**Karin Smyth:**

No specific assessment has been made centrally by the Department. Air ambulance response times are not routinely published by Air Ambulance Charities.

■ **AJM Healthcare: Wheelchairs**

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[2496\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 23 July to Question 383 on Wheelchairs: Procurement, if he will take steps to solicit feedback from ICBs on the performance of AJM Healthcare in their areas.

**Stephen Kinnock:**

The Department does not have specific plans to solicit feedback from integrated care boards (ICBs) on the performance of AJM Healthcare in their areas.

Data collected through the National Wheelchair Data Collection is at ICB level, therefore we do not hold specific provider data. ICBs hold accountability and responsibility for the performance of contracted provision, and any issues arising within the contracting and commissioning of wheelchair services must be reviewed and addressed by the relevant ICB.

■ **Autism and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: Diagnosis**

**Ben Goldsborough:**

[\[2203\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average waiting times were for (a) ADHD and (b) autism assessments in each year since 2010.

**Stephen Kinnock:**

There is, at present, no single, established dataset that can be used to monitor waiting times for the assessment or treatment of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) nationally. The National Institute for Health and Care Research has commissioned a research project to provide initial insights into local ADHD diagnosis waiting times data collection. We are also supporting a taskforce that NHS England is establishing to look at ADHD service provision, announced in March 2024. The taskforce will bring together expertise from across a broad range of sectors, including the National Health Service, education, and justice, to better understand the challenges affecting people with ADHD. NHS England is also working to develop a national ADHD data improvement plan.

In regard to autism, waiting times are published quarterly by NHS England, and include information about the waiting time from referral to a first care contact, since 2019. Further information is available at the following link:

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

The following table shows the number of people with an open referral, the number of people with an open referral and a care contact, and the median waiting time in days of patients with an open suspected autism referral, where their first care contact was within the year, for each of the last five years:

YEAR	PEOPLE WITH AN OPEN REFERRAL	PEOPLE WITH AN OPEN REFERRAL AND A CARE CONTACT	MEDIAN WAITING TIME BETWEEN REFERRAL AND FIRST CONTACT IN DAYS
2019/20	53,857	12,602	128
2020/21	87,654	15,540	226
2021/22	130,060	22,608	214
2022/23	199,975	31,463	210
2023/24	280,338	39,371	296

Source: Mental Health Services Dataset. Notes:

1. care contact is used as a proxy for an assessment, and data could only be provided from 2019/20 as this is the first full year in which the methodology was agreed, and the data quality of the fields used in the autism pathway was sufficient; and
2. given autism data has only been published since 2019/20, it should be expected that data quality would improve over time, and as such, some of the change seen will be the result of data quality improvements.

## ■ Autism and Mental Health: Hospital Beds

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[1934\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the availability of beds for (a) adults and (b) children with (i) a dual diagnosis with autism and (ii) other complex mental health needs.

**Stephen Kinnock:**

This specific assessment has not yet been made, as NHS England does not currently hold data of the necessary quality on the number of available beds in mental health inpatient settings prior to March 2024. NHS England has recently implemented version 6 of the Mental Health Service Dataset, which will include data from April 2024 onwards. The data within this new dataset is currently being checked for data quality.

## ■ Autism: Diagnosis

**Neil Duncan-Jordan:**

[\[R\]](#) [\[2221\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to reduce waiting times for children requiring an autism assessment.

**Stephen Kinnock:**

The Department is currently considering next steps to improve access to autism assessments. We expect integrated care boards (ICBs) to have due regard to relevant National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines on autism, when commissioning services for children, young people, and adults. It is the responsibility of ICBs to make available appropriate provision to meet the health and care needs of their local population, in line with these NICE guidelines.

On 5 April 2023, NHS England published a national framework and operational guidance to deliver improved outcomes in all-age autism assessment pathways. This guidance will help ICBs and the National Health Service to deliver improved outcomes for children, young people, and adults referred to an autism assessment service. In 2024/25, £4.3 million is available nationally to improve services for autistic children and young people, including autism assessment services.

## ■ Blood Cancer: Health Services

**Mr Mark Francois:**

[\[2030\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to develop a best practice pathway for (a) leukaemia and (b) other blood cancers.

**Andrew Gwynne:**

NHS England has implemented non-symptom specific pathways for patients who present with symptoms that can indicate several different cancers, including leukaemia. An NHS England national evaluation showed blood cancers are one of the most common cancer types diagnosed through these pathways.

**Mr Mark Francois:**

[2031]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure consistent publication of data on waiting times for (a) leukaemia and (b) other cancer treatments.

**Karin Smyth:**

Cancer waiting time data is collected by NHS England according to three performance standards: the Faster Diagnosis Standard (FDS), which aims to ensure patients have cancer diagnosed or ruled out within 28 days of referral from a general practice or screening service; the 31-day wait from a decision to treat to first or subsequent treatment of cancer combined standard; and the 62-day referral to first definitive treatment for cancer combined standard.

Data can then be broken down by cancer type. For the FDS, data regarding leukaemia and its sub-types is collected using the following two categories, suspected acute leukaemia and suspected haematological malignancies, excluding acute leukaemia. The latter category includes non-acute leukaemia when there is a suspicion. These statistics are published monthly and are available at the following link:

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

**Mr Mark Francois:**

[2035]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the evaluation of non-specific pathways will include granular blood cancer data.

**Andrew Gwynne:**

Raising awareness, delivering more research, including into new treatments, and improving early diagnosis of cancers, which includes blood related cancers such as leukaemia, are crucial for improving cancer survival.

NHS England has implemented non-symptom specific pathways for patients who present with non-specific symptoms, or combinations thereof, that can indicate several different cancers. This includes leukaemia, which can present non-specific symptoms, such as unexpected weight loss and night sweats. Using its national evaluation, NHS England has determined that blood cancers are one of the most common cancer types diagnosed through these pathways.

## ■ Cancer

**Mr Mark Francois:**

[2034]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to implement a cancer strategy over the course of this Parliament.

**Andrew Gwynne:**

Professor Lord Darzi is currently undertaking an independent investigation into the state of the National Health Service, the findings of which will feed into the Government's 10-year plan to build a health service that is fit for the future. The Government will set out any further priorities on cancer and health in due course.



The NHS Long-Term Plan, published in January 2019, sets out the NHS's key ambitions on cancer. The plan sets out the ambition to increase the number of cancers diagnosed at stage one and two to 75% by 2028, and to increase the number of people surviving cancer for five years by 55,000 as a result.

## ■ Cancer: Health Services

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[2240\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of implementing a cancer plan that (a) increases (a) radiotherapy and (b) other services.

**Andrew Gwynne:**

Professor Lord Darzi is currently undertaking an independent investigation into the state of the National Health Service, the findings of which will feed into the Government's 10-year plan to build a health service that is fit for the future. The Government will set out any further priorities on cancer and health in due course. The Government's Health Mission will aim to make progress against major diseases, including cancer.

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[2241\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has taken steps to increase workforce capacity for (a) cancer care and (b) radiotherapy treatment services.

**Karin Smyth:**

The Department is working closely with NHS England to make sure we have the right workforce with the right skills up and down the country. This includes cancer care and radiotherapy treatment services.

As well as increasing the workforce, we will also be treating staff with the respect they deserve, improving their working conditions, and reforming the way they deliver care, so they deliver more care in the community and more preventative care.

We are committed to training the staff we need to get cancer patients seen on time. The Government will make sure the National Health Service has the staff it needs to be there for all of us when we need it.

In March 2024 there were over 35,400 full-time equivalent staff working across the key cancer-facing professions of clinical oncology, gastro-enterology, medical oncology, histopathology, clinical radiology, diagnostic and therapeutic radiography.

## ■ Care Homes: Fees and Charges

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[2082\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he is taking steps to help people with care home fees.

**Stephen Kinnock:**

Adult social care is devolved across the United Kingdom. In England, the current system of charging for care is based on a long-standing principle of personal responsibility. However, where an individual has assets of less than £23,250, they are entitled to state-funded support with their fees. Those who reside in care homes are also entitled to maintain some of their income, via the Personal Expenses Allowance (PEA), after paying for care. The PEA is currently set at £30.15 per week, and allows individuals to purchase personal items that are not part of their care. Individuals can also retain any of their income, or assets, which are disregarded under the Care and Statutory Support guidance.

We have had to announce that the commitment we inherited to introduce charging reform by October 2025 cannot be taken forward. The funding for the reforms was not guaranteed and councils warned that the reforms are now impossible to deliver to previously announced timeframes.

**Care Homes: High Peak****Jon Pearce:**[\[2599\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of care homes are rated as good by the Care Quality Commission in High Peak constituency.

**Stephen Kinnock:**

There are currently 25 care homes registered with the Care Quality Commission in the High Peak constituency. As of 1 July 2024, 13 of those care homes, or 52%, are rated as 'Good'.

**Commission on Human Medicines: Pregnancy Tests****Yasmin Qureshi:**[\[2254\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will commission an independent review of the Report of the Commission on Human Medicines' Expert Working Group on Hormone Pregnancy Tests, published on 15 November 2017.

**Andrew Gwynne:**

We are hugely sympathetic to the families who believe that they or their children have suffered following the use of hormone pregnancy tests. It is not currently the Government's intention to review the Report of the Commission on Human Medicines; however we are committed to reviewing any new scientific evidence which may come to light.

**Dental Services: Bournemouth West****Jessica Toale:**[\[2653\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve (a) access to and (b) the provision of NHS dentistry in Bournemouth West constituency.

**Jessica Toale:**

[2654]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of NHS dental provision in (a) Bournemouth West constituency and (b) Dorset.

**Stephen Kinnock:**

The Government plans to tackle the challenges patients face when trying to access National Health Service dental care with a rescue plan to provide 700,000 more urgent dental appointments and recruit new dentists to the areas that need them most. To rebuild dentistry in the long term and increase access to NHS dental care, we will reform the dental contract, with a shift to focus on prevention and the retention of NHS dentists.

From 1 April 2023, the responsibility for commissioning primary care dentistry to meet the needs of the local population has been delegated to all integrated care boards (ICBs) across England. In the 24 months to June 2023, 245,772 adults saw an NHS dentist in the Dorset ICB, equal to 39% of the adult population in the ICB. In the 12 months to June 2023, 73,084 children saw an NHS dentist in Dorset, equal to 51% of the child population in the ICB.

**Jessica Toale:**

[2656]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many dental practices offered NHS services in Bournemouth West constituency in each year since 2015.

**Stephen Kinnock:**

While data is not held for each year since 2015, as of 10 July 2024, there are 18 dental practices currently offering National Health Services in the Bournemouth West constituency. This data is sourced from the Find a Dentist website and is matched to constituencies based on the postcode data shown on the website, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-Dentist>

#### ■ Dental Services: Children

**Jessica Toale:**

[2655]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many children aged four and under have been admitted to hospital for tooth extraction due to decay in each of the last five years.

**Stephen Kinnock:**

The following tables show the number of Finished Consultant Episodes for tooth extraction, with caries as the primary diagnosis code, from 2018/19 to 2022/23:

	AGE 0 TO 4 YEARS OLD
2022/23	4,383

  

	AGE 0 TO 5 YEARS
2021/22	7,496
2020/21	4,441
2019/20	10,581
2018/19	11,397

Source: the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities' annual statistics on tooth extractions, available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hospital-based-tooth-extractions-in-0-to-19-year-olds>

Data in 2022/23 was reported for the age band zero to four years old. However, data for all previous years was reported for the age band zero to five years old. The data is reported as the number of Finished Consultant Episodes, therefore the data does not represent the number of individual children who received these treatments, as one child may have had more than one Finished Consultant Episode.

■ **Dental Services: Gosport**

**Dame Caroline Dinenage:**

**[2059]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he plans to take to increase access to NHS dentists in Gosport constituency.

**Stephen Kinnock:**

The Government plans to tackle the challenges patients face when trying to access National Health Service dental care with a rescue plan to provide 700,000 more urgent dental appointments and recruit new dentists to the areas that need them most. To rebuild dentistry in the long term and increase access to NHS dental care, we will reform the dental contract, with a shift to focus on prevention and the retention of NHS dentists.

From 1 April 2023, the responsibility for commissioning primary care dentistry to meet the needs of the local population has been delegated to all integrated care boards across England.

Patients unable to access an urgent dental appointment directly through an NHS dental practice are advised to contact NHS 111 for assistance. NHS dentists are now required to update their NHS website profiles at least every 90 days to ensure patients have access to up-to-date information on where they can access care.

#### ■ **Dental Services: Rural Areas**

**Alicia Kearns:**

[\[2141\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to increase access to NHS dentistry in rural areas.

**Stephen Kinnock:**

We are aware of the challenges faced when accessing a dentist, particularly in more rural and coastal areas. The Government plans to tackle the challenges patients face when trying to access National Health Service dental care with a rescue plan to provide 700,000 more urgent dental appointments and recruit new dentists to the areas that need them most. To rebuild dentistry in the long term and increase access to NHS dental care, we will reform the dental contract, with a shift to focus on prevention and the retention of NHS dentists.

From 1 April 2023, the responsibility for commissioning primary care dentistry to meet the needs of the local population has been delegated to all integrated care boards across England.

#### ■ **Dental Services: South West**

**Sarah Gibson:**

[\[2207\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to (a) financially support and (b) improve local access to NHS dental practices in South West England.

**Stephen Kinnock:**

The Government plans to tackle the challenges patients face when trying to access National Health Service dental care with a rescue plan to provide 700,000 more urgent dental appointments and recruit new dentists to the areas that need them most. To rebuild dentistry in the long term and increase access to NHS dental care, we will reform the dental contract, with a shift to focus on prevention and the retention of NHS dentists.

On 1 April 2023 responsibility for commissioning NHS dentistry was delegated to integrated care boards (ICBs) across England. The seven ICBs in the Southwest are supported by the NHS Southwest Collaborative Commissioning Hub to commission NHS dentistry in their area.

NHS England has provided guidance for ICBs that requires dental allocations to be ringfenced in 2024/25, with any unused resources re-directed to improve NHS dental access in the first instance, and not spent on other services. ICBs will decide how to use any forecast underspend in line with this guidance.

**■ Dentistry: Students**

**Yasmin Qureshi:** [\[2251\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much capital funding he plans to provide to expand dental school estates to accommodate the increased number of dental students from September 2026.

**Stephen Kinnock:**

The Department for Education is responsible for capital investment in Higher Education Institutions, including dental schools, and we will work closely with them on this matter. Specific programmes of capital funding to support dental school expansion are subject to the upcoming spending review.

**■ Dentistry: Training**

**Yasmin Qureshi:** [\[2248\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the plans to increase dental training places by 40% by 2031-32 outlined in the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan are fully funded.

**Yasmin Qureshi:** [\[2249\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the plans to increase dental training places by 40% by 2031-32 outlined in the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan are fully funded.

**Yasmin Qureshi:** [\[2252\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the adequacy of funding for the planned extension of Dental Foundation Training places after 2031.

**Stephen Kinnock:**

The NHS Long Term Workforce Plan has made up to £2.4 billion available to support the additional education and training expansion across the plan up to 2028/29. This settlement pre-empted the next spending review. Revenue funding for the increase of undergraduate dental training places up to 2028/29 is provided within this. Decisions about funding beyond 2028/29, will be considered at a later date.

**Yasmin Qureshi:** [\[2250\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the cost of training for new dental academic staff to support the expansion of dental school places in the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan is fully funded.

**Stephen Kinnock:**

Higher Education Institutions are responsible for training their members of staff, and ensuring they have adequate staffing levels to teach their courses.

## ■ Department of Health and Social Care: Ministers

**Kit Malthouse:**

[2407]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what (a) statutory and (b) non-statutory direct ministerial appointments excluding special advisers he has made; and (i) who the appointee was and (ii) what the (A) remuneration, (B) title and (C) terms of reference was for each appointment.

**Karin Smyth:**

My Rt hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care is responsible for making a range of public appointments, some of which are established in statute, and some of which are not. As of 29 August 2024, my Rt hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care had not made any public appointments directly, without competition.

Separate to public appointments, and in line with Cabinet Office guidance, ministers can also make direct ministerial appointments. As of 29 August 2024, my Rt hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care had made two such appointments. The first of which is the Rt hon. Professor Lord Darzi, who has been appointed to lead the independent audit of the National Health Service. This is an unpaid position, and details of this appointment and the terms of reference are available, respectively, at the following two links:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-investigation-of-nhs-performance-terms-of-reference/independent-investigation-of-nhs-performance-terms-of-reference>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/independent-investigation-ordered-into-state-of-nhs>

The second appointment is Paul Corrigan, who has been appointed as a Senior Strategy Advisor for the 10-Year Health Plan. This is a paid position, at a rate of £350 per day. Further details on the terms of reference for the role will be released shortly on the GOV.UK website.

## ■ Derriford Hospital: Accident and Emergency Departments

**Rebecca Smith:**

[2666]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has for the proposed urgent and emergency care centre at Derriford Hospital in Plymouth.

**Karin Smyth:**

We recognise the need for investment in our estate across the country, including in Plymouth. As my rt. Hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, announced, and as subsequently confirmed in the Chancellor's statement on 29 July 2024, there is a full and comprehensive ongoing review of the New Hospital Programme, to provide a realistic and costed timetable for delivery. This will consider the urgent need to rebuild the seven hospitals built mostly using reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete to protect staff and patient safety.

The Secretary of State will consider the findings and update Parliament on the outcome of the review reporting back to patients, clinicians, and local communities on the next steps for the New Hospital Programme. We will provide a clear and realistic timetable for delivery of the Programme and agree the investment needed to get patients the care they deserve.

## ■ Doctors: North of England

**Charlotte Nichols:** [\[2530\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he plans to take to help registrars find work in the North of England.

**Karin Smyth:**

As we continue to expand the medical workforce, we will ensure there is growth in registrar and specialty training places, to meet the demands of the National Health Service. NHS England will continue to work with stakeholders to ensure this growth is focused in areas of the country and in specialities where the need is greatest.

## ■ Dyslexia: Children

**Helen Grant:** [\[2284\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help improve the diagnosis of dyslexia in children.

**Stephen Kinnock:**

Assessments for dyslexia in children are currently provided through Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) services by an educational psychologist or an appropriately qualified specialist dyslexia teacher.

If a parent thinks their child may be dyslexic, as a first step they should speak to their child's teacher or their school's special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) about their concerns. They may be able to offer additional support to help the child if necessary.

The government will be focusing on a community-wide approach to meeting the needs of children with SEND, improving inclusivity and expertise in mainstream schools. On 22 November 2023, the Department of Health and Social Care, Department for Education and NHS England launched a joint project, Partnerships for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS), with £13million of funding to test an innovative delivery model to improve access to specialist support in mainstream primary schools, upskilling those settings to meet a range of neurodiverse needs. The programme is ongoing, with delivery due to be completed by 31 March 2025. The programme is being evaluated, and learning will inform future policy development around how schools support neurodiverse children.



## ■ **Electronic Cigarettes and Tobacco: Smuggling**

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[2245\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will extend powers from HMRC to Trading Standards to provide on-the-spot fines for retailers selling illegal (a) tobacco and (b) vape products.

**Andrew Gwynne:**

HM Revenue and Customs does not have the power to issue on-the-spot fines for retailers selling illegal tobacco or vaping products. Those convicted of selling illegal products could face penalties, including imprisonment or an unlimited fine.

However, the Tobacco and Vapes Bill, which will be introduced to Parliament in the coming weeks, will strengthen enforcement at the local level, to support implementation of the measures in the bill and support our ambition to create a smoke-free United Kingdom. The bill will provide Trading Standards with the option to issue fixed penalty notices, which are on-the-spot fines, for certain offences. The new fixed penalty notices will be in addition to existing sanctions, including the existing fine of £2,500 for underage sales, allowing Trading Standards to take quicker action instead of escalating to a court process.

A strong and proportionate approach to enforcement is essential to prevent illicit trade and underage sales undermining our efforts to create a smoke-free country. HM Revenue and Customs and Border Force's new joint illicit tobacco strategy sets out their continued commitment to reduce the trade in, and demand for, illicit tobacco, and to tackle and disrupt the organised crime groups behind the illicit tobacco trade. Work to enhance illicit vapes enforcement, led by National Trading Standards and funded by a £3 million grant over two years, 2023/24 and 2024/25, from the Department of Health and Social Care, will build on existing work to tackle illicit vapes by Trading Standards across the country.

## ■ **Family Hubs: Finance**

**Steve Darling:**

[\[2574\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to continue funding (a) family hubs and (b) the Start for Life programme.

**Andrew Gwynne:**

The Government has a bold new ambition to raise the healthiest generation of children in our history. There is strong evidence that the critical 1,001 days from conception to the age of two years old sets the foundations for later cognitive, emotional, and physical development.

Launched in August 2022, the three-year Family Hubs and Start for Life programme provides approximately £300 million to 75 local authorities in England with high levels of deprivation, to improve outcomes for families with babies.

The Family Hubs and Start for Life programme is currently funded until 31 March 2025. Further funding for the programme is dependent on future fiscal events and cannot yet be confirmed.

## ■ Gambling

**Dr Beccy Cooper:** [\[2671\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to protect those most at risk of harm from gambling and betting.

**Andrew Gwynne:**

The Government recognises the negative impact gambling can have on individuals, their families, and wider society. The Government has set out our commitment to reducing gambling-related harm by reforming regulation and strengthening protections. We will continue to consider how best to take this commitment forward in the coming months.

## ■ General Practitioners: Derbyshire

**Jon Pearce:** [\[2604\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will provide additional funding for the provision of out-of-hours GP appointments in (a) High Peak constituency and (b) Derbyshire.

**Stephen Kinnock:**

Integrated care boards (ICBs) must ensure that out-of-hours appointments are available to patients to help them access care at convenient times, for example on weekends, evenings, or bank holidays.

The Derby and Derbyshire ICB commissions Derbyshire Health United to provide out of hours general practice (GP) appointments. The ICB also commissions GPs to provide extended access appointments during the period from 8:00am to 8:00pm on Monday to Friday, and 9:00am to 5:00pm on Saturday, as part of the national Primary Care Network Directed Enhanced Service.

## ■ General Practitioners: High Peak

**Jon Pearce:** [\[2600\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of GP surgeries are rated as good by the Care Quality Commission in High Peak constituency.

**Stephen Kinnock:**

As of 2 August 2024, there are 10 general practices (GPs) in the High Peak constituency rated Good by the Care Quality Commission (CQC), which is 77% as a proportion of all GPs in the constituency. There are currently 13 GPs overall registered with the CQC in the High Peak constituency.

## ■ Health Services: Disability

**Marsha De Cordova:**

[2469]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 30 July 2024 to Question 1339 on Accessible Information Standard, for what reason NHS England cannot provide a specific date for publication.

**Stephen Kinnock:**

NHS England is unable to provide an exact date for the publication of the Accessible Information Standard (AIS), due to their internal assurance and governance process. In addition, the AIS can only be published once the accessible versions are in place, all web content has been produced, and all stakeholders have been informed in advance, all of which can only be considered post-internal assurance and governance.

It should be noted that the current AIS remains in force and therefore, there should not be a gap in provision for people using services.

## ■ Heart Diseases

**Jim Shannon:**

[2072]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people are diagnosed with hypoplastic left heart syndrome as of July 2025.

**Andrew Gwynne:**

The most recent data shows that there were 186 diagnoses in the year 2021, the latest year for which data is available, which resulted in 87 live births. Further information is available at the following link:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/ncardrs-congenital-anomaly-statistics-annual-data/ncardrs-congenital-anomaly-statistics-report-2021>

## ■ Junior Doctors: Pay

**Rachael Maskell:**

[2382]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the pay differential between junior doctors and Agenda for Change staff following his Department's recent pay offer to junior doctors.

**Karin Smyth:**

The different roles and responsibilities of junior doctors, compared to Agenda for Change (AfC) staff, makes it difficult to draw a simple comparison. Junior doctor pay scales cover a wide range of experience, from new medical graduates, to those about to qualify as consultants. The AfC pay scales cover a diverse range of roles and experiences, including porters, cleaners, nurses, paramedics, and managers. The NHS Job Evaluation Scheme is used to determine the pay bands for all posts under AfC terms and conditions.

Outside of multi-year pay deals, pay tends to be set through the independent Pay Review Body (PRB) process. The NHS PRB covers AfC staff, and the Review Body on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration covers medical staff, including junior doctors. This process involves an independent panel who make recommendations based on their terms of reference and the evidence they receive. As part of this they consider a wide range of factors, including morale, and recruitment and retention, to generate appropriate pay values by workforce, before recommending these to the Government. The Government has accepted the pay recommendations from both PRBs for 2024/25.

During the exceptional recent period of industrial action in the National Health Service, bespoke negotiations have taken place outside of the PRB process to address specific concerns. However, a significant part of the overall offer to junior doctors has come from accepting the independent PRB recommendation.

### ■ Leighton Hospital: Concrete

**Connor Naismith:**

[\[2210\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the condition of RAAC at Leighton Hospital in Crewe and Nantwich constituency.

**Karin Smyth:**

As one of the seven hospitals constructed mostly using reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC), Leighton Hospital was selected to be rebuilt as part of the New Hospital Programme (NHP) in May 2023. It is also part of NHS England's robust national RAAC programme, which is backed by £954 million. This programme has delivered mitigation, safety, and eradication works across all National Health Service sites in England with confirmed RAAC, to keep facilities safe and open, including Leighton Hospital. Keeping capacity open but being scrupulous about monitoring and mitigation until the hospital is rebuilt is fully in line with the current evidence and recommendations of the Institute of Structural Engineers.

As the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care announced, and as subsequently confirmed in the Chancellor's statement on 29 July 2024, the Department will undertake a full and comprehensive review of the NHP to provide a realistic and costed timetable for delivery. This will take into account the urgent need to rebuild Leighton Hospital to ensure the safety of staff and patients. Once the review into the NHP is concluded the Secretary of State will update Parliament and set out the next steps for the Programme.

### ■ Leukaemia: Health Services

**Mr Mark Francois:**

[\[2032\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of leukaemia patients were offered a holistic needs assessment in the last 12 months.

**Karin Smyth:**

NHS England has committed to ensuring that all cancer patients have access to a Holistic Needs Assessment, ensuring care is focused on what matters most to each person.

The 2023 England National Cancer Patient Experience Survey indicates the proportion of people with Leukaemia who reported having had a discussion with a member of the team looking after them, before their treatment started, about their needs or concerns was 72.6%. For people with Leukaemia, a further 24.5% said they had the discussion to some extent, and a total of 97.1% reported having had a discussion.

**■ Leukaemia: Mortality Rates****Mr Mark Francois:**[\[2033\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of five-year survival rates for (a) acute myeloid leukaemia and (b) other leukaemias.

**Andrew Gwynne:**

The age-standardised, one-year net survival for adults, those aged 15 to 99 years old, diagnosed with leukaemia between 2016 and 2020 in England was 74.4%, and the five-year survival rate was 55.9%.

NHS England has implemented non symptom specific pathways for patients who present with non-specific symptoms or combinations thereof, that can indicate several different cancers. This includes leukaemia, which can present non-specific symptoms, such as unexpected weight loss and night sweats. The national evaluation showed that blood cancers are one of the most common cancer types diagnosed through these pathways.

Raising awareness, delivering more research, including into new treatments, and improving early diagnosis of cancers, which includes blood related cancers such as leukaemia, are crucial for improving cancer survival.

Cancer patients are being failed, waiting too long for a diagnosis and treatment. We will bring down waits for cancer appointments with the Fit For the Future fund, doubling the number of state-of-the-art magnetic resonance imaging and computed tomography in the National Health Service to ensure early diagnosis and faster treatment.

**■ Life Expectancy: Equality****Dr Beccy Cooper:**[\[2667\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to establish a health mission to tackle the (a) social determinants of health and (b) regional gap in healthy life expectancy.

**Andrew Gwynne:**

The Government has established a mission to build a National Health Service fit for the future. As part of this mission, the Government will tackle the social determinants of health, with the aim of halving the gap in healthy life expectancy between the richest and poorest regions in England.

**■ Long Covid: Health Services****Kim Leadbeater:**[\[2563\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to support (a) children and (b) other people with long covid.

**Andrew Gwynne:**

NHS England has invested significantly in supporting people with long COVID. This includes setting up specialist post-COVID services nationwide for adults, and children and young people, developing digital self-management tools, and investing in ensuring general practice teams are equipped to support people affected by the condition. As of 1 April 2024, there were over 90 adult post-COVID services across England along with an additional 10 children and young people's hubs.

From April 2024, in line with the National Health Service's operating framework and the establishment of integrated care systems, commissioning of post-COVID services has been the responsibility of integrated care boards. This is being supported by ongoing funding, and the expectation is that dedicated services should continue to be offered to support people with long COVID. The Government has also invested over £50 million in research through two specific funding calls to better understand long COVID and how to treat it.

**■ Mental Health Services: Children and Young People****Jim Shannon:**[\[2083\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will hold discussion with his Northern Ireland counterpart on trends in waiting times for access to CAMHS.

**Stephen Kinnock:**

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care had an introductory meeting with Northern Ireland's Minister of Health on 6 July 2024. During the meeting the ministers outlined their priorities and commitment to collaboration, which included discussion on mental health.

**■ Mental Health Services: Derbyshire and Greater London****Jon Pearce:**[\[2173\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many mental health support teams there were in (a) High Peak constituency, (b) Derbyshire and (c) London in each year since 2010.

**Stephen Kinnock:**

A table showing the number of operational and mobilising Mental Health Support Teams in London and Derbyshire, each year from 2018/19 to May 2023, is attached. Precise numbers may be subject to slight variation due to local mergers, as well as recruitment in the case of later years. The information is only available at an integrated care system level.

**Attachments:**

1. Formatted table for PQ2173 [FORMATTED TABLE FOR MINISTERIAL CLEARANCE Table for PQ2173 (2).docx]

**■ Mental Health Services: High Peak****Jon Pearce:**[\[2594\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve access to mental health services in High Peak constituency.

**Jon Pearce:**[\[2601\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to support the (a) recruitment and (b) retention of mental health specialists in High Peak constituency.

**Stephen Kinnock:**

People with mental health issues are not getting the support or care they need, which is why we will ensure we give mental health the same attention and focus as physical health, so that people can be confident in accessing high quality mental health support when they need it. As set out in the NHS Priorities and Operational Planning Guidance for 2024/25, NHS England is continuing to expand access to mental health services, to increase the number of people accessing mental health support. We plan to recruit an additional 8,500 mental health workers across child and adult mental health services in England, including in the High Peak constituency, to reduce delays and provide faster treatment.

**■ Mental Health Services: Rural Areas****Cat Smith:**[\[2359\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to take steps to help ensure mental health services are accessible to patients in rural communities.

**Cat Smith:**[\[2360\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps with representatives from the farming sector to support people with mental health issues in rural communities.

**Stephen Kinnock:**

As set out in the NHS Priorities and Operational Planning Guidance for 2024/25, NHS England is continuing to expand access to mental health services, to increase the number of people accessing mental health support. Integrated care boards are

responsible for providing health and care services to meet the needs of their local populations.

We plan to recruit an additional 8,500 mental health workers across child and adult mental health services in England, to reduce delays and provide faster treatment, including in rural areas.

The Suicide prevention strategy for England: 2023 to 2028, published in September 2023, sets out an ambition to conduct and commission research and data linkage projects, including supporting the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to look at agricultural workers, to understand the unique challenges in that occupational group and respond appropriately.

In addition, through its Farming and Countryside Programme, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs is working with a range of farming charities, including the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution and the Yellow Wellies charity, which have highlighted mental health challenges for farming communities.

#### ■ **NHS England: Communication and Management Consultants**

**Charlie Dewhirst:**

**[2636]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to page 10 of HM Treasury's document entitled Fixing the foundations: Public spending audit 2024-25, published on 29 July 2024, whether his plans to cut (a) consultancy and (b) communications spending apply to (i) NHS trusts and (ii) NHS England.

**Karin Smyth:**

The Department is exploring options across all budgets within its remit to identify savings to contribute to pressures revealed in the audit, as outlined in HM Treasury's document entitled Fixing the foundations: Public spending audit 2024-25. This includes, but is not exclusive to, taking action to reduce non-essential consultancy and communications spending.

#### ■ **NHS: Cybersecurity**

**Jim Shannon:**

**[2075]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to (a) modernise NHS IT systems and (b) protect them from cyber attacks.

**Karin Smyth:**

The National Health Service has made significant progress in digitising and modernising their services in recent years. Notably, we are on course to ensure that 93% of NHS trusts have an electronic patient record (EPR) system by the end of this year, reducing reliance on paper and significantly improving both clinical safety and performance. We are also working to ensure that 74% of trusts meet the minimum standards for the capability of those EPR systems. Those investments will make a marked difference to the digital capabilities of dozens of trusts.



The Cyber Security Strategy for Health and Adult Social Care: 2023 to 2030 sets out plans to increase cyber resilience across the system. There is on-going work through the Cyber Improvement Programme that addresses the changing cyber risk landscape, expands protection and services, and reduces the risk of a successful attack. The NHS England Cyber Security Operations Centre monitors over 1.85 million devices across the NHS IT estate, identifying and preventing cyber incidents.

## ■ NHS: Pay

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[2071\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will ensure that NHS workers receive above inflation pay awards.

**Karin Smyth:**

The Government uses the independent Pay Review Body (PRB) process to set pay for all public sector workers. In reaching a decision on what to recommend, the PRBs consider recruitment, retention, funding, and the Government's inflation target. The PRBs are also required to take account of economic and other evidence submitted by Government, professional representatives, and staff. The Government accepted the PRB's recommendations in full on 29 July 2024.

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[2383\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment has he made of the potential impact of the Government's pay offer to non-Pay Review Body staff on (a) recruitment and (b) retention in those organisations.

**Karin Smyth:**

No assessment has been made, on either recruitment or retention, of the impact of pay uplifts confirmed by the Government on non-Pay Review Body (PRB) staff.

Independent organisations, organisations that fall outside of the PRB's remit, such as social enterprises, are free to develop and adapt their own terms and conditions of employment, in order to recruit and retain the staff they need.

**Sarah Owen:**

[\[2504\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what percentage of the recent pay award for Agenda for Change staff will be funded from (a) existing NHS budgets, (b) the Departmental budget, (c) additional funding from the Treasury, (d) efficiencies, and (e) any other sources; and what consequential funding will be allocated to each of the devolved administrations as a result.

**Karin Smyth:**

The statement from my Rt hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 29 July 2024 sets out the position across the Government, and includes departments making savings to pay towards the outcomes of the Pay Review Bodies. As the process for agreeing savings is not yet complete, at this point we cannot provide the breakdown requested.

However, the Government is committed to ensuring the National Health Service receives the funding it needs to pay for this deal. There will be no reduction in the availability or quality of frontline health and care services as a consequence of funding this pay award.

Any Barnett consequential would be provided to the devolved administrations in the usual way. Any additional funding that flows to the Department as a result would be at supplementary estimates in 2024/25.

## ■ Obesity: Drugs

**Yasmin Qureshi:** [\[2258\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the regulation of sales of weight loss injections by online pharmacies.

**Karin Smyth:**

When used appropriately, online prescribing provides a valuable route for patient access, taking pressure off general practices. We are concerned, however, about some online prescribing, including the prescribing of weight loss medicines by online businesses. These are prescription only medicines (POMs), licensed for use in the United Kingdom by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), and should be prescribed according to the terms of the MHRA's marketing authorisation. Prescribing outside of these terms, known as off-label prescribing, should only take place when the prescriber doing so judges it to be in the best interest of the patient, on the basis of the available evidence.

Rules regarding the advertising and promotion of medicines in the UK are set out under Part 14 of the Human Medicines Regulations 2012. The MHRA works closely with other regulators to help ensure that the public is protected from the advertising of POMs. A joint enforcement operation is in place with the Advertising Standards Authority to take targeted action against weight-loss treatment providers who use social media to promote POMs. In England, online prescribing is regulated by the Care Quality Commission and the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC). The GPhC regulates the supply of medicines against prescriptions in pharmacies. Regulators are able to take action when a provider does not comply with the standards.

## ■ Pancreatic Cancer: Health Services

**Dan Carden:** [\[2466\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help improve pancreatic cancer outcomes.

**Andrew Gwynne:**

The Department is working with NHS England to deliver interventions to improve outcomes for those with pancreatic cancer across England. Early diagnosis is imperative to improving outcomes for all types of cancer, especially pancreatic due to the non-specific nature of its symptoms. As the first step to ensuring faster diagnosis

and treatment, we will deliver an extra 40,000 operations, scans, and appointments each week.

For pancreatic cancer specifically, NHS England is providing a route into pancreatic cancer surveillance for those at inherited high-risk, to identify lesions before they develop into cancer. NHS England is additionally creating pathways to support faster referral routes for people with non-specific symptoms, and is increasing direct access for general practitioners to diagnostic tests.

Additionally, the Getting it Right First-Time team in NHS England is undertaking a deep dive into pancreatic cancer, which will highlight good practice and actions National Health Service providers need to take to improve services. NHS England is also funding a new audit into pancreatic cancer, aiming to provide regular and timely evidence to cancer service providers of where patterns of care in England may vary, to increase the consistency of access to treatments and to stimulate improvements in cancer treatment and outcomes for patients.

## ■ Primodos

**Yasmin Qureshi:**

[\[2253\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to support those impacted by Primodos.

**Andrew Gwynne:**

Primodos is one of three areas Baroness Cumberlege was asked to look into as part of her Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Review, which reported in 2020. Since the report was published, action has been taken to address the issues identified, including appointing the first Patient Safety Commissioner to champion patient voice in relation to the safety of medicines and medical devices.

## ■ Processed Food: Advertising

**Dr Beccy Cooper:**

[\[2670\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress his Department has made on the implementation of a ban on junk food advertising before the watershed.

**Andrew Gwynne:**

As set out in the King's Speech, in this parliamentary session, we will bring forward the necessary secondary legislation to restrict advertisements of less healthy food and drink products before 9:00pm on television, and all paid-for advertising of these products online. We will set out the details on the next steps shortly.

## ■ Public Buildings: Defibrillators

**Steve Darling:**

[\[2592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a duty on local authorities to facilitate the installation of defibrillators on buildings that they own.

**Andrew Gwynne:**

The Department does not have any plans to introduce a duty on local authorities to facilitate the installation of automated external defibrillators (AEDs) on buildings that they own. The Government is committed to improving access to AEDs in public spaces and reducing inequalities in access to these life saving devices.

■ **Radiotherapy: Romford****Andrew Rosindell:**[\[2239\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to increase radiotherapy treatment capacity for patients in Romford constituency.

**Andrew Gwynne:**

Since April 2022, the responsibility for investing in new radiotherapy machines sits with local systems. This is supported by the 2021 Spending Review, which set aside £12 billion in operational capital for the National Health Service for 2022 to 2025, and the latest Capital Planning Guidance.

■ **Surgery: High Peak****Jon Pearce:**[\[2603\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to reduce waiting times for elective surgeries for people in High Peak constituency.

**Karin Smyth:**

Reducing waiting times for elective surgery is a key part of our Health Mission, including for people in the High Peak constituency. We will start by delivering an extra 40,000 operations, scans, and appointments each week across the country, as the first step in our commitment to ensuring patients can expect to be treated within 18 weeks. We are also addressing the challenges in diagnostic waiting times and will ensure we have the number of computed tomography and magnetic resonance imaging scans, and other tests, that are needed to reduce elective and cancer waits.

■ **Tobacco and Vapes Bill****Jim Shannon:**[\[2330\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to introduce the Tobacco and Vapes Bill.

**Andrew Gwynne:**

As set out in the King's Speech, a bill will be introduced to progressively increase the age at which people can be sold cigarettes and impose limits on the sale and marketing of vapes. The Tobacco and Vapes Bill will pave the way for a smoke-free United Kingdom and will be the biggest public health intervention since the ban on smoking in indoor public places in 2007.

The bill is a key pillar of the Government's Health Mission to help people stay healthier for longer, reduce the number of premature deaths from the biggest killers like cancer, and raise the healthiest generation of children in our history.

It will also save thousands of lives, break the cycle of addiction and disadvantage, and begin the immense task of fixing our broken health system and rebuilding our economy. We will introduce the Tobacco and Vapes Bill to Parliament in the coming weeks.

## ■ Tobacco and Vapes Bill: Impact Assessments

**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[2242\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to use the impact assessment entitled Tobacco and Vapes Bill: impact assessment, published on 20 March 2024, as part of its forthcoming Tobacco and Vapes Bill.

**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[2243\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made an estimate of future licensing and enforcement costs of a generational ban on tobacco.

**Andrew Gwynne:**

As set out in the King's Speech, a bill will be introduced to progressively increase the age at which people can be sold cigarettes and impose limits on the sale and marketing of vapes. The Tobacco and Vapes Bill will pave the way for a smoke-free United Kingdom and will be the biggest public health intervention since the ban on smoking in indoor public places in 2007.

The bill will be introduced to Parliament in the coming weeks, and an Impact Assessment will be published early in the passage of the bill. We will also conduct New Burdens Assessments for the measures in the bill and any future regulations, which will assess any costs to local authorities of enforcing the new measures.

## ■ University of Portsmouth Dental Academy

**Dame Caroline Dineneage:** [\[2058\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to p.8 of the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan, published on 30 June 2023, how many new dentistry training places will be allocated to Portsmouth Dental School by 2031-32.

**Stephen Kinnock:**

At this stage, as the University of Portsmouth is not a dental school, no plans have been made to allocate new dentistry training places.

Before a university, such as the University of Portsmouth, can apply to receive Government funded dental school places, it needs to have met the requirements of the General Dental Council. If established as a dental school, Portsmouth Dental School would be eligible to be considered for Government-funded training places,

subject to meeting the requirements of the Office for Students, who have statutory responsibility for allocating funding for medical and dental school places.

### ■ West Suffolk Hospital: Repairs and Maintenance

**James Cartlidge:**

[2117]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to continue the previous Government's (a) plans and (b) timetable for rebuilding West Suffolk Hospital.

**Karin Smyth:**

We recognise the need for investment in our estate across the country, including at West Suffolk. As my rt. Hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, announced, and as subsequently confirmed in the Chancellor's statement on 29 July 2024, there is a full and comprehensive ongoing review of the New Hospital Programme, to provide a realistic and costed timetable for delivery. This will consider the urgent need to rebuild the seven hospitals built mostly using reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete to protect staff and patient safety.

The Secretary of State will consider the findings and update Parliament on the outcome of the review reporting back to patients, clinicians, and local communities on the next steps for the New Hospital Programme. We will provide a clear and realistic timetable for delivery of the Programme and agree the investment needed to get patients the care they deserve.

## HOME OFFICE

### ■ Anti-social Behaviour and Drugs: Urban Areas

**Jessica Toale:**

[2645]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to tackle a) anti-social behaviour and b) illegal drug use in town centres.

**Dame Diana Johnson:**

Tackling anti-social behaviour is a top priority for this Government, and a key part of our Safer Streets Mission to take back our streets.

We will put thousands of neighbourhood police and community support officers into local communities so that residents have a named officer they can turn to when things go wrong.

We will introduce tougher powers to tackle antisocial behaviour via a Crime and Policing Bill, including a new Respect Order to tackle repeat offending. The introduction of Respect Orders will be announced when parliamentary time allows.

We know that drugs drive crime and cause harm to individuals and society. We will take action as part of our Safer Streets Mission to drive down crime and anti-social behaviour across the country including cracking down on the drug gangs profiting from this harmful trade.

## ■ Anti-social Behaviour: Urban Areas

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[1938\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to reduce anti-social behaviour (a) on high streets and (b) in city centres.

**Dame Diana Johnson:**

Tackling anti-social behaviour is a top priority for this Government, and a key part of our Safer Streets Mission to take back our streets.

We will put thousands of neighbourhood police and community support officers into local communities.

We will crack down on those causing havoc on our high streets and in city centres by introducing tougher powers via a Crime and Policing Bill, including a new Respect Order to tackle repeat offending.

## ■ Bottles: Plastics

**Cat Smith:**

[\[2361\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of the aim of the Bottle Stop campaign to ensure that all bottles in clubs and bars are plastic instead of glass.

**Dame Diana Johnson:**

The Licensing Act 2003 regulates the sale and supply of alcohol in licensed premises across England and Wales and devolves decision-making to local licensing authorities.

The Government publishes guidance for licensing authorities to assist them in carrying out their functions under the Act in line with the four licensing objectives: the prevention of crime and disorder; the prevention of public nuisance, upholding public safety, and the protection of children from harm.

This guidance specifically states that a number of matters should be considered by a licensing authority in relation to public safety, which may include requiring, as part of a premises licence, the use of plastic containers and preventing customer access to glass bottles.

We keep under review licensing of alcohol premises.

## ■ Crime: Rural Areas

**Stuart Anderson:**

[\[2489\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to (a) increase prosecution rates for perpetrators of rural crime and (b) protect victims of those crimes.

**Dame Diana Johnson:**

The Government recognises the importance of tackling rural crime. We are committed to safeguarding rural communities, with tougher measures to clamp down

on anti-social behaviour, strengthened neighbourhood policing, and stronger laws to prevent farm theft and fly-tippers.

We are also committed to implementing the Equipment Theft (Prevention) Act 2023, which aims to prevent the theft and re-sale of high-value equipment, particularly for use in rural settings.

The National Police Chiefs' Council Wildlife and Rural Crime Strategy 2022-2025 provides a framework through which policing, and its partners, can work together to tackle the most prevalent threats and emerging issues which predominantly affect rural communities.

The Home Office funded the establishment of the National Rural Crime Unit. The unit takes the lead on improving co-ordination and partnership working between police forces and rural communities. This provides police forces with specialist operational support in their responses to rural crime, such as the theft of farming or construction machinery, livestock theft, fly tipping, fuel theft and equine crime. The unit also helps in sharing best practice and encouraging regional and national approaches.

The Home Office also directly funds the National Wildlife Crime Unit to provide intelligence, analysis and investigative assistance to forces and other law enforcement agencies across the UK to support them in investigating wildlife crime, which can affect rural areas.

## ■ Crimes of Violence: Women

**Jim Shannon:**

**[2085]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to help tackle violent crimes against women.

**Jess Phillips:**

To make our streets safe, we must drastically reduce serious violent crimes and violence against women and girls; increase confidence in the police; stop young people falling into crime and make our criminal justice system work for victims.

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.

We have set out our mission to halve violence against women and girls within a decade.

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.



## ■ Dangerous Driving: Romford

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[2046\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to reduce dangerous driving in Romford constituency.

**Dame Diana Johnson:**

Any form of dangerous driving behaviour is a serious matter of concern. The maximum sentence for dangerous driving is an unlimited fine, disqualification and up to 14 years in prison.

How the police enforce road traffic legislation and investigate road traffic offences in Romford and other areas of London is an operational matter for the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, in conjunction with the Mayor of London and the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime.

## ■ Immigration Controls: Northern Ireland

**Robin Swann:**

[\[2216\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to help ensure that introduction of the EU Entry/Exit System does not delay people travelling to Northern Ireland through Republic of Ireland (a) ports and (b) airports.

**Seema Malhotra:**

EES is a European Union initiative due to be introduced in the autumn of this year that applies to non-EU travellers visiting countries forming part of the Schengen area. As neither the Republic of Ireland nor Northern Ireland form part of the Schengen area, EES will not apply.

## ■ Knives: Crime

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[2084\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will hold discussions with the Mayor of London on steps to tackle knife crime.

**Dame Diana Johnson:**

The Home Secretary has already met the Mayor of London to discuss knife crime and other related issues, and will maintain regular discussions with the Mayor and other key stakeholders throughout the country to tackle this awful crime.

## ■ Licensing Laws

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[1937\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of providing additional legal powers of local authorities to assess the suitability of applications by premises for the sale of alcohol.

**Dame Diana Johnson:**

The Licensing Act 2003 regulates the sale and supply of alcohol in licensed premises across England and Wales and devolves decision-making to local licensing authorities.

The Act sets out four statutory licensing objectives: the prevention of crime and disorder; public safety; the prevention of public nuisance and the protection of children from harm.

Licensing committees can utilise a number of discretionary powers set out in the Licensing Act should they decide it is appropriate to do so – for example by introducing a cumulative impact assessment. Responsible authorities as set out in the Act can submit representations to the licensing committee to help inform decision making and flag concerns. Local residents can submit representations on individual licensing applications.

**■ Pensions: Hong Kong**

**Blair McDougall:** [\[2169\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will take steps to support people from Hong Kong with British National (Overseas) visas access pensions managed in Hong Kong.

**Blair McDougall:** [\[2170\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will hold discussions with HSBC on steps to help people with British National (Overseas) visas access HSBC pensions managed in Hong Kong.

**Seema Malhotra:**

This Government is deeply committed to supporting members of the Hong Kong community who have relocated to the UK.

We are aware that individuals who have chosen to take up the British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) visa route are having difficulties in drawing down early their pensions held in the Hong Kong Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF).

Whilst documentary requirements for withdrawing funds early are a matter for the Hong Kong authorities, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office has raised this issue directly with the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government and the Hong Kong MPF Schemes Authority. They have urged them to facilitate early draw down of funds as is the case for other Hong Kong residents who move overseas permanently and have made clear that any discrimination against BN(O)s is unacceptable.

## ■ Police and Crime Commissioners

**Steve Darling:** [\[2578\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will introduce legislation to (a) abolish the post of Police and Crime Commissioners and (b) replace them with local boards of elected councillors.

**Dame Diana Johnson:**

PCCs play an important role as the voice of the public and victims in policing at a local level, holding Chief Constables to account and leading local partnerships to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour.

The government will continue to work with PCCs and Chief Constables to set clear expectations for policing on performance and standards, ensuring that our communities have an effective and efficient police service within their force area.

## ■ Police and Crime Commissioners: Recruitment

**Steve Darling:** [\[2575\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what guidance her Department provides on rules governing the recruitment of Deputy Police and Crime Commissioners.

**Steve Darling:** [\[2576\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the Government plans to take steps to increase transparency around the recruitment of Deputy Police and Crime Commissioners.

**Steve Darling:** [\[2577\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to abolish the recruitment of deputy Police and Crime Commissioners.

**Dame Diana Johnson:**

The arrangements enabling a Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to appoint a deputy and the functions a deputy can exercise, are set out within the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

Before appointing a deputy, a PCC must notify the local Police and Crime Panel of the proposed appointment. This must include the name of the candidate, the criteria used to assess their suitability, how the candidate satisfies those criteria, and the terms and conditions on which the candidate is to be appointed. The Police and Crime Panel must review the proposed appointment, hold a confirmation hearing attended by the candidate to answer questions, and make a report to the PCC, including a recommendation on whether the candidate should be appointed.

The PCC must notify the Police and Crime Panel of the decision whether to accept or reject the recommendation.

**■ Police Community Support Officers: York Outer****Mr Luke Charters:****[2200]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the potential impact of trends in the number of community police officers in York Outer constituency since 2010 on levels of crime.

**Dame Diana Johnson:**

The latest statistics on police workforce and crime, covering the period to 31 March 2024, were published on 24 July 2024. These statistics can be accessed at the following links:

Police workforce statistics: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/police-workforce-england-and-wales>

Crime statistics:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice>

The Home Office does not hold this information at Parliamentary Constituency level and is unable to assess the impact of the number of community police officers in York Outer constituency on levels of crime. Police and Crime Commissioners are responsible for holding their Chief Constable to account for policing in their area.

The Government is committed to strengthening neighbourhood policing as part of its Safer Streets mission. That is why we are introducing a Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee, providing a more visible police presence in town centres, recruiting thousands of additional neighbourhood police officers, PCSOs and Special Constables, and giving every community a named local officer.

**■ Police: Biometrics****Siân Berry:****[2680]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will bring forward legislative proposals to set conditions for and regulate the use and deployment of live facial recognition technology by police forces in England and Wales.

**Dame Diana Johnson:**

Live facial technology is already being used effectively by some police forces to identify suspects more quickly and accurately.

Its use is governed by data protection, equality, and human rights legislation supplemented by specific policing guidance.

**■ Police: Pay****Stuart Anderson:****[2490]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether additional funding will be provided to Police and Crime Commissioners (a) to deliver above-inflation pay rises and (b) long term.

**Dame Diana Johnson:**

Police officer pay is determined by the Home Secretary, following advice from the independent Police Remuneration Review Body and Senior Salaries Review Body. On 29 July, the Government announced it had accepted the Review Bodies' recommendations to award all ranks and pay points a consolidated increase of 4.75% with effect from 1 September 2024.

To support forces with the cost of the pay award, the Home Office is providing additional funding of £175m in 2024/25. Funding for 2025/26 will be announced in the next Spending Review.

**Police: Vetting****Daisy Cooper:**[\[2138\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of Disclosure Barring Service checks have been completed by police forces within 60 days in each month of the last two years by police force.

**Jess Phillips:**

The Home Office does not hold the information in an easily accessible format, therefore the information requested cannot be obtained without disproportionate cost.

**Protest****Dr Simon Opher:**[\[2565\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to review measures within the Public Order Act 2023 on restrictions to the right to protest.

**Dame Diana Johnson:**

Post-legislative scrutiny of the Public Order Act 2023 will be conducted two years after royal assent.

**Refugees: Loans****Neil O'Brien:**[\[2470\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much was loaned through refugee integration loans in each year since the scheme was created.

**Neil O'Brien:**[\[2471\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much she expects will be loaned in refugee integration loans this year.

**Seema Malhotra:**

Refugee Integration Loans were introduced in 2007 following a public consultation and have operated over the last seventeen years to help recipients with the costs of integrating into UK society. They are funded by the Home Office, who make the initial decisions on applications. They are then administered and recouped by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Single applicants can borrow between £100 and £500 and if applying jointly the maximum amount increases to £780.

The Home Office work with DWP to administer the loans across different IT platforms. Consequently, data on the level of loans provided on an annual basis is not held in an easily reportable format and would require a manual search of records that could only be conducted at a disproportionate cost.

#### ■ Visas: Families and Graduates

**Sorcha Eastwood:** [2612]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what guidance her Department issues on whether people living in the UK on a Graduate visa can start a Master's degree while waiting for a decision in relation to their application for a Family visa.

**Seema Malhotra:**

The UK government website has guidance on all our immigration rules and criteria, including the requirements of the Student route and the study conditions of the Graduate route: [Visas and immigration - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk).

#### ■ Visas: Skilled Workers

**Stephen Gethins:** [2355]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of the increase in the earnings threshold for overseas workers on the care sector.

**Stephen Gethins:** [2356]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the impact of the increase in the earnings threshold for overseas workers on the higher education sector.

**Stephen Gethins:** [2357]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the impact of the increase in the earnings threshold for overseas workers on the food and drink sector.

**Seema Malhotra:**

I refer the Honourable Gentlemen to the Home Secretary's written ministerial statement on 30 July 2024.

#### ■ Visas: Ukraine

**Daisy Cooper:** [2497]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make it her policy to grant visa extensions to Ukrainian nationals under the age of 18 on the Ukrainian Sponsorship Scheme that want to pursue higher education.

**Seema Malhotra:**

Ukrainian nationals and their families granted under the Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme have the right to work, rent or study and access to benefits and

services for the duration of their permission. Ukrainian nationals who wish to pursue higher education are free to do so while seeking sanctuary in the UK under the scheme.

The Ukraine Permission Extension scheme is due to open for applications in advance of the expiry of the first Ukraine scheme visas in early 2025, providing the same rights to study and access to benefits and services that individuals on the existing schemes have.

## ■ **Wildlife: Crime**

**Sarah Champion:**

[\[1917\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to make wildlife crimes notifiable; and whether she plans to include those crimes in national statistics.

**Dame Diana Johnson:**

This Government recognises the importance of tackling wildlife crime, which is why, along with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Home Office directly funds the National Wildlife Crime Unit to help tackle these crimes.

There are no plans currently to make all wildlife crimes notifiable. Any non-notifiable wildlife crime reported to police can be investigated as Chief Constables have operational independence to tackle the crimes that matter most to their communities.

## HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### ■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]**

**Melanie Ward:**

[\[900287\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether the UK Shared Prosperity Fund will continue after March 2025.

**Alex Norris:**

The Government is committed to delivering economic growth across the country and is considering how to best fund long-term local funding in line with wider fiscal and economic priorities.

Post-March 2025 funding is a decision for the Budget.

**Mr Peter Bedford:**

[\[900288\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if she will take steps to ensure that local authorities work collaboratively when preparing local plans.

**Matthew Pennycook:**

Local authorities should already be working together when preparing development plans under the current plan making system as the Duty to Cooperate remains in place.

The consultation on proposed reforms to the NPPF published on 31 July included proposals to strengthen co-operation between local authorities on the sharing of unmet housing need and other strategic issues.

It also sought views on our proposed intention to introduce mandatory mechanisms for cross-boundary co-operation with a view to moving to a model of universal strategic planning coverage within the next five years.

**Jim Dickson:** [\[900293\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent progress her Department has made on planning reform.

**Matthew Pennycook:**

On 30 July we opened an eight week consultation on a revised National Planning Policy Framework.

As well as reversing the damaging anti-supply changes made by the previous government in December 2023, proposed reforms include making housing targets mandatory, strengthening policy support for brownfield development, and the targeted release of low-quality grey belt land within the green belt.

The consultation will run until Tuesday 24 September.

**Sarah Gibson:** [\[900294\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether she plans to take steps to ensure that changes to the National Planning Policy Framework prevent developers from land banking.

**Matthew Pennycook:**

The consultation on proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system that began on Tuesday 30 July includes proposals designed to support increased build out rates.

In conjunction with the start of that consultation, the housebuilding industry made a public commitment to increase the pace at which homes are delivered and to get on and build where sites are viable and have implementable consent.

## ■ Housing

**John Milne:** [\[2217\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether she plans to amend the standard method formula for calculating housing need.

**Matthew Pennycook:**

The Government has set out changes to how we plan for the homes we need as part of the consultation on proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework launched on 30 July. This includes a proposal to amend the standard method formula for calculating housing need.



## ■ Leasehold

**Ms Stella Creasy:**

[2070]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if she will publish guidance on the responsibilities of freeholders for the external areas of an estate on which leaseholder have secured the right to manage.

**Matthew Pennycook:**

Guidance on the responsibilities of freeholders under the right to manage is provided by the Leasehold Advisory Service (LEASE) and is available on their website:

<https://www.lease-advice.org/advice-guide/right-manage>.

## ■ Local Plans: Horsham

**John Milne:**

[R] [2218]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether it is her policy that the Horsham District Council local plan should be allowed to progress without alteration in the context of her proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework.

**Matthew Pennycook:**

I regret that due to the Deputy Prime Minister's quasi-judicial role in the planning system, I am unable to comment on the details of a specific local plan.

More generally, as part of our current consultation on proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework, we have proposed transitional arrangements to maintain the progress of plans at more advanced stages of preparation. These will apply differently depending on what stage of preparation the plan has reached and the extent to which it is meeting the Government's housing growth aspirations.

We would encourage any views on the proposed transitional arrangements, or any alternatives that we should consider, to be submitted in response to the consultation.

## ■ Private Rented Housing: Evictions

**Yasmin Qureshi:**

[1913]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether she has made an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a tenancy support duty for possessions proceedings for the private rented sector.

**Matthew Pennycook:**

The Renters' Rights Bill will support quicker, cheaper resolution when there are disputes, preventing them escalating to court. A new ombudsman service for the private rented sector will provide fair, impartial and binding resolution to both landlords and tenants.

My department will continue to work alongside the Ministry of Justice to explore options for pre-action resolution, to help ensure that only cases which need adjudication come to court.

**JUSTICE****■ Crimes of Violence and Sexual Offences: Victim Support Schemes**

**Caroline Voaden:** [\[2662\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of increasing funding for support services for victims of sexual assault and violence.

**Alex Davies-Jones:**

Rape and sexual violence are devastating crimes that can have life-long impacts on victims and survivors. This Government is fully committed to supporting victims and survivors, and that is why we have made it a priority to halve violence against women and girls.

The Ministry of Justice funds a range of support services for victims and survivors of sexual violence, both through direct grant funding to organisations (such as the Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Fund) and through funding to Police and Crime Commissioners. These services offer tailored support to victims and survivors of all ages to help them cope with their experiences and move forward with their lives. These services complement the wider support system across Government, such as NHS England-funded Sexual Assault Referral Centres.

Funding after March 2025 will be agreed through the next Spending Review.

**■ Drugs: Crime**

**Jessica Toale:** [\[2657\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people have been prosecuted for drug-related offences in Bournemouth in each year since 2019.

**Jessica Toale:** [\[2658\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people have been prosecuted for (a) sexual assault or (b) rape in Bournemouth in each year since 2019.

**Alex Davies-Jones:**

The Ministry of Justice publishes data on the number of prosecutions at magistrates' courts in England and Wales in the [Outcomes by Offence data tool: December 2023](#), including breakdowns for specific offences.

However, magistrates' court proceedings data held centrally is collated at a Local Justice Area (LJA) level only and is therefore not available for Bournemouth specifically. To view the number of prosecutions at courts located in the Dorset LJA, select 'Dorset' in the 'Police Force Area' filter (Dorset LJA is the only LJA in the Dorset police force area).

## ■ Ministry of Justice: Ministers

**Kit Malthouse:**

[2406]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what (a) statutory and (b) non-statutory direct ministerial appointments excluding special advisers she has made; and (i) who the appointee was and (ii) what the (A) remuneration, (B) title and (C) terms of reference was for each appointment.

**Alex Davies-Jones:**

The Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice has made no such appointments.

## LEADER OF THE HOUSE

## ■ Palace of Westminster: Repairs and Maintenance

**John Glen:**

[2314]

To ask the Leader of the House, whether she plans to amend the Restoration and Renewal (a) budget, (b) timetable and (c) decant policy.

**Lucy Powell:**

The Restoration and Renewal Programme is a matter for Parliament. The Parliamentary Client Board agreed the strategic direction of the Programme in February and expect costed proposals for three options (including full decant, continued presence and enhanced maintenance and improvement) to be put to members in 2025, enabling the Programme to progress.

## ■ Short Money

**Richard Tice:**

[R] [2624]

To ask the Leader of the House, if she make it her policy that the resolution restricting short money for parties with fewer than five hon. Members should be amended to only apply to parties with fewer than three hon. Members.

**Lucy Powell:**

Short Money is allocated on the basis of the number of seats won by each opposition party at the previous general election. The House of Commons Members Estimate Committee is responsible for modifying the provisions of the Resolutions relating to Short money as it considers “necessary or desirable in the interests of clarity, consistency, accountability and effective administration, and conformity with current circumstances” ([Standing Order No. 152D \(3\)\(c\)](#)).

We should acknowledge that public money underpins the political system in respect of the Opposition as well as the Government, but we must always be conscious of the cost to the taxpayer. Further consideration of this policy is rightly a matter for the House.

**NORTHERN IRELAND****■ InterTrade UK and UK East-West Council: Northern Ireland**

**Alex Burghart:** [\[1786\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, whether he plans to take steps to (a) convene the East-West Council and (b) establish Intertrade UK.

**Hilary Benn:**

The Government is committed to taking all necessary steps to protect the UK internal market, and to making progress on the commitments made in the Safeguarding the Union command paper. This includes taking steps to establish Intertrade UK and to convene the next meeting of the East-West Council, which had its inaugural meeting in March 2024.

**■ Northern Ireland Office: Ministers**

**Kit Malthouse:** [\[2402\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what (a) statutory and (b) non-statutory direct ministerial appointments excluding special advisers he has made; and (i) who the appointee was and (ii) what the (A) remuneration, (B) title and (C) terms of reference was for each appointment.

**Hilary Benn:**

Since becoming Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on 5 July, I have not made any statutory or non-statutory direct ministerial appointments.

**■ Northern Ireland Office: Press Conferences**

**Jim Allister:** [\[2219\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, if he will take steps to ensure that (a) the Belfast News Letter and (b) other news outlets are given equal rights to ask questions at his Department's press conferences.

**Hilary Benn:**

The Northern Ireland Office invites a wide range of news outlets to its departmental press conferences.

During press conferences, as many news outlets as possible are given an opportunity to ask a question. However, it is not always possible for every media outlet to ask a question due to time constraints.

News outlets can pose questions at any time to the department's press office.

## SCIENCE, INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY

### ■ Research: Government Departments

**Alex Burghart:**

[\[1968\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what steps he is taking to ensure that departments have access to high quality predictive modelling.

**Feryal Clark:**

Predictive modelling is widely used across government departments, including DSIT, and is implemented by analysts from the various analytical professions. These professions are brought together by the ONS-based Analysis Function, which co-ordinates analytical standards, including learning and training resources, and quality assurance. The Central Digital and Data Office (CDDO), which is now part of DSIT, is driving cross-government AI-adoption plans which will increase departments' access to high quality predictive modelling. CDDO develops standards and guidance for AI adoption, including the Algorithmic Transparency Recording Standards which support the National Data Strategy commitment to explore an appropriate and effective way to deliver greater transparency on algorithm-assisted decision making in the public sector.

### ■ Shared Rural Network: Cost Effectiveness

**Helen Morgan:**

[\[1993\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the value for money of the Shared Rural Network.

**Helen Morgan:**

[\[1994\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, whether the overspend of the Shared Rural Network project will be paid from the public purse.

**Chris Bryant:**

To deliver the Shared Rural Network, the UK's four mobile network operators are investing £532m to eliminate the majority of 'partial not-spots' – areas which receive coverage from at least one, but not all, operators. The programme has already delivered substantial improvements for rural communities across the UK, with Ofcom reporting that 4G coverage from at least one operator now stands at over 93%, up from 91% when the programme started.

The government's grant funding to upgrade Extended Area Service masts and tackle 'total not spots' is capped to prevent overspend. Building Digital UK is working with its delivery partners, including the Home Office, to ensure that maximal benefit can be achieved within the allotted programme funding and that the programme represents good value for money.

## SCOTLAND

## ■ Scotland Office: Ministers

**Kit Malthouse:** [\[2405\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what (a) statutory and (b) non-statutory direct ministerial appointments excluding special advisers he has made; and (i) who the appointee was and (ii) what the (A) remuneration, (B) title and (C) terms of reference was for each appointment.

**Ian Murray:**

I can confirm that I have not made any statutory or non-statutory direct Ministerial Appointments since taking up office as the Secretary of State for Scotland on 5 July 2024.

## TRANSPORT

## ■ Active Travel: Finance

**Siân Berry:** [\[2679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much (a) revenue and (b) capital funding her Department has provided for (i) walking, (ii) cycling, (iii) healthy and safer streets, (iv) disabled access and (v) other ways to support active travel in England in each financial year since 2010-11.

**Simon Lightwood:**

The table below outlines Departmental funding for active travel for the period 2011/12 to 2023/24. It is not possible to disaggregate this into separate amounts for walking, cycling, healthy streets and so forth. Comparable data for 2010/11 is unavailable. The figures do not include funding from wider sources within the Department such as the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements (CRSTS) or the Levelling Up Fund.

YEAR	CAPITAL (£ MILLION)	REVENUE (£ MILLION)	COMBINED* (£ MILLION)
2011-12	39	64	54
2012-13	72	59	54
2013-14	131	63	54
2014-15	50	54	54
2015-16	74	57	54
2016-17	43	44	0
2017-18	72	30	0

YEAR	CAPITAL (£ MILLION)	REVENUE (£ MILLION)	COMBINED* (£ MILLION)
2018-19	29	36	0
2019-20	3	37	0
2020-21	187	118	0
2021-22	205	74	0
2022-23	200	73	0
2023-24	54	58	0

\*Local Sustainable Transport Fund including wider sustainable transport spend.

#### ■ Automatic Number Plate Recognition: Lambeth and Southwark

**Helen Whately:**

[\[2438\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of Automatic Number Plate Recognition car pilots in the London Borough of (a) Lambeth and (b) Southwark.

**Lilian Greenwood:**

DfT has made no assessment of the effectiveness of Automatic Number Plate Recognition car pilots in the London Borough of (a) Lambeth and (b) Southwark.

#### ■ Bicycles: Parking

**Helen Morgan:**

[\[1996\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if her Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing lockable bike storage at rural (a) bus and (b) rail stations.

**Simon Lightwood:**

The Department has no plans to carry out an assessment on the potential merits of lockable cycle storage in rural travel hubs. Funding for cycle storage has been made available from a range of local transport funds, including the Active Travel Fund and the Cycle Rail Fund.

In addition, Active Travel England also provides training on infrastructure design guidance and is developing specific guidance for good practice application in rural areas.

**■ Bus Services: Bicycles****Helen Morgan:**[\[1997\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if her Department will take steps to encourage the carrying of bicycles on buses to create a more integrated public transport service.

**Simon Lightwood:**

The government knows that Britain needs a modern transport network to help kickstart economic growth and delivering reliable and affordable public transport services for passengers is one of the government's top priorities. 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.

Every community will have its own unique needs from its public transport network and wants to empower local leaders to work with operators to design networks that meet these needs, including considering how best to integrate services with different ways of travelling, such as active travel, to deliver comprehensive coverage.

**■ Bus Services: Concessions****Mr Peter Bedford:**[\[2688\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what representations she has made to the Chancellor of the Exchequer on retaining the £2 bus fare scheme beyond December 2024.

**Simon Lightwood:**

Delivering reliable and affordable public transport services for passengers is one of the Government's top priorities and we know how important this is for passengers and for local growth. The Government is urgently considering the most effective and affordable ways to deliver on these objectives.

**■ Bus Services: Finance****Alex Mayer:**[\[2194\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 26 July 2024 to Question 722 on Public Transport, if her Department will list the Local Transport Authorities that are (a) using and (b) planning to use Bus Service Improvement Plan funding to fund Demand Responsive Transport schemes.

**Alex Mayer:**[\[2616\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 26 July 2024 to Question 722 on Public Transport, which Local Transport Authorities (a) are using and (b) plan to use Bus Service Improvement Plan funding to fund Demand Responsive Transport schemes.



**Simon Lightwood:**

The following Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) are either using or are exploring the use of Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) funding to fund Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) schemes. To note, this list is subject to change and may not be exhaustive due to BSIP scheme plans sometimes changing. We recommend referring to the published BSIPs of individual LTAs for more information on their DRT plans.

- Cheshire East Council
- Cheshire West and Chester Council
- Cumberland Council
- Derby City Council
- Derbyshire County Council
- East Sussex County Council
- Hertfordshire County Council
- Leicestershire County Council
- North East Combined Authority
- North Northamptonshire Council
- Portsmouth City Council
- Rutland County Council
- Shropshire Council
- Somerset Council
- Telford and Wrekin Council
- Westmorland and Furness Council
- West of England Combined Authority and North Somerset Council
- West Sussex County Council
- West Yorkshire Combined Authority
- Worcestershire County Council

**■ Bus Services: Rural Areas****Greg Smith:**[\[2512\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps she is taking to improve bus services in rural areas.

**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 introduce 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 rural areas.

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.

**Claire Young:**

[\[2615\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if she will take steps to introduce a minimum bus service frequency standard in rural areas.

**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 introduce 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 rural areas. We plan to empower local transport authorities through reforming bus funding and introducing local network safeguards, giving local transport authorities enhanced accountability over bus operators.

## ■ Bus Services: South West

**Rebecca Smith:**

[\[2212\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps she plans to take to increase access to bus services in (a) South West Devon constituency and (b) the South West.

**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 introduce 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 South West Devon and the South West.

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.

## ■ **Bus Services: Tiverton and Minehead**

**Rachel Gilmour:**

[\[2208\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of funding community shuttle bus services in Tiverton and Minehead constituency.

**Simon Lightwood:**

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. The government knows that every community will have its own unique needs from its public transport network and wants to empower local leaders to work with operators to design networks that meet these needs, including considering the use of different types of services, such as community transport and demand responsive transport services, alongside regular stopping services to deliver comprehensive coverage.

## ■ **Bus Services: York Outer**

**Mr Luke Charters:**

[\[2199\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether she plans to take steps to increase the provision of bus services in rural areas with low connectivity in York Outer constituency.

**Simon Lightwood:**

Good local bus services are an essential part of prosperous and sustainable communities. Since the de-regulation of buses in England, passenger numbers have declined, and the government is committed to delivering better bus services and growing passenger numbers.

As announced in the King's Speech, the government will introduce 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 and encourage passengers back onto buses right across England. The Department will work closely with local leaders and bus operators to deliver on these ambitions.

## ■ **Cars: Hire Services**

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[2327\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps her Department is taking to enforce vehicle excise duty rules for car rental companies that use vehicles registered outside the UK.

**Lilian Greenwood:**

Foreign registered vehicles brought temporarily into the UK by non-UK residents are exempt from UK registration and the payment of vehicle excise duty for up to six months in any 12-month period.

When the keeper of a vehicle becomes resident in the UK, or the vehicle has remained in the UK for more than six months, the vehicle should be registered and vehicle excise duty paid in line with UK laws.

Where there is sufficient evidence that the six-month rule is breached, enforcement action can be taken by the police, local authorities with devolved powers or the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency.

**■ Cars: Sales**

**Greg Smith:** [\[2510\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if her Department will make an assessment of the potential impact of introducing a phase-out date of 2030 for new cars with internal combustion engines.

**Lilian Greenwood:**

We are committed to delivering greener transport by accelerating the transition to electric vehicles.

This includes re-instating the phase out date of new cars that rely solely on internal combustion engines by 2030. We will set out further details in due course.

**■ Low Traffic Neighbourhoods**

**Helen Whately:** [\[2444\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether she has plans to increase the number of low traffic neighbourhoods.

**Lilian Greenwood:**

The installation of low traffic neighbourhoods and other traffic management measures is a decision for local councils, and the local communities they serve.

**■ Motor Vehicles: Exhaust Systems**

**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[2045\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of using acoustic cameras to help tackle illegal car exhaust systems.

**Lilian Greenwood:**

The Department conducted roadside trials of noise camera technology between October 2022 and February 2023. Reports of these trials, including detailed assessment of the technology's performance and potential merits, were published on 17 March 2024.

## ■ Public Transport: Rural Areas

**Helen Morgan:**

[1995]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps she will take to help make the public transport system more accessible for rural users.

**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 introduce 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 rural areas across England.

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.

The Secretary of State has set out plans for the biggest overhaul of our railways in a generation by delivering publicly owned passenger rail within the first term in government. The Government will do this as contracts with existing operators expire or if the relevant contractual conditions for early termination are met. The Passenger Railway Services Bill, announced on 17 July, will allow the Government to deliver on this commitment to bring rail services back into public ownership.

The Government will also establish a new arm's length body, Great British Railways, which will deliver a unified system that focuses on reliable, affordable, high-quality, and efficient services; along with ensuring safety and accessibility.

## ■ Railways: Cleethorpes

**Melanie Onn:**

[2093]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress her Department has made on the planned direct train link between Cleethorpes and London Kings Cross.

**Lilian Greenwood:**

We are working with industry to address the timetabling, financial, operational, and infrastructure issues that need to be resolved before a service to Cleethorpes can be introduced; once the East Coast Mainline timetable change has been implemented.

We are considering proposals put forward, with final approval subject to a thorough business case process.

## ■ Railways: Compensation

**Alex Mayer:**

[\[2193\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if she will make it her policy to introduce an online search facility hosted by Great British Rail to help people affected by train delays find actual past (a) departure and (b) arrival times to support their claims under the Delay Repay scheme.

**Simon Lightwood:**

Getting Britain Moving sets out the Government's ambition for Great British Railways to simplify the ticketing system in future, including improving the Delay Repay claims process alongside improved reliability of services. Passengers currently only need to know the timetabled departure time of their service to submit their delay repay claim, however we will consider all options to improve passenger experience.

## ■ Roads: South West

**Rebecca Smith:**

[\[2214\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether she plans to increase funding for road resurfacing in (a) the South West and (b) South West Devon constituency.

**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 the future.

The responsibility for the maintenance of the local highway network in Devon, including the South West Devon constituency, rests with Devon County Council. In 2024/25, the Department allocated over £59.4 million to Devon County Council, the largest amount any local authority was allocated for highway maintenance.

Further funding for highways maintenance beyond 2024/25 is a matter for the forthcoming Spending Review.

## TREASURY

### ■ Banking Hubs

**Alex Mayer:**

[\[2191\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what criteria her Department plans to use to identify locations for banking hubs; and if she will set out a timetable for rolling out hubs in constituencies affected by 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. These will provide individuals and businesses up and down the country with critical cash and banking services.

Banking hubs are a voluntary service developed by the financial services sector in the context of legislation to protect individuals' and businesses' access to cash deposit and withdrawal services under the Financial Services Act 2023. Their rollout is overseen by Cash Access UK, a not-for-profit company set up and funded by the banks for the purpose of coordinating banking hub delivery. LINK, the operator of the UK's largest ATM network, is responsible for assessing a community's needs regarding access to cash. Where LINK considers that a community requires additional cash services, Cash Access UK will provide a suitable shared solution, such as a deposit service, or a banking hub, for cash users in that community.

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

### ■ Banks: Derbyshire

**Jon Pearce:** [\[2187\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an estimate of the number of bank branches that have closed in (a) High Peak constituency and (b) Derbyshire in each year since 2010.

**Jon Pearce:** [\[2188\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if she will make an assessment of the potential impact of bank closures on access to (a) cash and (b) in-person services in High Peak constituency.

**Tulip Siddiq:**

The Government does not hold bank branch closure data from 2010.

Guidance from the FCA sets out its expectation of firms when they are deciding to reduce their physical branches or the number of free-to-use ATMs. Firms are expected to carefully consider the impact of planned branch closures on their customers' everyday banking and cash access needs, and put in place alternatives, where this is reasonable.

Alternative options to access everyday banking services can include telephone banking, through digital means such as mobile or online banking, and via one of the UK's 11,500 Post Office branches.

The Government recognises the importance of face-to-face banking to communities and high streets. The Government has therefore committed to work closely with banks to roll out at least 350 banking hubs, which provide individuals and businesses up and down the country with critical cash and banking services.

### ■ Cash Dispensing

**Paula Barker:** [\[2144\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps her Department is taking to improve access to cash in areas with (a) few and (b) no cash machines.

**Tulip Siddiq:**

The Government is committed to protecting access to cash for individuals and businesses. The Financial Conduct Authority is the regulator responsible for access to cash further to the Financial Services and Markets Act 2023, with powers to seek to ensure the reasonable provision of cash withdrawal and deposit facilities for individuals and businesses, including free withdrawal services for

The FCA published its final rules on access to cash on 24 July. Under its rules, designated firms will be required to undertake assessments of a community's cash access needs following the closure of a service or a community request, and to put in a new service if necessary. These rules come into force on 18 September.

**■ Cash Dispensing: Rural Areas****Sir John Hayes:**[\[2227\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps she is taking to ensure that people are able to access cashpoints in rural areas.

**Tulip Siddiq:**

The Government is committed to protecting access to cash for individuals and businesses across the UK, including in rural areas. The Financial Conduct Authority is the regulator responsible for access to cash further to the Financial Services and Markets Act 2023, with powers to seek to ensure the reasonable provision of cash withdrawal and deposit facilities for individuals and businesses, including free withdrawal services for individuals.

The FCA published its final rules on access to cash on 24 July. Under its rules, designated firms will be required to undertake assessments of a community's cash access needs following the closure of a service or a community request, and to put in a new service if necessary. These rules come into force on 18 September.

**■ Money Laundering****Phil Brickell:**[\[2613\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what her planned timetable is for publishing its response to the consultations on (a) reform of the UK's anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing supervisory system, published on 30 June 2023, (b) Improving the effectiveness of the Money Laundering Regulations, published on 11 March 2024 and (c) Senior Managers & Certification Regime, published on 30 March 2023.

**Tulip Siddiq:**

Responses to these consultations have been invaluable in building the evidence base on potential reforms. Policy development is ongoing, and next steps will be set out as soon as possible.



## ■ Pensions: Taxation

**Mr Peter Bedford:**

[\[2684\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if she will make an estimate of the revenue to the public purse from reducing the top rate of tax relief on pension contributions to 30%.

**Tulip Siddiq:**

The Government does not publish such estimates.

## ■ Sanctions

**Phil Brickell:**

[\[2614\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps she is taking to help support the enforcement of UK sanctions.

**Tulip Siddiq:**

The Treasury's Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI) is responsible for civil enforcement of the UK's financial sanctions regimes.

OFSI is committed to ensuring that the UK has the strongest possible capability to implement and enforce the UK's financial sanctions. OFSI has scaled up its enforcement capabilities through legislative changes and expanded its team, allowing it to progress a higher number of complex investigations. For example, in the financial year 2022 – 2023 OFSI increased resource in its enforcement team by 175%.

OFSI expects to see the first monetary penalties resulting from breaches related to the 2022 Russia designations in 2024.

## ■ Special Educational Needs: Private Education

**Neil O'Brien:**

[\[2475\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if she will exempt independent special schools from the removal of business rates charitable rates relief.

**James Murray:**

On 29 July 2024, the Government published a technical note confirming that the Government will remove private schools' eligibility for charitable rates relief under business rates in England.

The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government will bring forward primary legislation to amend the Local Government Finance Act 1988 to end relief eligibility for private schools. The change is intended to take effect from April 2025, subject to Parliamentary process.

As set out in the technical note, the Government recognises some pupils have special educational needs that can only be met in a private school. The Government has made clear that it 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

**■ Tourism: VAT****Rachael Maskell:**[\[1936\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether she plans to introduce tax free shopping in tourist destinations.

**James Murray:**

Earlier this year, the Office for Budget Responsibility conducted a review of the previous government's 2020 costing of removing tax-free shopping for tourists. The OBR's updated estimate is that the withdrawal of the VAT Retail Export Scheme will lead to a saving for the Exchequer of around £540 million by 2025-26 (compared to £460 million when originally costed in 2020).

The Government has inherited a challenging fiscal position. Debt is near 100% of GDP and borrowing is more than double what it was before the pandemic. In addition to this, a recent Treasury audit has revealed an additional £21.9 billion pressure on departmental spending.

The Chancellor has confirmed that she will be making decisions on tax policy, in this context, at the Budget on 30 October.

**WORK AND PENSIONS****■ Winter Fuel Payment: Melton Borough****Edward Argar:**[\[2346\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people in the Melton Borough received winter fuel allowance payments in 2023.

**Emma Reynolds:**

Annual statistics on the number of Winter Fuel Payment recipients and households by local authority and by Westminster parliamentary constituency are made publicly available via [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk). For Winter 2022 to 2023 11,729 people received a Winter Fuel Payment in the Melton Borough.

## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

### BUSINESS AND TRADE

#### ■ **Statement from the Secretary of State for Business and Trade**

**Secretary of State for Business and Trade and President of the Board of Trade (Jonathan Reynolds):** [\[HCWS64\]](#)

The UK Government has been absolutely clear that Israel must, in taking military action to support its legitimate right to self-defence, do so whilst adhering to International Humanitarian Law (IHL).

Following a rigorous process in line with the UK's legal obligations, the UK Government has concluded that there is a clear risk that military exports to Israel, where used for military operations in Gaza, might be used in serious violations of international humanitarian law. To continue to permit these exports would therefore be inconsistent with our Strategic Export Licensing Criteria.

The Foreign Secretary has now considered detailed assessments and has determined that while Israel has the capability to comply with international humanitarian law and the most senior Ministers and officials have affirmed Israel's commitment to do so, there are significant doubts about its record of compliance. Consequently, he has advised me that there is a clear risk that some UK exports to Israel might be used to commit or facilitate a serious violation of international humanitarian law.

A thorough process has now been followed and the summary of the Government's assessment is being published.

I have therefore instructed officials to suspend licences for exports to Israel, where we have assessed those items are for use in military operations in Gaza. This includes approximately 30 export licences for items which could be used in the current conflict. This includes components for fighter aircraft (F-16s), parts for Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), naval systems, and targeting equipment.

The Government condemned Hamas' barbaric attack on 7 October and supports Israel's right to defend itself in line with international law. The government is also working intensively with international partners to encourage wider regional de-escalation in the context of recent events.

This is not a blanket ban but targets relevant licences that could be used in military operations in Gaza. Assessments of Israel's commitment to international humanitarian law will continue, including with regard to the provision of food and medical supplies to civilians in Gaza and the treatment of detainees, and may change over time to allow reinstatement of these licences.

Affected exporters will be notified of that suspension.

The UK stresses that there is no equivalence between Hamas terrorists and Israel's democratic government. The UK remains committed to supporting Israel's self-defence.

But to license arms exports to Israel, the UK must assess their compliance with international humanitarian law, notwithstanding the abhorrence of their opponents' tactics and ideology.

In the context of this suspension, I have also considered the particular issue of the F-35 strike fighter programme. I am grateful to the Defence Secretary for his advice on this issue.

The F-35 is an aircraft that operates globally, forming a key capability in the militaries of many of our allies.

The F35 programme has a significant dependence on the UK, which provides unique and critical components. Due to the nature of the F35 as an international collaborative programme, it is not currently possible to suspend licensing of F35 components for use by Israel without prejudicing the entire global F35 programme, including its broader strategic role in NATO and our support to Ukraine. This Government has an unwavering commitment to the security not just of this country but to our allies around the world, especially at a time when we face increased global insecurity and volatility.

In this context, with a view to ensuring international peace and security, exports to the global F-35 programme will be excluded from this suspension decision, except where going direct to Israel. This is in line with the Written Ministerial Statement that issued the Strategic Export Licensing Criteria on 8 December 2021, which provided that application of the Criteria would be without prejudice to the application to specific cases of specific measures as may be announced to Parliament from time to time. This will be kept under review.

The UK continues to call for an immediate ceasefire to the conflict in Gaza, the release of all hostages and a significant increase in the amount of aid to civilians in Gaza.

The Foreign Secretary and I will provide further updates to Parliament as appropriate.

## ■ **UK accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership – Entry into Force**

**Minister of State (Minister for Trade Policy and Economic Security) (Mr Douglas Alexander):** [\[HCWS56\]](#)

The Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) is set to enter into force for the UK by 15 December 2024. This follows Peru's ratification of the UK's Accession Protocol to the Agreement.

The Accession Protocol sets out that the agreement will enter into force for the UK 60 days after all Parties and the UK have each notified the CPTPP Depository. Notification would follow the completion of relevant domestic procedures. However, after 15 months have passed since signature (which falls in mid-October 2024), the mechanism changes and the Protocol can enter into force 60 days after a minimum of six Parties and the UK have each notified. If at least 6 Parties and the UK have already notified within 15 months of signature, entry into force would take place 60 days after the October date. Given Peru

is the sixth Party to notify their ratification, we currently expect the UK's accession to CPTPP to enter into force by 15 December 2024.

Before Peru, five other CPTPP Parties had already ratified the terms of the UK's accession, including Japan, Singapore, Chile, New Zealand and Viet Nam. This means that the agreement will come into force between the UK and those Parties by the end of the year, and with other Parties depending on when they ratify. The UK continues to work closely with remaining Parties, who are completing their own processes as quickly as possible.

This Department is helping British businesses ready themselves to take full advantage of the opportunities CPTPP presents. As the first country to accede to this agreement, the UK will be perfectly positioned to shape its future development, from influencing the future development of the CPTPP rulebook to championing the group's expansion to new economies.

## ■ UK-Ukraine Digital Trade Agreement Entry into Force

**Minister of State (Minister for Trade Policy and Economic Security) (Mr Douglas Alexander):**

[\[HCWS59\]](#)

I am pleased to announce that the UK-Ukraine Digital Trade Agreement (DTA) entered into force on 1 September, following the completion of the necessary domestic procedures on both sides. This historic trade agreement will help Ukraine rebuild its economy and support livelihoods following Russia's illegal invasion.

This is the deepest digital trade agreement that the UK has negotiated. Digital trade is rapidly becoming the dominant form of trade. Seizing the opportunities in this area is fundamental to our prosperity. UK and Ukrainian businesses of all shapes and sizes, and across all sectors of the economy (whether trading in goods or services) will benefit from the agreement.

Ukraine's recovery from Putin's illegal and barbaric war will be a symbol of the power of freedom and democracy over autocracy. Our DTA with Ukraine creates a digital UK-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement by modernising our bilateral trade in the digital era and deepening our economic ties with Ukraine.

Greater digitalisation of the economy is a key priority for President Zelenskyy's Government. This Agreement will boost productivity, jobs and growth, and allow us to help Ukraine deliver on their digital ambitions by:

- Ensuring open digital markets, including through commitments such as a ban on imposing customs duties on electronic transmissions.
- Supporting cross-border data flows, including financial data, and prohibiting the unfair imposed localisation of data as well as committing to high standards of personal data protection.
- Championing digital trading systems to cut red tape and make trade cheaper, faster, and more secure for Ukraine and UK businesses.

- Upholding consumer benefits and business safeguards in trade, including cybersecurity and online consumer protection.

This Agreement further cements the UK's commitment to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with Ukrainian allies in response to the ongoing conflict and play our part in securing Ukraine's future as a prosperous, stable and democratic partner in Europe.

I hope the House will join me in celebrating this important milestone for UK and Ukrainian businesses.

## CABINET OFFICE

### ■ UK COVID-19 Inquiry response costs for Quarter 1 24/25

**Paymaster General and Minister for the Cabinet Office (Nick Thomas-Symonds):**  
[\[HCWS53\]](#)

The Covid-19 pandemic impacted each and every person in the UK. The work of the UK Covid-19 Inquiry is crucial in examining the UK's response to and impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. There are evidently lessons to be learnt from the pandemic and the Government is committed to closely considering the Covid-19 Inquiry's findings and recommendations, which will play a key role in informing the Government's planning and preparations for the future.

The Government recognises the unprecedented and wholly exceptional circumstances of the pandemic, and the importance of examining as rigorously as possible the actions the state took in response, in order to learn lessons for the future. The Inquiry is therefore unprecedented in its scope, complexity and profile, looking at recent events that have profoundly impacted everyone's lives.

The independent UK COVID-19 Inquiry publishes its own running costs quarterly. Following the publication of the Inquiry's Financial Report for Quarter 1 2024-25 on 29 July 2024, I would like to update colleagues on the costs to the UK Government associated with responding to the UK COVID-19 Inquiry.

Figures provided are based upon a selection of the most relevant departments and are not based on a complete set of departmental figures and are not precise for accounting purposes. Ensuring a comprehensive and timely response to the Inquiry requires significant input from a number of key government departments, including, but not limited to, the Cabinet Office, the Department for Health and Social Care, the UK Health Security Agency, the Home Office and HM Treasury, many of which are supported by the Government Legal Department. While every effort has been made to ensure a robust methodology, complexities remain in trying to quantify the time and costs dedicated to the Inquiry alone.

It should be noted that alongside full time resource within departments, Inquiry response teams draw on expertise from across their organisations. The staff costs associated with appearing as witnesses, preparing witnesses and associated policy development work on the Covid Inquiry are not included in the costs below.

### Breakdown of Staff & Costs

The Government's response to the UK COVID-19 Inquiry is led by Inquiry Response Units across departments.

- Number of UK COVID-19 Inquiry Response Unit staff: 280 Full Time Equivalents (Q1)
- Cost of UK COVID-19 Inquiry Response Unit staff: £5,049,000 (including contingent labour costs) (Q1)

### Total Inquiry Response Unit Legal Costs

Inquiry Response Units across government departments are supported by the Government Legal Department, co-partnering firms of solicitors, and legal counsel. These associated legal costs (excluding internal departmental advisory legal costs) for April - June 2024 are below.

- Q1 legal costs: £4,236,000

## EDUCATION

### ■ Education reforms to deliver on the government's opportunity mission

**Secretary of State for Education and Minister for Women and Equalities (Bridget Phillipson):** [\[HCWS54\]](#)

With immediate effect single headline grades will no longer be issued by Ofsted when they inspect state-funded schools, to drive high and rising school standards for children and increase transparency for parents.

For state-funded schools inspected in the 2024/25 academic year, parents will see four grades across the existing sub-categories: quality of education, behaviour and attitudes, personal development and leadership & management.

The change delivers on the government's mission to break down barriers to opportunity and demonstrates the Prime Minister's commitment to improve the life chances of young people across the country.

Where schools are identified as struggling, government will prioritise rapid planning and action to improve the education and experience of children, rather than relying purely on changing schools' management.

The reform paves the way for the introduction of School Report Cards from September 2025, which will provide parents with a more complete picture of how schools are performing and where there is a need for improvement. The design and content of report cards will be developed over the coming months, including through extensive engagement with parents and schools.

From early 2025, the department will introduce Regional Improvement Teams to work with teachers and leaders in struggling schools to quickly and directly address identified areas of weakness.

For schools whose performance is causing the most serious concern – which would previously have been rated ‘inadequate’ - the government will continue to intervene. Ofsted is under a legal duty to identify schools causing concern (defined as schools requiring special measures or requiring significant improvement) and notify the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State is under a legal duty to issue an academy order to a local authority maintained school in either of the categories of concern. The removal of headline grades will not affect the legal position. The Secretary of State will also continue to use, where appropriate, the power to terminate the funding agreement of an academy identified as a school causing concern.

For schools that have previously received two or more consecutive judgements that were less than ‘Good’ and, as of today’s announcement, are due to become academies or transfer to a new trust by 1 January, that process will continue. For schools that have received two or more consecutive judgements that were less than ‘Good’ but are due to convert or transfer in the new year, the government’s intervention approach will change. The government will now put in place support for these schools from a high performing school, helping to drive up standards quickly. Schools with current Ofsted grades of below ‘good’ which are in receipt of a ‘requires improvement’ sub-judgement in Leadership and Management or Quality of Education in their next Ofsted inspection will also be eligible for this support.

The government is committed, in time, to replacing single headline grades in all the remits that Ofsted inspects - namely private schools, early years settings, colleges, initial teacher education and children’s social care providers. Government and Ofsted will work in partnership with sectors over the next year to develop alternative reporting arrangements. New arrangements will take account of the unique characteristics of each sector but will broadly reflect the report card approach that is being taken for schools. Providers in other sectors will continue to receive single headline grades in the meantime.

Today’s changes build on the recently announced Children’s Wellbeing Bill, which will put children at the centre of education and make changes to ensure every child is supported to achieve and thrive.

Today’s announcement is the first step towards a school accountability system that sets the highest expectations on standards while making inspection a more powerful, more transparent tool for driving school improvement. The reforms represent a major step in the government’s mission to break down the barriers to opportunity for every child at every stage. In doing so, the government will put education back at the forefront of national life and restore teaching as a valued profession which delivers for our children and our country.



## ENERGY SECURITY AND NET ZERO

### ■ Energy Infrastructure Planning Projects

**Minister for Energy (Michael Shanks):**

[\[HCWS52\]](#)

My Noble Friend, the Minister of State for Energy Security and Net Zero (Lord Hunt of Kings Heath OBE), made the following statement today:

This Statement concerns an application for development consent made under the Planning Act 2008 by Ecotricity (Heck Fen) Limited for the construction and operation of a solar photovoltaic electricity generating station situated in Lincolnshire.

Under section 107(1) of the Planning Act 2008, the Secretary of State must make a decision on an application within three months of the receipt of the Examining Authority's report unless exercising the power under section 107(3) of the Act to set a new deadline. Where a new deadline is set, the Secretary of State must make a Statement to Parliament to announce it.

The statutory deadline for the decision on the Heckington Fen Solar Park application was 9 August 2024.

Ecotricity (Heck Fen) Limited has requested that the Secretary of State extends the statutory deadline to allow time for further negotiations with landowners and to ensure the necessary permissions can be obtained. I have decided to allow a short extension and to set a new deadline of no later than **27 September 2024** for deciding this application for these reasons.

The decision to set the new deadline for this application is without prejudice to the decision on whether to grant or refuse development consent.

### ■ Publication of Statutory Consultation and National Energy System Operator Licences Jointly With Ofgem

**Minister for Energy (Michael Shanks):**

[\[HCWS57\]](#)

Our nation stands at a pivotal moment in our energy and net zero journey. As we navigate the challenges of energy security and the urgent need for a sustainable future, I am proud to announce the publication of the joint Government-Ofgem response to the Statutory Consultation on National Energy System Operator (NESO) licences and other impacted licences.

NESO will be a trailblazing, independent entity, serving as a trusted voice at the core of our energy sector. It will spearhead strategic planning for our energy systems and networks, manage the electricity system with precision and play a crucial role in achieving our overarching energy strategy and objectives.

NESO's independence from commercial interests and operational control of the government will enable it to provide unbiased, expert advice on critical decisions that will shape our energy landscape for decades to come, including our Clean Power 2030 target.

As we move forward, NESO's role will be instrumental in achieving our net zero and energy security goals. By fostering innovation, enhancing system resilience, and promoting transparency, NESO will help navigate the complexities of our evolving energy system. We are enormously grateful for the valuable input from industry stakeholders, whose insights have been integral to shaping the future of NESO.

NESO will be regulated by Ofgem through two new licences, and this consultation response marks a significant milestone in establishing NESO's regulatory regime. The final step will be for the Secretary of State to grant NESO these licences under the powers conferred by the Energy Act 2023. The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero and Ofgem are aiming to establish NESO this year.

Our response addresses thematically the feedback raised by stakeholders to the consultation on the contents of these licences published in March 2024. The key themes include NESO transparency and industry feedback, incentives and performance, energy resilience and critical national infrastructure, network planning, NESO transitional service agreements, future roles, UNC Arrangements, and on NESO's advisory role.

Alongside this response document, we are also publishing updated versions of NESO's licences.

The establishment of NESO is intended to apply only to England, Scotland, and Wales. Energy is generally devolved in Northern Ireland.

I will place copies of the Statutory Consultation Response on the National Energy System Operator's licences in the House Libraries.

## FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

### ■ FCDO Services' Ministerial Targets 2024/25

**Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Indo-Pacific) (Catherine West):**  
[\[HCWS61\]](#)

FCDO Services operates as a trading fund of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). I have set the following performance targets for 2024-2025:

1. An in-year surplus before interest, tax and dividend;
2. Achievement of the return on capital employed (ROCE) of at least 6.5% (weighted average);
3. A productivity ratio of at least 82%, measuring actual billable hours versus available billable hours;
4. An in-year customer satisfaction rating average of at least 82;
5. An average Civil Service People Survey score for 'Employee Engagement' of at least 61%; and
6. An average Civil Service People Survey score for 'My Manager' of at least 65%.

FCDO Services will report to Parliament on its success against these targets through its Annual Report and Accounts for 2024-2025.

FCDO Services is a Trading Fund of the FCDO. It provides a range of integrated, secure services worldwide to the FCDO and other UK Government departments, supporting the delivery of government agendas. Services include protective security, estates and construction, cloud computing, communications and monitoring, logistics, translation and interpreting. This is combined with a portfolio of global maintenance work. FCDO Services also manages the UK National Authority for Counter Eavesdropping (UK NACE), helping protect UK assets from physical, electronic and cyber-attack.

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

### ■ COVID-19 Vaccination - Autumn 2024

**Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Public Health and Prevention (Andrew Gwynne):** [\[HCWS60\]](#)

His Majesty's Government (HMG) is committed to protecting people most vulnerable to COVID-19 through vaccination as guided by the independent Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI).

On 2 August 2024, the JCVI published advice on the COVID-19 vaccination programme for autumn 2024. Their advice is that a COVID-19 vaccine should be offered in autumn 2024 to those in the population most vulnerable to serious outcomes from COVID-19 and who are therefore most likely to benefit from vaccination. These groups are:

- adults aged 65 years and over;
- residents in a care home for older adults;
- persons aged 6 months to 64 years in a clinical risk group, as defined in tables 3 and 4 of the COVID-19 chapter of the UK Health Security Green Book on Immunisation against infectious disease.

HMG has accepted the JCVI advice, and the above groups will be offered vaccination in England this autumn.

The JCVI also advised that health and social care service providers may wish to consider whether vaccination provided as an occupational health programme to frontline health and social care workers is appropriate in future years and that ahead of such considerations, health departments may choose to continue to extend an offer of vaccination to frontline health and social care workers and staff working in care homes for older adults in autumn 2024.

HMG has decided that frontline health and social care workers and staff working in care homes for older adults will continue to be offered vaccination in the autumn 2024 programme in England.

The JCVI has also advised which vaccines may be used in the autumn 2024 COVID-19 programme and in line with this advice the vaccines that will be supplied are the Moderna mRNA (Spikevax) vaccine and Pfizer-BioNTech mRNA (Comirnaty) vaccine.

### **Future programmes**

The JCVI has advised that infection with SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19 disease) continues to occur throughout the year. The current trend indicates intermittent waves occurring every few months which are consistently peaking at lower amplitude. Winter remains the period of greatest threat from COVID-19 both in relation to the risk of infection to individuals and the pressures on health systems. Should population immunity to SARS-CoV-2 be maintained, it is anticipated that most people will experience relatively mild symptomatic or asymptomatic infections. JCVI will continue to review and advise on the optimal timing and frequency of COVID-19 vaccination beyond autumn 2024.

### **Notification of liabilities**

I am now updating the House on the liabilities HMG has taken on in relation to further vaccine deployment via this statement and accompanying Departmental Minute laid in Parliament containing a description of the liability undertaken. The agreement to provide indemnity with deployment of further doses increases the contingent liability of the COVID-19 vaccination programme.

I will update the House in a similar manner as appropriate, as and when any future decisions impact the contingent liability of the COVID-19 vaccination programme.

## **HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

### **■ Building Safety**

**Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Building Safety and Homelessness  
(Rushanara Ali):**

[\[HCWS62\]](#)

Today, I can update Parliament on fire safety and evacuation proposals; on the recognition of CE ('Conformité Européenne') marking for construction products; and on updates to the statutory guidance to the building regulations to remove references to outdated National Classes fire testing standards and make provision for sprinklers in new care homes.

#### **Fire safety and evacuation**

The Home Office will bring forward proposals in the Autumn to improve the fire safety and evacuation of disabled/vulnerable residents in high-rise and higher-risk residential buildings in England in response to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry's Phase 1 recommendations that relate to Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans, or PEEPs. These proposals will be called 'Residential PEEPs'.

Through them, residents with disabilities and impairments will be entitled to a person-centred risk assessment to identify appropriate equipment and adjustments to aid their

fire safety / evacuation, as well as a 'Residential PEEPs statement' that records what vulnerable residents should do in the event of a fire.

The Government has committed funding next year to begin this important work by supporting social housing providers to deliver Residential PEEPs for their renters. Future years' funding will be confirmed at the upcoming Spending Review.

The Government has made progress on delivering recommendation 33.22[d] of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry's Phase 1 report, on Evacuation Alert Systems ('sounders') for new builds, through amendment to statutory guidance to the building regulations in relation to high-rise residential building design (requiring sounders to be fitted in new buildings over 18 metres in height).

We will consider further the second part of the recommendation, relating to existing buildings, in light of further evidence or recommendations in the Phase 2 report. This will, like the work on fire safety improvements nationally, be part of the important task of reducing the likelihood and impact of future fires.

### **CE marking**

Construction products are a pivotal part of the housing and infrastructure supply chain and make up 13% of the United Kingdom's (UK) entire manufacturing base by turnover. Ensuring continuing supply of products is critical to delivering house building targets and wider infrastructure ambitions. These products must be safe. Evidence to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry revealed the scale of concern about construction products – products which are vital to all our buildings and infrastructure – and the system that oversees them remains inadequate.

A subset of construction products fall within scope of the current construction products regulations. These existing regulations set out rules for placing construction products on the market, providing a common technical language to assess the performance of products. Products within scope of these regulations must undergo an assessment of conformity with the relevant standard or technical assessment. Such products must also be affixed with a UKCA (UK Conformity Assessed) or a CE (Conformité Européenne) mark. Current Government guidance sets out that recognition of CE marking will end in June 2025.

I can announce today that the Government will extend the period of recognition of CE marking for construction products. The CE mark will continue to be available when placing construction products on the market across the UK.

We have listened to the findings from the Independent Review of the Construction Products Testing Regime. This was clear that there is currently insufficient testing and certification capacity in the UK alone to provide the volume of conformity assessment that would be required were CE recognition to end. We are also clear that ending recognition of CE marking without reforming the domestic regime would create trade barriers and negatively affect the supply of products that meet recognised standards.

I am also determined to address the inadequacies across the wider construction products regime. Residents and communities need to be confident that their homes will be safe

and well-built now and in the future. To ensure this, the Government will want to take into account any recommendations from the forthcoming Grenfell Inquiry report to inform proposals for reform. Therefore, I am making this extension, and the longer-term future of CE/UKCA marking, conditional on this Government committing to system wide reform of the construction products regulatory regime.

The Government recognises the role of UK Conformity Assessment Bodies in ensuring compliance of goods on the market. As part of the reforms the Government will work with UK Conformity Assessment Bodies, the UK Accreditation Service, and the wider industry to strengthen the conformity assessment market.

Lastly, I recognise the need for industry to have sufficient certainty to support supply chains. I can confirm that any subsequent changes to the recognition of CE marking would be subject to a minimum 2-year transitional period.

### **National Classes and Sprinklers in care homes**

I am also announcing, today, publication of two updates to the statutory guidance that accompanies Building Regulations. First, we are introducing a provision for sprinklers to be installed in new care homes; and second, we are completing the withdrawal of the outdated National Classes fire testing standards, ending a long period of dual specification in favour of the more robust European standard. This implements the recommendation, made in the Hackitt Report, for a clearer, transparent and effective testing regime. Alongside guidance for second staircases in tall residential buildings that are more than 18m in height, which was published on 29 March 2024, these measures conclude the new policy responses to the Sprinklers in care homes, removal of national classes, and staircases in residential buildings consultation, which ran from 23 December 2022 to 17 March 2023.

Withdrawing the National Classes fire testing standards from 'Approved Document B' will end the dual classification system that has operated since the early 2000s in favour of the more rigorous, internationally recognised European standard (BS EN 13501). The current testing standard tests for both reaction to fire and fire resistance. I am aware that there are a small number of manufacturers who have only ever tested to National Class standards who will need time to re-test their products. We are providing industry with a transition period of five years for fire resistance and 6 months for reaction to fire. This is a generous yet critical approach and has been put in place to facilitate a smooth transition to the European standard that is not disruptive to supply chains.

A compassionate society protects its most vulnerable. Today, I am also publishing an update to 'Approved Document B' that makes provision for sprinklers in all new care homes. Sprinklers enhance fire protection where residents may be reliant on others for help and assistance, especially if a building evacuation is needed. Many care home providers already include sprinklers in new designs. For those that do not yet provide for sprinklers, again, I recognise that businesses and investors seek certainty. So, care homeowners and developers will benefit from a six-month transition period until the guidance comes into effect and will then have a further six months to enable work on current development projects that are underway, or about to start, to continue.

**SCIENCE, INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY****■ Departmental Contingent Liability Notification for the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts HQ Project**

**Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology (Peter Kyle):**

[\[HCWS55\]](#)

I am tabling this statement for the benefit of Honourable and Right Honourable Members to bring to their attention two new Contingent Liabilities for the activities of DSIT and the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts, here on referred to as ECMWF.

The UK has agreed to fully fund the construction of a new headquarters for ECMWF on the University of Reading (UoR) campus. This was a political commitment made to Member States at the ECMWF Council Meeting in December 2021. To enable this, an Agreement for Lease (AfL) has been negotiated with UoR to secure land and rights to build.

ECMWF is an independent international and intergovernmental organisation supported by 35 States, including the UK. ECMWF are considered experts in their field and attract talented scientists and engineers from across the world. The provision of the new ECMWF HQ will ensure approximately 270-300 skilled roles remain in the UK along with significant investment in the UK economy over the life of the building, generating a net present value of £97m. The continued hosting of ECMWF will help to maintain the UK's reputation as a world leader in weather and climate science.

Two indemnities are required by the university. The first is due to the university having incurred costs on the basis that DSIT will subsequently complete the project. The costs cover relocating their Art Department to make space for the HQ and carrying out significant works in clearing the site by (amongst other things) demolishing existing buildings, removing asbestos/other contaminants and decommissioning services so that the site will be ready for development. The university are seeking an indemnity to ensure they would be partially reimbursed, should the project not be completed. They will not move forward with the project without this protection so without these indemnities, the deal to secure the site would be jeopardised along with the project as a whole.

This indemnity will be triggered should DSIT not achieve specific planning and construction milestones by specified deadlines. Since the planning requirements are nearly fulfilled with the grant of planning already in place, the risk of this indemnity crystallising is considered to be very low. The maximum costs to the Government are £14.4 million including VAT. If crystallised, the cost is likely to be the full capped value.

The detailed planning consent application was made in October 2023, with the grant of planning received on 24 July 2024. A six-week period following grant of planning permission during which the decision to grant planning permission could be judicially reviewed will expire in early September 2024. In the event that period expires without an application for judicial review being made, this indemnity will fall away entirely. This is considered to be likely given the planning application was not contentious.

The second indemnity relates to vacation and handover of the HQ at the end of the 50-year lease. If ECMWF do not vacate the premises at the end of the contractual term of the Lease (or if the Lease is otherwise determined before the end of the contractual term) and UK Government cannot return the building to UoR with vacant possession because ECMWF do not vacate, UK Government would be liable for UoR's associated costs. Given ECMWF's privileges and immunities, the inviolable status of its premises and the uncertain basis of its occupation of the property under domestic landlord and tenant law, UoR are concerned about their ability to recover vacant possession after the end of the Lease if ECMWF were to remain in occupation. This risk is being held by UK government as part of the lease agreement.

The UK would be under an obligation as host nation to provide alternative accommodation to allow ECMWF to move before the end of the tenancy, unless they depart the UK. There is a strong possibility that the university would agree to extend the lease or agree a new lease. UK Government and ECMWF are obliged to work together to avoid this kind of situation.

Costs in the event of this occurring are uncapped. Property and legal costs are estimated by the Government Property Agency to be around £500k (£600k incl. VAT). Other costs cannot be estimated at this stage due to the uncertainties involved. Costs comprise liabilities, expenses (including solicitors' and other professional costs), claims and damages. Losses (including any diminution in UoR's interest in the Property arising as a result of the breach of covenant to provide vacant possession at the end of the Lease) would also have to be covered. DSIT would be responsible for such costs.

Although the Agreement for Lease and Lease will be entered into by the Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, DSIT as ultimate sponsor and funder of the project will have budgetary responsibility within Government for them, and will be responsible for any payments due under the first Indemnity and second Indemnity. DSIT are seeking approval of the indemnities as ultimate sponsor and funder of the project.

The Government will be subject to the new contingent liabilities, and I will be laying a Departmental Minute today containing a description of the liabilities undertaken.

## WALES

### ■ Port Talbot Transition Board

**Secretary of State for Wales (Jo Stevens):**

[\[HCWS63\]](#)

Today I can confirm that on 15 August I announced the release of £13.5million in funding to support supply chain businesses and individuals affected by Tata Steel's decision to transition to greener steelmaking.

This initial tranche of £13.5m in funding demonstrates that this government will act decisively to support workers and businesses in Port Talbot, working with Welsh Government, unions, and the wider community.



This funding, which is the first release from the Tata Steel / Port Talbot Transition Board fund, will target local businesses which are heavily reliant on Tata Steel as their primary customer, allowing them to turn towards new markets and customers where necessary.

The funding will also be available to workers affected by the transition, allowing them to retrain or to learn new skills for the employment market. We are also harnessing the generosity of the local community, with 50 employers so far pledging practical support for affected workers.

Negotiations with Tata Steel on the future of the site will continue separately. But this government will not wait for a crisis to overtake us before acting. We are putting a safety net in place now to ensure we can back workers and businesses, whatever happens.

We have reset our relationship with the Welsh Government and will continue to work closely with them and other partners to ensure we are delivering support on the ground.

Recognising the immediate need, support through the funds will be available imminently.

Businesses and Individuals can register an interest or send any enquiries to an email address if interested - [tsukqueries@npt.gov.uk](mailto:tsukqueries@npt.gov.uk)

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### ■ Cost of Living

**Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Liz Kendall):**

[\[HCWS58\]](#)

Today we are announcing funding for an extension to the Household Support Fund which will enable Local Authorities in England to help vulnerable people and families, receive discretionary emergency crisis support as we help people through the winter.

Many councils also use the Fund beyond emergency support, including working with local charities and community groups to provide residents with key appliances, school uniforms, cookery classes, and items to improve energy efficiency in the home.

The scheme will be worth £421m in England and will run until the end of March 2025. The devolved governments will receive consequential funding as usual through the Barnett formula to spend at their discretion.

The dire inheritance we face means more people are living in poverty now than 14 years ago – and this Government is taking immediate action to prevent a cliff edge of support for the most vulnerable in our society.

At the same time, we are taking action to fix the foundations of our country and spread opportunity and prosperity to every part of the country through our plans to grow the economy, make work pay, and Get Britain Working again.

That means delivering the biggest and boldest reforms to employment support for a generation, including through our upcoming White Paper to tackle the root causes of worklessness.

It also means reducing poverty and driving up opportunity through our Child Poverty Taskforce, taking action across Government so every child, no matter where they come from, has the best start to life.

We will also root out the unacceptable levels of fraud and error in our welfare system so that taxpayers' money supports those who need it most.

We are under no illusions about the scale of the challenge given our inheritance. We will not turn things around overnight, but our plan will transform lives.

By growing the economy and unlocking investment through the National Wealth Fund; launching Great British Energy to drive home-grown clean energy and lower bills; making work pay and developing a new Child Poverty Strategy to give children the best start in life – the Government is looking at all levers available to unlock the potential of millions across the country and give them the platform they need to thrive.

Further details for the forthcoming extension will be published ahead of the launch of the new scheme in the coming weeks.

This funding will work to help those in need. Pensioners and others struggling with the cost of living over the colder months should contact their local council to see what support may be available to them. If applicable, please direct residents in your area to their Local Authority who will be able to help them access the Household Support Fund in the coming months.