



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 4 September 2024 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:38 P.M., 04 September 2024). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

CONTENTS

ANSWERS	4	■ Prime Minister: Special Advisers	10
BUSINESS AND TRADE	4	CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT	10
■ Community Interest Companies: Children and Vulnerable Adults	4	■ Holiday Accommodation: Registration	10
■ Devolution: Wales	4	■ Sports: Injuries	10
■ Minerals	4	■ VisitEngland: Devon	11
■ Public Sector: Audit	5	EDUCATION	11
CABINET OFFICE	5	■ GCE A-Level: Knowsley	11
■ 10 Downing Street: Alcoholic Drinks	5	■ Pre-school Education	12
■ Blood: Contamination	6	■ Schools: Finance	12
■ Civil Service	6	■ Special Educational Needs: Shropshire	14
■ Cybersecurity	6	ENERGY SECURITY AND NET ZERO	14
■ Disease Control: National Security	7	■ British Coal Staff Superannuation Scheme	14
■ Infected Blood Compensation Scheme	7	■ Carbon Capture, Usage and Storage	14
■ Peers: Retirement	8	■ Department for Energy Security and Net Zero: Energy	15
■ Political Office: Staff	8	■ Electric Cables: Costs	15
■ Prime Minister: Aviation	8	■ Electricity Generation	15
■ Prime Minister: Communication and Marketing	9	■ Energy Supply	15
■ Prime Minister: Members' Interests	9	■ Energy Supply: Government Assistance	16
■ Prime Minister: Public Expenditure	9	■ Energy: Prices	16
		■ Environment Protection: Business	16

■ Fuel Poverty: Winter Fuel Payment	17	HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT	28
■ Great British Energy	17	■ Birmingham City Council: Insolvency	28
■ Great British Energy: Capital Investment	19	■ Combined Authorities	28
■ Great British Energy: Infrastructure	19	■ Culture: Maldon	28
■ Great British Energy: Public Appointments	19	■ Freeports	29
■ Great British Energy: Supply Chains	20	■ Green Belt: Havering	29
■ Offshore Industry: Employment	20	■ Housing: Young People	30
■ Renewable Energy: Planning Permission	21	■ Insulation: Housing	30
■ Wind Power: Finance	21	■ Islamophobia	30
FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE	21	■ Local Government Finance	31
■ Bangladesh: Hinduism	21	■ Local Government: Devolution	31
■ Bangladesh: Religious Freedom	22	■ Members: Correspondence	32
■ India: Development Aid	22	■ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Pentland Communications and Sovereign Strategy	32
■ Jimmy Lai	23	■ Park Homes: Sales	32
HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	23	■ Private Rented Housing: High Peak	32
■ Dental Services: Torbay	23	■ Private Rented Housing: Rents	33
■ Hospitals: Parking	23	■ Radicalism	33
■ Hospitals: Planning Permission	24	■ Recreation Spaces: Havering	34
■ Junior Doctors: Pay	24	■ Religion: Departmental Responsibilities	34
HOME OFFICE	25	■ UK Shared Prosperity Fund	34
■ Anti-corruption Champion	25	■ Urban Areas: Capital Investment	35
■ Counter-terrorism: Remand in Custody	25	■ Urban Areas: Torquay	36
■ Immigration: Families	26	■ Voter Authority Certificates: Romford	36
■ Spiking	26	JUSTICE	36
■ Visas: Palestinians	27	■ Lincoln Prison	36
■ Visas: Switzerland	27		
■ Women: Safety	27		

■ Prisoners' Release: Mid Leicestershire	37	■ Public Finance	45
NORTHERN IRELAND	38	■ Public Sector: Productivity	45
■ Winter Fuel Payment: Northern Ireland	38	■ Taxation	45
SCOTLAND	38	WORK AND PENSIONS	46
■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]	38	■ Access to Work Programme	46
■ Potatoes: UK Internal Trade	39	■ Bereavement Support Payment	46
■ Scottish Cities Alliance	39	■ Department for Work and Pensions: Equality	46
TRANSPORT	40	■ Housing Benefit: Social Rented Housing	48
■ A167 (M) and Tyne Bridge: Newcastle upon Tyne	40	■ Local Housing Allowance	48
■ Aviation: Compensation	42	■ Pensioners: Poverty	48
■ Bus Services: Gloucestershire	42	■ Universal Credit: EU Nationals	49
■ Railways: Devon	42	WRITTEN STATEMENTS	50
■ Roads: Birmingham	43	HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	50
■ Roads: Chelmsford	43	■ Improvements to gender identity services for children and young people	50
TREASURY	43	PRIME MINISTER	52
■ Energy: Taxation	43	■ Publication of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 Report	52
■ Equitable Life Assurance Society: Compensation	44	TREASURY	53
■ Pay: Young People	44	■ Extension of Enterprise Investment Scheme and Venture Capital Trust Scheme	53
■ Public Expenditure	44		

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

■ **Community Interest Companies: Children and Vulnerable Adults**

Paula Barker:

[\[3202\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, whether he has plans to increase the (a) monitoring and (b) oversight of community interest companies that are engaged in regulated activity with children and vulnerable adults.

Justin Madders:

Different restrictions apply for those engaging in regulated activity dependent on many factors, such as the type of provision, the age, Special Educational Needs and Disability status of any children involved, and staff providing the activity. The Government expects anyone engaged in regulated activity with children and vulnerable adults to comply with all statutory requirements and safeguards, with appropriate oversight applied.

The Regulator of Community Interest Companies decides whether an organisation is eligible to become, or continue to be, a community interest company, and has no role in overseeing or ensuring compliance with any requirements (e.g. licensing or regulatory compliance) outside of this.

■ **Devolution: Wales**

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[2965\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of devolving (a) the Post Office in Wales and (b) his Departmental powers to Wales.

Gareth Thomas:

There are no plans to devolve the Post Office in Wales. The access criteria set by Government ensures Post Office delivers essential services across all four nations of the UK via its network of 11,500 branches.

We will work closely with the Welsh Government in line with the existing devolution settlement. Welsh businesses can access a range of DBT support including those delivered through our unrivalled international network at posts overseas.

■ **Minerals**

Chris McDonald:

[\[3390\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, when he plans to review the list of critical minerals; what criteria he plans to use to assess which materials will be included; and if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of including copper.

Sarah Jones:

The Critical Minerals Intelligence Centre (CMIC), sponsored by the Department for Business and Trade, is currently undertaking an updated criticality assessment, with the results to be released later this year. The methodology for this assessment can be found on the CMIC website and the process involves assessing over 80 candidate materials, including copper.

Chris McDonald:[\[3391\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, whether he has made a comparative assessment of the (a) effectiveness and (b) extent of the UK's list of critical minerals and the list used by (a) the European Union and (ii) other jurisdictions.

Sarah Jones:

The Critical Minerals Intelligence Centre (CMIC), sponsored by the Department for Business and Trade, will publish an updated assessment of the criticality of over 80 candidate materials, later this year. This assessment is focused on the UK's circumstances, needs and priorities, and no comparative assessment of other jurisdictions has been undertaken to date.

Public Sector: Audit**Laurence Turner:**[\[3555\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, whether the draft Audit Reform and Corporate Governance Bill will contain measures to improve the quality of the auditing of public sector bodies.

Justin Madders:

The Government's manifesto committed to overhaul the local audit system to provide high quality, timely assurance to taxpayers. On 30 July, Jim McMahon, the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution, outlined to Parliament immediate actions to address the local audit backlog in England. Longer-term, he committed to reviewing the evidence (including external review recommendations) and to update the House this autumn.

The draft Audit Reform and Corporate Governance Bill will tackle bad financial reporting through a strengthened regulator. It will uphold standards and independent scrutiny of companies' accounts, supporting investment and economic security.

CABINET OFFICE**10 Downing Street: Alcoholic Drinks****John Glen:**[\[2294\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the Government's policy is on consumption of alcohol on the Downing Street estate.

Georgia Gould:

There has been no change of policy from when the Rt Hon Member was Minister for the Cabinet Office, of which the Downing Street estate forms part.

■ **Blood: Contamination****John Glen:**[\[2291\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the final report of the Infected Blood inquiry (HC 569-I), published on 20 May 2024, what progress his Department has made on identifying potential locations for the permanent memorial to the infected blood victims since May 2024; and what his planned timetable is for consulting those (a) infected and (b) affected by the scandal.

Nick Thomas-Symonds:

It is very important that we recognise what happened to people as a result of the Infected Blood Scandal and that we continue to remember these events for future generations. The Government is carefully considering Sir Brian Langstaff's recommendations and we will provide an update to Parliament on the progress we are making to respond to the Inquiry's recommendations, including this recommendation on memorialisation, by the end of the year.

■ **Civil Service****John Glen:**[\[2289\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the final report of the Infected Blood Inquiry, published on 20 May 2024, what steps he is taking to change the culture of the civil service.

Nick Thomas-Symonds:

The findings of the Inquiry's report are deeply concerning. We are working closely with DHSC and other interested departments to give each recommendation full consideration. This Government will bring forward legislation to place a duty of candour on public servants and authorities. This will be an important step towards addressing a culture of defensiveness. I will update Parliament on the progress on all recommendations by the end of the year.

■ **Cybersecurity****John Glen:**[\[2302\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to meet the cyber resilience targets for UK critical national infrastructure by 2025; and if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of mandatory cyber security requirements in the UK public sector.

Ms Abena Oppong-Asare:

HMG is committed to continue driving up levels of cyber resilience within the UK and we have seen the significant impact that cyber attacks can have.

We will continue to work closely with Lead Government Departments and the National Cyber Security Centre to ensure resilience and preparedness to cyber threat, and to work towards resilience targets for Critical National Infrastructure (CNI) sectors. This will be achieved through working with CNI (in both the private and public sector) to better: i) understand; ii) manage cyber risk; and, iii) minimise the impact of cyber incidents when they occur.

The King's Speech set out that the Government would bring forward a Cyber Security and Resilience Bill in this parliamentary session which will strengthen the UK's cyber defences, ensure that critical infrastructure and the digital services that companies rely on are secure. This complements the Cabinet Office's work to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of all regulation that applies to CNI.

The UK Government is also using [GovAssure](#), the cyber security assurance regime for the whole of government, including Government sector CNI, to define clear cyber resilience outcomes and develop an objective view of cyber resilience across the government technology estate. The common approach to Secure by Design across Government is being rolled out to all Departments responsible for CNI.

The [Cyber Security Standard](#) sets out the GovAssure cyber assurance regime as mandatory for some government organisations. The Cabinet Office and partner organisations are using the results from GovAssure to continue to assess the effectiveness of existing cyber security requirements, including consideration of further mandation of requirements.

■ **Disease Control: National Security**

John Glen:

[2297]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will provide an annual update to the UK Biological Security Strategy.

Ms Abena Oppong-Asare:

Yes. This Government has adopted the UK Biological Security Strategy and as lead Minister, The Rt Hon. Pat McFadden MP, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster will be updating Parliament in the Autumn on its implementation.

■ **Infected Blood Compensation Scheme**

Dave Doogan:

[3091]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what discussions he has had with the devolved Administrations on the format of payments from the infected blood compensation scheme; whether he has had discussions with each devolved Administration on their presumed approach in terms of lump-sum versus monthly payments; and what assessment his Department has made of each devolved Administration's presumed approach.

Nick Thomas-Symonds:

I met the Health Ministers for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland ahead of the announcement on 16 August, and officials meet on a regular basis to discuss the progress of the Infected Blood Compensation Scheme. The Scheme will operate across

the UK and the Infected Blood Compensation Authority has been set up to deliver compensation payments to people infected and affected, and will work across the whole country as a single point administering compensation. We are committed to working closely with devolved governments and their support scheme administrators as we move forward with this work.

■ Peers: Retirement

John Glen: [\[2315\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 22 July 2024 to Question 455 on Retirement: Public Sector, whether the Prime Minister plans to introduce a mandatory retirement age in the House of Lords.

Nick Thomas-Symonds:

The Government set out clear plans for House of Lords reform in the manifesto, including introducing a retirement age of 80. We will engage with peers to consider how best to implement this and our other manifesto commitments on Lords reform.

■ Political Office: Staff

John Glen: [\[2309\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, which (a) official and (b) special adviser is responsible for locating staff in the Number 10 political office within the Downing Street estate.

Georgia Gould:

As was the case under the previous Administration, the individual responsibilities of Cabinet Office staff are not published.

■ Prime Minister: Aviation

John Glen: [\[2304\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Prime Minister plans to use sustainable aviation fuel for official (a) domestic and (b) overseas flights.

Georgia Gould:

My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for Transport set out to the House on 22 July 2024 our plans to support the development, production, and use of sustainable aviation fuel which the Government already uses where possible.

John Glen: [\[2305\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Prime Minister plans to carbon offset his official (a) domestic and (b) overseas flights.

Georgia Gould:

It has been the practice that official Prime Ministerial flights are carbon offset where that is possible.

■ Prime Minister: Communication and Marketing

Charlie Dewhirst:

[\[2626\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to page 10 of the document entitled Fixing the foundations: Public spending audit 2024-25, CP 1133, published in July 2024, whether he plans to take steps to reduce communications and marketing expenditure for Downing Street.

Georgia Gould:

The Prime Minister's Office is a business unit of the Cabinet Office. Campaigns run by the Cabinet Office are subject to the review of communications and marketing expenditure announced on 29 July 2024. The review is currently in progress and no decisions have yet been made.

■ Prime Minister: Members' Interests

John Glen:

[\[2300\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Prime Minister has declared The Pensions Increase (Pension Scheme for Keir Starmer QC) Regulations 2013 as an interest to the Independent Adviser on Ministerial Interests.

John Glen:

[\[2317\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what guidance is issued to Ministers on declaring political donations in the list of Ministers' Interests.

John Glen:

[\[2319\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, when the register of Ministers' Interests will be published.

Georgia Gould:

There has been no change in the established process in place for the declaration and management of private interests held by ministers, which ensures that steps are taken to avoid or mitigate any potential or perceived conflicts of interest. This process is well underway. The next List of Ministers' Interests will be published in due course.

■ Prime Minister: Public Expenditure

Charlie Dewhirst:

[\[2625\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to p.10 of the document entitled Fixing the Foundations: Public Spending Audit 2024-25, published on 29 July 2024, whether the Prime Minister's Office will be expected to implement 2% administrative savings to its own annual budget sub-heading.

Georgia Gould:

For management and staffing purposes the Prime Minister's Office is a business unit of the Cabinet Office. Following the Chancellor's announcement, the Cabinet Office, like other Government Departments, will be going through a comprehensive spending review process which will factor in any administrative savings in the round.

■ Prime Minister: Special Advisers**John Glen:** **[2303]**

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Prime Minister's chief of staff has a probationary period.

Georgia Gould:

I refer the Rt Hon Member to paragraph 6 of the Model Contract for Special Advisers (Probation) and which can be found at:

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

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ Holiday Accommodation: Registration****Steve Darling:** **[2591]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a registration scheme for short term lets.

Chris Bryant:

Short-term lets are an integral part of what the UK has to offer visitors. They can bring a range of benefits to local and national economies, but communities in tourism destinations, particularly coastal and rural communities, must be able to reap the benefit of thriving tourism without losing the spirit of their community when the holiday season ends.

Parliament legislated for a registration scheme for short-term lets in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 and we are working on precisely how to implement that statutory requirement.

■ Sports: Injuries**Grahame Morris:** **[2260]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, if she will take steps to provide funding for education on brain (a) health and (b) safeguarding in sport.

Stephanie Peacock:

The safety and wellbeing of everyone taking part in sport is absolutely paramount. National Governing Bodies are responsible for the regulation of their sports and for ensuring that appropriate measures are in place to protect participants from harm.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) worked with relevant stakeholders to develop the first ever set of shared concussion guidelines for grassroots sport across the UK, which were published in April 2023, marking a significant step forward for safety in sport.

DCMS also provides funding to Sport England, its Arm's-Length Body for grassroots sport. Sport England provides support to the sport and physical activity sector around

safeguarding, including funding the Ann Craft Trust and the NSPCC's Child Protection in Sport Unit. This totalled £330,917 and £527,525 respectively in 2024/25.

■ VisitEngland: Devon

Steve Darling:

[\[2589\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what funding her Department plans to allocate to the Devon Local Visitor Economy Partnership.

Chris Bryant:

The Department does not allocate funds to Local Visitor Economy Partnerships (LVEPs) directly, but has allocated £7.15 million in core funding to its arm's-length body VisitEngland, plus £1.35 million for destination management organisations; and VisitEngland has accredited Devon and partners which can apply for VisitBritain/VisitEngland grant funding programmes.

EDUCATION

■ GCE A-Level: Knowsley

Anneliese Midgley:

[\[3293\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many people from Knowsley constituency have studied A levels in another local authority in each of the last 10 years.

Catherine McKinnell:

The department does not in general hold the specific information on students who study qualifications outside of their home local authority in the format requested.

The below table provides data on the number of students entering A or AS level examinations for the last five academic years for students whose home postcode is in the Knowsley local authority. The data covers students who reached the end of 16 to 18 study in the academic year stated, having attended a state-funded school or college, which could either be in Knowsley local authority or in another local authority in England.

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Students residing in Knowsley entering A/AS levels	553	498	472	526	555

Separately, the 'A level and other 16 to 18 results' statistical release provides data on the number of students entering A/AS levels by the end of 16-18 study, by the local authority where the state-funded schools and colleges they attend is located. This data release is available here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find->

[statistics/a-level-and-other-16-to-18-results](#). This is available for Knowsley local authority at the following link: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/4c733e68-1da4-40f4-cf42-08dcca5019b8>.

■ Pre-school Education

Dan Carden: [2467]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether her Department plans to extend contracts for Early Years Stronger Practice Hubs in (a) the Liverpool City Region and (b) across England.

Stephen Morgan:

The department is committed to ensuring that every child in an early years setting receives high quality education and care. Evidence shows that this has a positive impact on outcomes in both the short and long term, particularly for the most disadvantaged children.

The Stronger Practice Hubs Programme was launched in 2022 to address the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on the youngest children, with a focus on the most disadvantaged areas. The Hubs support early years settings and childminders by sharing effective practice, learning from the best available evidence, and building lasting local networks.

The department is pleased to confirm that all Stronger Practice Hubs in England, including the Hub in the Liverpool City Region, have been offered the opportunity to extend their grants until 31 March 2025.

■ Schools: Finance

Anneliese Midgley: [3294]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the average funding per pupil was in mainstream schools in (a) Knowsley constituency, (b) Merseyside, (c) the North West and (d) England in each of the last ten years.

Catherine McKinnell:

The tables below set out funding statistics for Knowsley constituency, Knowsley local authority, the North West and England in the last five years. Knowsley local authority is included instead of Merseyside, since Merseyside is not a local authority.

The department cannot provide comparable funding data for each of the last 10 years due to the changes in the funding system since that time. The scope of the per pupil funding before and after 2018/19 are 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.

For Knowsley local authority, the North West and England, the figures represent the funding provided through the schools block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). All of the figures in table one exclude growth funding but include premises.

The DSG is allocated at local authority level, and as such the equivalent figures are not available for Knowsley constituency. The constituency level data for Knowsley is therefore calculated based on the notional schools national funding formula (NFF) allocations for all mainstream schools in the constituency. The figures in table two are not comparable to those in table one, not only because DSG funding cannot be aggregated down to constituency level, but also because the context of the funding figures is not the same.

The tables below provide average per pupil funding from 2020/21 to 2024/25.

Table one

	DSG SCHOOLS BLOCK PER PUPIL FUNDING *		
	YEAR	North West	England
Knowsley local authority			
2020/21	£5,382	£4,838	£5,055
2021/22	£5,752	£5,221	£5,212
2022/23	£6,082	£5,524	£5,534
2023/24	£6,465	£5,835	£5,838
2024/25	£6,651	£5,962	£5,957

* Additional grants, such as the School Supplementary grant (SSG) and the Mainstream Schools Additional grant (MSAG) are included in these figures once they have been incorporated into the DSG.

Table two

NFF SCHOOLS BLOCK PER PUPIL FUNDING **

Year	Knowsley constituency
2020/21	£5,619
2021/22	£5,760
2022/23	£5,932
2023/24	£6,272
2024/25	£6,867

** The allocations that schools within a constituency actually receive are determined by the local funding formula in their area. Additional grants, such as the School Supplementary grant (SSG) and the Mainstream Schools Additional grant (MSAG) are included in these figures once they have been incorporated into the DSG.

■ **Special Educational Needs: Shropshire**

Julia Buckley:

[3497]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent discussions she has had with Shropshire Council on the adequacy of (a) funding for and (b) delivery of SEND services.

Catherine McKinnell:

Departmental officials are in regular contact with Shropshire Local Area Partnership to ensure children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities and their families are provided with positive experiences and outcomes, helping to foster a shared sense of responsibility and accountability for inclusion.

This government is committed to taking a community-wide approach in collaboration with Local Area Partnerships, improving inclusivity and expertise in mainstream schools, as well as ensuring special schools cater to those with the most complex needs.

ENERGY SECURITY AND NET ZERO

■ **British Coal Staff Superannuation Scheme**

Grahame Morris:

[2836]

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, whether he plans to reform the surplus sharing arrangements for the British Coal Staff Superannuation Scheme.

Sarah Jones:

There is no surplus sharing arrangement within the British Coal Staff Superannuation Scheme. Work is already underway to initiate our manifesto commitment regarding the Mineworker's Pension Scheme.

■ **Carbon Capture, Usage and Storage**

Mark Garnier:

[2877]

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, whether he plans to continue the construction of new Carbon Capture, Usage and Storage sites.

Sarah Jones:

This Government is committed to CCUS, which will create good jobs in Britain's industrial heartlands, ensure a just transition for the industries based in the North Sea, and accelerate towards Net Zero. Our National Wealth Fund includes £1 billion to accelerate the deployment of CCUS.

■ Department for Energy Security and Net Zero: Energy

Mark Garnier:

[\[2881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what plans his Department has to reduce its energy usage.

Michael Shanks:

The Government Property Agency (GPA) manage the estate occupied by DESNZ and is responsible for energy usage reduction in its properties.

DESNZ undertakes an assurance role in this, to ensure the Department achieves the targets in the Greening Government Commitments related to energy usage reduction.

DESNZ recently relocated its HQ to a newly refurbished GPA building, which included a range of energy reduction measures, such as connection to the Whitehall District Heating Network, upgraded heating and ventilation systems, and LED lighting throughout.

DESNZ continues to work with GPA to achieve similar improvements across the wider UK estate.

■ Electric Cables: Costs

Dave Doogan:

[\[3090\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what recent estimate he has made of the relative costs per km of (a) overhead, (b) underground and (c) offshore electricity transmission cables.

Michael Shanks:

The Government keeps abreast of the various technologies that can be used to help us achieve clean power by 2030, including the various means of laying cable, but has not yet made an estimate of the relative costs of cabling since it came into power.

■ Electricity Generation

Dave Doogan:

[\[2480\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, whether he will publish a response to the consultation entitled Review of electricity market arrangements (REMA): second consultation which closed on 7 May 2024.

Michael Shanks:

Electricity market reform work is key to delivering a decarbonised, secure, and affordable system. The new Government is currently assessing timelines, and we will provide more information in due course.

■ Energy Supply

Dave Doogan:

[\[2488\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, whether he plans to introduce zonal energy markets in the UK.

Michael Shanks:

Electricity market reform work is key to delivering a decarbonised, secure, and affordable system. The Government will provide more information in due course.

■ **Energy Supply: Government Assistance****Melanie Onn:****[2365]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, whether he plans to provide (a) financial and (b) other support to regional energy cluster organisations.

Sarah Jones:

National government provides support to local areas to decarbonise. This includes funding five regional Local Net Zero Hubs which support local authorities to develop net zero projects and attract commercial investment. In addition, the Local Industrial Decarbonisation Plans competition, run by government in partnership with Innovate UK, is providing up to £6 million in grant funding to 13 projects, supporting dispersed industrial manufacturers not located in the UK's existing industrial clusters to decarbonise and reduce their emissions.

■ **Energy: Prices****Claire Coutinho:****[2538]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what is his expected timetable for GB Energy to cut household energy bills by £300 per year.

Michael Shanks:

The Government's mission to make Britain a clean energy superpower is a sustainable, long-term plan to protect billpayers for good. That's because in an unstable world, the only way to guarantee our energy security and protect billpayers permanently is to speed up the transition away from fossil fuels and towards homegrown clean energy.

The exact impact and timetable of Great British Energy's interventions will be determined by detailed development and design of the organisation's functions which will follow in the coming months.

■ **Environment Protection: Business****Mark Garnier:****[2880]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, if he will take steps with Cabinet colleagues to require (a) FTSE 100 companies and (b) financial services firms to (i) develop green transition plans and (ii) publish a timetable for doing this.

Kerry McCarthy:

The Government has committed to making the UK the green finance capital of the world and is exploring requirements in relation to transition plans for companies and financial institutions. The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero is working with other government departments, including HM Treasury and the Department for Business

and Trade, on these requirements and will provide further information about plans and a timetable in due course.

■ **Fuel Poverty: Winter Fuel Payment**

Mary Glendon:

[\[2891\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of means testing the winter fuel payment on levels of fuel poverty in the winter of 2024-25.

Miatta Fahnbulleh:

The Department has not made an assessment of the potential impact of means testing the Winter Fuel Payment on levels of fuel poverty in winter 2024-25. A statistical publication estimating the rate of fuel poverty for those in receipt of Winter Fuel Payment in 2023, and the proportion of households who would be in fuel poverty under new eligibility criteria, will be published in due course.

■ **Great British Energy**

Sir John Hayes:

[\[2233\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of setting up GB Energy.

Michael Shanks:

The cost to the taxpayer of Great British Energy set-up and investments will be carefully managed and monitored through parliament. As set out by Cabinet Office guidance on setting up new public bodies, a full business case will be developed for GBE, which will be published on Gov.uk in due course. Great British Energy investments will be subject to safeguards and risk assessments similar to established public finance institutions.

Dave Doogan:

[\[2481\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, whether he plans for GB Energy to have a public option retail arm.

Michael Shanks:

No. The Government does not intend Great British Energy to be an energy retail company or to supply energy directly to households. Great British Energy will invest in, own and operate energy projects which will produce clean, cheap and homegrown power that is sold to retail companies.

Dave Doogan:

[\[2483\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what plans he has for (a) whole and (b) partial ownership of energy generation capacity by GB Energy by 2045.

Michael Shanks:

Government does not intend for Great British Energy to buy existing generation assets from private sector operators. Instead, Government anticipates that it will develop a portfolio of new assets, boosting Britain's energy security whilst also delivering revenues

to the British taxpayer. Government will do this by working in partnership with the private sector, local authorities and communities.

Dave Doogan: [2484]

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what plans he has for GB Energy (a) investment in and (b) partial ownership of community energy projects.

Michael Shanks:

Great British Energy, through the Local Power Plan, will give local communities a stake in the transition to net zero, as owners and partners in clean energy projects. It will provide commercial, technical and project-planning assistance to Local and Combined Authorities and Community Energy Groups, increasing their capability and capacity to build a pipeline of successful projects in their local areas. As an operationally independent company, Great British Energy will work with stakeholders at the local level to decide ownership structures for each project.

Claire Coutinho: [2535]

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what estimate he has made of the increase in quantum of energy that GB Energy will generate; and by what timeline.

Michael Shanks:

Great British Energy will invest in, own and operate energy projects which will produce clean, cheap and homegrown energy and make Britain energy secure.

The exact impact and timeline of Great British Energy's interventions will be determined by detailed development and design of the organisation's functions.

Claire Coutinho: [2536]

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, whether GB Energy will produce energy.

Michael Shanks:

Yes. Great British Energy will invest in and own clean power generation assets, which will produce clean, cheap and homegrown energy and make Britain energy secure.

Great British Energy will not be simply an investment vehicle; it is a publicly-owned energy company that will take stakes in the projects it owns, manages and operates.

Mark Garnier: [2876]

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, with reference to the Great British Energy founding statement, published on 25 July 2024, whether he plans that every project invested in by Great British Energy will make a return by 2030.

Michael Shanks:

Great British Energy will be an operationally independent company, overseen by a Board. The exact impact and timeline of Great British Energy's interventions will be determined by detailed development and design of the organisation's functions. Any discussions around specific project to support would be determined by Great British Energy itself, as an operationally independent company, once fully established.

■ **Great British Energy: Capital Investment**

Dave Doogan:

[\[2479\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, how GB Energy will interact with the (a) UK Infrastructure Bank and (b) National Wealth Fund to provide investment for renewable energy; and how renewables investments by GB Energy will differ from investments by the (a) UK Infrastructure Bank and (b) National Wealth Fund.

Michael Shanks:

Great British Energy will work with institutions such as the National Wealth Fund and UK Infrastructure Bank to deliver the Government's clean energy mission. The Government is currently developing the details of both Great British Energy and the National Wealth Fund in consultation with industry stakeholders and is committed to providing further detail on these bodies and the interactions between them in due course.

■ **Great British Energy: Infrastructure**

Dave Doogan:

[\[2486\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what plans he has for GB Energy (a) whole and (b) partial ownership of electricity transmission infrastructure.

Michael Shanks:

Great British Energy will not seek to own electricity transmission infrastructure, instead it will be a publicly owned generation company that will own, manage, and operate clean energy projects across the country. This means Great British Energy will invest in and own renewable energy projects which will produce clean, cheap and homegrown energy and make Britain energy secure.

Claire Coutinho:

[\[2537\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, whether GB Energy will operate energy infrastructure.

Michael Shanks:

Yes. Great British Energy will own, manage, and operate clean energy projects across the country; which could include energy infrastructure. As set out in the Founding Statement, Great British Energy will have five key functions. This means the exact role of Great British Energy will vary from project to project, providing important flexibility to ensure Great British Energy works collaboratively with private companies, local authorities, and communities already operating in the energy space. To meet immediate needs, Great British Energy will initially focus on project development and investment.

■ **Great British Energy: Public Appointments**

Joy Morrissey:

[\[2492\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, whether the Chair of Great British Energy was appointed through open competition; what his remuneration is; and whether he has registered his business interests and shareholdings.

Michael Shanks:

The Secretary of State considered a range of candidates for the role of Start Up Chair for Great British Energy and directly appointed Juergen Maier as the strongest candidate. DESNZ intends to run an open, fair and transparent competition to recruit the permanent Great British Energy Chair in due course. The Chair's salary is £114,400 per annum. Juergen Maier has declared his interests as part of the appointment process.

Joy Morrissey:**[3098]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, whether the new chair of Great British Energy was appointed through open competition; what his remuneration is; and what provisions have been put in place to prevent potential conflicts of interest.

Michael Shanks:

I refer the hon Member to the answer I gave to Question UIN [2492](#).

Great British Energy: Supply Chains**Dave Doogan:****[2485]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what plans he has for GB Energy (a) investments in renewable energy supply chains and (b) (i) whole and (ii) partial ownership of supply chain manufacturing companies.

Michael Shanks:

As set out in Great British Energy's Founding Statement, supporting British supply chains is one of the five key functions of this new publicly-owned energy company. Government is committed to supporting the transition to an affordable, decarbonised power system by 2030, built using domestic manufacturing and supply chains. Government will provide further detail as to the role that Great British Energy will play in due course as we continue to work towards putting a plan in motion to deliver a comprehensive package of support for domestic clean energy supply chains that will significantly boost the number of skilled jobs in these essential industries.

Offshore Industry: Employment**Dave Doogan:****[3089]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what estimate his Department has made of changes in the number of jobs in the (a) oil and (b) gas sector in (i) the UK and (ii) Scotland in each of the next 30 years.

Michael Shanks:

The Department does not hold these estimates.

According to ONS data^[1], direct jobs in oil and gas extraction fell by around a third between 2014 and 2022 (from c.42k to c.28k). Of all current direct offshore oil and gas jobs, roughly 80% are in Scotland^[2].

As Britain becomes a clean energy superpower, the Government is determined to create new high-quality jobs to ensure a phased and responsible transition in the North Sea.

^[1]ONS Business Register and Employment Survey - <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/datasets/industry235digitsicbusinessregisterandemploymentsurveybrestable2>

^[2]ONS Business Register and Employment data from NOMIS - (<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/select/getdatasetbytheme.asp?theme=27&subgrp=Previous+employment+surveys>)

■ Renewable Energy: Planning Permission

Joy Morrissey:

[3097]

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what plans his Department has to consult local residents prior to the approval of (a) solar farms and (b) onshore wind farms.

Michael Shanks:

There are established routes in the planning system which enable communities to raise concerns about solar and onshore wind developments in their area. The level and quality of community engagement, amongst other factors, will be taken into account by decision-makers.

We want both solar and onshore wind developers to continue to engage with local communities as we increase renewable deployment to meet net zero. That is why we are retaining important checks and balances in relation to community engagement and consultation.

■ Wind Power: Finance

Dave Doogan:

[2477]

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, whether wind farm developments which receive investment from GB Energy will be eligible for contracts via the Contracts for Difference scheme.

Michael Shanks:

The way that Great British Energy interacts with other existing and new government policies influencing the energy system, including the Contracts for Difference Scheme, will be determined in due course. Great British Energy's activities will be compliant with the Subsidy Control Act and Windsor Framework.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ Bangladesh: Hinduism

Paula Barker:

[3200]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what (a) discussions he has had with his counterpart in Bangladesh and (b) diplomatic steps his Department is taking to help protect the Hindu minority in Bangladesh.

Catherine West:

I spoke to the Bangladesh High Commissioner on 19 and 23 July to reiterate my concerns about the events unfolding in Bangladesh. In July and August, the UK Government issued statements expressing concern about the situation in Bangladesh, calling for all sides to work together to end the violence and for internet access and communications services to be quickly restored. We were clear that a full and independent UN-led investigation into recent events is important. The Interim Government in Bangladesh has the UK's full support as it works to restore peace and order including investigating alleged human rights violations and ensuring accountability.

■ Bangladesh: Religious Freedom**Paula Barker:****[3201]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the level of religious-based violence against minorities in Bangladesh following the collapse of Sheikh Hasina's government.

Catherine West:

In our public statements about the situation in Bangladesh, we urged for an end to the violence and a de-escalation of the situation. We were clear that a full and independent UN-led investigation into recent events is important. The UK Government welcomed the appointment of the Interim Government in Bangladesh, and it has the UK's support as it works to restore peace and order, as well as ensure accountability and promote national reconciliation. The UK is committed to Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) for all, as guaranteed under international human rights law.

■ India: Development Aid**Mr Richard Holden:****[3166]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much is budgeted for aid to India in this financial year.

Mr Richard Holden:**[3175]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much aid his Department is giving to India annually; and what programmes that aid is spent on.

Anneliese Dodds:

Most of FCDO's bilateral development funding for India is invested in projects to tackle the climate crisis and support economic growth, in partnership with the Indian Government.

The UK's bilateral ODA spend in India in 2022 was £46 million and we received back £24 million on our investments that year.

Ministers are reviewing the FCDO's ODA budget to ensure it delivers on our priorities. We are committed to transparency and will publish ODA allocations for 2024-25.

■ Jimmy Lai**Neil Coyle:****[2088]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has made representations to his counterpart from the People's Republic of China on (a) the case of Jimmy Lai's and (b) the latest delays to his trial.

Catherine West:

British national Jimmy Lai's case is a priority for the Government. The Foreign Secretary raised his case in his first meeting with China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi at the ASEAN Summit on 26 July.

We will continue to call on the Hong Kong authorities to end their politically motivated prosecution and immediately release Jimmy Lai and we will continue to press for consular access.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ Dental Services: Torbay****Steve Darling:****[2590]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the waiting list for NHS dentists in Torbay.

Stephen Kinnock:

The Government will tackle the immediate crisis with a rescue plan to provide 700,000 more urgent dental appointments and recruit new dentists to the areas that need them most.

Patients in England are not registered with a National Health Service dental practice, although many NHS dental practices do tend to see patients regularly. NHS dentists are required to keep their NHS website profiles up to date so that patients can find a dentist more easily. This includes information on whether they are accepting new patients. In circumstances where patients are unable to access an urgent dental appointment directly through an NHS dental practice, they should contact NHS 111.

From 1 April 2023 the responsibility for commissioning primary care dentistry to meet the needs of the local population has been delegated to integrated care boards (ICBs) across England. ICBs are responsible for having local processes in place to involve patient groups, and for undertaking oral health needs assessments, to identify areas of need and determine the priorities for investment.

■ Hospitals: Parking**Danny Beales:****[3640]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of levels of compliance of NHS Trusts with the NHS car parking guidance 2022.

Karin Smyth:

The NHS Car Parking Guidance 2022 includes mandatory and voluntary elements. All trusts that charge for hospital car parking provide free car parking to in-need groups, and are therefore compliant with the mandatory element of the NHS Car Parking Guidance 2022.

NHS England strongly encourages all trusts to follow the voluntary element of the guidance, particularly that where hospital car parking charges do exist, they should be reasonable for the area.

Hospitals: Planning Permission**Daisy Cooper:****[2494]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many of the new hospitals in the New Hospital Programme have planning permission.

Karin Smyth:

18 schemes in the New Hospital Programme have been granted full planning permission and six have achieved outline planning permission.

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.

Junior Doctors: Pay**Victoria Atkins:****[2351]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the (a) total and (b) estimated yearly cost to the public purse is of the pay offer award to NHS junior doctors.

Karin Smyth:

The additional pay uplift, worth an average of 4.05% on top of their existing pay award for 2023/24, would have an estimated cost impact of approximately £350 million per year. The estimated £350 million cost for 2023/24 will fall in 2024/25 for accounting purposes.

This is additional to the 6% uplift recommended by the Review Body on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration, plus £1,000 on a consolidated basis, when applied to the revised 2023/24 pay scales, while also averaging an increase of over 8%, and with an effective date of 1 April 2024.

If agreed, this offer will bring an end to industrial action by junior doctors. Industrial action has cost taxpayers £1.7 billion since April 2023, and patients nearly 1.5 million cancelled appointments under the previous government.

HOME OFFICE

■ **Anti-corruption Champion**

Rachel Blake:

[3572]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the Prime Minister will appoint an Anti-Corruption Champion.

Dan Jarvis:

The government is considering a range of appointments following the election, including that of the Prime Minister's Anti-Corruption Champion. When there are appointments to announce, this will be done in the usual way.

■ **Counter-terrorism: Remand in Custody**

Christine Jardine:

[3057]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether a person remanded in custody is prevented from receiving (a) visits and (b) phone-calls from next-of-kin if they have been arrested under counter-terrorism legislation but not charged with terror-related offences.

Dan Jarvis:

The Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) and the accompanying PACE codes of practice establish the powers of the police to combat crimes while protecting the rights of the public. PACE Code H focuses on detention, treatment and questioning by the police under terrorism legislation.

PACE Code H 2023 can be accessed via Gov.uk and details a person's right to communication with 'one named person'. The code sets out the following:

While held in custody at a police station or other premises the detainee may, on request, have one named person who is a friend, relative or a person known to them who is likely to take an interest in their welfare informed by the custody officer that they have been detained. They may also request a phone call or other form of communication with the 'named person'.

At the custody officer's discretion and subject to the detainee's consent, visits should be allowed, when possible, subject to sufficient personnel being available to supervise a visit and any possible hindrance to the investigation.

However, in limited circumstances the nature of an investigation might mean that such requests (for visits, phone-calls or other form of communication) cannot be met. This is risk assessed on an individual basis, and in accordance with the considerations set out in Annex B to the Code. In this situation consideration is given to increasing the frequency

of visits from independent visitor schemes, such as by the Independent Custody Visitors Association.

Any delay or denial of these rights should be proportionate and should last no longer than necessary.

■ Immigration: Families

Grahame Morris:

[\[2835\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the Migration Advisory Committee's planned timetable is for completing its review of the financial requirements in the family immigration rules.

Seema Malhotra:

The Home Secretary announced that she would commission the Migration Advisory Committee to review the financial immigration requirements on the Family Immigration Rules. We expect the review to take approximately 9 months which will include a call for evidence to ensure sufficient stakeholder engagement.

■ Spiking

Julia Buckley:

[\[3496\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Ninth Report of Session 2021–22 of the Home Affairs Select Committee entitled Spiking, HC967, whether her Department plans to follow the recommendations of that report.

Jess Phillips:

The Home Office has already implemented a number of the recommendations, or is in the process of doing so. This includes:

- The rollout of an online spiking reporting and advice tool across the UK to encourage more and better reporting of spiking, including anonymously. This is intended to improve data on the prevalence and scale of spiking.
- Providing funding for the development of spiking training to ensure that night time economy staff are trained to respond effectively to reports of spiking and co-ordinate with security staff and the emergency services.
- The government has committed in its manifesto to introduce a new criminal offence for spiking to help police better respond to this crime. This will form part of the Crime and Policing Bill.
- The formation of a rapid testing capability for spiking to gather more accurate results in a quicker time frame (2-3 weeks opposed to 6-8). This is being supported by research into the efficacy of rapid urine testing kits which aim to provide results in a matter of minutes. At this stage however, I urge anyone who believes they have been spiked to contact the police as soon as possible to provide a report and a urine sample for lab testing.

Many of these measures were designed with the aim of addressing the key barriers to prosecution which we have identified as lack of evidence, and identification of perpetrators.

■ **Visas: Palestinians**

Nadia Whittome:

[2558]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of creating a visa waiver scheme for Palestinians requiring urgent medical treatment.

Seema Malhotra:

Currently, those seeking to come to the UK for private medical treatment, along with their family members, can apply for a visitor visa and consideration will be given to compelling, compassionate and exceptional circumstances.

It should be noted that the World Health Organisation (WHO) position is that people who are medically evacuated should stay as close to home as possible, so that they remain amongst those who are more likely to understand their language and culture, and so that their return home, when ready, is easier.

■ **Visas: Switzerland**

Andrew Rosindell:

[2755]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has met her Swiss counterpart to discuss facilitated mobility for Swiss and British professionals to travel to the UK and Switzerland.

Seema Malhotra:

The Secretary of State for the Home Department has had no meetings to date with her Swiss counterpart. Business and Trade Secretary Jonathan Reynolds has met his Swiss counterpart, but it would not be appropriate to comment on the detail of those discussions.

■ **Women: Safety**

Anneliese Midgley:

[3298]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she hold discussions with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the potential merits of providing multi-year funding to (a) The First Step in Knowsley and (b) other organisations that seek to protect the safety of women and girls.

Jess Phillips:

We have set out to halve violence against women and girls in a decade.

This will be achieved by drastically improving the police and wider criminal justice response, including a relentless pursuit of dangerous perpetrators and sustained support for victims.

The Ministry of Justice provides core funding to Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) to allocate at their discretion, based on their assessment of local need.

All decisions on funding after March 2025 will be subject to the next spending review.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ **Birmingham City Council: Insolvency**

Laurence Turner:

[R] [3553]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the report entitled Value for money and accountability: a report on the Birmingham City Council section 114 bankruptcy, published by Sheffield University's Audit Reform Lab on 19 August 2024, if her Department will make an assessment of the the (a) findings and (b) recommendations of that report.

Jim McMahon:

Commissioners at Birmingham City Council provided a response to the Audit Lab Report which is publicly available at: <https://auditreformlab.group.shef.ac.uk/value-for-money-and-accountability/>. The Ministry will continue to work with commissioners and the Council on the challenges faced at the authority to return it to financial stability. I also refer my Hon Friend to the answer given by my Rt Hon Friend the Member for Ashton-under-lyne to his Oral Question [900270](#) on 2 September 2024.

■ **Combined Authorities**

Mrs Kemi Badenoch:

[2447]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of simplifying the process for creating new Combined County Authorities.

Jim McMahon:

We are committed to ensuring that every part of England can rapidly benefit from devolution, moving power out of Westminster back to those who know their areas best. The English Devolution Bill will establish a more ambitious standardised framework and make it easier to provide devolved powers quickly to more areas through establishing a simpler process for creating new Combined and Combined County Authorities.

Ahead of this we invite councils wishing to explore enhanced devolution to their areas to engage with the department.

■ **Culture: Maldon**

Sir John Whittingdale:

[2224]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much funding her Department plans to provide Maldon District Council for culture projects.

Alex Norris:

This government was elected on a manifesto that stressed a partnership approach with local authorities and an intention to stabilise the funding system, moving away from wasteful competition. Local places will rightly be seeking clarity on previous funding commitments. The government is giving full consideration to this matter, including the hard work undertaken on projects to date.

During this time officials remain available for conversations and to discuss any issues impacting delivery that may arise. Officials will keep projects informed on any programme updates.

Freeports**Sir Julian Lewis:****[2702]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what her policy is on the (a) freeport approved for the Solent area and (b) freeports programme.

Alex Norris:

Future plans for the Freeports Programme are being carefully considered as part of the ongoing Spending Review process.

This does not change the fact that Solent Freeport, alongside the other seven English Freeports and the two Scottish Green Freeports, has had tax sites designated and is open for business. Delivery is - and will continue to be - led by local partners and I thank all those involved for their continued hard work on the project.

Green Belt: Havering**Andrew Rosindell:****[2040]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps her Department is taking to protect the greenbelt in (a) Romford constituency and (b) the London Borough of Havering.

Wendy Morton:**[2341]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether she plans to bring forward legislative proposals to implement her proposed changes to planning policy on the green belt within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Wendy Morton:**[2343]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether she plans to amend the Green Belt (London and Home Counties) Act 1938.

Matthew Pennycook:

The Government set out details of proposed reforms relating to brownfield, grey belt, and the Green Belt in the consultation on our approach to revising the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system that began on Tuesday 30 July and closes on Tuesday 24 September.

■ Housing: Young People

Kevin Bonavia: [\[2570\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps her Department plans to take to help (a) younger people and (b) first time buyers onto the housing ladder.

Matthew Pennycook:

The affordability challenges facing prospective first-time buyers mean that too many young people are now locked out of homeownership. In addition to increasing the supply of homes of all tenures, the Government has committed to introducing a permanent, comprehensive mortgage guarantee scheme and to giving first-time buyers the first chance to buy homes.

■ Insulation: Housing

Helen Hayes: [\[2959\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate she has made of the number of homeowners unable to sell their home due to the installation of spray foam insulation.

Helen Hayes: [\[2960\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps her Department is taking to (a) ensure that the installation of spray foam insulation is regulated and (b) support homeowners unable to sell their homes due to the installation of that insulation.

Alex Norris:

We are aware of the issues some homeowners are facing in obtaining finance where spray foam insulation has been installed. In response, the insulation, lending, and surveying communities published protocols in March 2023 to support surveyors to assess spray foam and provide reassurance to lenders. This can be found here: [https://www.property-care.org/resources/spray-foam-insulation-inspections\(opens in a new tab\)](https://www.property-care.org/resources/spray-foam-insulation-inspections(opens%20in%20a%20new%20tab)) and [Guides & Documents - IMA \(insulationmanufacturers.org.uk\)](https://www.insulationmanufacturers.org.uk).

Whilst the department cannot comment on the decisions made by individual lenders, the presence of spray foam should not automatically prevent lending, and decisions should be made on a case-by-case basis following a survey.

■ Islamophobia

Mrs Kemi Badenoch: [\[2454\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps she is taking to tackle islamophobia.

Alex Norris:

Islamophobia, and all forms of religious and racial hatred, have absolutely no place in our society. No one should be targeted because of the colour of their skin, or their faith.

This Government is clear that perpetrators of such hate crimes will face the full force of the law.

Sadly, we have seen how Muslim communities and other minorities have been targeted in the deplorable acts of violence following the recent tragic events in Southport. This Government will make sure that criminals intent on causing violence and unrest on our streets will be stopped in their tracks and brought to justice thanks to the new National Violent Disorder Programme. We are also providing rapid additional support to mosques through the Protective Security for Mosques Scheme to protect Muslim communities, which comes on top of the £29.4 million already made available to fund security at mosques and Muslim faith schools this year.

British Muslims are a crucial part of Britain's history and British life today. This Government will not tolerate Islamophobia in any form and has committed to a more cohesive and integrated approach to ensure that all forms of hatred are stamped out of our communities.

■ Local Government Finance

Andrew Rosindell:

[2042]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that local authorities receive adequate funding.

Jim McMahon:

The Government is under no illusions about the scale of the pressures that local authorities are facing. Successive years of underfunding and increasing demand for services has left councils experiencing significant budget pressures and vulnerable to shocks, impacting the services councils can provide to local people.

To get local government back on its feet, we will work closely with councils to provide more stability through multi-year funding settlements, ending competitive bidding for pots of money and reforming the local audit system. The government will fix the foundations of local government and work closely with the sector to do so.

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

■ Local Government: Devolution

Daisy Cooper:

[2503]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to her letter of 16 July 2024 to local council leaders, whether devolution settlements are available to district councils.

Jim McMahon:

English devolution underpins this Government's national mission to deliver economic growth for everyone, everywhere, raising living standards across the UK. While the previous government hoarded power in Whitehall, this Government will deliver the most

ambitious programme of devolution this country has ever seen, pushing power into the hands of cities, towns, and villages across the country to unlock their true potential. Of course, we value the important role districts will play in this mission, and in due course the Government will publish a new devolution framework, which will set out in more detail the role district councils can play.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Mrs Kemi Badenoch: [\[2972\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when she plans to respond to the correspondence from the Rt Hon. Member for North West Essex of 13 July 2024 on Parliamentary boundaries.

Jim McMahan:

A response to the Rt Hon Member was issued by email on 29 August 2024.

■ **Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Pentland Communications and Sovereign Strategy**

Mrs Kemi Badenoch: [\[2973\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether (a) she and (b) her special advisers have held discussions with representatives of (i) Sovereign Strategy and (ii) Pentland Communications since the general election.

Mrs Kemi Badenoch: [\[2974\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many meetings Ministers in her Department have had with (a) Labour, (b) Liberal Democrat and (c) Conservative councillors since the general election.

Alex Norris:

Details of ministerial meetings with external organisations are published on Gov.uk.

■ **Park Homes: Sales**

Alicia Kearns: [\[2532\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what her Department's policy is on the future of commission paid to site owners following the sale of park homes.

Matthew Pennycook:

I refer the hon Member to the answer given to Question UIN [1176](#) on 31 July 2024.

■ **Private Rented Housing: High Peak**

Jon Pearce: [\[2596\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if she will make an estimate of the average increase in rent for private properties in High Peak constituency in the last 12 months; and what assessment she has made of the affordability of rent increases for people on average earnings in High Peak constituency.

Matthew Pennycook:

The Government has made clear that we intend to use the Renters' Rights Bill to provide tenants with greater protections against unreasonable within-tenancy rent increases.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) publishes data on the average increase in rent. Private rents across the UK increased by 8.6% in the 12 months to June 2024 (provisional estimate), down from 8.7% in the 12 months to May 2024. The average monthly private rent in High Peak was £850 in June 2024. This was an increase from £780 in June 2023, a 8.9% rise.

The Government appreciates that housing costs are likely a households highest monthly expense. In 2022-23, housing costs took an average of 37% of private tenants' income, in comparison to 32% for social renters and 18% for owner occupiers.

Private Rented Housing: Rents**Helen Hayes:**[\[2961\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps she plans to take to prevent bidding wars in the private rented sector; and when she plans to bring forward the Renters' Rights Bill.

Helen Hayes:[\[2962\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps she is taking to prevent private rented landlords from seeking rents above the advertised price.

Matthew Pennycook:

The Government is committed to bring forward a Renters' Rights Bill as a priority. The Bill will decisively level the playing field between landlord and tenant by providing renters with greater security, rights and protections and we will crack down on the minority of unscrupulous landlords who exploit, mistreat or discriminate against tenants.

The Bill will introduce new laws that will prohibit the practice of rental bidding, which unfairly pit tenants against one another.

Radicalism**Mrs Kemi Badenoch:**[\[2452\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps she is taking to tackle extremism.

Alex Norris:

Countering extremism in all its forms is important for preserving our democratic values and protecting our society and communities. It is a cross-government endeavour and MHCLG will continue tackle the harms it causes to individuals and in communities.

As we saw following the violent incidents in Southport on July 29, extremism poses a threat to community integration and safety. We have been clear that criminal behaviour masked as protest will not be tolerated. Comprehensive multi-agency support is being

coordinated for affected families in Southport, focusing on long-term recovery and community cohesion.

The Home Secretary has commissioned a rapid review of extremism policy to understand the threat of extremism and the response required, with a pledge to take urgent action to address any issues.

■ **Recreation Spaces: Havering**

Andrew Rosindell:

[2052]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps she is taking to help ensure the protection of green spaces in the London Borough of Havering.

Alex Norris:

Havering is one of the greenest boroughs in London, this has been recognised through the MHCLG-owned Green Flag Awards Scheme, with 16 Havering sites being awarded Green Flag status. This Green Flag Award sets the national standard for parks and green spaces that are welcoming, safe, well-maintained and promote biodiversity and community participation.

The Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) allows communities to designate land as Local Green Space, in order to protect green areas that are important to them. Designating land as Local Green Space should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. We are consulting on 'golden rules' in relation to grey and green belt release to ensure development benefits communities and nature.

■ **Religion: Departmental Responsibilities**

John Glen:

[2290]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether the Prime Minister intends to appoint a Minister for Faith.

Alex Norris:

My noble friend Lord Khan of Burnley has been appointed as the Minister for Faith, Communities and Resettlement. Details of ministerial responsibilities for the department are published on gov.uk.

■ **UK Shared Prosperity Fund**

Manuela Perteghella:

[2611]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if she will take steps to ensure the UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocations are protected from future budget cuts.

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. We will begin setting these plans out Autumn Budget in October and at the Spending Review this spring.

We appreciate that those delivering UKSPF have an understandable desire for certainty about its future. We are giving full consideration to this matter, including the hard work undertaken on projects to date. We will continue to work closely with our key stakeholders and will utilise their feedback as we determine our approach going forward.

Decisions regarding funding beyond March 2025 are a matter for the next fiscal event.

Melanie Ward:

[2663]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what discussions she has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the future of the Shared Prosperity Fund.

Alex Norris:

I regularly talk to the Chancellor and her team to discuss many aspects of funding, across all the departments' business and my officials work closely with those in the Treasury. The future of any departmental programme will be agreed as part of the budget and next fiscal event in light of those discussions.

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.

■ **Urban Areas: Capital Investment**

Jessica Toale:

[2661]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps her Department is taking to help (a) improve town centres and (b) encourage companies to invest in Bournemouth town centre.

Alex Norris:

This Government is fully committed to rejuvenating our high streets and supporting the businesses and communities that make our town centres successful.

Through the English Devolution Bill we will introduce a strong new 'right to buy' for valued community assets which will help this Government safeguard our high streets. This measure will empower local communities to reclaim and revitalise empty shops, pubs, and community spaces, helping to revamp our high streets and eliminate the blight of vacant premises.

Alongside these steps, my officials continue to work closely with Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council to support their town centre regeneration plans.

■ Urban Areas: Torquay

Steve Darling:

[\[2588\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to her Department's policy paper entitled Our Long-Term Plan for Towns, published on 1 October 2023, what her planned timetable is for providing targeted support to Torquay.

Alex Norris:

The government has inherited an extremely difficult fiscal environment and has a responsibility to fix the foundations of our economy, to ensure economic stability.

The department will set out further details on next steps and confirmation of the revised timelines in due course.

■ Voter Authority Certificates: Romford

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[2041\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many Voter Authority Certificates have been issued in Romford constituency.

Alex Norris:

This data is not held centrally but is held by the Electoral Registration Officer and is therefore their data to disclose.

JUSTICE

■ Lincoln Prison

Sir John Hayes:

[\[2231\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prisoners were released and recalled to HMP Lincoln (a) once and (b) multiple times in the last 12 months.

Sir John Hayes:

[\[2232\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prisoners were released and recalled to HMP Peterborough (a) once and (b) multiple times in the last 12 months.

Sir Nicholas Dakin:

The table below shows the number of prisoners released from, and recalled to, HMP Lincoln and HMP Peterborough between 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, and the number of those who were subsequently recalled, either once or more than once, during that period.

PRISON RELEASED FROM	NUMBER OF RELEASES	NUMBER OF OFFENDERS RECALLED ONCE ²	NUMBER OF OFFENDERS RECALLED MORE THAN ONCE ²
Lincoln	878	72	15

PRISON RELEASED FROM	NUMBER OF RELEASES	NUMBER OF OFFENDERS RECALLED ONCE ²	NUMBER OF OFFENDERS RECALLED MORE THAN ONCE ²
Peterborough ¹	1,437	139	41

Notes:

1. Includes prisoners at both male and female establishments at HMP Peterborough.
1. Number of individual sentences. It is possible that a very small number of offenders may have been released for the first time on different sentences during the period.

The figures in this table have been drawn from administrative IT systems which, as with any large-scale recording system, are subject to possible errors with data entry and processing.

Source: Prison NOMIS and Public Protection Database

■ Prisoners' Release: Mid Leicestershire

Mr Peter Bedford:

[\[2686\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prisoners usually resident in Mid Leicestershire constituency are eligible for early release.

Sir Nicholas Dakin:

The change to the Standard Determinate Sentence release point was the only option to prevent the imminent collapse of the Criminal Justice System and ensure we protect the public.

The amended release point is applicable to eligible sentences only. Certain offences have been excluded from this change. This includes sex offences irrespective of sentence length; serious violent offences with a sentence of four years or more; specified offences linked to domestic abuse irrespective of sentence length (including stalking, coercive or controlling behaviour and non-fatal strangulation); as well as offences concerning national security. The change will also not apply to sentences subject to release at the discretion of the Parole Board or to offences which currently attract automatic release from an SDS at the two-thirds point (certain serious sexual and violent offences).

Some offenders will have a mixture of eligible and ineligible offences. Whether an offender is released early or not depends on their other sentences, and how they were imposed by the court to be served consecutively or concurrently.

The number of revised releases for those currently in custody are being recalculated to ensure probation and prison staff have time to prepare proper plans for their release. This data is being provided at local authority level to align with service provider boundaries, and therefore is not being provided at a constituency level.

NORTHERN IRELAND**■ Winter Fuel Payment: Northern Ireland****Robin Swann:****[3630]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what recent discussions he has had with the Minister for Communities in Northern Ireland on the potential impact of changes to the eligibility criteria for the Winter Fuel Payment on people in Northern Ireland.

Hilary Benn:

The Winter Fuel Payment is a devolved matter in Northern Ireland and its delivery and the eligibility criteria are the responsibility of the Northern Ireland Department for Communities.

The Northern Ireland Executive is responsible for balancing its own budget. The Executive has made a decision to maintain parity with the UK Government by requiring receipt of the Winter Fuel Payment to be means tested.

SCOTLAND**■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Dr Zubir Ahmed:****[900240]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what discussions he has had with the Scottish Government on the potential impact of the Chancellor's statement on public spending inheritance of 29 July 2024 on public sector pay in Scotland.

Ian Murray:

The financial inheritance - the worst inherited by any incoming Government since World War 2 - was compounded by the unforeseen £22 billion black hole in spending left by the previous Government. This means we face hard choices we didn't expect or want to make to fix the foundations of our economy.

What the previous Government did - spending the Treasury reserves three times over by July - was reckless and unforgivable. They also for the first time excluded an affordability clause from the Pay Bodies and the SNP had no set pay back either.

The Scottish Government is responsible for public sector pay awards for devolved workforces. Barnett consequentials and Supplementary Estimates for 2024-25 will be confirmed at the budget in October and the Spending Review will set block grant funding up to at least 2027-28. This will allow the devolved governments to financially plan over a longer period of time.

Blair McDougall:**[900243]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what steps he is taking with the Secretary of State for the Home Department to help tackle far-right extremism in Scotland.

Kirsty McNeill:

The past weeks have been frightening for many of our communities in Scotland, in particular for Muslims. I will never forget hearing from a young woman who has asked to work from home indefinitely because she is so afraid to be in a city centre, in Scotland, in 2024, wearing the hijab. That is intolerable and cannot - and will not - be accepted.

So I do not share the complacency of some that Scotland has no issues around racism and Islamophobia to address.

The UK Government and Scotland Office are determined to play our part in defeating hate. I am grateful to the civil society and voluntary organisations throughout our communities whose efforts are so vital in supporting that endeavour, and to Police Scotland for their work in keeping us safe.

While I am confident that the true values of this country are best reflected by millions of decent, law abiding people who cherish our neighbours and will not be divided, we must acknowledge that mosques, synagogues and other buildings used by a range of faith communities in Scotland have had to take advantage of Home Office funding for security. Their need to do so shames us all and we will not rest until those responsible for violent disorder are brought to justice and everyone, of every faith and background, feels equally safe.

This government will continue to promote unity and solidarity across the diverse communities that so enrich life in Scotland and the United Kingdom and bring to justice all those engaged in thuggery and violent disorder.

■ Potatoes: UK Internal Trade**Carla Lockhart:****[900241]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on the commercial movement of potatoes from Scotland to Northern Ireland under the Windsor Framework.

Kirsty McNeill:

The Windsor Framework has lifted the ban on the movement of seed potatoes between Great Britain and Northern Ireland under the Northern Ireland Plant Health Label scheme.

Once planted in Northern Ireland, the new crop of seed potatoes can be sold with no restrictions. This reflects long-standing arrangements for biosecurity, and our commitment to upholding a smooth flow of trade with Northern Ireland.

■ Scottish Cities Alliance**Graeme Downie:****[3593]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what plans he has to work with the Scottish Cities Alliance.

Ian Murray:

The Scottish Cities Alliance is an important stakeholder. There is a clear synergy in the work of the Scottish Cities Alliance and how this Government wants to kickstart economic growth in all parts of the country. Therefore, I have plans to meet with the Scottish Cities Alliance in the future to hear about their very important plans for the economic potential across Scotland's eight cities and better understand how they can better work in partnership with this Government.

TRANSPORT**■ A167 (M) and Tyne Bridge: Newcastle upon Tyne**

Sir Alec Shelbrooke: [\[2261\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether her Department will continue to fund improvements to the Tyne Bridge and Central Motorway A167 (M).

Sir Alec Shelbrooke: [\[2262\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether her Department will continue to fund improvements to the Blyth Relief Road.

Sir Alec Shelbrooke: [\[2263\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether her Department will continue to fund improvements to the Sunderland Strategic Transport Corridor (phase 4).

Sir Alec Shelbrooke: [\[2264\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether her Department will continue to fund improvements to the Middlewich Eastern Bypass.

Sir Alec Shelbrooke: [\[2265\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether her Department will continue to fund the A34 MRN Cheadle – Handforth improvement plan (phase 1).

Sir Alec Shelbrooke: [\[2266\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether her Department will continue to fund improvements to the A500 dualling.

Sir Alec Shelbrooke: [\[2267\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether her Department plans to fund improvements to the A595 Grizebeck bypass.

Sir Alec Shelbrooke: [\[2268\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether her Department plans to fund improvements to the Warrington Western Link Road.

Sir Alec Shelbrooke: [\[2269\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if she will continue to fund improvements to the A582 South Ribble Western Distributor.

Sir Alec Shelbrooke: [\[2270\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if she will continue to fund improvements to the Kendal Northern Access route.

Sir Alec Shelbrooke: [\[2271\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if she will continue to fund improvements to the Rocket junction Liverpool-M62 junction 4/A58 project.

Sir Alec Shelbrooke: [\[2272\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether her Department will fund improvements to the Wigan East West project.

Sir Alec Shelbrooke: [\[2273\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether her Department will fund improvements to the A164/Jock's Lodge junction improvement scheme.

Sir Alec Shelbrooke: [\[2274\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether her Department will fund improvements to the A1237 York Outer Ring Road dualling phase 1 project.

Sir Alec Shelbrooke: [\[2275\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether her Department will fund improvements to the Dawson's Corner junction and Stanningley Bypass scheme.

Sir Alec Shelbrooke: [\[2276\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether her Department will fund improvements to the A650 Tong Street Bradford scheme.

Sir Alec Shelbrooke: [\[2277\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether her Department will fund improvements to the Shalesmoor Gateway project.

Sir Alec Shelbrooke: [\[2278\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether her Department will fund improvements to the Sheffield City Region Innovation Corridor.

Sir Alec Shelbrooke: [\[2279\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether her Department will fund improvements to the A1079 improvement scheme in Wilberfoss.

Sir Alec Shelbrooke: [\[2280\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether her Department will fund improvements to the A1237 York Outer Ring Road dualling phase 2 Wetherby Road to A19 project.

Lilian Greenwood:

The Chancellor set out on 29 July a range of pressures on public spending, including £2.9 billion of unfunded transport specific spending. Following this, the Secretary of State's Written Ministerial Statement on 30 July set out that the Department is undertaking an internal review of its capital spend portfolio which will support the development of our new long-term strategy for transport. Any decisions about the portfolio will be subject to broader discussions and fiscal decisions made at Budget and Spending Review.

Aviation: Compensation**Jim Shannon:**[\[2074\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions she has had with representatives of the aviation industry on levels of compensation for passengers whose flights are cancelled.

Mike Kane:

Regulation 261/2004 sets out passenger rights in the event of certain flight disruptions. Under this Regulation, passengers who have their flight cancelled are entitled to a refund or alternative flight. In some circumstances, passengers may also be entitled to additional compensation.

Government is committed to working with industry and stakeholders to ensure consumers continue to have a high level of protection whilst travelling by air.

Bus Services: Gloucestershire**Dr Simon Opher:**[\[2566\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 30 July 2024 to Question 1876 on Bus Services: Gloucestershire, if she will take steps to provide additional funding to South Gloucestershire Council for the maintenance of the local bus route from Wotton-under-Edge.

Simon Lightwood:

Improving bus services is a key part of this Government's growth mission. We are determined to deliver better services, grow passenger numbers and drive opportunity to under-served regions. We have set out our plan to achieve this, centred around supporting local transport authorities to take back control of local bus services.

We will work closely with local authorities to understand what is needed to improve and grow their bus networks by learning from their experiences and building on their successes.

Railways: Devon**Steve Darling:**[\[2581\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress she has made on (a) rail and (b) station improvements in (i) Torbay and (ii) Devon.

Lilian Greenwood:

The Chancellor set out on 29 July a range of pressures on public spending, including £2.9 billion of unfunded transport specific spending. Following this, the Secretary of State's Written Ministerial Statement on 30 July set out that the Department is undertaking an internal review of its capital spend portfolio. This will support the development of our new long-term strategy for transport.

The review will consider several projects under the former Restoring Your Railway programme.

Any decisions about the capital spend portfolio will be subject to broader discussions and fiscal decisions made at Budget and Spending Review.

Roads: Birmingham**Laurence Turner:****[3554]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 26 July 2024 to Question 266 on Roads: Birmingham and with reference to deposited paper DEP2024-0567, if she will place a copy of her Department's decision letter to Birmingham City Council dated 30 November 2023 in the House of Commons Library.

Lilian Greenwood:

A copy of the letter will be deposited in the House of Commons Library.

Roads: Chelmsford**Sir John Whittingdale:****[2223]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much funding her Department plans to provide for a new Army and Navy Roundabout in Chelmsford.

Lilian Greenwood:

The Chancellor set out on 29 July a range of pressures on public spending, including £2.9 billion of unfunded transport specific spending. Following this, the Secretary of State's Written Ministerial Statement on 30 July set out that the Department is undertaking an internal review of its capital spend portfolio which will support the development of our new long-term strategy for transport. Any decisions about the portfolio will be subject to broader discussions and fiscal decisions made at Budget and Spending Review.

TREASURY**Energy: Taxation****Claire Coutinho:****[2533]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of ending the investment allowance within the Energy Profits Levy on investment in the (a) economy and (b) energy transition.

James Murray:

In July, the Government announced its intention to remove the Energy Profits Levy's (EPL) 29% main investment allowance. Further details of final policy and impacts will be announced at Budget.

A key outcome of the government's clean energy mission will be greater energy security and independence. The government will achieve a phased and responsible transition by taking a proportionate approach that ensures the oil and gas sector continues to play a role whilst contributing more towards our clean energy transition.

Equitable Life Assurance Society: Compensation**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:****[2966]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether she plans to review the Equitable Life payment scheme.

Tulip Siddiq:

The Equitable Life Payment Scheme has been fully wound down and closed since 2016, and there are no plans to reopen any decisions relating to the Payment Scheme or review the £1.5 billion funding allocation previously made to it. Further guidance on the status of the Payment Scheme after closure is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equitable-life-payment-scheme#closure-of-the-scheme>.

Pay: Young People**Mr Richard Holden:****[3172]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 30 July 2024 to Question 1812 on Pay: Young People, if she will make it her policy to publish data on average take home pay for young people working full-time on the minimum wage in (a) cash terms and (b) adjusted for inflation.

Tulip Siddiq:

The Low Pay Commission publishes an annual report on the National Living Wage, including estimates of take-home income for example, households.

The latest report is available here: National Minimum Wage - Low Pay Commission Report 2023 (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Public Expenditure**Mr Richard Holden:****[3173]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 25 July 2024 to Question 1813 on Public Expenditure, what the overspend was in each Departmental budget at the end of (a) July and (b) August 2024.

Darren Jones:

On 29th July, the Chancellor set out the £21.9bn pressure on departmental budgets in the 2024-25 financial year. This announcement was accompanied by the document

'Fixing the Foundations'. The Chancellor is running a Spending Review and will publish a full breakdown of departmental settlements at Budget in October.

■ Public Finance

Laura Trott:

[3116]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 29 July 2024 to Question 1370 on Public Finances, if she will publish assumptions made by the Government's (a) special advisers and (b) Ministers used as the basis for financial estimates on the last Administration's policies and spending decisions, set out in the Command Paper entitled Fixing the foundations.

Darren Jones:

On 29th July, the Chancellor set out the £21.9bn pressure on departmental budgets in the 2024-25 financial year. This was accompanied by the 'Fixing the Foundations' paper you refer to, which sets out the detail of the pressures on the public finances that the government inherited.

■ Public Sector: Productivity

John Glen:

[2324]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of planned labour market reforms on public sector productivity.

Tulip Siddiq:

The government is committed to creating good jobs and improving productivity in every part of the country.

Our planned reforms to the labour market, including the Plan to Make Work Pay and the upcoming Get Britain Working White Paper, will aim to boost incomes, ensure workplace rights are fit for a modern economy, increase productivity and create the right conditions for sustained economic growth.

■ Taxation

Mr Richard Holden:

[2541]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 30 July 2024 to Question 1811 on Taxation, what the tax gap of (a) 2005-06 and (b) 2022-3 is adjusted for inflation in (i) 2005-06 and (ii) 2022-23 real terms.

James Murray:

The UK tax gap in 2022-23 is estimated to be 4.8% of total theoretical tax liabilities, or £39.8 billion in absolute terms. The tax gap has fallen from 7.4% of total theoretical liabilities in 2005-06, or £32.4bn in absolute terms.

The 2005-06 and 2022-23 tax gap estimates can be adjusted for inflation using the published GDP deflators available at: www.gov.uk/government/statistics/gdp-deflators-at-market-prices-and-money-gdp-june-2024-quarterly-national-accounts

The government is committed to tackling the tax gap, through increasing HMRC's compliance staff, investing in HMRC's technology infrastructure, and making policy changes to tackle tax non-compliance. The government will set out further details at the budget.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Access to Work Programme

Laurence Turner: [\[3558\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether Access to Work applicants can contact that service in writing

Alison McGovern:

Individuals can apply for Access to Work assistance either online via Gov.UK or by telephone on 0800 121 7479. Once the application is assigned to a Case Manager, the customer is provided with the direct contact details of their personal case manager for the duration of the decision-making process.

■ Bereavement Support Payment

Caroline Voaden: [\[2205\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make it her policy to increase Bereavement Support Payments in line with inflation.

Jim Allister: [\[2220\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will take steps to (a) extend the duration of Bereavement Support Payments and (b) update those payments in line with inflation.

Andrew Western:

Bereavement Support Payment (BSP) helps people through the immediate period following a bereavement by way of an initial lump sum followed by up to 18 monthly instalments. Where longer-term financial support is needed, benefits such as Universal Credit have been specifically designed to provide assistance with ongoing living costs. We have no current plans to change the duration of Bereavement Support Payment.

The rate of Bereavement Support Payment is reviewed on a discretionary basis as part of the annual uprating process, but there is no legal requirement to uprate it. BSP is not a cost-of-living benefit like Universal Credit, which has been increased in line with inflation. We will review the rate of Bereavement Support Payment later this year as part of the annual uprating process.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Equality

Sir John Hayes: [\[2234\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the cost to the public purse was of staff diversity networks in her Department in each of the last five years.

Andrew Western:

TOTAL ANNUAL COSTS FOR EDI ACTIVITIES	1 APRIL 2023 - 31 FEBRUARY 2024	2022/ 2023	1 APRIL 2021 - 31 MARCH 2022	1 APRIL 2020 - 31 MARCH 2021	1 APRIL 2019 – MARCH 2020
Departmental staff networks	0	£2675	0	0	0
Cross-departmental staff networks	0	£29,605	£23,658	£23,658	0

From August 2019, 7 National Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Networks are given pro rata time allocation to support respective network activity. There was no official time allocation given to support Network activity prior to this, tasks were undertaken on a voluntary basis.

Time allocation

The National EDI Network Co-Chairs have a 25%-weekly time allocation and the Strand Lead/Board Member/Committee roles have a weekly 10%-time allocation. Each Network can recruit up to 10 Committee members (please note that not all Networks have up to 10 Committee members).

7 National EDI Networks with allocated time equates to:

1 x 25 % time allocation 37- hour week contract equates to 9.25 hours for each co-chair or 18.5 hours for both per week for each of them (pro rata)

1x10% time allocation 37 – hour week contract equates to 3.7 per committee member, or for each committee member 10 x 10 % equates to 37 hours a week (pro rata)

Across all 7 Networks:

- 70* people support network activity at 10% with 90% of their time focused on their contracted job role.
- 14 people spend 25% of their time on network activity, with 75% of their time focused on their contracted job role.

The cost of staff information requested is not collated centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

■ Housing Benefit: Social Rented Housing

Clive Lewis:

[\[2957\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she plans to review the removal of the spare room subsidy.

Sir Stephen Timms:

Any decisions on the Removal of the Spare Room Subsidy policy need to be taken in the context of the Government's missions, housing priorities, and the fiscal context.

Those unable to meet a shortfall in their rent can seek a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) from their local authority. DHPs can be paid to those entitled to Housing Benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit.

■ Local Housing Allowance

Mary Glendon:

[\[2895\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make it her policy to ensure local housing allowance keeps pace with median rent prices.

Sir Stephen Timms:

The Local Housing Allowance (LHA) determines the maximum housing support for tenants in the private rented sector.

Households in similar circumstances living in the same area are entitled to the same maximum rent allowance regardless of the contractual rent paid. LHA rates do not cover all rents in all areas.

Any decisions on LHA in 25/26 need to be taken in the context of the Government's missions, housing priorities and the fiscal context. LHA rates were restored to the 30th percentile of local market rents from April 2024, at a cost of £1.2bn in 2024/25 and £7bn over five years.

For those who need further support, Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) are available from local authorities.

■ Pensioners: Poverty

Andy McDonald:

[\[2334\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate her Department has made of the number of pensioners living in (a) relative poverty and (b) absolute poverty that are not in receipt of Pension Credit.

Emma Reynolds:

For the financial year 2022/23, the latest year that data that is available, 1.6m pensioners living in households not in receipt of Pension Credit were in relative poverty after housing costs, and 1.2m pensioners living in households not in receipt of Pension Credit were in absolute poverty after housing costs.

Statistics on the number of pensioners living in absolute and relative poverty in the UK are published annually in the "Households Below Average Income" publication at

[Households below average income: for financial years ending 1995 to 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)\(opens in a new tab\)](https://www.gov.uk) . The latest available data with breakdowns by receipt of Pension Credit can be found on Stat-Xplore (<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>) in the 'Households Below Average Income' dataset. The latest statistics published on 21 March 2024 are for the financial period 2022/23.

Guidance on how to use Stat-Xplore can be found here: [Getting Started \(dwp.gov.uk\)](https://dwp.gov.uk). An account is not required to use Stat- Xplore, the 'Guest Login' feature gives instant access to the main functions .

■ **Universal Credit: EU Nationals**

Sir Desmond Swayne:

[2225]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she plans to enable EU citizens with pre-settled status to claim universal credit.

Andrew Western:

EEA and Swiss citizens with pre-settled status have the same access to benefits as they did prior to the UK leaving the EU. They will be able to access income-related public fund benefits, such as Universal Credit, if they are exercising a qualifying right to reside in the UK, for example by being a worker. This is similar to the rules for UK citizens residing in EU member states on the basis of the Withdrawal Agreement. The eligibility of claimants with pre-settled status is verified through the Habitual Residence Test.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ **Improvements to gender identity services for children and young people**

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Wes Streeting):

[HCWS70]

I am writing to update the House about the Government and NHS England's work to improve gender identity services, as well as implement the recommendations of the independent review into gender identity services for children and young people by Dr Hilary Cass.

During summer recess the Government and NHS England made progress toward these recommendations. The aim of this work is to ensure that children and young people who are experiencing gender incongruence or dysphoria receive a high standard of care that meets their needs and is safe, holistic and effective.

Puberty Blockers

The Cass Review made it clear that there is not enough evidence about the long-term effects of using puberty blockers to treat gender dysphoria and incongruence to know whether they are safe or beneficial.

The Review recommended that puberty suppressing hormones should only be prescribed in the context of a clinical trial or under the guidance of the national multi-disciplinary team. The report also recommended defining the dispensing responsibilities of pharmacists of private prescriptions of puberty blockers and considering other statutory solutions that would prevent inappropriate overseas prescribing.

The NHS has subsequently ceased the routine use of puberty blockers to treat gender incongruence in children. The former Secretary of State also issued an emergency order to extend restrictions to the private sector.

That emergency order came into force from 3 June 2024 in Great Britain and was due to expire on 2 September 2024. On 22 August, this government renewed the order jointly with the Minister of Health (in Northern Ireland). It commenced in Northern Ireland on 27 August 2024.

The government recognises that the introduction of this order may cause concern to individuals and families who are impacted. If a young person has already taken these medicines or has been prescribed these medicines in the 6 months prior to 3 June 2024 (in Great Britain) or 27 August 2024 (in Northern Ireland), they can continue to do so, providing their prescription is now issued by a UK registered prescriber. They are strongly advised to meet with their prescribing clinician to fully understand the safety risks. For those patients accessing prescriptions from an EEA registered prescriber, they can seek help from a UK private provider or see their GP.

The new order extends to Northern Ireland. The Northern Ireland First Minister and Deputy First Minister gave their approval for the Minister of Health to co-sign the order. This will remain in place until the end of 26 November 2024 while we gather responses to a targeted consultation on a permanent banning order issued last month to representative organisations of those likely to be impacted by a permanent order. The proposed permanent order would continue the same restrictions and apply to the same medicines impacted by the emergency order, on a permanent basis. This would apply to private and overseas prescribing.

We do not yet know enough about the impacts of using puberty suppressing hormones at this critical stage in young people's lives. In partnership with the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR), NHS England is launching a clinical trial to assess the potential benefits and harms of puberty suppressing hormones.

Within this trial, the effects of puberty blockers can be safely monitored, and the research will give government and the NHS the evidence we need to decide whether they can be used as a safe and effective treatment. The trial aims to begin recruiting participants early in the new year.

New children's services

In April, NHS England opened two new children and young person gender services in the North West and London that offer a different clinical model, embedding multi-disciplinary teams in specialist children's hospitals. This includes a nominated paediatrician or psychiatrist with overall clinical responsibility for patient safety in these services. A third new service will open in the South West in the autumn, and a fourth in the East of England in spring of next year. NHS England is advancing towards meeting its commitment for there to be a specialist children's gender service in every region by 2026.

Referral service specification

NHS England has published a new service specification for the National Referral Support Service for Specialist Services for Children and Young People with Gender Incongruence. A referral can only be made by an NHS-commissioned, secondary care-level paediatric service or a Children and Young Person mental health service. This will ensure that healthcare professionals with the relevant expertise conduct the assessment and help determine any co-existing mental health or other health needs of these children and their onward care.

Adult services review

Dr Cass also recommended a review of the adult service specification for gender services, given the changing demographic presenting to children and young people's services is reflected in a change of presentations to adult services. In response, NHS England has taken the decision to conduct a review of the operation and delivery of adult Gender Dysphoria Clinics. The review will examine the model of care and operating procedures of each service, with the aim of producing an updated service specification for adult gender services. This will be led by Dr David Levy, Medical Director of Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board, and previously NHS England's North West Regional Medical Director. Dr Levy will act

as the independent Chair of the Review, which will include an expert panel of professionals and patients.

Conclusion

The trans community is disproportionately affected by issues of mental ill health, suicide and self-harm. We have a duty to them to lower the temperature and look for common ground away from the toxicity of the current debate.

The government will not lose sight of the fundamental point that anyone accessing a gender identity service deserves the highest quality of care and support, and to be treated with dignity and respect, just as we would expect from any other service. This government is determined that the public discourse about these issues does not lead to harm.

That is why this government is absolutely committed to making sure every trans person feels fully part of our society. I believe the Cass Review will deliver material improvements in the wellbeing, safety, and dignity of trans people of all ages and gender identities.

There is much to do in overhauling children's gender identity services, and I can assure the House that I will be working closely with NHS England to implement further changes as soon as possible to ensure that every child receives the best possible care.

We will proceed with caution at every step, always putting the evidence first, and putting people above politics.

PRIME MINISTER

■ **Publication of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 Report**

Prime Minister (Sir Keir Starmer):

[[HCWS68](#)]

The Chair of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, Sir Martin Moore-Bick has today published the Inquiry's Phase 2 Report.

The report examines how it came to be that the Grenfell Tower was in the condition whereby a fire could spread so quickly and fatally, as tragically happened on 14 June 2017. A copy has been laid before each House of Parliament and I will make a statement to the House following Prime Minister's Questions.

The report finds substantial and widespread failings. The Government will carefully consider the report and its recommendations, to ensure that such a tragedy cannot occur again. I hope that those outside government will do the same. Given the detailed and extensive nature of the report, a further and more in-depth debate will be held at a later date.

My thoughts today are wholly with those bereaved by, and survivors of, the Grenfell Tower tragedy and the residents in the immediate community. This day is for them. I hope that Sir Martin's report can provide the truth they have sought for so long, and that it is step towards the accountability and justice they deserve.

I would like to thank Sir Martin, his panel of Thouria Istephan and Ali Akbor, and the Inquiry team for their thorough work on producing this report and for their years of work on this Inquiry.

TREASURY**■ Extension of Enterprise Investment Scheme and Venture Capital Trust Scheme**

The Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury (James Murray): [\[HCWS69\]](#)

On 3 September 2024 the Treasury made The Finance Act 2024, Section 11 (Extension of Enterprise Investment Scheme Relief and Venture Capital Trusts Relief) (Appointed Day) Regulations 2024 (SI 2024/897). These regulations bring into effect the extension of the Enterprise Investment Scheme (EIS) and the Venture Capital Trust (VCT) Scheme sunset clause to 2035. When this extension was legislated for in the Finance Act 2024, a Tax Information and Impact Note was published. This set out that there is no additional exchequer impact from this measure, as the costs were already accounted for in the forecast. The schemes will continue to support early-stage companies to raise the financing they need to grow and succeed.

[Tax Information and Impact Note](#)