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**Notes:**

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

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

## ANSWERS

### ATTORNEY GENERAL

#### ■ Attorney General: Ministers

##### Kit Malthouse:

[2398]

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

##### Sarah Sackman:

As of this date, I can confirm that, excluding special advisers, the Attorney General and I have not made any direct statutory or non-statutory ministerial appointments.

Of course, the Law Officers and wider government legal teams for which they are responsible do make use of outside experts on the law, whether counsel, law firms or academic specialists. Arrangements for using counsel or academics are principally through the Attorney General's panels and an off-panel nomination process or via their academic institution, whereas law firms are principally instructed through a panel firm procurement process.

#### ■ Law Officers: Freedom of Information

##### John Glen:

[2318]

To ask the Solicitor General, what the Government's policy is on the role of the law officers on (a) freedom of information requests, (b) appeals and (c) tribunals on decisions undertaken by the previous Government.

##### Sarah Sackman:

The Law Officers' role in respect of assessing exemptions under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI Act) for papers of a previous administration is set out at paragraph 11.24 of the Cabinet Manual:

*“ When a decision is required on the application of sections 36 or 53 of the FOI Act to papers of a previous administration, the Attorney General will act, as appropriate, as the accountable person for all government departments under section 53 and a Law Officer will act as the qualified person under section 36. ”*

Once an assessment is made it is returned to the relevant department who then apply the public interest test (where applicable). Any appeals or tribunal proceedings would be for the relevant department.

## ■ Legal Opinion: Disclosure of Information

**John Glen:** [\[2310\]](#)

To ask the Solicitor General, what the Government's policy is on the publication of its legal advice.

**Sarah Sackman:**

The Law Officers' Convention, reflected in paragraph 2.13 of the Ministerial Code, is a long-standing convention observed by successive governments. It exists to preserve the ability of the Government and ministers to seek the advice of the Law Officers and not to be disadvantaged by disclosing when they have done so, and what advice they received.

As you may know, on some occasions the Government has published summaries of its legal position on specific matters, for example, on military activity in the Red Sea (see here: [Summary of the UK Government Legal Position: The legality of UK military action to target Houthi facilities in Yemen on 12 January 2024 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) ).

## BUSINESS AND TRADE

### ■ Billing: Payment Methods

**Kevin Hollinrake:** [\[2095\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, when he plans to bring forward legislative proposals to amend the Reporting on Payment Practices and Performance Regulations 2017 to introduce new metrics on retentions; and whether he plans to bring into force new metrics on the value of invoices paid and disputed invoices from 1 January 2025.

**Gareth Thomas:**

Legislation is expected to be laid before Parliament in 2024 to amend the Reporting on Payment Practices and Performance Regulations 2017 to require new retention reporting requirements.

Amendments were made to the Payment Practices and Performance Regulations which introduced two new reporting metrics which will cover the value of payments, and the level of invoices not paid because of disputes. Businesses will be required to collect data and report on these new metrics from January 2025 as planned.

### ■ Cars: Spare Parts

**Mr Richard Holden:** [\[3671\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, whether there is an embargo on spare parts for foreign cars.

**Mr Douglas Alexander:**

The UK has not placed a blanket embargo on spare parts for foreign cars.

All information on trade sanctions, embargoes and restrictions, including trade controls and transit controls can be found on GOV.UK [ [here](#) ].

## ■ Department for Business and Trade: Ministers

### Kit Malthouse:

[2408]

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

### Justin Madders:

All Business and Trade direct ministerial appointments are currently under review and no direct Ministerial appointments have been finalised.

## ■ Environment Protection: Technology

### Wera Hobhouse:

[2126]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, how he plans to encourage investment in (a) chemical recycling and (b) other green technologies.

### Sarah Jones:

The UK is committed to a circular economy which will keep resources in use as long as possible, extracting maximum value, minimizing waste and promoting resource efficiency. Policies such as the UK's Plastic Packaging Tax help support innovation, growth and jobs in the waste management and the recycling sectors, including within chemical recycling.

The UK supports investment into green technologies through competitive research and innovation-based incentives such as R&D tax credits, innovation funding and incentives.

DBT will use its investment services to support Great British Energy to seek investment into new technologies to speed up and scale their deployment.

## ■ Retail Trade: Urban Areas

### Jim Shannon:

[2073]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what plans he has to support high street retailers.

### Gareth Thomas:

This Government is focused on its five-point plan to breathe life back into Britain's high streets. Our plans include tackling retail crime, ensuring a level playing field between online and high street businesses, stamping out late payments and ending the blight of empty spaces. This work will ensure that our high streets are great places for our businesses, supporting economic growth across the UK.

The British Business Bank supports SMEs to grow by improving their access to finance. The Growth Guarantee Scheme offers a 70% government guarantee on

loans to SMEs of up to £2 million in Great Britain, and £1 million in Northern Ireland and is available until the end of March 2026.

The industry-led Retail Sector Council has identified High Street Regeneration and Investment as one of its key areas of work and has been considering a sector vision for the high street.

## ■ Trade Agreements: India

**Wera Hobhouse:** [\[2123\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, whether intellectual property provisions on plant genetic resources are being negotiated under the UK-India Free Trade Agreement.

**Mr Douglas Alexander:**

Boosting trade abroad is essential to deliver a strong economy at home. That is why we are committed to negotiating a Free Trade Agreement with India, which is projected to be the world's third largest economy by 2027.

It is the department's established practice to not comment on the details of live negotiations. We will commence negotiations as soon as possible to secure an agreement that creates new opportunities for businesses, supports jobs across the United Kingdom, and delivers growth.

## CABINET OFFICE

### ■ Civil Servants: Recruitment and Training

**Charlie Dewhurst:** [\[2639\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the policy paper entitled Fixing the Foundations: Public Spending Audit 2024-25, published on 29 July 2024, CP 1133, whether he plans to reduce consultancy spending on equality, diversity and inclusion (a) recruitment and (b) training for the civil service.

**Georgia Gould:**

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has set out this Government's commitment to reducing consultancy spend across Government by 50%.

### ■ Civil Service Agencies and Government Departments: South West

**Steve Darling:** [\[2584\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will take steps to relocate Government (a) departments and (b) agencies to the South West.

**Georgia Gould:**

The government is committed to ensuring that the Civil Service workforce operates across the country, including in the South West, to improve policy making and outcomes for UK citizens.



## ■ Civil Service: Remote Working

**John Glen:**

[2322]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether he plans to publish civil service headquarters occupancy data.

**Georgia Gould:**

The publication of this data was suspended in line with pre-election guidance for the duration of the Pre-Election Period. Future collection and publication plans are being considered.

## ■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

**Daisy Cooper:**

[2501]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how much his Department paid to each publisher that took part in the All in, all together advertising campaign since 2020.

**Daisy Cooper:**

[2502]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what criteria were used to decide which publishers would be invited to take place in the All in, all together campaign since 2020.

**Georgia Gould:**

The UK government partnered with the newspaper industry to launch the “All in, all Together” Covid-19 advertising campaign. The purpose of the partnership was to amplify public information on critical coronavirus messaging to ensure it reached all communities while also delivering demonstrable value for money. The partnership comprised over 600 titles, to ensure messaging is reaching communities throughout England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and includes over 25 multicultural titles. We only hold information about the press partnership as a whole; it is not broken down by publisher, campaign or newspaper.

Cabinet Office publishes expenditure, including on public information campaigns, on a rolling monthly basis on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

## ■ Emergencies: Planning

**John Glen:**

[2867]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, when he expects the National Exercising Programme’s next Tier 1 exercise test to take place.

**Ms Abena Oppong-Asare:**

The National Exercise Programme (NEP) provides direction and establishes cross-cutting activity to stress test capabilities, plans, protocols and procedures to strengthen our resilience in order to better prevent, mitigate, respond to and recover from significant risks facing the UK.

The NEP sets out a timetable of exercises (2024-2028), including at least one annual Tier 1 exercise with Ministerial involvement to be delivered each year.

The Department of Health and Social Care will conduct a major Tier 1 exercise as the Lead Government Department, testing our response to a major pandemic. Planning for the exercise is underway and timelines are to be confirmed.

**John Glen:**

[\[3669\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what his Department's policy is on using the National Resilience Academy to provide training for (a) Ministers and (b) Rt. hon Members.

**Ms Abena Oppong-Asare:**

Resilience is a top priority for this government. In a statement to the House on Friday 19 July, the Chancellor for the Duchy of Lancaster committed to leading a review of our national resilience against the full range of risks that the UK faces.

The UK Resilience Academy will be established in 2025 and be accessible to all those working in the resilience profession. This will include Ministers, government departments and arm's length bodies (ALBs), local resilience forums and partnerships, emergency responders, the voluntary and community sector, Critical National Infrastructure owners and operators and businesses. There will also be tools for households and individuals. The training provided will be benchmarked against the National Occupational Standards for civil contingencies, which will be refreshed to include all resilience disciplines, including crisis management.

#### ■ EU Countries: Visas

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[2499\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will make it his policy to seek negotiations with the EU on extending the duration of Schengen Area visas for UK citizens travelling to the EU for longer than 90 days.

**Nick Thomas-Symonds:**

Both the UK and the EU allow for visa-free short-term travel in line with their arrangements for Third Country Nationals. The UK allows EU citizens short-term visa-free travel for up to six months. Meanwhile, the Schengen Borders Code allows for Third Country Nationals to travel within the Schengen Area for up to 90 days in any 180-day period; this is standard for third countries travelling to the EU. The UK Government will continue to listen to and advocate for UK nationals.

#### ■ Government Departments: Accountancy

**John Glen:**

[\[2307\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what his planned timetable is for the publication of departmental annual accounts for financial year 2023-24.

**Georgia Gould:**

The department plans to lay the 2023/24 Annual Report in the House at the end of October 2024. This is dependent on the satisfactory completion of the audit of the accounts of the Cabinet Office group.

## ■ Government Departments: Communication

**Charlie Dewhirst:** [\[2630\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to page 9 of HM Treasury's document entitled Fixing the foundations: Public spending audit 2024-25, published on 29 July 2024, which planned government communications programmes will be cancelled.

**Georgia Gould:**

A review of planned government communications and marketing is currently in progress.

## ■ Hereditary Peers: By-elections

**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[2754\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether (a) the Government has a planned timetable for the removal of the right for hereditary peers to sit in the House of Lords and (b) his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of (i) ending by-elections to the House of Lords and (ii) offering life peerages to incumbent hereditary peers.

**Nick Thomas-Symonds:**

As a first step in reform of the House of Lords, the Government has introduced the House of Lords (Hereditary Peers) Bill, which will remove the right of hereditary peers to sit and vote in the House of Lords.

The Government is committed to other reforms to the House of Lords, including the introduction of a mandatory retirement age, a new participation requirement, and changes to the appointments process, as well as strengthening the circumstances in which disgraced members can be removed. There is also a long-term commitment to replace the House of Lords with an alternative second chamber that is more representative of the regions and nations. Given the nature and potential scale of these reforms, the Government will conduct engagement and consult on proposals for an alternative second chamber, seeking the input of the British public on how politics can best serve them.

## ■ Prime Minister: Ministers

**Kit Malthouse:** [\[2388\]](#)

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

**Georgia Gould:**

As of this date, there have been no such appointments.

**■ Public Sector: Procurement****Jon Trickett:** [\[2028\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether he has had recent discussions with civil service trade unions on the procurement of facilities management services.

**Georgia Gould:**

The Cabinet Office holds frequent discussions with Civil Service trade unions on a number of topics. The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster held introductory meetings with the General Secretaries of the FDA, Prospect and PCS unions recently where they discussed a range of issues.

**■ Urban Areas: Bournemouth****Jessica Toale:** [\[2659\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what data his Department holds on a) public sector and b) private investment in Bournemouth town centre in each of the last 14 years.

**Georgia Gould:**

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

A response to the Hon Lady's Parliamentary Question of 30/09/24 is attached.

**Attachments:**

1. Letter from the National Statistician [PQ2659 (1).pdf]

**CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT****■ Arts: Artificial Intelligence****Julia Lopez:** [\[2128\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology on (a) legislation to govern artificial intelligence models and (b) the impact of that legislation on the creative industries.

**Chris Bryant:**

Discussions between and within the two departments have been ongoing since the General Election, based on the Government's belief in both human-centred creativity and the potential of technology to open up new creative frontiers. The whole government is committed to ensuring AI development supports, rather than undermines the power of human creativity, innovation and the provision of trustworthy information.

The Secretary of State also intends to meet with counterparts across government to discuss a range of issues to ensure the continued growth of our world-leading creative industries. This will include artificial intelligence models and their impact on the creative industries, which will require close collaboration between the Department

for Culture, Media and Sport, the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology and the Intellectual Property Office.

■ **BBC: Finance**

**Julia Lopez:**

[\[2127\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, whether she plans to alter the membership of the Expert Panel for her Department's BBC Funding Model Review.

**Stephanie Peacock:**

The Government is committed to the licence fee for the remainder of the current Charter period. The Government will keep an open mind about the future of the licence fee, and will engage with the BBC and other relevant stakeholders before deciding on next steps.

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

**Sir John Hayes:**

[\[2230\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what her Department's policy is on ministerial clearance of contracts relating to external equality, diversity and inclusion providers.

**Stephanie Peacock:**

Ministerial approval is currently sought for all contracts relating to external EDI providers within scope of the EDI Expenditure Guidance published on 14th May. The guidance allows for Ministers to delegate this responsibility to the Permanent Secretary, which DCMS Ministers may choose to do in the future.

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

**Kit Malthouse:**

[\[2410\]](#)

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

**Stephanie Peacock:**

The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport has not made any statutory or non-statutory direct appointments.

■ **Football: Clubs**

**Jon Pearce:**

[\[2609\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that (a) football clubs remain community assets and (b) fans get a greater say in how they are run.

**Jon Pearce:**

[2610]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, whether she plans to take steps to help ensure the financial suitability of potential buyers of football clubs.

**Stephanie Peacock:**

This Government wants to make this country the best place in the world to be a football fan. That is why the King's Speech set out our plans for legislation to establish an independent football regulator.

The new regulator will protect and promote the sustainability of English football. The Bill will provide greater protections to club heritage and give fans more of a voice in how their club is run. It will ensure responsible owners for these community assets, by creating a new owners' and directors' test. It will also ensure that clubs can't be syphoned off from the English football pyramid to set up closed-shop and breakaway leagues.

We will introduce this legislation as soon as Parliamentary time allows.

#### ■ **Olympic Games: Festivals and Special Occasions**

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[2036]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, whether her Department has (a) organised events and (b) taken other steps to celebrate the Olympic Games in the next two weeks.

**Stephanie Peacock:**

The Government is committed to supporting elite sport and enabling our athletes to excel on the world stage. The Secretary of State and I were both fortunate enough to attend the Paris Olympics to cheer on our athletes. The Government welcomes the free, accessible, fan zones that Team GB set up around the UK for fans to watch live coverage with friends and family, and the many local events that communities across the country enjoyed. We were also delighted to join the celebrations for our Olympians at the National Lottery's Team GB Homecoming in Manchester on 17 August.

#### ■ **Olympic Games: Paris**

**Alex Mayer:**

[2618]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department will take to help build on the legacy of the Paris Olympics.

**Stephanie Peacock:**

As I set out during the Westminster Hall debate on the Paris 2024 Olympics Team GB Legacy, which took place on 3 September, the Government is fully committed to multi-year funding for our elite sport system and enabling our athletes to excel on the world stage. This means supporting them financially to match and build on their success in Paris, helping them to deliver at LA 2028. We will set out further details at the Spending Review.

The Government also recognises that high-quality, inclusive facilities help ensure everyone has access to sport. We will continue to support grassroots sport including through the Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities Programme that will invest £123 million across the UK this year.

We provide the majority of support for grassroots sport through our arm's-length body, Sport England – which annually invests over £250 million of National Lottery and Government money. Sport England's newly established Movement Fund offers crowdfunding pledges, grants and resources to improve physical activity opportunities for the people and communities who need it the most.

### ■ Sports: Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard

**Alex Mayer:**

**[2617]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she is taking with Cabinet colleagues to help improve the quality of sporting facilities in (a) Bedfordshire and (b) Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard constituency.

**Stephanie Peacock:**

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

We will continue to support grassroots sport including through the Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities Programme that will invest £123 million across the UK this year.

The Government provides the majority of support for grassroots sport through our Arms Length Body, Sport England - which invests an average of £250 million in Exchequer and Lottery funding each year.

Over the last five years Bedfordshire has received over £8.8 million and Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard constituency has received over £192,000 from Sport England to support projects which facilitate participation in grassroots sport.

Additionally, Bedfordshire received £5,305,046.28 in funding across 51 facilities through the Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities Programme, Park Tennis Court Programme and the Swimming Pool Support Fund. Of this amount, £1,798,441 was awarded across six facilities in Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard, including £1,032,533 for a new artificial grass pitch and changing pavilion at Tithe Farm Road Recreation Ground. Full breakdowns of the facilities funded through the [Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities Programme](#) and through the [Park Tennis Court Programme](#) are available on gov.uk, and a breakdown of facilities funded through the [Swimming Pool Support Fund](#) is available on the Sport England website.

**■ Youth Work: Finance****Siân Berry:**[\[2678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, if she will publish the (a) revenue and (b) capital funding provided by each government department for youth work in England and Wales in each financial year since 2010-11.

**Stephanie Peacock:**

The Government recognises the vital role that youth services and activities play in improving the life chances and wellbeing of young people. In England, since 2010, DCMS has directly provided over £1.5 billion to the youth sector - mainly through three large programmes: MyPlace (capital); National Citizen Service (revenue) and the Youth Investment Fund (capital and revenue).

Over the current Spending Review Period, DCMS is investing £500 million of revenue and capital funding in youth services to deliver the National Youth Guarantee. This is in addition to revenue funding provided through DCMS Public Bodies, such as Sport England, Arts Council England and the National Lottery Community Fund, and other government departments. We do not hold the breakdown of youth work funding from other government departments.

As set out in section 507B of the Education Act 1996, Local Authorities have a statutory duty to 'secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient provision of educational and recreational leisure-time activities for young people'. Details of all Local Authorities' annual spending on youth services in England can be found in Section 251 data published on gov.uk.

The devolved administration of Wales is responsible for their own youth services and we do not hold the data requested.

**DEFENCE****■ Armed Forces: HIV Infection****David Mundell:**[\[2055\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he is taking steps to permit people living with HIV to serve (a) as pilots, (b) as air traffic controllers and (c) in other roles in the armed forces.

**Luke Pollard:**

As a new Government, we are commissioning a review into the circumstances where those who are living with HIV are not permitted to fulfil some roles within the Armed Forces.

After recent changes there are only a very small number of roles where those living with HIV are currently excluded from serving, including aircrew and pilots. We note changes made to rules around civil aviation in respect of people living with HIV and I have asked the Department to consider whether the current policy measures,



especially given advances in PREP, are consistent with the values and standards of our Armed Forces.

I have asked for this review to be delivered swiftly. I would be happy to meet the right hon. Member and cross-party colleagues to discuss this matter further with a view to a decision being taken by the Ministers in the coming weeks.

### ■ **Armed Forces: Radiation Exposure**

**Nick Timothy:**

[1875]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of amending the eligibility criteria for the Nuclear Test Medal to include UK service personnel who took part in (a) Operation Bagpipes in 1954 and (b) all other US tests.

**AI Carns:**

The Nuclear Test Medal was designed to recognise the unique contribution of those personnel who served at the locations in Australia and the Pacific where the UK Atmospheric Nuclear Test Programme, including clear-up operations, took place between 1952 and 1967. In particular, the Medal recognises the contribution made by these personnel to the development of the UK's independent deterrent.

The agreed eligibility criteria for the Medal do not currently include UK personnel who were not present in the defined test areas, personnel who monitored nuclear tests conducted by other nations, or personnel who were present at later, non-atmospheric, tests.

We recognise the sacrifices and the huge contribution that Nuclear Test Veterans have made to the UK's security. The Secretary of State for Defence has directed the Department to look at the commemorative medal criteria, in consultation with other stakeholders.

### ■ **British Overseas Territories: Hurricanes and Tornadoes**

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[2053]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what support his Department is providing to the British Overseas Territories affected by Hurricane Beryl.

**Luke Pollard:**

The FCDO lead HMG's response during the Caribbean hurricane season. HMS TRENT, our current persistent maritime presence in the region, proactively sailed to the Cayman Islands to provide a rapid response to Hurricane Beryl. Thankfully the islands escaped the worst of the storm and the ship was not required to deliver humanitarian assistance and disaster relief on this occasion. However, she took the opportunity to engage with the civil authorities and assess critical infrastructure. There were no further requests on Defence and it was not necessary to activate our contingency plans for providing support with UK based forces.

**■ Cruise Missiles****James Cartlidge:** [\[2103\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans he has to provide funding for SPEAR Cap 3.

**Maria Eagle:**

The SPEAR 3 programme is currently in the demonstration phase. The next significant milestone is the first Guided Firing, scheduled to take place later this year. Total investment in the SPEAR 3 programme comprises approximately £1.4 billion.

**■ Guided Weapons****James Cartlidge:** [\[2104\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans he has to provide funding for FCASW.

**Maria Eagle:**

Investment in the Future Cruise/Anti-Ship weapon programme is continuing under an on-going assessment phase contract with MBDA, forming a key part of the recently agreed complex weapons Portfolio Management Agreement 2.

**■ Iran: Russia****Andrew Rosindell:** [\[2054\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the relationship between Iran and Russia.

**Luke Pollard:**

We continue to condemn Iran's supply of weapons to Russia; these weapons have been used in Ukraine to target critical national infrastructure and kill civilians. In return for the funds and operational feedback it is receiving in this deal, Iran will be able to expand its defence-industrial base and further proliferate weapons throughout the Middle East. The Ministry of Defence is working with a range of partners to identify and expose this relationship and hold both Iran and Russia to account. Meanwhile, we continue to assess the implications of this relationship on regional and global security and that of the safety of our Armed Forces.

**■ Ministry of Defence: Contracts****Sir Julian Lewis:** [\[2701\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of reports of the outsourcing by a commercial subcontractor of work to coders based in Belarus; what remedial steps he has taken; whether he has made changes to his Department's procedures; and whether sanctions have been imposed.

**Maria Eagle:**

Both the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and Rolls-Royce Submarines (RRS) investigated a subcontractor's outsourcing of development work for a RRS intranet page; this IT system is separate to the RRS classified systems. The investigation found no evidence that Belarusian nationals had access to sensitive information and concluded that no change to MOD procurement policy was required. No formal sanctions were imposed.

Defence took steps to ensure and confirm that there had been no compromise of classified information. The safety and security of the United Kingdom's nuclear submarines and the Deterrent, including the Service personnel who operate it, remain our highest priority. Our security processes are under constant review to ensure best practice.

**Ministry of Defence: Ministers****Kit Malthouse:**[\[2393\]](#)

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

**Al Carns:**

The Department has not made any statutory direct Ministerial appointments.

The Department has made eight non-statutory direct Ministerial appointments. These are as follows:

## Strategic Defence Review (SDR) 2024

## Reviewers:

- Lead reviewer- Lord Robertson of Port Ellen
- Reviewer - Dr Fiona Hill
- Reviewer - General Sir Richard Barrons
- Review Team Expert - Rt Hon Sir Jeremy Quin
- Review Team Expert - Edward Dinsmore
- Review Team Expert - Robin Marshall
- Review Team Expert - Grace Cassy

Remuneration rates have not yet been finalised.

All these appointments are subject to the Terms of Reference for the SDR which is available on GOV.UK.

## AUKUS

- UK Government's AUKUS Adviser - Sir Stephen Lovegrove

Un-remunerated. Appointment's Terms of Reference available on GOV.UK.

**■ Veterans: Hearing Impairment****Jim Shannon:****[2076]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what support his Department (a) is providing and (b) plans to provide to veterans that experienced hearing loss during their service.

**Al Carns:**

There is no individual compensation scheme for hearing loss. The Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) compensates for any injury (including Noise-Induced Sensorineural Hearing Loss), illness or death which was caused by or worsened by service on or after 6 April 2005. The older War Pension Scheme (WPS) compensates for any injury, illness or death which was caused by or aggravated by service before 6 April 2005.

Medical evidence is carefully considered, and hearing loss is assessed initially for attributability to service, based on the burden of proof associated with the scheme rules set by Parliament.

In making a determination on a claim, decision makers take into consideration a wide variety of evidence. In a hearing loss claim this is likely to include but is not limited to the service medical records, audiograms, hospital case notes and GP records (if they have left service). The evidence is carefully considered in accordance with the scheme rules.

If injury is found to be attributable to service, under the AFCS, hearing loss is assessed against Tariff Table 7 (senses), which details the type and level of hearing loss required to meet the criteria for the specific descriptors. Under the WPS, a percentage assessment is derived based on audiometric values.

A 2023 review of the AFCS in the form of the quinquennial review (QQR) was last updated on 21 March 2024. The purpose of which is to ensure AFCS remains fit for purpose, providing appropriate recognition and financial support to those members of the Armed Forces who are injured, become ill or die as a result of service.

**EDUCATION****■ Childcare and Pre-school Education: Pay****Daisy Cooper:****[2500]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make an assessment of the adequacy of the rates paid to providers for free hours childcare and early years education.

**Stephen Morgan:**

Current national average funding rates for local authorities are broadly in line with, or higher than, nursery fees paid by parents last year. However, the department is taking concerns from the early years sector very seriously and wants to ensure that the sector is financially sustainable going forward. Budgets for 2025/26 are still to be

agreed at the autumn Spending Review. This includes the 2025/26 early years budget which the department will need to agree across government. The department knows how important these decisions are to local authorities and providers, and is working across government to take them as soon as practicably possible.

## ■ Department for Education: Ministers

### Kit Malthouse:

[2409]

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

#### Janet Daby:

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, made a direct ministerial appointment for the Interim Chair of Skills England with Richard Pennycook appointed on 22 July 2024. Details of the remuneration will be available in future published Annual Reports and Accounts.

In addition, Sir Kevan Collins has been appointed as a non-executive board member of the Department for Education for a period of three years from 5 July 2024. As a regulated public appointment, it was made in accordance with paragraph 3.3 of the Governance Code on Public Appointments, which states that: "In exceptional cases, Ministers may decide to appoint a candidate without a competition. They must make this decision public alongside their reasons for doing so. They must consult the Commissioner for Public Appointments in good time before the appointment is publicly announced". Further details are published here, including terms and remuneration: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/department-for-education-non-executive-appointments/appointments-made-april-2024-to-march-2025>.

## ■ Nurseries

### Melanie Onn:

[2091]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the educational benefits of state maintained nurseries.

#### Stephen Morgan:

High quality early education has a profound impact on child development, and it particularly benefits disadvantaged children. The government recognises that maintained nursery schools contribute to improving the lives of some of our most disadvantaged children, with around 80% of them being located in disadvantaged areas.

They also have a reputation for excellence and are recognised as high quality providers; in December 2023, 61% of them were judged to be Outstanding by Ofsted and 37% were judged to be Good.

In 2018, the department carried out research on the role and contribution of maintained nursery schools. The report can be found at:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5f48d4398fa8f57fb653f840/Frontier\\_Economics\\_MNS\\_report\\_REVISED\\_v2.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5f48d4398fa8f57fb653f840/Frontier_Economics_MNS_report_REVISED_v2.pdf).

## ■ Ormiston Sudbury Academy

**James Cartlidge:** [2119]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she plans to continue the previous Government's (a) plans and (b) timetable for delivering a new school building at Ormiston Sudbury Academy.

**Stephen Morgan:**

The building project for Ormiston Sudbury Academy is in the procurement stage of the process. The project team is working with the school and contractor and the planning submission is on track to be submitted by the end of the year. Works are estimated to start in summer 2025 with a planned handover around 2028.

## ■ Pre-school Education

**Damian Hinds:** [2056]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what her policy is on the future of the Early Years Stronger Practice Hubs programme.

**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 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 the Stronger Practice Hubs programme will be extended until 31 March 2025.

## ■ Private Education: Fees and Charges

**Rachael Maskell:** [2372]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to ensure that the state school sector is able to accommodate children in the independent sector who will need to transfer due to the introduction of VAT on schools in (a) September 2024 and (b) January 2025.

**Stephen Morgan:**

The government understands that moving school can be challenging for parents and pupils. However, the department expects very few pupils to need to move within the academic year. Local authorities and schools have processes in place to support

pupils moving between schools, and children move between private sector and the state sector every year.

The number of pupils who may move schools as a result of these changes represents a very small proportion of overall pupil numbers in the state sector. Furthermore, the government expects any displacement to take place over several years, reducing immediate pressures.

If the pupil displacement is somewhat above the Institute for Fiscal Studies estimated range of up to 40,000, this is likely to represent less than 1% of the more than 9 million total UK state school pupils. There is significant spare capacity in existing state schools.

A technical note setting out the details of these two tax policies has been published and is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/vat-on-private-school-fees-removing-the-charitable-rates-relief-for-private-schools>. Draft VAT legislation has also been published alongside this technical note.

## ■ Qualifications

**Karl Turner:**

**[2287]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether students will be able to enrol on all existing applied general qualifications up to and including the 2026-27 academic year.

**Janet Daby:**

In July 2024, my Right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, announced a short pause to the defunding of qualifications to enable a review of post-16 qualification reforms at Level 3 and below. The review will begin immediately and will examine the current planned qualification reforms as well as looking at how to ensure young people have high-quality Level 3 pathways.

To allow space for this short review, the department paused the planned removal of 16 to 19 funding from Level 3 qualifications in Construction and the Built Environment, Digital, Education and Early Years, and Health and Science that was due to take place on 31 July 2024. This will mean that, subject to any commercial decisions made by awarding organisations on these qualifications, these qualifications can be funded for 16 to 19 year old students in the 2024/25 academic year. The list of qualifications that will continue to be available until September 2025 is available here: [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/qualifications-that-overlap-with-t-levels?\\_hsenc=p2ANqtz--hLIQbHfWVIKIYVePivcjDOKIc1BLwm20ObP9qiGiSsqjYOBol7Bc6uRQOeVggoXVSHHijy](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/qualifications-that-overlap-with-t-levels?_hsenc=p2ANqtz--hLIQbHfWVIKIYVePivcjDOKIc1BLwm20ObP9qiGiSsqjYOBol7Bc6uRQOeVggoXVSHHijy). If a student is enrolled on a two-year course of study in September 2024, they will be funded for the full length of the qualification.

The department will conclude and communicate the outcomes of the short review into qualifications reform at Level 3 and below before the end of 2024.

**■ Students: Debts****Jon Pearce:**[\[2172\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if her Department will make an estimate of the median level of student debt held by people in High Peak constituency.

**Janet Daby:**

The median debt of full-time undergraduate borrowers funded by student finance England, whose postcode is within the High Peak constituency, and who entered repayment within the last five financial years, is £47,831.69. The median debt includes tuition fee and maintenance loans.

The borrowers' postcode refers to the current contact or home address supplied by the borrower to the Student Loans Company.

**ENERGY SECURITY AND NET ZERO****■ Department for Energy Security and Net Zero: Ministers****Kit Malthouse:**[\[2403\]](#)

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

**Michael Shanks:**

No statutory direct ministerial appointments have been made by the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero.

The Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero has made two non-statutory direct ministerial appointments:

- Great British Energy Start-Up Chair, Juergen Maier. The Start-Up Chair is responsible for establishing and growing Great British Energy (GBE), a new organisation which is a key Government priority, with a mission to drive clean energy deployment to create jobs, boost energy independence, and ensure UK taxpayers, billpayers and communities reap the benefits of clean, secure, home-grown energy. Please see the answer to Question UIN [2492](#) for further information on remuneration.
- Great British Nuclear, Interim Non-executive Director, Gareth Price. The function of this position is to bring independent oversight and provide expert advice, support, and constructive challenge to the organisation. Duties for this role will include taking all appropriate and necessary action as a Non-Executive Director to facilitate and promote the statutory objects of GBN, which include the facilitation of the design, construction, commissioning and operation of nuclear energy generation projects for the purpose of furthering any policies published by His Majesty's



government. Remuneration for this role will be published in GBN's Annual Reports and Accounts.

## ■ Electricity: Prices

**James Wild:**

[\[2140\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of decoupling electricity from wholesale gas prices.

**Michael Shanks:**

Our mission is for clean power by 2030 because this is the best way to achieve energy independence and protect billpayers. New, clean renewable energy will reduce our exposure to volatile fossil fuel markets. As part of the Review of Electricity Market Arrangements (REMA) programme, the Government is considering what further steps can be taken to shield consumers from the impacts of potential price spikes and to ensure they benefit from lower cost renewable energy.

## ■ Energy: Prices

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[2378\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what steps he is taking to support people who cannot afford their energy bills in winter 2024-25.

**Miatta Fahnbulleh:**

The Government is continuing to deliver the Warm Home Discount which provides an annual £150 rebate off energy bills for eligible low-income households. We are also extending the Household Support Fund to help struggling households with bills and essential costs this winter.

We expect energy suppliers to do everything they can to support customers who are struggling with bills, especially vulnerable households. This includes providing extra support to customers in debt, or those at risk of falling into debt, by committing to proactive steps to support consumers.

**Mark Pritchard:**

[\[2786\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, if he will commission research into reducing consumer energy prices through locational energy consumption.

**Michael Shanks:**

Through the Review of Electricity Market Arrangements, we are exploring several ways to reduce energy bills by making more efficient use of the energy infrastructure we are building. As part of this we are considering zonal pricing, alongside options for further reform within our current national pricing arrangements. Government is considering these options carefully and will provide more information in due course.

**■ Great British Energy: Innovation****Dave Doogan:** [\[2478\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, whether any of Great British Energy's 8.3bn budget will be spent on funding (a) the offshore renewable energy catapult and (b) other existing technology investment initiatives.

**Michael Shanks:**

Great British Energy will invest in, own and operate projects which will produce clean, cheap and homegrown energy and make Britain energy secure. It will be backed by a capitalisation of £8.3bn of new money over this Parliament.

Government will clarify the relationship between Great British Energy and existing technology investment schemes and initiatives, such as the Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult, in due course.

**■ Moorside Power Station****Josh MacAlister:** [\[2162\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, whether decisions have been (a) requested of and (b) made by his Department on alternative uses of land licensed for new nuclear use owned by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority at Moorside in West Cumbria.

**Michael Shanks:**

To date, no decisions have been made, but discussions are ongoing regarding the most effective use of the land at Moorside. The Department is considering options to maximise public benefit.

**■ Natural Gas and Oil: Greenhouse Gas Emissions****Mark Garnier:** [\[2874\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what estimate he has made of the investment that (a) oil and (b) gas companies have made in clean energy in the last 10 years.

**Michael Shanks:**

The Government does not systematically track investments made by specific companies in clean energy. DESNZ analysis of BNEF data shows that between 2010 and 2023 the UK saw £300billion of public and private investment across low carbon sectors.

**■ Nuclear Power Stations****Andrew Bowie:** [\[3021\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what his planned timetable is for responding to the Approach to siting new nuclear power stations beyond 2025 consultation, which closed on 10 March 2024.

**Michael Shanks:**

The Government is grateful for the views submitted as part of the consultation on the approach to siting new nuclear power stations beyond 2025. This consultation was run to inform drafting of a new nuclear National Policy Statement (EN-7) which we will bring forward in due course. EN-7 will be subject to the usual public consultation and Parliamentary scrutiny.

■ **ORE Catapult****Melanie Onn:**[\[2094\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what plans he has for the future of the Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult.

**Kerry McCarthy:**

The Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult (OREC) is an independent research centre that advances technology innovation for offshore renewable energy. OREC's capabilities are vital to achieving the government's clean power mission. As part of the Department's Net Zero Innovation Portfolio, OREC's expertise from its Floating Offshore Wind Centre of Excellence has led to the development of 36 projects focused on technology development and innovation in the offshore wind sector, laying the foundation for increased deployment of floating offshore wind in the UK.

The Department is considering how best to integrate OREC's capabilities into forthcoming innovation programmes.

■ **Sizewell C Power Station****Andrew Bowie:**[\[3025\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, when he will make a final investment decision on Sizewell C.

**Michael Shanks:**

The Government is committed to the development of Sizewell C, and is working to secure a Final Investment Decision (FID). Subject to receiving the relevant approvals we aim to reach FID before the end of this year.

■ **Solar Taskforce****Mark Garnier:**[\[2882\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, when his Department plans to publish an updated (a) membership list and (b) terms of reference for the Solar Taskforce.

**Michael Shanks:**

The Secretary of State announced the relaunch of the Solar Taskforce, which will consider further actions commensurate with the Government's new clean energy mission. The core membership of the Taskforce will remain unchanged. Updated

terms of reference, reflecting the Government's new ambition, will be published ahead of the Taskforce's first meeting.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### ■ Animal Welfare

**Rebecca Long Bailey:** [\[2934\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will take steps to promote stray animal (a) trap-neuter-return, (b) rescue and (c) adoption initiatives.

**Daniel Zeichner:**

There are no plans to promote activities relating to stray animals. A number of animal welfare organisations such as Cats Protection and RSPCA already support neutering through community neutering programmes.

There are also a large number of organisations that rescue and rehome stray animals. Members of the public can already check if the rescue centre they use is a member of the Association of Dogs and Cats Homes, which has standards for animal assessments, neutering and rehoming procedures that all members adhere to.

### ■ Chemicals: Recycling

**Wera Hobhouse:** [\[2125\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to use chemical recycling as part of his Department's roadmap to a zero waste economy.

**Mary Creagh:**

Chemical recycling technologies have a role to play together with mechanical recycling in helping us transition towards a circular economy by supporting the reduction in virgin plastic stock used in production.

### ■ Environment Protection

**Adrian Ramsay:** [\[2682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of powers and resources currently available to (a) local authorities and (b) the Environment Agency to enforce environmental protection laws.

**Emma Hardy:**

Local authorities have a range of powers to enforce environmental protection laws, including through the Environmental Permitting Regulations (England and Wales) 2016 and the Environmental Protection Act, 1990.

The Environment Agency, through the Environment Act 1995, has a range of powers to enforce environmental protection laws. Its principal aim is to protect and enhance the environment.

The Government committed in its manifesto to forcing fly-tippers and vandals to clean up the mess that they have created.

## ■ Litter

**Rebecca Long Bailey:**

[\[2933\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to support local anti-littering initiatives.

**Mary Creagh:**

Littering is a crime that blights communities and the environment. Local authorities already have a range of powers to tackle littering including the ability to issue fixed penalty notices of up to £500. They must spend the income from these penalties on enforcement or clean up.

At this stage, the Government has not yet made an assessment of how it can further support local anti-littering initiatives.

## ■ Poultry: Import Controls

**Alex Burghart:**

[\[3050\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 1 August 2024 to Question 1969 on Poultry: Import Controls, what steps British businesses wishing to import French duck meat should take to certify that it comes from unvaccinated flocks.

**Daniel Zeichner:**

France cannot currently export duck meat or products to Great Britain if they come from ducks vaccinated against Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI).

Importers must ensure their suppliers can certify that the products are from unvaccinated ducks. The French competent authority has been clear in advising their industry on the rules surrounding HPAI vaccination. Close collaboration with suppliers is crucial to ensure that certificates are accurately completed according to the flock's vaccination status. This is key to meeting UK standards and avoiding incorrectly certified imports

## ■ Squirrels: Conservation

**Charlotte Nichols:**

[\[3148\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to reintroduce red squirrels in parts of England.

**Mary Creagh:**

The leading causes of red squirrel decline in England include competition from non-native grey squirrels, squirrel pox virus, and habitat availability. Conservation of red squirrels is therefore targeted to red squirrel stronghold areas in the north of England. All reintroductions in England are expected to follow the Code for Reintroductions and other Conservation Translocations.

The UK Squirrel Accord, to which Defra, Natural England, and the Forestry Commission are signatories, is working to better understand the appropriate strategies for conserving the red squirrel. This work includes identifying, protecting, and strengthening existing red squirrel populations, expanding their current range, and promoting better understanding and support for their conservation. Future conservation actions will be informed by this work. Once the work of the strategy has concluded and its recommendations set out, we will consider whether red squirrels should be reintroduced. In the meantime, the red squirrel action plan contains actions that could improve their habitats.

## ■ Trapping

**Sarah Champion:** [\[2907\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 26 July 2024 to Question 957 on Animal Welfare, what his planned timetable is for banning the use of snare traps.

**James MacCleary:** [\[3583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to take steps to ban the use of snares to trap animals.

**Mary Creagh:**

This is a devolved matter and the information provided therefore relates to England only.

The Government will introduce the most ambitious programme for animal welfare in a generation. As outlined in our manifesto, we will bring an end to the use of snare traps. We are considering the most effective way to deliver this commitment and will be setting out next steps in due course

## ■ Veterinary Services: Fees and Charges

**Blair McDougall:** [\[3362\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing price regulation for veterinary services.

**Daniel Zeichner:**

The Competition and Markets Authority, which is independent from Defra, is currently undertaking a market investigation into veterinary services, and Defra will review any recommendations that are made by the CMA when their process concludes in 2025.

## ■ Water Companies: Accountability

**Clive Lewis:** [\[2947\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how the new customer panels to hold water companies to account will be selected; and what powers these panels will have.

**Emma Hardy:**

This government expects companies to provide high levels of service, both for customers and the environment and believes that customers should be at heart of challenging companies on their performance, which is why we have immediately announced that powerful new customer panels will be established. These panels will have the remit to do things like summon members of the executive and hold them to account.

Further detail will be set out in due course.

**Water Supply: Infrastructure****Clive Lewis:**[\[2946\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department plans to take to monitor Ofwat's (a) monitoring and (b) enforcement of the ring-fencing of funds for vital infrastructure.

**Emma Hardy:**

After writing to Ofwat, the Secretary of State has secured agreement that funding for vital infrastructure investment is ringfenced and can only be spent on upgrades benefiting customers and the environment. Ofwat will also ensure that when money for investment is not spent, companies refund customers, with money never allowed to be diverted for bonuses, dividends or salary increases.

As part of PR24, Ofwat have introduced increased consumer protections through Price Control Deliverables which act to pull back funding from companies when they fail to deliver, helping to ensure customers are protected and money is returned if outputs are not being met.

Ofwat propose to require companies to report on progress against their price control deliverable outputs on a six-monthly basis and forecast performance for the 2025-2030 period. Where Ofwat consider a company is sufficiently off-track, they will consider what additional steps that they should take.

**FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE****Benjamin Netanyahu: Arrest Warrants****John Glen:**[\[2063\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with the Attorney General on the International Court of Justice's warrant to arrest the Israeli Prime Minister.

**Mr Hamish Falconer:**

The Foreign Secretary and the Attorney General speak regularly as fellow Cabinet ministers. The UK has received the International Court of Justice's (ICJ) Advisory Opinion on the 'Legal Consequences arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem'. The UK is

considering the Opinion carefully before responding. The UK respects the independence of the ICJ. The UK will await the final decision of the International Criminal Court's (ICC) Pre-Trial Chamber on the Prosecutor's application for arrest warrants. No warrants have been issued by the court. The UK respects the independence of the ICC.

■ **British Indian Ocean Territory: Sovereignty**

**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[2047\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Mauritian counterpart on the British Indian Ocean Territory.

**Stephen Doughty:**

The Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary met the Mauritian Prime Minister in London on 23 July and agreed to continue negotiations on the exercise of sovereignty over the British Indian Ocean Territory/Chagos Archipelago.

**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[2048\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his American counterpart on the British Indian Ocean Territory.

**Stephen Doughty:**

The Foreign Secretary is in regular contact with Secretary Blinken on a range of issues, including the British Indian Ocean Territory / Chagos Archipelago. Protecting the effective operation and vital role of the joint UK/US military facility on Diego Garcia remains our shared objective.

**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[2049\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has received representations from the Mauritian Chagossian community on the British Indian Ocean Territory.

**Stephen Doughty:**

The Foreign Secretary has not received representations from either the British or Mauritian Chagossian community on the subject of the British Indian Ocean Territory/Chagos Archipelago. We recognise the future of the islands is an important issue for many Chagossians. FCDO officials regularly engage with different Chagossian groups on a range of issues and will continue to do so.

**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[2050\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has received representations from the British Chagossian community on the British Indian Ocean Territory.



**Stephen Doughty:**

The Foreign Secretary has not received representations from either the British or Mauritian Chagossian community on the subject of the British Indian Ocean Territory/Chagos Archipelago. We recognise the future of the islands is an important issue for many Chagossians. FCDO officials regularly engage with different Chagossian groups on a range of issues and will continue to do so.

**■ British Overseas Territories: Hurricanes and Tornadoes****Andrew Rosindell:**[\[2051\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to support the British Overseas Territories following Hurricane Beryl.

**Stephen Doughty:**

HMS Trent visited the Cayman Islands immediately after Hurricane Beryl. As Hurricane Beryl had a limited impact upon the Cayman Islands, HMS Trent was not required to support the local recovery. HMS Trent and Cayman used the opportunity to grow shared understanding and awareness ahead of potential future hurricane responses.

The UK continues to stand ready to support the British Overseas Territories to respond to hurricanes, maintaining an array of response plans to be able to provide civil, military, and/or commercial support in response to requests for assistance.

**■ Development Aid: Poverty****Sonia Kumar:**[\[2211\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of trends in the level of spending on international aid on the effectiveness of his Department's steps to tackle (a) hunger and (b) poverty.

**Anneliese Dodds:**

We are committed to a modernised approach to international development, based on a reconnected Britain, with a strong focus on poverty and hunger. We will reset our relationship with the global South, founded on genuine respect and partnership to support our common interests.

In [my/her] first international visit, [I/the Minister for Development] travelled to Rio to endorse the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty. And on 22 August, [I/the Minister for Development] announced an additional £15 million of vital assistance to Sudan, South Sudan and Chad to support vulnerable people forced to flee violence and seek safety. This funding will provide food parcels for 145,000 people in Sudan and around 60,000 vulnerable refugees in Chad. Displaced people in South Sudan will also receive critical nutrition services for children under 5 and their caregivers.

**Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: British Overseas Territories****Andrew Rosindell:**[\[2758\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he plans to visit British Overseas Territories within the next six months.

**Stephen Doughty:**

The Foreign Secretary is keen to visit the Overseas Territories, where diary demands allow. The Foreign Secretary and the Minister for the Overseas Territories, will continue to engage directly with the Overseas Territories, including during the November Joint Ministerial Council and in future visits to the Territories. In August, the Minister for the Overseas Territories met all of the elected Leaders of the Overseas Territories via video call.

**Gaza: Health Services****Yasmin Qureshi:**[\[2255\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of the (a) capacity of (i) hospitals and (ii) primary health care centres and (b) availability of (A) medicine and (B) basic medical supplies in Gaza.

**Mr Hamish Falconer:**

The FCDO is closely monitoring the impact of the conflict in Gaza on health. We collect information from the World Health Organisation (WHO) and other partners based in Gaza.

According to the WHO, no hospitals in Gaza are fully functional. 16 hospitals out of 36 are partially functioning. Of primary health care facilities, only an estimated 30-35 percent are functional compared to pre-conflict levels. This has fallen sharply as a result of recent evacuation orders in the Deir el Balah area. We are also aware of significant constraints on the availability and delivery of medicine and medical supplies to health care facilities. The UK continues to call on Israel to facilitate unfettered aid into Gaza, to address this serious issue.

**Gaza: Water****Ellie Chowns:**[\[2664\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential implications for his policies of the report by Oxfam entitled Water War Crimes, published 18 July 2024.

**Mr Hamish Falconer:**

This Government is clear that International Humanitarian Law must be upheld, and civilians protected. Israel must take steps working with humanitarian agencies to fully restore water supplies and to significantly increase the flow of aid into and through Gaza. We have consistently raised water supplies and the opening of vital water lines with Israel throughout the conflict

The FCDO is monitoring the impact of the recent evacuation orders on water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services.

**Ellie Chowns:**

[2665]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department plans to examine alleged instances of damage to (a) water, (b) sanitation and (c) Hygiene infrastructure in Gaza when commissioning future legal advice on arms sales to Israel.

**Mr Hamish Falconer:**

The Foreign Secretary has committed to keeping our position on suspension of around 30 export licenses to Israel for use in Gaza, over International Humanitarian Law (IHL) concerns under review. The UK assesses export licences against the Strategic Export Licensing Criteria (SELC), which state that a licence will not be granted for an item if the Government determines there is a clear risk that it might be used to commit or facilitate a serious violation of IHL. When reviewing licensing decisions against these criteria in the context of the conflict in Gaza, the Government considers Israel's commitment and capability to comply with IHL, as well as aspects of its record of compliance. Those assessments are supported by a detailed evidence base, including analysis of the conflict from international bodies, NGOs and partner countries, as well as statements and reports by the Israeli Government and military representatives. The government has published a summary of the IHL process, decision and the factors taken into account  
[<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/summary-of-the-international-humanitarian-law-ihl-process-decision-and-the-factors-taken-into-account#:~:text=The%20government%20has%20conducted%20a%20thorough%20review%20of%20Israel%E2%80%99s%20compliance>].

## ■ Hamas: Hostage Taking

**David Simmonds:**

[2561]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to help secure the release of people taken hostage by Hamas.

**Mr Hamish Falconer:**

This government has prioritised working to end this conflict and secure the safe release of hostages still cruelly detained by Hamas since day one. During their joint visit to the region, the Foreign Secretary and French Foreign Secretary Stéphane Séjourné met with Israel's Foreign Minister Israel Katz to reiterate the need to end the conflict in Gaza and secure the release of hostages. Both the Foreign Secretary and I have met with hostage families with links to the UK whose loved ones have been murdered or taken by Hamas and reiterated our commitment to using all diplomatic avenues to secure their release.

We welcome the tireless efforts of our partners in Qatar, Egypt and the United States, and fully endorse their joint statement calling for the immediate resumption of

ceasefire negotiations and a hostage release deal between Israel and Hamas. This deal is the best way to get the remaining hostages out. We are urging all sides to show flexibility.

**David Simmonds:**

[2562]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential implications for his policies of the reported treatment of released Israeli hostage Andrey Kozlov.

**Mr Hamish Falconer:**

The treatment of hostages still cruelly detained by Hamas is a matter of international concern. We are clear in our call - Hamas must release all hostages immediately. This government has prioritised working to end this conflict and secure the safe release of hostages since day one. The Foreign Secretary and I have both recently met with families with links to the UK whose loved ones have been murdered or taken by Hamas and reiterated our commitment to using all diplomatic avenues to secure their release.

We welcome the tireless efforts of our partners in Qatar, Egypt and the United States, and fully endorse their joint statement calling for the immediate resumption of ceasefire negotiations and a hostage release deal between Israel and Hamas. This deal is the best way to get the remaining hostages out. We are urging all sides to show flexibility.

## ■ Iran: Weapons

**Jack Rankin:**

[2690]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to prevent (a) illicit weapons smuggling and (b) the destabilisation of the Middle East by Iran.

**Mr Hamish Falconer:**

Iran has long proliferated weapons across the Middle East, and continues to provide military, financial and political support to its proxies and partners - destabilising the region and jeopardising international security. The Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary have made clear to their Iranian counterparts that Iran must restrain its proxies and partners and take action to avoid regional escalation.

We will continue to work with our international partners to tackle Iran's malign behaviour. This includes holding them to account in multilateral fora, using sanctions regimes to target Iranian support to its proxies, and by maintaining our permanent defence presence in the region.

The Prime Minister spoke with Iranian President Pezeshkian on 12 August, warning against the risk of regional escalation. The Foreign Secretary has also spoken with both former Acting Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri-Kani, on 7 August, and Foreign Minister Abbas Aragchi, on 23 August.

## ■ Israel: Hezbollah

**Greg Smith:**

[\[2505\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what diplomatic steps he is taking to respond to Hezbollah military activity against Israel.

**Mr Hamish Falconer:**

We are working in lockstep with our allies to deescalate tensions and urge all parties to refrain from perpetuating the current destructive cycle of retaliatory violence. All sides must show restraint and work to prevent escalation. The Prime Minister spoke with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu on 20 August. The Foreign Secretary spoke with Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Aragchi on 23 August, and with Lebanese Prime Minister Mikati and Israeli Minister of Strategic Affairs Dermer on 25 August. The Foreign Secretary has also had calls with other key partners including Egypt, Jordan and the UAE to press these messages. The Government will continue to support Israel's security and to urge Israel and Lebanon to engage with the US-led discussions to resolve their disagreements diplomatically and reach a political settlement.

**Jack Rankin:**

[\[2689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Israeli counterpart on the Hezbollah attack on Majdal Shams on 27 July 2024.

**Mr Hamish Falconer:**

The UK unequivocally condemns the strike in Golan Heights that has tragically claimed at least 12 lives. Hizballah must cease their indiscriminate attacks and their destabilising activity. The Foreign Secretary spoke with Israel's Foreign Minister Katz on 4 August following the attack, offering his condolences for the death of innocent children in Madj al Shams. He expressed the Government's concern about the escalation in tensions and the growing potential for miscalculation across the de-facto border between Lebanon and Israel. We continue to urge both Israel and Lebanon to engage with the US led discussions to reach a political settlement and resolve their tensions diplomatically. A widening of the conflict is in nobody's interest. The Government is working in lockstep with our allies to deescalate tensions and urge all parties to end the destructive cycle of retaliatory violence.

## ■ Olympic Games

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[2037\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many Ministers will be attending the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

**Stephen Doughty:**

The Prime Minister; Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport; Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Sport, Media, Civil Society and Youth; and I [Minister

Doughty] attended the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, where I met with Team GB. There will be further ministerial visits for the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games.

## ■ Republic of Ireland: Foreign Relations

**Adam Jogee:** [\[3484\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with this Irish counterpart.

**Stephen Doughty:**

The Foreign Secretary spoke to the Tánaiste Micheál Martin on 5 July when he set out how the government was looking forward to resetting the bilateral relationship with Ireland. He looks forward to visiting Dublin in the near future, as do I, which I made clear to my Irish counterpart - Minister Jennifer Carroll MacNeill - when we spoke on 02 September. The Prime Minister hosted the Taoiseach at Chequers in July where they agreed to a UK-Ireland Summit in early 2025; they met again in Dublin on 7 September to agree priorities for the Summit. Ireland is the UK's nearest neighbour and sixth largest trading partner, and he is committed to ensuring UK/Ireland relations continue to go from strength to strength.

## ■ Sanctions: Humanitarian Aid

**Stephen Gethins:** [\[2352\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he plans to bring UK sanctions in line with the humanitarian exemption in UN Security Council Resolution 2664.

**Stephen Doughty:**

The UK played a central role in helping secure UN Security Council Resolution 2664 - a landmark step that introduced a cross-cutting exemption to the asset freeze measures to further support humanitarian delivery. The exception applies to the UK's 7 UN sanctions regimes and 12 mixed UN and UK autonomous sanctions regimes.

Our UK regimes include humanitarian provisions including licensing grounds and exceptions to support humanitarian assistance, whether that be to a specific entity, or via a General Licence. For example, HMG has issued General Licences to facilitate humanitarian activities in Syria, and in relation to the current conflict in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

## ■ UNRWA: Finance

**David Simmonds:** [\[2559\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what conditions he has placed on the restoring of funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

**Mr Hamish Falconer:**

The Foreign Secretary noted in his statement to the House of Commons on 19 July 2024, that the UN had taken the allegations that United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) staff were involved in the 7 October Hamas terrorist attack seriously. He is reassured after Catherine Colonna's independent review, that UNRWA is ensuring the highest standards of neutrality.

£1 million of the £21 million of new UK funding to UNRWA will support it to implement the management reforms recommended by the review. We continue to monitor UNRWA's implementation. Separately, a Memorandum of Understanding governs UK financial support to UNRWA. The FCDO carries out due diligence assessments and conducts an annual assessment of UK funding to UNRWA.

**HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ **Children and Young People Cancer Taskforce****Dame Caroline Dinenge:**[\[2283\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to support the continuation of the Children and Young People Cancer Taskforce.

**Andrew Gwynne:**

The work on the Children and Young People Cancer Taskforce has been paused. We are in the process of considering next steps for taking forward the Taskforce's work.

**HOME OFFICE**■ **Animal Experiments****Alex Mayer:**[\[3417\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if her Department will publish a list of animal tests replaced by non-animal methods since 2010.

**Dan Jarvis:**

The use of animals in scientific procedures is only authorised by the Home Office Regulator where there is clear scientific benefit, to people, animals, or the environment, and only when all aspects of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 have been fulfilled.

Licence applicants are required to robustly evidence their consideration of alternative methods. The Regulator reviews all licence applications and will only issue a licence once it is satisfied there are no practicable alternative methods.

## ■ British Nationality and Visas: Fees and Charges

**Rebecca Long Bailey:** [2935]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if her Department will take steps to review the cost of (a) visa and (b) citizenship application fees.

**Seema Malhotra:**

Immigration fees are set taking account of the charging powers provided by Section 68(9) of the Immigration Act 2014, which include the ability to set fees based on: the cost of processing the relevant application, the benefits and entitlements provided by a successful application and the wider costs of the Migration and Borders system.

Full details can be reviewed via the following link:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/22/section/68>.

## ■ British Nationality: Fees and Charges

**Matt Western:** [3055]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has made an (a) impact assessment and (b) equality impact assessment on the application fee for people applying for UK citizenship who have (i) indefinite leave to remain and (ii) settled status.

**Seema Malhotra:**

An Equality Impact Assessment, which was produced in line with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty, and an Impact Assessment were published alongside the Immigration and Nationality (Fees) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2023 that amended fees to register and naturalise as a British Citizen.

## ■ British Overseas Citizenship

**Ruth Cadbury:** [2925]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people hold British Overseas Citizen status.

**Seema Malhotra:**

The Home Office does not hold data on the number of people who hold a British Overseas Citizenship status.

## ■ Home Office: Ministers

**Kit Malthouse:** [2401]

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



**Dame Diana Johnson:**

The Home Office has not made any new direct ministerial appointments since the General Election.

■ **Iran: National Security****Dr Neil Shastri-Hurst:**[\[3537\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the levels of Iranian-based activity in the UK.

**Dan Jarvis:**

The Government does not routinely comment on the detail of operational matters or specific threats. But the UK will always stand up to threats from foreign states and this Government will always treat threats to the UK with the upmost seriousness.

In concert with partners, the UK Government will continue to use all tools at our disposal to protect the UK and its overseas interests against any threats from the Iranian state.

■ **Religious Buildings: Protection****Paula Barker:**[\[3672\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much funding her Department has provided to protect places of worship for each religion in each of the last five years.

**Dan Jarvis:**

The Home Office provides protective security for Places of Worship as part of three separate strands. These are the Protective Security for Mosques Scheme and protection for Muslim faith schools (since 2023/24), the Jewish Community Protective Security Grant (administered by the Community Security Trust) and the Places of Worship Protective Security Scheme (for all other, non-Muslim and non-Jewish, faiths). Prior to 2023/24, the Muslim community were eligible for support under the Places of Worship Protective Security Scheme.

No funding is provided directly from the Home Office to any Place of Worship, instead they receive protective security measures funded by the Home Office via contracts or grants.

For the last five years, up to the following amounts have been made available, however in 2023/24 the full budget for the Protective Security for Mosques scheme was not utilised. We do, however, expect the full amount to be used in 2024/25.

	PROTECTIVE SECURITY FOR MOSQUES SCHEME AND MUSLIM FAITH SCHOOLS	JEWISH COMMUNITY PROTECTIVE SECURITY GRANT	PLACES OF WORSHIP PROTECTIVE SECURITY SCHEME
2019/20	N/A	£13.4 million	£1.6 million

	PROTECTIVE SECURITY FOR MOSQUES SCHEME AND MUSLIM FAITH SCHOOLS	JEWISH COMMUNITY PROTECTIVE SECURITY GRANT	PLACES OF WORSHIP PROTECTIVE SECURITY SCHEME
2020/21	N/A	£14 million	£3.2 million
2021/22	N/A	£14 million	£3.5 million
2022/23	N/A	£14 million	£3.5 million
2023/24	£29.4 million	£18 million	£3.5 million

### ■ Terrorism: Social Media

**Siân Berry:**

[\[3625\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of prosecution under Section 2 of the Terrorism Act 2006 of (a) social media platforms and (b) their owners for facilitating (i) the dissemination of terrorist materials and (ii) incitements to terrorism by far right groups.

**Dan Jarvis:**

Section 2 of the Terrorism Act 2006 contains offences relating to the sale and other dissemination of books and other publications, including material on the internet by an individual, that encourage people to engage in terrorism, or provide information that could be useful to terrorists. Section 3 of the Terrorism Act 2006 also provides a power for a constable to, in certain circumstances, give a notice to a person that a statement, article or record is unlawfully terrorism-related.

It is a matter for the police to consider whether to open a criminal investigation into an offence. It is then for the Crown Prosecution Service to make a charging decision.

Both the Police and the Crown Prosecution Service are independent of Government.

### ■ Visas: Refugees

**Rebecca Long Bailey:**

[\[2930\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her Department's criteria are for implementation of an emergency visa scheme for refugees fleeing war zones.

**Seema Malhotra:**

As the Home Secretary said in her statement to the House of Commons on the 22 July 2024, the UK will always work, along with other states, to help those fleeing war and persecution.

Our global resettlement scheme, the UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS) is designed in way that allows us to respond in any emergency. The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) can refer cases to the UK under their standard resettlement submission categories, based on people's needs and vulnerabilities. The UNHCR is expertly

placed to help the UK authorities to identify and process vulnerable refugees who would benefit from resettlement in the UK and as such, HMG does not intervene in who the UNHCR refer for resettlement to the UK.

## HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### ■ Affordable Housing: Finance

**Siân Berry:**

[\[2673\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if she will make an estimate of the amount held by each (a) council and (b) other planning authority in unspent Section 106 and developer contributions towards affordable housing..

**Matthew Pennycook:**

Local planning authorities are required to publish an infrastructure funding statement annually on their websites. These should include information on the amount of unspent developer contributions they hold at the end of each reporting year and the amount spent during the year, including on affordable housing.

### ■ Council Housing: Finance

**Siân Berry:**

[\[2674\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the value for money of grant spending on new council housing through the Affordable Housing Programme.

**Matthew Pennycook:**

The Affordable Homes Programme (AHP) receives bids from housing associations and local authorities. Our delivery partners, the GLA and Homes England, assess the viability of these against criteria set out in the internal programme evaluation. The National Audit Office conducted a value for money assessment for the AHP 21-26 and published this in on their website in September 2022.

### ■ Derelict Land

**Wendy Morton:**

[\[2340\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps she is taking to ensure that brownfield land is prioritised for development through full financing on brownfield reclamation.

**Matthew Pennycook:**

The Government invests billions of pounds to reclaim brownfield land and make it available for new housing and the creation of employment floor space. Funding is provided through a range of programmes including the £1.5 billion Brownfield, Infrastructure and Land Fund, the £610 million Brownfield Housing Fund and the £180 million Brownfield Land Release Fund. These programmes unlock sites across

the country that the private sector alone will not deliver, often because they are too contaminated, too large, or need a significant amount of upfront public investment to cover the additional costs associated with the reclamation of brownfield land and bringing it back into productive use.

### ■ Empty Property: Derbyshire

**Jon Pearce:** [\[2595\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will make an estimate of the number of unoccupied dwellings in (a) Derbyshire and (b) High Peak constituency.

**Matthew Pennycook:**

The department publishes data on vacant dwellings in live table 615 which can be found at this link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants>. This data is collated from Council Taxbase data collected from local authorities.

Data for Derbyshire can be aggregated from the district level data. Data are not available at a constituency level.

### ■ Help to Buy Scheme: High Peak

**Jon Pearce:** [\[2175\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many Help to Buy homeowners are waiting for a decision on a loan redemption application in High Peak constituency.

**Matthew Pennycook:**

Information on Help to Buy redemptions initiated but not completed is not held by constituency. Data is publicly available in the Homes England annual report on the total redemptions for each year and a breakdown of how many loans were taken out in each parliamentary constituency is available on gov.uk.

[Help to Buy: Equity loan data to 31 May 2023 \(England\) by parliamentary constituency](#)

[Help to Buy \(equity loan scheme\): data to 31 May 2023](#)

[Homes England Annual Report and Financial Statements 2023/24](#)

### ■ Housing: Construction

**Mrs Kemi Badenoch:** [\[2458\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps her Department takes to help ensure that new homes are in keeping with existing communities.

**Matthew Pennycook:**

A clear framework exists through policy and guidance to support local planning authorities deliver well-designed places and to enable them to work together with the communities they serve to ensure the development of new homes responds to the positive or distinctive characteristics of an area.

■ **Leasehold****Charlotte Nichols:****[2531]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what information her Departments holds on the leasehold-related costs for the average leaseholder in an apartment block.

**Rushanara Ali:**

The English Housing Survey contains data on service charge costs and ground rents. The latest data available for 2022-2023, published on 18 July 2024, found that owner occupier leaseholders paid on average £419 in ground rent per year and £1650 per year in service charges. This covers leaseholders in both flats and houses. Details can be found at: [English Housing Survey data on leaseholders - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-data-on-leaseholders).

Some leaseholders will also pay specific charges like administration, permission and event fees. Leaseholders may also face one-off bills to meet the costs of major works. Obligations to meet these costs will be set out in the lease.

In relation to building safety, under the Building Safety Act 2022 'qualifying leaseholders' in relevant buildings over 11m are protected from costs associated with the remediation of unsafe cladding and non-cladding building safety defects. For qualifying leaseholders, their maximum cap for non-cladding remediation and interim measures is £15,000 in Greater London and £10,000 elsewhere in England.

The Impact Assessment provides further details and can be found at: [The Building Safety \(Leaseholder Protections\) \(England\) Regulations 2022 - Impact Assessment \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2022/1211/ia)

■ **Mayors: South West****Steve Darling:****[2582]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of public support for an elected Mayor in the South West peninsula.

**Jim McMahon:**

The Government wants more areas to benefit from devolution settlements, with new powers that will allow them to play a leading role in delivering growth and bring economic benefit to communities. This is why we are encouraging local authorities to advance discussions on devolution settlements. We will develop further proposals to widen and deepen devolution through the landmark English Devolution Bill and welcome engagement in that process.

**■ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Ministers****Kit Malthouse:** [\[2396\]](#)

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

**Alex Norris:**

The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government has made two non-statutory direct ministerial appointments since being appointed to the role: Sir Michael Lyons as the Chair of the New Towns Taskforce, and Dame Kate Barker as the Deputy Chair of the New Towns Taskforce. The New Towns Taskforce will be responsible for recommending locations for new towns within the next year. We will set out further details of the Taskforce in the coming weeks, ahead of the appointment of the other Taskforce members and its first meeting in the autumn.

**■ Planning Authorities: Finance****Mrs Kemi Badenoch:** [\[2457\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans she has to review local planning authorities that are in special measures.

**Matthew Pennycook:**

The Secretary of State will aim to decide whether any designations should be lifted, usually in the first quarter of each calendar year. Exceptionally, de-designations may be made at other times.

**■ Private Rented Housing****Mrs Kemi Badenoch:** [\[2448\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps she plans to take to help ensure landlords do not leave the rental market.

**Matthew Pennycook:**

The Government values the contribution made by responsible landlords who provide quality homes to their tenants and believes they must enjoy robust grounds for possession where there is good reason to take their property back.

However, we are determined to level decisively the playing field between landlords and private tenants by providing the latter with greater security, rights and protections and cracking down on the minority of unscrupulous landlords who exploit, mistreat or discriminate against renters.

We do not expect our forthcoming Renters' Rights Bill to have a destabilising effect on the rental market and will continue to work with good landlords and their representative associations throughout implementation.

## ■ Social Rented Housing

**Helen Grant:**

[\[2286\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps she is taking to help support local authorities to meet social housing demand.

**Matthew Pennycook:**

The Deputy Prime Minister outlined the early steps we are taking to deliver the biggest boost to social and affordable housing for a generation in her written statement made on 30 July 2024 ([HCWS48](#)). More announcements will be made in due course.

## ■ Social Rented Housing: Finance

**Steve Darling:**

[\[2586\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps she is taking to ensure that funding for social rented housing goes to communities where the need is greatest.

**Matthew Pennycook:**

The Government is committed to the biggest growth in social and affordable housebuilding in a generation. We intend to ensure that we are supporting the delivery of the right kinds of affordable homes to meet local need.

The bid scoring mechanism of the Affordable Homes Programme actively targets areas of acute housing need by generating greater value for money for social landlords and central Government, and we strongly encourage bids from these areas.

We are committed to setting out details of future Government investment in social and affordable housing at the Spending Review.

## JUSTICE

### ■ Marriage

**Julia Buckley:**

[\[3492\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when her Department plans to publish a response to the Law Commission report entitled Celebrating Marriage: A New Weddings Law, published in July 2022.

**Alex Davies-Jones:**

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

## ■ Reoffenders

**Caroline Voaden:** [\[3548\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will take steps to help ensure that the probation service works closely with other services critical to reducing reoffending.

**Sir Nicholas Dakin:**

The role of the Probation Service is crucial in protecting the public, turning offenders' lives around, and providing a path of reintegration into the community to ultimately break the cycle of reoffending. The Probation Service works collaboratively with many partner organisations across the criminal justice system – police forces, local authorities, health providers, the third sector, and others – to drive down offending and keep our streets safe.

There are already great examples of partnership working between HMPPS and others. For example, in Greater Manchester, HMPPS's temporary accommodation provision is delivered in partnership between HMPPS and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, to improve efficiency and outcomes. We will continue to encourage and facilitate participation of partners to ensure the services provided are fit for purpose and meet local needs.

**Caroline Voaden:** [\[3549\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the work of the prison and probation services work with (a) smaller organisations that cannot easily compete for commissioned contracts and (b) other third sector organisations involved in reducing reoffending.

**Sir Nicholas Dakin:**

I want to acknowledge the valuable work that the third sector does in supporting the work of the Department. Officials meet regularly with the third sector to discuss mutual areas of interest.

To provide services that are best value for money, responsive to local need, and fit for purpose, it is important that organisations of all sizes can participate in contracts.

HMPPS is working to encourage and facilitate participation of voluntary community and social enterprises in the justice system, by simplifying contracting processes for lower value contracts to make them more accessible for third sector organisations. There is ongoing work to support and upskill the sector in the bidding process.

Furthermore, as part of our planning to recommission current services, we are engaging with interested parties, including current and potential suppliers, the third sector, prison and probation staff, and people in prison and on probation to support the commissioning and design of future services.



**NORTHERN IRELAND****■ Civil Disorder: Belfast****Claire Hanna:****[3191]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what recent discussions he has had with the (a) NI Executive and (b) Police Service of Northern Ireland on anti-immigration disorder and violence in Belfast in August 2024.

**Hilary Benn:**

The disorder was unacceptable and does not represent the real Northern Ireland. Public safety and community cohesion are primarily the responsibility of local elected Ministers and I have therefore remained in close contact with the NI Executive and the Police Service of Northern Ireland on this matter.

I met the First and deputy First Minister and spoke with the Justice Minister who all share my shock and concern at the targeting of violence and intimidation towards minority communities in Northern Ireland.

I also met the Chief Constable to express my sincere thanks to the PSNI for working tirelessly in extremely difficult conditions to keep communities in Northern Ireland safe. My officials and I continue to engage regularly with the PSNI.

**■ Harland and Wolff: Northern Ireland****Jim Shannon:****[3700]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, whether he is taking steps to secure further funding for Harland and Wolf in Northern Ireland.

**Hilary Benn:**

Following a comprehensive assessment of the company's financial profile and the criteria set out in UK Government risk policies, the Secretary of State for Business and Trade confirmed in a Written Ministerial Statement on 22 July that the UK Government had decided not to proceed with the provision of an Export Development Guarantee to Harland and Wolff.

This was not an easy decision, but we concluded that the market is best placed to resolve these commercial matters. Government funding would not necessarily secure our objectives, and there is a risk that taxpayer money would be lost.

We want to see an outcome for Harland and Wolff that delivers shipbuilding and fabrication in Northern Ireland and protects jobs, and we encourage all parties to engage with trade unions before further decisions are made.

**■ Northern Ireland Office: Redundancy Pay****Wera Hobhouse:****[3045]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what the cost to his Department was of ministerial severance payments in each year from 19 December 2019 to 30 May 2024; which Ministers received a severance payment; and how much each Minister received.

**Hilary Benn:**

The provision of severance payments for Ministers is set out in legislation. Details of the severance payments made to ministers when leaving office are published in the Department's Annual Report and Accounts available at <https://www.gov.uk/>. The amounts for 2023-24 will be included in the Department's forthcoming Annual Report and Accounts upon completion of the year end audit.

■ **Operation Kenova**

**Alex Burghart:** [3051]

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, if he will publish the letter from Sir Iain Livingstone on the discovery of new documents relevant to Operation Kenova.

**Hilary Benn:**

The letter addressed to me from Sir Iain Livingstone regarding the discovery of new documents relevant to Operation Kenova has already been published on the Operation Kenova website.

■ **UK Internal Trade: Northern Ireland**

**Sammy Wilson:** [2793]

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what discussions he has had with the EU on the potential impact of the General Product Safety Regulations on trade between Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

**Sammy Wilson:** [2794]

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the potential impact of the General Product Safety Regulations on trade between Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

**Sammy Wilson:** [2795]

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what discussions he has had with the Northern Ireland Executive on the potential impact of the General Product Safety Regulations on trade between Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

**Hilary Benn:**

The Government engages in regular discussions with both the Northern Ireland Executive and the EU on matters of mutual interest.

The updated General Product Safety Regulations largely formalises the reality of how businesses are already operating in the UK and the measures are therefore likely to have limited impact. Where businesses need to make changes, we expect that they will be adapting anyway in order to continue trading with the EU. We are providing more guidance to businesses in this area, will keep this under review, and continue to engage with businesses directly to ensure we are supporting them to trade freely across the whole of the UK.

**SCIENCE, INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY****■ Animal Experiments**

**Steve Race:** [\[2163\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what steps he plans to take with (a) scientists, (b) industry representatives and (c) civil society representatives to help phase out animal testing.

**Steve Race:** [\[2164\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing Herbie's Law, a practical framework to (a) enable the long-term phase-out of animal experiments in medical research and (b) support scientists with the transition to (i) computer modelling, (ii) organ-on-a-chip technology and (iii) other human-specific methods.

**Feryal Clark:**

The Government has committed to partnering with scientists, industry, and civil society as we work towards the requirements for phasing out of animal testing. Any policy changes as a result of this work will be assessed appropriately.

As yet, no assessment has been made of the potential merits of introducing Herbie's Law.

**■ Broadband: Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard**

**Alex Mayer:** [\[2619\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, if he will make an estimate of the proportion of households that have access to gigabit-capable broadband in Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard constituency.

**Chris Bryant:**

According to the independent website ThinkBroadband.com, 86% of premises in the Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard constituency currently have access to a gigabit-capable connection.

**■ Radiotherapy: Finance**

**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[2244\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, if he will have discussions with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on the potential merits of increasing funding for new radiotherapy technologies.

**Feryal Clark:**

The Office for Life Sciences is a joint unit sitting in this Department and the Department for Health and Social Care. It exists to power the government's health and growth missions and improve patient outcomes.

The Government does not generally ringfence funding for particular areas of research but continues to fund research for innovative radiotherapy approaches through UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). Since 2021, their Medical Research Council has awarded £15 million for cutting edge approaches such as FLASH photon therapy, and Innovate UK has invested £3.2 million to projects through the Biomedical Catalyst, including nanoparticle enhanced radiotherapy.

In 2023, UKRI invested £32 million in the National Total Body PET Imaging Platform to enhance national capabilities in the use of radioactive tracers.

## SCOTLAND

### ■ Broadband: Scotland

**Blair McDougall:** [\[3361\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what steps he plans to take to improve broadband access and connection speed in rural Scotland.

**Ian Murray:**

Digital connectivity is key to delivering our priority mission of growing the economy. Building Digital UK continues to work with the Scottish Government on the delivery of Project Gigabit procurements across Scotland.

Project Gigabit procurements are targeted at the remaining premises that are not expected to receive a gigabit-capable connection as part of a suppliers' commercial rollout, or any other subsidised delivery in Scotland.

The Scottish Government launched the first two Project Gigabit procurements in Scotland in May 2024, in the Borders and East Lothian area and in the Aberdeenshire, Dundee, Angus, and Moray Coast areas. Further local and regional procurements are expected to launch in phases throughout the rest of 2024, including Shetland and Orkney, Fife and Perth & Kinross and Dumfries & Galloway. The remainder of Central and North Scotland will be included in a procurement under the cross-regional framework which has been awarded to Openreach.

## TRANSPORT

### ■ Aviation: Security

**Angus MacDonald:** [\[3667\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment she has made of the ability of UK airports to meet the new departmental deadlines to install next-generation security scanners.

**Mike Kane:**

I have already had the pleasure of visiting airports upgrading airport security equipment and seeing the new security equipment in operation. I, and my department, continue to regularly engage with airports to ensure the implementation

of the Next Generation Security Checkpoint remains on track. Where new equipment is installed, it will improve the passenger experience but most importantly improve the already high standards of security in the UK.

#### ■ Department for Transport: Ministers

##### **Kit Malthouse:**

[2397]

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

##### **Mike Kane:**

The Secretary of State for Transport has not made any statutory or non-statutory direct ministerial appointments.

#### ■ Great British Railways: Costs

##### **Dr Kieran Mullan:**

[2547]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps she is taking to ensure that the costs associated with the establishment of Great British Railways remain within budget.

##### **Simon Lightwood:**

The King's Speech set out that we will be introducing legislation to establish Great British Railways (GBR) in this Parliamentary session.

The Rail Sector Transformation Programme Board will hold to account those responsible for implementing reforms and will oversee the planned savings and track incurred costs. We are applying lessons from recent National Audit Office, Public Accounts Committee and Infrastructure and Projects Authority reports, including ensuring there is effective governance and clear accountabilities.

#### ■ Ministers: Official Cars

##### **John Glen:**

[2306]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, which Ministers have been allocated a dedicated vehicle from the Government Car Service.

##### **John Glen:**

[2308]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many Ministers have been allocated an electric vehicle from the Government Car Service.

##### **Mike Kane:**

The Government Car Service (GCS) offers vehicles to government departments as a shared resource. Each department independently determines the allocation of these vehicles to its ministerial cadre.

Presently, GCS has allocated 27 electric vehicles to various government departments and maintains an additional pool of electric vehicles for ad hoc requests. Due to

logistical and operational considerations, these numbers are subject to regular change.

## ■ Railways

**Dr Kieran Mullan:** [2550]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what (a) the criteria for assessment and (b) her Department's planned timeline is for the review of individual Restoring Your Railways projects.

**Lilian Greenwood:**

Aside from Restoring Your Railways (RYR) projects currently at the delivery stage or in construction, all remaining RYR-originated projects are now being considered as part of preparations for the Spending Review. Ministers have been clear that not all projects will be able to proceed to delivery due to the challenging financial situation facing the Department.

## ■ Railways: Nationalisation

**Dr Kieran Mullan:** [2554]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether any rail operators will be brought into public ownership before their contract expires.

**Simon Lightwood:**

The Passenger Railway Services (Public Ownership) Bill facilitates the Government's commitment to bring passenger train operations into public ownership and enables the Secretary of State to commence the transition to public sector operation as current contracts reach their end date or contractual break point. This approach ensures that taxpayers will not need to compensate operating companies for ending contracts early.

The Bill does not exclude the possibility of terminating a contract before it expires if the train operating company defaults on its obligations, as set out in its respective National Rail Contract. National Rail Contracts are publicly available and can be accessed through the '[Public register of rail passenger contracts](#)'.

**Dr Kieran Mullan:** [2555]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps she plans to take to ensure that there is a smooth transition from private to public rail operators.

**Dr Kieran Mullan:** [2557]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how she plans to manage the capacity of DfT OLR Holdings Limited to absorb additional rail franchises; and what steps she is taking to expand its capabilities.

**Simon Lightwood:**

The responsibility for the transfers from the private to the public sectors lies with DfT OLR Holdings Ltd (DOHL). DOHL is tasked with undertaking these transfers in an

efficient and effective manner with no disruption to passengers and employees. The Board has a strong mix of skills, expertise and experience in the rail industry that covers safety, rail franchising, finance and management accounting, project change, project management and contracts. DOHL has managed four successful transfers so far and is scaling up to ensure the successful transfer of all train operating companies into public ownership.

The Department will continue to work with DOHL and ensure that it has sufficient capacity to take on train operating companies and manage effectively the train operating companies currently under its control as we work towards Great British Railways. DOHL is already well versed in building up specialist capacity quickly in response to a need to transfer operations to the public sector at pace. Significant work is already underway by DOHL to bring in additional capacity and expertise. We are meeting regularly with DOHL to obtain assurances that it is scaling up appropriately to meet the opportunities and challenges of public ownership and operation.

#### ■ Railways: Oxfordshire

**Layla Moran:** [\[2129\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions she has had with Network Rail on the status of the Oxfordshire Connect rail programme.

**Layla Moran:** [\[2130\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what her Department's planned timetable is for the completion of the Oxfordshire Connect programme.

**Lilian Greenwood:**

The Minister of State for Rail, Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill, and senior officials from my Department are having regular discussions with Network Rail (NR) to press them for a credible delivery plan for the completion of the Oxford station project and Botley Road bridge.

Lord Hendy has written to you and other stakeholders with details of improvements being made to alleviate the effects of the bridge closure. He and the Chief Executive of NR will come to meet you, and other stakeholders, as soon as NR are certain of the delivery plan.

#### ■ Railways: Public Sector

**Dr Kieran Mullan:** [\[2549\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps she plans to take to help ensure that public railway operators achieve passenger growth.

**Simon Lightwood:**

We are committed to delivering a unified and simplified rail system that focuses on improved services for passengers and better value for taxpayers, ending years of fragmentation and waste.

We will establish Great British Railways as the directing mind in charge of Britain's railway infrastructure and services, responsible for ensuring both work together. We will also bring passenger services into public ownership, in the pursuit of a more efficient and passenger-focused rail system.

In the interim, while National Rail Contracts (NRCs) remain in place, we will set stretching performance targets for each operator through the annual business planning process. These targets will be specific to each operator, reflecting their individual circumstances. Where performance falls short, we will require operators to put in place robust improvement plans. The Secretary of State has already met a number of poorly performing train operators and their Network Rail counterparts, setting clear expectations for immediate improvement.

### ■ Railways: Ticket Offices

**Jon Pearce:** [\[2607\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment her Department has made of the impact of ticket office closures in railway stations on communities; and what steps she plans to take to avoid closures.

**Simon Lightwood:**

Passenger service is at the heart of our plans to improve Britain's railways and it is clear the role that station staff play in supporting vulnerable passengers. This Government has no plans to close ticket offices and we expect train operating companies to take measures to ensure they are open at published times.

### ■ Railways: Tickets

**Jon Pearce:** [\[2608\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment her Department has made of the impact of online-only booking at railway stations on elderly travellers.

**Simon Lightwood:**

There are no proposals for online-only booking at railway stations. Ensuring accessibility for all passengers is at the heart of our passenger-focused approach. As modern ticketing and payment methods roll out more widely on the railways, we will ensure that all passengers, including those who need to use cash or do not have access to smartphones or the internet, are able to buy a ticket across the different retail options.

### ■ Restoring Your Railway Fund

**Dr Kieran Mullan:** [\[2551\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps she is taking to help mitigate the impact of the cancellation of the Restoring Your Railway programme on (a) regional connectivity and (b) economic development.



**Lilian Greenwood:**

Aside from Restoring Your Railway (RJR) projects currently at the delivery stage or in construction, all remaining RJR-originated projects are now being considered as part of preparations for the Spending Review. Ministers have been clear that not all projects will be able to proceed to delivery due to the challenging financial situation facing the Department.

**■ Tankers: Exclusive Economic Zone and Territorial Waters****Blair McDougall:**[\[3364\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether she plans to take steps to ensure enforcement of environmental laws for sea vessels in (a) UK territorial waters and (b) the Exclusive Economic Zone in the context of reports of Russian shadow oil fleets and the standards of ships involved.

**Mike Kane:**

The Department already has robust measures in place to ensure the enforcement and compliance of environmental laws for all sea vessels in UK territorial waters and the Exclusive Economic Zone, including the Russian shadow fleet.

The UK is a signatory to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL), which is the main convention covering prevention of pollution of the marine environment by ships from operational or accidental causes. The UK applies MARPOL requirements to applicable UK ships wherever they are in the world - and to foreign vessels when in UK waters.

To ensure vessels are complying with the MARPOL convention within UK territorial waters and the Exclusive Economic Zone, satellites and fix wing surveillance aircraft can be used to identify possible incidences of pollution and consequent environmental risks.

Intelligence is also received through the Paris Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) Inspection regime on vessels suspected of pollution when they enter a Paris MoU port. This information is used to help enforce environmental laws in the UK.

**■ Transport****Dr Kieran Mullan:**[\[2552\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if she will take steps to ensure engagement with (a) the public and (b) campaign groups on decisions on transportation projects that have been (i) halted or (ii) altered due to the cancellation of the Restoring Your Railway programme.

**Lilian Greenwood:**

Aside from Restoring Your Railways (RJR) projects currently at the delivery stage or in construction, all remaining RJR-originated projects are now being considered as part of preparations for the Spending Review. Ministers have been clear that not all projects will be able to proceed to delivery due to the challenging financial situation facing the Department.

**■ Transport: North Yorkshire****Rachael Maskell:**[\[2380\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, which (a) road and (b) rail projects have been cancelled in North Yorkshire.

**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.

The Secretary of State has also made clear her commitment to transparency in government, including clarity for schemes which were cancelled or paused previously without public statements on their change in status.

**TREASURY****■ Child Benefit: Uprating****Ann Davies:**[\[2196\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of increasing the rate of child benefit by £20 per week for each child.

**Darren Jones:**

All working-age benefits (including Child Benefit, the child element of Universal Credit, and Child Tax Credit) were uprated in full from April 2024, by September 2023 CPI of 6.7%. Beyond the receipt of benefits, the Government is committed to supporting children and families. At the King's Speech, the Government set out plans to introduce free breakfast clubs in every primary school, to bring down costs for parents. Growth is our number one mission, which will help families by boosting wages and putting more money in people's pockets.

To give every child the very best start at life, the Government is also prioritising work to develop an ambitious and comprehensive strategy to reduce child poverty through the Ministerial taskforce on Child Poverty.

**■ Civil Service: Pay****Charlie Dewhirst:**[\[2631\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to page 6 of HM Treasury's document entitled Fixing the foundations: Public spending audit 2024-25, published on 29 July 2024, what is the gross cost of the civil service pay award for 2024-25.

**Darren Jones:**

Pay for civil servants outside of the Senior Civil Service is not set centrally; rather, departments and bodies have freedom to make decisions on pay within the parameters of the Pay Remit Guidance published annually by the Cabinet Office. The Pay Remit Guidance for 2024/5 can be found using the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-pay-remit-guidance-2024-to-2025/civil-service-pay-remit-guidance-2024-to-2025>

The pay remit sets a percentage maximum by which bodies can increase their average paybill. Each department will need to consider how they intend to apply the award to their workforce, before implementing it. The final cost of the civil service pay award for 2024/25 will not be confirmed until this is concluded.

**■ Dental Services: Northern Ireland****Jim Shannon:****[2081]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if she will have discussions with Cabinet colleagues on the potential merits of increasing Barnett consequential for dental services in Northern Ireland.

**Darren Jones:**

Funding for dental services in Northern Ireland is the responsibility of the Northern Ireland Executive. Barnett consequential provided as a result of changes to UK Government department budgets are not ringfenced and it is for the Northern Ireland Executive to allocate their funding in devolved areas.

As part of the Interim Fiscal Framework for Northern Ireland, a 24% needs-based factor has been included in the Barnett formula for the Northern Ireland Executive to account for Northern Ireland's greater level of relative need.

**■ Household Support Fund****Paula Barker:****[3203]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions her Department has had with the (a) Department for Work and Pensions and (b) Local Government Association on the Household Support Fund.

**Darren Jones:**

HMT holds discussions with the Department for Work & Pensions and the Local Government Association on a wide range of issues.

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions has recently announced that the Government is providing half a billion pounds (including estimated Barnett impact) to extend the Household Support Fund (HSF) in England.

The HSF will run until the end of March 2025, and will enable Local Authorities to help vulnerable people and families receive emergency crisis support as we help people through the winter.

**■ Office for Value for Money****Sir John Hayes:** [\[2229\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what is the projected cost to the public purse of setting up the Office for Value for Money.

**Darren Jones:**

The Office for Value for Money is a part of HM Treasury. Existing departmental resources will be reprioritised to fulfil the needs of the office where possible.

**Charlie Dewhirst:** [\[2637\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to page 15 of HM Treasury's document entitled Fixing the foundations: Public spending audit 2024-25, published on 29 July 2024, for how long the Office for Value for Money will exist; and what its remit will be.

**Darren Jones:**

The Office for Value for Money (OVfM) will have two primary roles. First, to provide targeted interventions, working with departments, so that value for money governs every decision government makes. Second, to recommend system reforms to ensure any changes support the government's missions and deliver value for money.

The OVfM will be a time-limited team. No final decision has been taken on when to disband the office, but its vision is to leave a legacy of concrete, embedded improvements to spending controls, to minimise the risk of poor value for money in the future.

**■ Office for Value for Money: Staff****Charlie Dewhirst:** [\[2638\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many days a week staff in the Office for Value for Money will be allowed to work from home; and how many staff that Office will employ.

**Darren Jones:**

The Office for Value for Money (OVfM) is staffed by civil servants with a range of professional disciplines, from within HM Treasury and other partner organisations. In line with Civil Service expectations, staff will spend 60% of their time working from the office.

The OVfM is a time-limited team within HM Treasury. We expect around 20 staff to be working within the office.

**■ Offshore Industry****Andrew Bowie:** [\[2459\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when the next meeting of the Fiscal Forum between representatives of the oil and gas industry and HMT officials will go ahead.

**Andrew Bowie:** [2460]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when the next meeting of the Fiscal Forum between representatives of the oil and gas industry and HMT officials will go ahead.

**James Murray:**

The Oil and Gas Fiscal Forum was held on 12 August 2024, chaired by the Exchequer Secretary and attended by senior representatives from the oil and gas industry.

## ■ **Plastics: Taxation**

**Wera Hobhouse:** [2124]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when she plans to publish a response to the consultation on Plastic Packaging Tax - chemical recycling and adoption of a mass balance approach, published on 18 July 2023.

**James Murray:**

The government intends to publish a response to the Plastic Packaging Tax consultation on adoption of a mass balance approach by the end of the year.

## ■ **Public Expenditure**

**Kit Malthouse:** [2384]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on what day and at what time the final draft for publication of her Department's document entitled Fixing the Foundations: Public spending audit 2024-25, CP 1133, was sent to HH Associates Ltd for printing.

**Darren Jones:**

As the Chancellor of the Exchequer set out in her [statement](#) to Parliament on 29th July 2024, she asked Treasury officials, on her first day in office, to undertake a rapid audit of public spending. As is the usual process with Treasury documents, officials worked closely with typesetters throughout to develop and print the document. The conclusions of the public spending audit were presented to the House of Commons on 29th July 2024.

**Kit Malthouse:** [2385]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on what day and time her Department's publication entitled Fixing the Foundations: Public spending audit 2024-25, CP 1133 was approved.

**Darren Jones:**

As the Chancellor of the Exchequer set out in her [statement](#) to Parliament on 29th July 2024, she asked Treasury officials, on her first day in office, to undertake a rapid audit of public spending. Once the audit was complete, she took immediate action to find £5.5 billion of savings in 2024-25, rising to £8.1 billion in 2025-26. The conclusions of the public spending audit were presented to the House of Commons on 29th July 2024.

**Kit Malthouse:**[\[2386\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on what day and time (a) she and (b) her advisers received the first draft of her Department's publication entitled Fixing the Foundations: Public spending audit 2024-25, CP 1133.

**Darren Jones:**

As the Chancellor of the Exchequer set out in her [statement](#) to Parliament on 29th July 2024, she asked Treasury officials, on her first day in office, to undertake a rapid audit of public spending. Officials updated the Chancellor on the findings of the audit throughout the process, and she took immediate action to find £5.5 billion of savings in 2024-25, rising to £8.1 billion in 2025-26. The conclusions of the public spending audit were presented to the House of Commons on 29th July 2024.

**Kit Malthouse:**[\[2387\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on (a) what dates and (b) at what times she met with (i) the Prime Minister and (ii) his advisers to discuss drafts of her Department's document entitled Fixing the foundations: Public spending audit 2024-25, published on 29 July 2024.

**Darren Jones:**

As the Chancellor of the Exchequer set out in her [statement](#) to Parliament on 29th July 2024, she asked Treasury officials, on her first day in office, to undertake a rapid audit of public spending. The Chancellor engaged with the Prime Minister throughout on the findings of the audit and took immediate action to find £5.5 billion of savings in 2024-25, rising to £8.1 billion in 2025-26. The conclusions of the public spending audit were presented to the House of Commons on 29th July 2024.

**Public Sector: Pay****Charlie Dewhirst:**[\[2627\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of (a) the junior doctors pay settlement and (b) other public sector pay rises on (i) the forecast rate of inflation and (ii) wage expectations in other sectors.

**Darren Jones:**

The impact of both the junior doctors' pay offer and the public sector pay awards announced on 29 July 2024 is expected to be limited.

**Charlie Dewhirst:**[\[2629\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to page 6 of HM Treasury's document entitled Fixing the foundations: Public spending audit 2024-25, published on 29 July 2024, whether it is his policy that average public sector pay excluding pension provision should equal private sector pay.

**Darren Jones:**

Pay for most frontline workforces - including nurses, teachers, armed forces and police officers - is set through an independent Pay Review Body (PRB) process. The PRBs consider a range of evidence when forming their recommendations, including

the need to recruit, retain and motivate suitably able and qualified people; the financial circumstances of Government; the Government's policies for improving public services; and the Government's inflation target. They consider the whole remuneration package of those working in the public sector when forming their recommendations, including pensions.

## ■ Railways: Expenditure

**Helen Whately:**

[\[2439\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to paragraph 25 of her Department's document entitled Fixing the Foundations: Public spending audit 2024-25, CP 1133, what the evidential basis is for saying there was an additional £1.6 billion cost to the rail system in the 2024-25 financial year.

**Darren Jones:**

The £1.6 billion cost referenced is an HMT assessment of the additional cost to run rail services in 2024/25 compared to SR21 plans. This assessment was made at the point at which this government entered office. The additional cost is primarily driven by the impact of weaker-than-expected passenger demand recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic.

## ■ Railways: Repairs and Maintenance

**Helen Whately:**

[\[2440\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to Table 1 of her Department's document entitled Fixing the Foundations: Public spending audit 2024-25, CP 1133, what the evidential basis is for saying there was an additional £1.3 billion cost for rail maintenance in the 2024-25 financial year.

**Darren Jones:**

Rail infrastructure is managed by Network Rail (NR). The Department for Transport (DfT) provides grant funding to NR for operations, maintenance, and renewals via five-year regulated 'Control Periods'. Funding for each Control Period is established through a statutory process of Periodic Reviews, the timelines for which have not aligned with Spending Review periods.

At Spending Review 2021, DfT's budgets were set for a period (2021/22-2024/25) which extended beyond the end of the previous Control Period (Control Period 6, 2019/20-2023/24). The periodic review to determine Control Period 7 (2024/25-2028/29) concluded in October 2023, confirming the funding requirements for 2024/25. Therefore, the assumption for maintenance costs in 2024/25 had to be revised following the periodic review in 2023 as these costs were higher than budgeted at SR21.

**■ Transport: Finance****Helen Whately:**[\[2441\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to page 11 of her Department's document entitled Fixing the Foundations: Public spending audit 2024-25, CP 1133, how her Department evaluated which transport commitments were considered low value.

**Darren Jones:**

This government wants to ensure that public spending on transport infrastructure drives economic growth and delivers value for money for taxpayers.

Transport schemes are assessed in accordance with the principles set out in the Green Book. The Green Book is the central government guidance on appraising policy options and ensuring that they represent good value for money. In this context, 'low value' means low value for money, taking account of the costs and benefits of these schemes.

**■ Treasury: Ministers****Kit Malthouse:**[\[2399\]](#)

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

**James Murray:**

As of 2 September 2024, there has been one direct ministerial appointment made. Ian Corfield has been appointed as an unpaid International Investment Summit Adviser by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Ian Corfield will be in post until 31 October 2024. Details of his appointment can be found on gov.uk.

**■ Winter Fuel Payment****Neil Duncan-Jordan:**[\[2695\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of Exchequer, if she will make an estimate of the impact of removing the entitlement to the Winter Fuel Allowance from people over State Pension age who pay tax at (a) the higher rate of 40% and (b) the additional rate of 45% on the public purse in the next financial year.

**Darren Jones:**

The Government does not publish estimates of the impacts on the public purse of removing the entitlement to the Winter Fuel Payment from people over State Pension age who pay income tax at the higher rate or additional rate.

In face of the substantial pressures faced by the public finances this year and next, the government has had to make hard choices to bring the public finances back under control, including targeting Winter Fuel Payments.



Winter Fuel Payments will continue to be paid to pensioner households with someone receiving Pension Credit or certain other income-related benefits. This means that the Winter Fuel Payment will be better targeted to low income pensioners who need it.

## WALES

### ■ Wales Office: Redundancy Pay

**Wera Hobhouse:** [\[3048\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what the cost to her Department was of ministerial severance payments in each year from 19 December 2019 to 30 May 2024; which Ministers received a severance payment in that period; and how much each Minister received.

**Dame Nia Griffith:**

In accordance with the Ministerial and Other Pensions and Salaries Act 1991, paid Ministers below the age of 65 are entitled to a loss of office payment of one quarter of their claimed annual ministerial salary when they cease to hold office.

Details of ministerial severance payments can be found in the Wales Office annual report and accounts.

## WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

### ■ Equality

**John Glen:** [\[2288\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, if she will make an assessment of the potential impact of enacting the socio-economic duty in the Equality Act 2010 on levels of equality.

**John Glen:** [\[2316\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, whether she plans to (a) consult on and (b) commence the socio-economic duty under the Equality Act 2010.

**Anneliese Dodds:**

The Government is committed to commencing the socio-economic duty in the Equality Act 2010. We will be updating Parliament on this in due course.

### ■ Women and Equalities: Ministers

**Kit Malthouse:** [\[2394\]](#)

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

**Anneliese Dodds:**

Since 5 July 2024, no statutory or non-statutory direct ministerial appointments have been made by the Minister for Women and Equalities.

**WORK AND PENSIONS****■ Department for Work and Pensions: Ministers****Kit Malthouse:****[2389]**

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

**Andrew Western:**

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions has established a non-statutory Labour Market Advisory Board which will consist of a small group of leading labour market experts to provide insight, ideas, and challenge to tackle key labour market issues. The Board will be chaired by Paul Gregg, Professor of Economic and Social Policy in the Department of Social and Policy Sciences, University of Bath with further members being announced shortly. Roles on the Board are unpaid. We will set out further details of the Labour Market Advisory Board, including the Terms of Reference, shortly.

**■ Pension Credit****Neil Duncan-Jordan:****[2697]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much pension credit was unclaimed in (a) 2021, (b) 2022 and (c) 2023.

**Emma Reynolds:**

The latest available Pension Credit take-up statistics cover the financial year 2021 to 2022 and are available at: [Income-related benefits: estimates of take-up: financial year ending 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/income-related-benefits-estimates-of-take-up-financial-year-ending-2022). These statistics were suspended for financial year ending 2021 due to data issues following the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

In the financial year ending 2022, the estimated amount of unclaimed Pension Credit was £1.72 billion.

**■ Pension Credit: Middlesbrough and Thornaby East****Andy McDonald:****[2332]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate her Department has made of the number of people eligible for but not claiming Pension Credit in Middlesbrough & Thornaby East constituency.

**Andy McDonald:**

[2333]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to increase the uptake of pension credit by those eligible in Middlesbrough and Thornaby East constituency.

**Emma Reynolds:**

The latest available Pension Credit take-up statistics cover the financial year 2021 to 2022 and are available at: [Income-related benefits: estimates of take-up: financial year ending 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/income-related-benefits-estimates-of-take-up-financial-year-ending-2022). These statistics are only available at Great Britain level and cannot be broken down to smaller geographical areas.

The Government is determined to ensure that the poorest pensioners get the support they need.

As part of the current Pension Credit Week of Action, we have joined forces with national charities, broadcasters and local authorities to encourage pensioners to check their eligibility and make a claim.

From 16 September, we will be running a national marketing campaign on a range of channels. The campaign will target potential pension-age customers, as well as friends and family who can encourage and support them to apply.

Our future campaign messaging will also focus on encouraging pensioners to apply for Pension Credit before the 21 December 2024, which is the last date for making a successful backdated claim for Pension Credit in order to receive a Winter Fuel Payment.

We will work with external partners, local authorities and the Devolved Governments to boost the take-up of Pension Credit.

■ **Pension Credit: Poole**

**Neil Duncan-Jordan:**

[2699]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people in Poole constituency are (a) eligible for and (b) in receipt of pension credit.

**Emma Reynolds:**

Information relating to Pension Credit eligibility is only available via take-up statistics. The latest available Pension Credit take-up statistics for Great Britain cover the financial year 2021 to 2022 and are available at: [Income-related benefits: estimates of take-up: financial year ending 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/income-related-benefits-estimates-of-take-up-financial-year-ending-2022). However, these statistics are only available at Great Britain level and cannot be broken down to smaller geographical areas.

Caseload statistics are routinely published and made publicly available via [DWP Stat-explore](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dwp-stat-explore). At November 2023, there were 2,139 people claiming Pension Credit in Poole.

## ■ Social Security Benefits: Children and Winter Fuel Payment

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[2377\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of households that are impacted by the two child benefit cap and the ending of their Winter Fuel Allowance.

**Emma Reynolds:**

The two-child limit does not apply in Pension Credit

No estimate has been made of the number of households that are impacted by the policy to support a maximum of two children and the ending of their Winter Fuel Payment.

This government is committed to pensioners – everyone in our society, no matter their working history or savings deserves a comfortable and dignified retirement.

We know there are low-income pensioners who aren't claiming Pension Credit, and we urge those people to apply. This will passport them to receive Winter Fuel Payment alongside other benefits – hundreds of pounds that could really help them. We will ensure that the poorest pensioners get the support they need. There are other pensioners who are eligible for Winter fuel payment as they claim other means tested benefits.

## ■ Winter Fuel Payment

**Andy McDonald:**

[\[2335\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department plans to take to help support low income pensioners that will no longer receive the Winter Fuel Payment.

**Emma Reynolds:**

This Government is committed to pensioners – everyone in our society, no matter their working history or savings deserves a comfortable and dignified retirement.

Given the substantial pressures faced by the public finances this year and next, the government has had to make hard choices to bring the public finances back under control.

Winter Fuel Payments will continue to be paid to pensioner households with someone receiving Pension Credit or certain other income-related benefits. They will continue to be worth £200 for eligible households, or £300 for eligible households with someone aged 80 and over.

Over the next five years we expect over 12 million pensioners will see their State Pensions increase by thousands of pounds as a result of our commitment to the Triple Lock. Protecting the Triple Lock even in the current economic climate shows our steadfast commitment to pensioners.

We are prioritising support for pensioners through our Warm Homes Plan which will support investment in insulation and low carbon heating – upgrading millions of

homes over this Parliament. Our long-term plan will protect billpayers permanently, reduce fuel poverty, and get the UK back on track to meet our climate goals.

We know there are low-income pensioners who aren't claiming Pension Credit, and we urge those people to apply. This will passport them to receive Winter Fuel Payment alongside other benefits – hundreds of pounds that could really help them. We will ensure that the poorest pensioners get the support they need.

As part of the current Pension Credit Week of Action, we have joined forces with national charities, broadcasters and local authorities to encourage pensioners to check their eligibility and make a claim.

From 16 September, we will be running a national marketing campaign on a range of channels. The campaign will target potential pension-age customers, as well as friends and family who can encourage and support them to apply.

Our future campaign messaging will also focus on encouraging pensioners to apply for Pension Credit before the 21 December 2024, which is the last date for making a successful backdated claim for Pension Credit in order to receive a Winter Fuel Payment.

We will work with external partners, local authorities and the Devolved Governments to boost the take-up of Pension Credit.

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[2376\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make an assessment of the potential impact of proposed changes to the eligibility for the Winter Fuel Payment on levels of equality.

**Emma Reynolds:**

This Government is committed to pensioners – everyone in our society, no matter their working history or savings deserves a comfortable and dignified retirement.

Given the substantial pressures faced by the public finances this year and next, the government has had to make hard choices to bring the public finances back under control.

Winter Fuel Payments will continue to be paid to pensioner households with someone receiving Pension Credit or certain other income-related benefits. They will continue to be worth £200 for eligible households, or £300 for eligible households with someone aged over 80.

In making a decision on Winter Fuel Payment eligibility, the Department had regard to the equality analysis in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty requirements.

**Neil O'Brien:**

[\[2476\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people are eligible for the Winter Fuel Payment in each Parliamentary constituency; and what estimate she has

made of the number of people that will be eligible after the proposed means testing for that payment.

**Emma Reynolds:**

ANNUAL STATISTICS RELATING TO WINTER FUEL PAYMENT RECIPIENTS ARE ROUTINELY PUBLISHED. THE NUMBER OF RECIPIENTS WITHIN EACH PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY IS AVAILABLE AT THE FOLLOWING LINK:

[winter-fuel-payments-caseload-2022-to-2023.ods \(live.com\)](https://www.dwp.gov.uk/statistics/winter-fuel-payments-caseload-2022-to-2023-ods)

The tab "3\_Parliamentary\_Constituency" contains the relevant numbers.

1.2 million households will be eligible for Winter Fuel Payments in England and 100,000 households in Wales post policy change (based on the number of current Pension Credit recipients). Source: [Stat-Xplore - Table View \(dwp.gov.uk\)](https://www.dwp.gov.uk/statistics/winter-fuel-payments-caseload-2022-to-2023-ods). Winter Fuel Payments in Scotland are a matter for the Scottish Government.

Please note that Pension Credit claimants are the majority of those that will be eligible for Winter Fuel Payments, not all.

Also, the published Pension Credit figures refer to households, so the number of individuals will be higher (i.e. taking account of households where it is a couple claiming Pension Credit).

Furthermore, the above does not take into account any potential increase in Pension Credit take-up we might see as a result of the policy.

**Claire Coutinho:**

**[2540]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people received the Winter Fuel Payment in each constituency in the last financial year.

**Emma Reynolds:**

This Government is committed to pensioners – everyone in our society, no matter their working history or savings deserves a comfortable and dignified retirement.

Given the substantial pressures faced by the public finances this year and next, the government has had to make hard choices to bring the public finances back under control.

The relevant latest statistics can be found at: [Winter Fuel Payment statistics for winter 2022 to 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/statistics/winter-fuel-payment-statistics) (Winter Fuel Payment statistics, Great Britain, European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland: winter 2022 to 2023).

**Ben Maguire:**

**[2691]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of changing eligibility requirements for the Winter Fuel Allowance on the affordability of energy for people aged over 65 in (a) North Cornwall constituency and (b) rural off-gas grid areas.

**Emma Reynolds:**

Around 20,000 people in the North Cornwall constituency will be affected by the change in eligibility requirements. Given the substantial pressures faced by the public finances this year and next, the government has had to make hard choices to bring the public finances back under control. However, Winter Fuel Payments will continue to be paid to pensioner households with someone receiving Pension Credit or certain other income-related benefits. They will continue to be worth £200 for eligible households, or £300 for eligible households with someone aged over 80.

This government is committed to pensioners – everyone in our society, no matter their working history or savings deserves a comfortable and dignified retirement. Over the next five years, we expect over 12 million pensioners will see their State Pensions increase by thousands of pounds as a result of our commitment to the Triple Lock. Protecting the Triple Lock even in the current economic climate shows our steadfast commitment to pensioners.

We are prioritising support for pensioners through our Warm Homes Plan which will support investment in insulation and low carbon heating – upgrading millions of homes over this Parliament. Our long-term plan will protect billpayers permanently, reduce fuel poverty, and get the UK back on track to meet our climate goals.

We know there are low-income pensioners who aren't claiming Pension Credit, and we urge those people to apply. This will passport them to receive Winter Fuel Payment alongside other benefits – hundreds of pounds that could really help them.

The government will work with external partners and local authorities to boost the uptake of Pension Credit and to target additional support to the poorest pensioners. We will ensure that the poorest pensioners get the support they need.

**■ Winter Fuel Payment: Mid Leicestershire****Mr Peter Bedford:**[\[2687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people in Mid Leicestershire constituency will be impacted by the decision to abolish universal winter fuel payments.

**Emma Reynolds:**

An estimated 70,000 people in Mid Leicestershire constituency will be affected by the change to Winter Fuel Payments. This is the estimated number of people in Mid Leicestershire constituency that will no longer receive Winter Fuel Payment as they do not claim Pension Credit.

This estimation is calculated by subtracting the number of Pension Credit recipients for Mid Leicestershire from the number of Winter Fuel Payment recipients for Mid Leicestershire (using the latest statistics, sources shown below).

Please note that following boundary changes to Parliamentary Constituency, data on Mid Leicestershire constituency is not explicitly available/ published. To obtain the above figure, local authority data on Blaby, Charnwood and Hinckley & Bosworth

have been combined. Therefore, the above figure of 70,000 is likely to be an overestimate as the Mid Leicestershire constituency consists of *some* wards of the boroughs of Blaby, Charnwood and Hinckley & Bosworth.

Also, the published Pension Credit figures refer to households, so the number of individuals will be higher (i.e. taking account of households where it's a couple claiming Pension Credit).

Furthermore, the above does not take into account any potential increase in Pension Credit take-up we might see as a result of the policy. We do not have data on those additional Pension Credit claims by Parliamentary constituencies.

Sources used:

[winter-fuel-payments-caseload-2022-to-2023.ods \(live.com\)](#)

[Stat-Xplore - Table View \(dwp.gov.uk\)](#)

## ■ Winter Fuel Payment: North Cornwall

**Ben Maguire:**

[2692]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people in North Cornwall constituency who will be affected by her decision to change eligibility requirements for the Winter Fuel Allowance.

**Emma Reynolds:**

This Government is committed to pensioners – everyone in our society, no matter their working history or savings deserves a comfortable and dignified retirement.

Given the substantial pressures faced by the public finances this year and next, the government has had to make hard choices to bring the public finances back under control.

Around 20,000 people in the North Cornwall constituency will be affected by the change in eligibility requirements.

We know there are low-income pensioners who aren't claiming Pension Credit, and we urge those people to apply. This will passport them to receive Winter Fuel Payment alongside other benefits – hundreds of pounds that could really help them. We will ensure that the poorest pensioners get the support they need. There are other pensioners who are eligible for Winter Fuel Payment as they claim other means tested benefits.