



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 6 November 2024 and the information is correct at the time of publication (07:14 P.M., 06 November 2024). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ Attorney General: Civil Servants

Sir Ashley Fox:

[\[9602\]](#)

To ask the Solicitor General, how many civil servants are assigned to work in each of her Department's offices; and how many desks are available in each office.

Sarah Sackman:

For the period 2 to 27 September 2024, there were 54 civil servants assigned to work in the Attorney General's Office (AGO) and 42 desks available.

The AGO superintends the Law Officers' Departments: Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), Government Legal Department (GLD), HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPIS), and Serious Fraud Office (SFO). Further information on the Law Officers' Departments is set out below.

As of 30 September 2024, the CPS had a headcount of 7,286 allocated against 4,347 desks.

The GLD has staff based in five sites across the country: 102 Petty France, London; 1 Ruskin Square, Croydon; 7-8 Wellington Place, Leeds; 2 Rivergate, Bristol; and Three New Bailey, Manchester.

For the period 2 to 27 September 2024, the table below shows a breakdown of the number of civil servants based in GLD offices and the number of desks in each office.

Please note that data for 102 Petty France, London, includes 10 HMCPIS staff, which share this office.

LOCATION	NUMBER OF CIVIL SERVANTS ASSIGNED TO WORK IN GLD	
	OFFICES	NUMBER OF DESKS IN OFFICE
102 Petty France, London	1509	737
1 Ruskin Square, Croydon	86	100
7-8 Wellington Place, Leeds	244	100
2 Rivergate, Bristol	106	38
Three New Bailey, Manchester	135	60

HMCPIS also shares office space with the CPS in Foss House, York. For the same period, HMCPIS had 10 civil servants assigned to work in Foss House.

As of 30 September 2024, the SFO had 534 permanent employees and 133 temporary agency workers, a total of 667 people. The total number of desks available is 432.

BUSINESS AND TRADE

■ Batteries and Lithium: Manufacturing industries

Sir Iain Duncan Smith:

[\[11826\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what steps he is taking to (a) support the development of the UK's lithium industry and (b) enhance battery manufacturing capabilities.

Sarah Jones:

Domestic production of lithium will be increasingly important as demand for resilient and responsible sources of critical minerals grows. Government has supported several lithium projects through the Automotive Transformation Fund, and the UK recently celebrated the opening of the first lithium hydroxide demonstration plant by Cornish Lithium. In Government will continue to work closely with industry to maximise our potential for domestic lithium production.

The Autumn Budget committed over £2bn by 2030 for the automotive sector including the electric vehicle manufacturing sector and supply chain, including gigafactories. Alongside the National Wealth Fund, this will accelerate investment in our zero emission vehicle supply chain providing long-term certainty for industry.

■ Business: North Lincolnshire and Yorkshire and the Humber

Mark Swards:

[\[11687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what steps his Department is taking to help support business investment into (a) Yorkshire and (b) northern Lincolnshire.

Sarah Jones:

The Department works across the UK, including Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire, to showcase strong commercial investment opportunities to potential investors and support business to grow, and provides extensive support to small businesses through the network of Growth Hubs. This government is developing a modern industrial strategy to deliver the certainty and stability for business to invest and creating the National Wealth Fund to support its delivery and mobilise billions of pounds of investment in the UK's growth industries. Through the Government owned British Business Bank, we are also investing over £1 billion through their regional Investment Fund programmes, including supporting growing businesses across Yorkshire and northern Lincolnshire.

■ Capital Investment: Thurrock

James McMurdock:

[\[10031\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what steps his Department is taking to encourage companies to invest in Thurrock.

Sarah Jones:

Growth is the government's central economic mission and we are currently developing an Industrial Strategy which aims to drive growth across the UK through investment in key sectors and regions.

DBT looks to encourage investment across the UK and works closely with relevant economic development and inward investment officers at Essex County Council, The Thames Freeport and the Thames Estuary Growth Board (PRP) along with the local councils as appropriate.

Investment into the wider region (Essex, Kent and East Sussex) has been consistent between 2021-2024. The number of jobs created rose to 1281 in 2023-2024, a 40% rise from the previous year.

The Lakeside shopping Centre at West Thurrock continues to be an attraction for foreign retailers and DBT has supported retail and distribution investments in the region from Aldi, Lidl and Amazon.

■ Dartford-Thurrock Crossing: Road Traffic

Jim Dickson:

[\[9104\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what assessment he has made of the impact of delays at the Dartford Crossing on businesses in Dartford.

Gareth Thomas:

My Department has not carried out an assessment of the impact of delays at the Dartford Crossing on local businesses. However, area teams in my Department engage closely with local stakeholders, including businesses, to support delivery of their economic plans.

■ Department for Business and Trade: Public Appointments

John Glen:

[\[6144\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what (a) direct ministerial and (b) other public appointments to his Department and associated bodies have (i) been (A) removed from their posts and (B) asked to resign and (ii) made since 4 July 2024.

Justin Madders:

The Department for Business and Trade has made three direct ministerial appointments since 04 July 2024: 1) Professor Sir Steve Smith, reappointed as International Education Champion, for a period of 12 months and 2) Lord Lancaster, reappointed as Defence and Security Advocate for a period of 3 months and 3) Clare Barclay as Chair of the Industrial Strategy Advisory Council.

Departments do not routinely record and collect the reasons why appointees leave their positions. The reasons why an appointee has left their role is the appointee's personal information and identifiable and would elicit GDPR considerations.

■ Fireworks Regulations 2004

Carla Lockhart:

[\[12158\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, if he will make an assessment of the adequacy of the Fireworks Regulations 2004 in protecting (a) people and (b) animals from negative impacts of fireworks.

Justin Madders:

The current regulatory framework is designed to support people to enjoy fireworks whilst lowering the risk of dangers and disruption to people, pets, and property. The Government recently launched an awareness campaign on the Gov.uk website to provide guidance on minimising the impacts of fireworks on people and animals.

To inform any future decisions on the legislative framework, the Government intends to engage with stakeholders to gather evidence on the issues and impacts of fireworks.

■ Fireworks: Safety

Neil Duncan-Jordan:

[\[12014\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of (a) restricting the sale of fireworks to licensed retailers and (b) lowering the noise limit of fireworks to 90 decibels.

Neil Duncan-Jordan:

[\[12015\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, if his Department will make an assessment of the adequacy of the Fireworks Regulations 2004 to protect (a) people and (b) animals from the negative impact of fireworks.

Justin Madders:

Most people use fireworks in a responsible, safe, and appropriate manner and there are laws in place to address situations where fireworks are misused. The current regulatory framework is designed to support people to enjoy fireworks whilst lowering the risk of dangers and disruption to people, pets, and property. The Government has recently launched an awareness campaign on the Gov.uk website to provide guidance on minimising the impacts of fireworks on people and animals.

To inform any future decisions on fireworks policy I intend to engage with businesses, consumer groups and charities shortly after the fireworks season to gather evidence on the issues and impacts with fireworks. Officials regularly meet and correspond with charities to listen to and understand their views.

■ Foreign Investment in UK

Callum Anderson:

[\[11747\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, how the Office for Investment will assess the potential impact of foreign direct investment on domestic businesses in key sectors.

Sarah Jones:

Investment is at the heart of the government's growth mission, increasing the number of good, well-skilled jobs and improving productivity across the country. Foreign direct investment is one part of this and can support domestic businesses directly through supply chains and indirectly through spillover benefits. The new Office for Investment will work closely with all businesses to increase facilitation of investment from UK and overseas businesses.

Previous research in 2021 by DBT found that on average a £1 million FDI project into Great Britain leads to a net increase in national levels of GVA of around £98,000 and a net increase in employment.

Kevin Hollinrake:

[\[12102\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, whether any businesses have (a) withdrawn and (b) reduced their investment commitments following the International Investment Summit on 14 October 2024.

Sarah Jones:

We are not aware of any announcements that investment highlighted at the International Investment Summit has subsequently been withdrawn or reduced. The Office for Investment continues to support business on all the investment projects announced at the summit among many others.

■ Royal Mail: Universal Service Obligation

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[11844\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that Royal Mail adheres to the universal service obligation.

Justin Madders:

As the independent regulator for the postal sector, it is for Ofcom to monitor Royal Mail's delivery of the universal service obligation and decide how to respond should Royal Mail fail to meet its obligations.

Ofcom is currently investigating Royal Mail's service standards in 2023-24 following its failure to meet its delivery obligations.

■ St George's Day: Public Holidays

James McMurdock:

[\[11811\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, if he will establish an additional public holiday for St George's Day.

Justin Madders:

The current pattern of bank and public holidays is well established and accepted. The Government has no plans to change it.

While an additional bank holiday may benefit some communities and sectors, the cost to the economy of an additional bank holiday remains considerable. The estimated cost to the UK economy of an additional one-off bank holiday is around £2bn.

■ **Summertime**

Andrew Lewin: [\[12242\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what assessment he has made of the potential economic impact of retaining British Summer Time all year round.

Justin Madders:

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

■ **UK Internal Trade: Environment Protection**

Ellie Chowns: [\[11710\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, whether any environmental (a) policies and (b) programmes are impacted by the UK Internal Market Act 2020.

Mr Douglas Alexander:

The UK Internal Market Act provides the practical framework that facilitates businesses and people to trade and purchase goods and services freely across the UK. It supports economic growth and protects jobs and investment across all four nations of the UK. The Act does not prevent the UK Government or Devolved Governments from legislating in any areas of reserved or devolved policy, including environmental policy.

CABINET OFFICE■ **10 Downing Street: Cats**

John Glen: [\[11580\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether there is a cost to the public purse of the upkeep of cats at 10 Downing Street.

Georgia Gould:

There is no cost to the public purse.

■ England Infected Blood Support Scheme: East Midlands

Sir John Hayes:

[11549]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many registrations have been made with the Infected Blood Interim Compensation Payment Scheme in (a) Lincolnshire and (b) the East Midlands.

Nick Thomas-Symonds:

As of July 2024, 3,698 interim compensation payments have been paid to living infected persons and bereaved partners. This information is not made available on a regional basis. The process under which estates can apply for interim compensation payments opened on 24th October. We will provide an update on the number of applications in due course.

■ Football: Regulation and Taxation

Paul Holmes:

[11643]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Prime Minister has had discussions with (a) the Premier League and (b) football clubs on (i) statutory football regulation and (ii) the taxation of football clubs.

Georgia Gould:

Ministerial meetings with external organisations will be published in the usual way on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) as part of the government's transparency agenda.

■ Foreign Investment in UK: National Security

John Glen:

[12412]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to table 5 of the National Security and Investment Act 2021: Annual Report 2023-24, published on 10 September 2024, for what reason each of the withdrawals from a called in acquisition withdrew; and whether he plans to ask companies to withdraw rather than proceeding with formal intervention.

Ms Abena Oppong-Asare:

There is no requirement for parties to inform the Government before they withdraw from acquisitions or to tell the Government the reasons behind the withdrawal.

Parties might withdraw from deals for a variety of reasons, including reasons unrelated to the National Security and Investment (NSI) Act.

All acquisitions are considered on a case-by-case basis.

■ Government Departments: Corporate Hospitality

John Glen:

[11598]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether he plans to update the guidance entitled (a) Special advisers' gifts and hospitality received, and meetings with Senior Media Figures, published on 2 April 2024, and (b) Senior Officials' business expenses,

hospitality received and meetings with external organisations and individuals, published on 2 April 2024.

Ms Abena Oppong-Asare:

This Government has committed to looking at how the range of data published can be improved and made as useful as possible.

■ **Government Departments: Disclosure of Information**

John Glen:

[\[12416\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Answer of 15 January 2024 to Question 7805 on Ministers: Members' Interests, what the budget is for the development of the single platform for transparency data; and which organisation has been tasked with developing the platform.

Ms Abena Oppong-Asare:

This Government is committed to looking at how the range of information published can be improved and made as useful as possible.

This Government will introduce a register for ministers' gifts and hospitality bringing publication of ministerial transparency data on a broadly equivalent basis to the parliamentary register.

■ **Ministers: Conduct**

John Glen:

[\[11595\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 2 September 2024 to Question 2060 on Ministers: Conduct, what steps the Prime Minister is taking to ensure that paragraph 9.1 is followed by all Departments.

Georgia Gould:

The Prime Minister published the new Ministerial Code on 6 November. The Code sets out the standards of conduct that all ministers are expected to uphold.

■ **Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman**

Sarah Green:

[\[12170\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will make an assessment of the adequacy of guidance provided to people on (a) the process and (b) timelines in relation to the admissibility of any complaint to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman.

Nick Thomas-Symonds:

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman publishes guidance on what it can and cannot investigate, timescales and what those making complaints can expect. The Ombudsman is independent of Government, so it is for the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee to consider whether the guidance is adequate.

■ Senior Civil Servants: Pay

Rupert Lowe: [\[11723\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many civil servants earn (a) over £100,000 and (b) more than the Prime Minister.

Rupert Lowe: [\[12341\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many civil service staff earned above £100,000 a year in (a) January 2024 and (b) the latest period for which data is available.

Georgia Gould:

Civil Service Statistics (Table 35) provides information on the number of civil servants earning over £100,000 and in other bandings. The latest information can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/civil-service-statistics-2024>

The previous administration did not publish a 2023 list. The Cabinet Office will publish this in due course following the usual process.

■ Special Advisers: Contracts

John Glen: [\[11588\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what proportion of special advisers have signed a contract.

Georgia Gould:

All special advisers are subject to the Model Contract for Special Advisers, which is published online at GOV.UK.

■ Varun Chandra: Business Interests

John Glen: [\[11593\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what financial interests have been declared by Varun Chandra.

Georgia Gould:

As was the case under the previous Administration, interests deemed relevant for publication by the appropriate permanent secretary, for special advisers in No10 and the Cabinet Office, are published on an annual basis by the Cabinet Office.

For special advisers in other departments, interests deemed relevant for publication by the appropriate permanent secretary are published by the relevant department on an annual basis in, or alongside, the department's Annual Report and Accounts.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ Department for Culture, Media and Sport: Official Cars**

Charlie Dewhirst: [\[11762\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 14 October 2024 to Question 7028 on Department for Culture, Media and Sport: Official Cars, if she will name which specific senior officials have access to a Government car; and whether these senior officials had access to a Government car before the 2024 general election.

Charlie Dewhirst: [\[11763\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 14 October 2024 to Question 7027 on Department for Culture, Media and Sport: Official Cars, whether the vehicle is an electric car.

Stephanie Peacock:

For security reasons specific details of allocations including make and model of vehicles are not issued.

The arrangements relating to the usage of vehicles in the Government Car Service are set out in the Civil Service Management Code.

■ Football: Foreign Investment in UK

John Glen: [\[11558\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, whether she has held recent discussions with the Premier League on the potential implications for his policies of foreign investment in football.

Stephanie Peacock:

This government is pro-business, and wants to see football continue to thrive. We recognise and are proud of the Premier League's position as the world's foremost football league. Investment in the Premier League has been one of the key drivers behind this success.

We are establishing a new Independent Football Regulator and have engaged extensively with the Premier League as we have finalised the legislation to deliver this. This Bill will deliver sustainability for clubs which will help support continued long-term investment in the game.

■ Sports

Mr Lee Dillon: [\[11699\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to help support grassroots sports.

Stephanie Peacock:

The Government is committed to ensuring that everyone, regardless of background, has access to and benefits from quality sport and physical activity opportunities.

The Government provides the majority of funding for grassroots sport through our Arm's Length Body, Sport England, which invests over £250 million in Exchequer and Lottery funding each year.

The Government has also committed to continued funding for grassroots facilities, investing £123 million UK-wide via the Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities Programme throughout 2024/25, working with our delivery partner the Football Foundation.

■ Sports: Children**Mr Lee Dillon:**[\[11698\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of trends in the number of closures of grassroots sports facilities on young children.

Stephanie Peacock:

Every child should have the opportunity to play sports and do regular physical activity. Our mission-led Government puts children and young people at the heart of our priorities. This includes breaking down barriers to opportunity for every child to access high-quality sport and physical activity, especially those who are less likely to be active.

This Government recognises that grassroots facilities are at the heart of communities up and down the country and is acting to support more people to get active wherever they live through the delivery of the £123 million Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities Programme in 2024/25.

■ Sports: Rural Areas**Stuart Anderson:**[\[11906\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to support sports development in rural communities.

Stephanie Peacock:

The Government is committed to improving access to sport and physical activity for everybody. This is central to achieving the aims set out in the manifesto around the health and opportunity missions. Everyone, no matter who they are or where they are in the country, should have access to the best possible facilities and opportunities to get active.

The Government has committed to continued funding for grassroots facilities. £123 million will be invested UK-wide via the Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities Programme throughout 2024/25, working with our delivery partner the Football Foundation.

Grassroots sport is also funded through the Government's Arm's Length Body, Sport England, who invest over £250 million in Exchequer and Lottery funding each year.

■ Television Licences**James McMurdock:** [\[11806\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what her policy is on the future of the TV licence.

Stephanie Peacock:

The Government remains committed to the licence fee for the remainder of the current Charter period.

We will keep an open mind about the future of the licence fee, and will engage with the BBC, the public and other stakeholders before deciding on next steps.

■ Television Licences: Non-payment**Jim Shannon:** [\[11864\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussion she had with the BBC on decriminalising non-payment of the TV license fee.

Stephanie Peacock:

The Culture Secretary believes it is important that the television licence fee has a fair enforcement regime that does not disproportionately impact vulnerable people, and has discussed her concerns on this issue with the BBC's leadership.

As part of the next Charter Review, the government will engage with the BBC and others to consider how to ensure the BBC thrives well into the next decade and beyond. This will include discussions on a range of important issues, including future funding models for the BBC and their enforcement.

DEFENCE**■ Air Force: Communication****James Cartlidge:** [\[12144\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he plans that the GUARDIAN Air Command and Control system based in the UK will reach full operating capability.

Maria Eagle:

The GUARDIAN Air Command and Control system based in the UK is expected to reach Full Operating Capability in 2026.

■ AUKUS: New Zealand**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[12051\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of New Zealand joining the AUKUS partnership.

Maria Eagle:

Our ambition to deliver nuclear-powered submarines for Australia under AUKUS Pillar One will remain trilateral, however AUKUS nations are seeking opportunities to engage key partners and allies on discrete advanced capability projects under AUKUS Pillar Two. Recognising New Zealand's close bilateral defence partnerships with the AUKUS nations, we have commenced consultations with New Zealand to identify possibilities for collaboration on advanced capabilities, on a project-by-project basis. We cannot prejudge the outcome of those consultations.

Defence: Job Creation**James Cartlidge:**[\[9500\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to support the creation of new jobs in the defence sector.

Maria Eagle:

This Government recognises the vital role the defence industry plays not only in our national security but also to the economic prosperity and growth of the UK.

In 2022-23, Ministry of Defence (MOD) expenditure supported 239,000 jobs in UK industry and a further 196,000 MOD Civilian and UK Regular Armed Forces personnel based in the UK.

The Defence Secretary has directed that the Defence Industrial Strategy be developed at pace to support this further.

Dreghorn Barracks: Tenants**Dr Scott Arthur:**[\[11961\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether plans to terminate tenancies of private sector tenants living in his Department's homes on the Dreghorn (Edinburgh) estate.

Maria Eagle:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) has identified the Dreghorn (Edinburgh) estate as surplus to requirements. As a result, all private sector tenants will be given at least two months' notice to vacate, in accordance with their tenancy agreements.

There is currently no timeframe for the notices to be issued. MOD officials will engage with those affected and advise them when a schedule has been agreed.

Gibraltar: Security**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[11556\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent steps he has taken to ensure the security of Gibraltar.

Luke Pollard:

The UK Government is committed to safeguarding the security of all our Overseas Territories, including Gibraltar. The Ministry of Defence undertakes regular assessments of the requirements for Defence support to Gibraltar.

Ministry of Defence: Official Cars**Charlie Dewhirst:** [\[11962\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 18 October 2024 to Question 7008 on Ministry of Defence: Official Cars, how many of those vehicles are electric.

Maria Eagle:

For security reasons specific details of allocations including make and model of vehicles are not issued.

The arrangements relating to the usage of vehicles in the Government Car Service are set out in the Civil Service Management Code.

Charlie Dewhirst: [\[11963\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 21 October 2024 to Question 7009 on Ministry of Defence: Official Cars, if he will publish a list of senior officials with access to a government car.

Maria Eagle:

For security reasons specific details of allocations including make and model of vehicles are not issued.

The arrangements relating to the usage of vehicles in the Government Car Service are set out in the Civil Service Management Code.

Navy: Labour Turnover and Recruitment**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[11555\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to improve (a) recruitment and (b) retention in the Royal Navy.

Luke Pollard:

The new Government inherited a very challenging retention and recruitment position for all Services including the Royal Navy. Since taking office we have announced a number of new initiatives to improve recruitment including removing or updating over 100 outdated medical policies. We have also announced our intention to reduce the time it takes to join the Royal Navy as part of a new package of measures to improve recruitment.

The Royal Navy continues to meet its operational commitments, but tackling recruitment and retention challenges is a top priority.

The Royal Navy has implemented a number of measures to improve recruitment and retention including streamlining its recruiting and selection process with the aim of reducing the time candidates spend in the recruitment pipeline.

Specific initiatives include an improved medical assessment procedure, an augmented recruitment workforce to increase outreach, additional funding to support an extended marketing campaign and a modernised and streamlined recruitment website.

■ RAF Cosford

Mark Pritchard:

[\[11160\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to upgrade and modernise married living quarters at RAF Cosford.

Maria Eagle:

Circa 95% of Service Family Accommodation (SFA) supporting RAF Cosford is at or above Decent Homes Standard.

Improving our Service accommodation across the UK and providing good quality homes that are safe and well maintained is a top priority for the Department. This Government is committed to setting new minimum standards for military housing, with the aim of improving the standard of SFA across the estate.

Circa £440 million is currently forecast to be spent on maintaining and improving SFA across the Defence Estate within financial year 2024-25.

■ Type 23 Frigates

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[11554\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Type 23 frigates are (a) operationally available and (b) capable of being deployed simultaneously.

Luke Pollard:

As of 31 October 2024, six Type 23 frigates were available. The normal operating cycle of every ship involves them entering different readiness levels depending on their programmes, periods of refit and Departmental planning requirements. This is carefully managed to ensure the Royal Navy has sufficient assets available to deliver concurrent operational outputs today, both in the UK and around the globe, whilst ensuring longer term Frigate availability tomorrow to meet changing defence demands in an uncertain world.

Readiness is a priority for this Government. Options to improve the readiness and availability of the Royal Navy Surface Fleet forms a key part of the ongoing Strategic Defence Review.

■ Type 45 Destroyers**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[11553\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Type 45 destroyers are (a) operationally available and (b) capable of being deployed simultaneously.

Luke Pollard:

As of 31 October 2024, two Type 45 destroyers were immediately available, or deployed. The normal operating cycle of every ship involves them entering different readiness levels depending on their programmes, periods of refit and Departmental planning requirements. This is carefully managed to ensure the Royal Navy has sufficient assets available to deliver concurrent operational outputs, both in the UK and around the globe, whilst sustaining longer term availability, to meet changing defence demands in an uncertain world.

Readiness is a priority for this Government. Options to improve the readiness and availability of the Royal Navy Surface Fleet forms a key part of the ongoing Strategic Defence Review.

■ USA: Veterans**Dr Andrew Murrison:**[\[11571\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answers of 28 October 2024 to Questions 4187, 4188, and 4189 on USA: Veterans, what steps his Department is taking to encourage Camp Lejeune veterans to come forward if they believe they have been affected by contaminated water.

AI Carns:

It is worth noting that the US compensation scheme had been running for almost two years at the point it was raised on 30 July 2024 to the new Ministerial team.

On notification, I immediately instructed the Ministry of Defence to release several statements encouraging those who think they may have been affected by contaminated water at Camp Lejeune to contact the department. This was done through an article on Gov.uk, on the Department's social media accounts and internally through Veterans UK and all three Services.

Dr Andrew Murrison:[\[11572\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answers of 28 October 2024 to Questions 4187, 4188, and 4189 on USA: Veterans, whether he has held discussions with veterans organisations on encouraging Camp Lejeune veterans to come forward if they believe they have been affected by contaminated water.

AI Carns:

We take the safety of our personnel very seriously and any veteran that may have served at Camp Lejeune during this period and believe that their health was affected can apply for compensation under the War Pension Scheme.

The US compensation scheme had been running for almost two years at the point it was raised on 30 July 2024 to the new Ministerial team. Immediate instruction was given to Service Chiefs to communicate the scheme to anyone who may have been based at Camp Lejeune between 1 August 1953 and 31 December 1987, as well as on Ministry of Defence external channels.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

[\[11573\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 28 October 2024 to Question 4189 on USA: Veterans, how many Camp Lejeune veterans have contacted his Department as a result of the encouragement cited.

Al Carns:

The US compensation scheme for those affected by contaminated water at Camp Lejeune had been running for almost two years at the point it was raised on 30 July 2024 to the new Ministerial team.

The Ministry of Defence has received three pieces of Ministerial Correspondence from relatives of veterans and veterans, one letter direct from a veteran and nine Freedom of Information Requests on the matter.

I once again encourage anyone who was based at Camp Lejeune between 1 August 1953 and 31 December 1987 to write to the Ministry of Defence so that we may provide them with advice. We take the safety of our personnel very seriously and any veteran that may have served at Camp Lejeune during this period and believe that their health was affected can apply for compensation under the War Pension Scheme.

EDUCATION

■ Apprentices: Disadvantaged

David Williams:

[\[11737\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that Foundational Apprenticeships support disadvantaged young people into apprenticeship schemes.

Janet Daby:

This government has a driving mission to break down barriers to opportunity. Too many young people face difficulties progressing beyond secondary education and we want to ensure that more people from disadvantaged backgrounds can undertake apprenticeships.

The department has begun work to develop new foundation apprenticeships, providing high quality entry pathways for young people. We will engage with relevant stakeholders to inform our thinking to maximise its positive impact on young people, including those in disadvantaged areas. More detail on foundation apprenticeships will be set out in due course.

The department continues to pay additional funding to employers and training providers to support them to take on young apprentices, apprentices with learning difficulties and disabilities, and care leavers.

■ Children in Care: Gloucester

Alex McIntyre: [\[11822\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to improve educational outcomes for (a) children in social care and (b) care-experienced young people in Gloucester.

Janet Daby:

Reforming children's social care is critical to giving all our children and young people the start in life they deserve. The government is committed to working in partnership with local government to support children who have experienced the care system across all settings, and to improving their educational outcomes.

In July, the King's Speech set out the government's plans to introduce a Children's Wellbeing Bill, which will help raise standards for children in care and ensure that every child can thrive in a safe, loving home as part of the government's commitment to deliver high and rising standards in education for children and young people in England. The Bill is expected to be introduced within the first session of Parliament and will be a crucial step in breaking down barriers to opportunity for children and young people.

Children in care and care leavers in Gloucester will also benefit from the almost £1 billion we have put into the high needs budget for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in 2025/26 given the high levels of SEND in the cohort, and the £300 million of funding we are putting into further education to ensure young people are developing the skills they need to succeed.

■ Children: Allergies

Chris Bloore: [\[11618\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to improve the (a) safeguarding and (b) wellbeing of children with allergies in schools.

Catherine McKinnell:

Section 100 of the Children and Families Act 2014 places a duty on maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units to make arrangements for supporting pupils with medical conditions. This includes allergies.

The accompanying statutory guidance, 'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions', makes clear to schools what is expected of them in taking reasonable steps to fulfil their legal obligations and to meet the individual needs of pupils with medical conditions. Schools should ensure they are aware of any pupils with medical conditions and have policies and processes in place to ensure these can be well managed. This guidance can be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3>.

'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions' includes guidance on individual healthcare plans and specifies that they should ensure that the school assesses and manages risks to the child's education, health and social wellbeing, and minimises disruption.

The department included a reminder to schools of these duties in its regular schools' email bulletin in both March and September 2024. In the same communication we also alerted schools to the newly created Schools Allergy Code. The Code was developed by The Allergy Team, Independent Schools' Bursars Association and the Benedict Blythe Foundation, who are all trusted voices on the matter of allergies. The department has now also added a link to the Code to its online allergy guidance, which can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-food-standards-resources-for-schools/allergy-guidance-for-schools>.

The Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) have produced guidance on the use of adrenaline auto-injectors in schools here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/using-emergency-adrenaline-auto-injectors-in-schools>. DHSC have also produced guidance on emergency inhalers in

schools, including the purchase of spares, which can be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-asthma-inhalers-for-use-in-schools>.

■ Children: Disability

Alex McIntyre:

[11820]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to ensure that disabled children are included in the Children's Wellbeing Bill.

Catherine McKinnell:

The Children's Wellbeing Bill will remove barriers to opportunity for every child, by raising school standards and delivering our commitment on children's social care.

The precise content of the Bill will be confirmed upon the Bill's introduction, which will be as soon as Parliamentary time allows.

■ Department for Education: Official Cars

Charlie Dewhirst:

[11772]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 18 October 2024 to Question 7026 on Department for Education: Official Cars, if she will name which specific senior officials have access to a Government car; and whether these senior officials had access to a Government car before the 2024 general election.

Janet Daby:

For security reasons specific details of allocations including make and model of vehicles are not issued.

The arrangements relating to the usage of vehicles in the Government Car Service are set out in the Civil Service Management Code.

■ **Further Education: Finance**

Andrew Rosindell:

[11570]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to help ensure value for money in tertiary education public spending.

Janet Daby:

The government defines tertiary education as all post-secondary education, encompassing both further education (FE) and higher education (HE). It includes education provided by colleges, universities and other specialist institutions, aimed at supporting progress to FE, training or work. Tertiary education typically starts from age 16.

The government publishes research on the net present value of FE, which consistently shows good value for the taxpayer, here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/609e78c6d3bf7f2883267c3b/Measuring_the_Net_Present_Value_of_Further_Education_in_England_2018_to_2019.pdf.

FE funding is designed to incentivise provision that has high economic value. For example, additional funding for 16 to 19-year-olds is available to encourage and support the delivery of selected courses in subjects that lead to higher wage returns. It is also available to support subjects that cost more to deliver. As part of the department's FE accountability system, we issue guidance that requires colleges to publish an annual accountability statement detailing outcome targets for areas of the curriculum they are planning to change for the coming year.

The department knows that investment in apprenticeships provides good value for money for the taxpayer. Apprenticeships at level 2, level 3 and levels 4/5 deliver a net present value of £16, £16 and £25 respectively for each pound of government funding.

The department has also established Skills England, which will play a crucial role in identifying skills needs now and in the future and helping to ensure that training funded from the growth and skills levy delivers value for money.

In order for HE students to be eligible for publicly funded loans, HE providers are expected to meet the registration conditions set by the Office for Students. These include clear expectations for the quality of HE, including minimum thresholds for student outcomes.

Tom Hayes:

[11706]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions she has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on funding for post-16 education.

Janet Daby:

Funding for post-16 education has been discussed with my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

As announced in the Budget, the government is providing an additional £300 million for further education to ensure young people are developing the skills they need to succeed.

■ Home Education: Registration

Richard Tice:

[\[11778\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of the proposed Children Not In School register on families who home-educate their children.

Stephen Morgan:

The proposals to require every local authority in England to maintain registers of children not in school, which are to be included in the future Children's Wellbeing Bill, are intended to help local authorities identify all home educating families in their areas, so that they can ensure children are receiving a safe and suitable education. To ensure these registers can operate effectively, parents of eligible children will be required to provide some information to their local authorities but, as part of the implementation of the legislation, the department would engage with stakeholders to ensure that any burdens on families are minimised. In addition, the children not in school proposals will also include a duty on local authorities to provide support to home educating families should they want it, which will help more families to deliver a suitable education, ensuring more children receive the high standard of education they deserve.

■ Mature Students: Finance

Chris Webb:

[\[11649\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of amending the current student finance system to enable adult learners with existing degrees to access financial support when pursuing an additional degree later.

Janet Daby:

The Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE) will launch in the 2026/27 academic year for courses starting on or after 1 January 2027. The LLE will transform the higher education student finance system in England by broadening access to high quality, flexible education and training.

From its launch, the LLE will be available for full courses at level 4 to 6, such as degrees and technical qualifications, and modules of high-value technical courses at level 4 and 5.

Under the LLE, eligible new learners will have access to a tuition fee loan equal to four years of study. For returning learners, the amount they can borrow will be reduced depending on the funding they have previously received to support study. For example, a typical graduate who completed a three year degree would have one year of residual entitlement remaining.

An additional entitlement above the core four-year entitlement will be available for some priority subjects and longer courses, such as medicine. Further details on the LLE can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/lifelong-learning-entitlement-lle-overview>.

■ Pupil Premium

Tom Hayes: **[11705]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the report by the Sutton Trust entitled Lessons Learnt, published on 28 October 2024, if she will make her policy to (a) review and (b) reform the pupil premium.

Catherine McKinnell:

Every child, regardless of background, deserves the opportunity to progress and succeed in school and beyond, and this government is committed to breaking the link between young people's backgrounds and their future success.

The department is fully focused on supporting the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children. That is why removing barriers to opportunity and raising school standards are at the heart of our mission to transform life chances and ensure all children can achieve and thrive.

The department is providing over £2.9 billion of pupil premium funding in 2024/25 to improve the educational outcomes of disadvantaged pupils in England.

The department will continue to take time to consider the various funding formulae going forward, recognising the importance of establishing a fair funding system that directs funding where it is needed. We will consider the pupil premium as part of that process, and decisions on pupil premium funding for 2025/26 will be taken later this year.

The department will continue to support schools to achieve maximum impact from the pupil premium.

■ Pupils: Dorset

Tom Hayes: **[11703]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the attainment gap for pupils in the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council area.

Catherine McKinnell:

Removing barriers to opportunity and driving high and rising standards at all schools are at the heart of the government's opportunity mission which aims to transform children's life chances.

The Education Policy Institute's Annual Report 2024 outlined that the disadvantage gap in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole is 10.2 months at the end of key stage 2 and that this grows to 16.1 months at the end of key stage 4. Far too many disadvantaged children are being failed and this government is determined to change

this by raising standards and creating opportunities for all our children enabling them to achieve and thrive.

This is why the department has already started work to recruit an additional 6,500 expert teachers and has launched an independent, expert-led Curriculum and Assessment Review that will look closely at key challenges to attainment.

The department is also committed to making quick progress to deliver on its commitment to offer breakfast clubs in all state-funded primary schools, ensuring every primary school child is well prepared for school. The government confirmed it will triple its investment in breakfast clubs to over £30 million in the 2025/26 financial year to help ensure children are ready to learn at the start of the school day and help to drive improvements to behaviour, attendance, and attainment.

Alongside this, pupil premium funding is allocated to schools to support the educational outcomes of disadvantaged pupils and is worth over £2.9 billion in the 2024/25 financial year.

Departmental officials also continue to work closely with the multi-academy trusts and schools in the area to promote continued collaboration, sector-led networks and initiatives to remove barriers to opportunity for all children in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole.

■ Pupils: English Language

Rupert Lowe:

[11709]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of children in school in each constituency do not have English as their first language.

Catherine McKinnell:

The information requested is in the attached table. Data for the proportion and number of children who do not have English as their first language can be found at school level in the school census publication: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-pupils-and-their-characteristics>.

A pupil is recorded to have English as an additional language if they are exposed to a language at home that is known or believed to be other than English. This measure is not a measure of English language proficiency nor a good proxy for recent immigration.

As these figures are taken from the January 2024 school census, the Parliamentary constituencies are based on pre-election boundaries. Where statistics were published prior to the changes in Parliamentary constituency boundaries, they will be updated to reflect the new boundaries in the next publication of statistics. This is expected to be in June 2025 for the Schools, Pupils and their Characteristics publication.

Attachments:

1. First Language Data [11709 attachment.xls]

■ School Rebuilding Programme: Birmingham Northfield**Laurence Turner:**[\[12316\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 7 October 2024 to Question 5620 on Schools: Buildings, what stage of the School Rebuilding Programme are (a) Green Meadow Primary School and (b) King Edward VI Balaam Wood Academy in Birmingham Northfield constituency at; and what indicative start dates have been given to each of those schools.

Stephen Morgan:

Green Meadow Primary School is in group 2 of the School Rebuilding Programme. Projects in group 2 are expected to commence with planning and feasibility work from April 2025.

King Edward VI Balaam Wood Academy is in group 3 and is currently expected to commence with planning and feasibility work no earlier than April 2027.

Specific start dates will be communicated to the schools at least a month in advance of the projects starting.

■ Special Educational Needs**Dr Roz Savage:**[\[11816\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to help ensure that children with (a) hearing impairments and (b) other disabilities receive adequate support at their local schools when specialist facilities are not available; and what support her Department provides for transport in cases where parents have to send their child to a school further away that provides such support.

Catherine McKinnell:

The government's ambition is that all children and young people receive the right support to succeed in their education and as they move into adult life. We are committed to improving inclusivity and expertise in mainstream schools, as well as ensuring special schools cater to those with the most complex needs, restoring parents' trust that their child will get the support they need.

Whilst we recognise the urgency and need to drive improvements, we are conscious that there are no quick fixes and want to take a considered approach to deliver sustainable education reform. Our initial work includes commissioning independent evidence reviews to identify what works to support children and young people with different needs, including hearing impairments. We are also working with Ofsted to consider how outcomes for children with special educational needs and disabilities are better reflected in the Education Inspection Framework.

The department's home-to-school travel policy aims to make sure no child is prevented from accessing education by a lack of transport. Local authorities must arrange free home-to-school travel for children of compulsory school age who attend their nearest school and would not be able to walk there because of the distance, their special educational needs, disability or mobility problem, or because the route is

unsafe. Where a child's nearest school is unable to offer them a place, the nearest school that can admit them becomes their nearest school for school travel purposes.

■ **Special Educational Needs: Cheshire East**

Connor Naismith:

[\[11749\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of a shortfall in SEND education provision within Cheshire East on SEND children; and whether she plans to take steps to increase this provision.

Catherine McKinnell:

The statutory duty to provide sufficient school places for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) sits with local authorities.

The department supports local authorities to provide suitable school places for children and young people with SEND through annual high needs capital funding. This can be used to deliver new places in mainstream and special schools, as well as other specialist settings. It can also be used to improve the suitability and accessibility of existing buildings.

We understand that local authorities, including Cheshire East, will want to be aware of further funding in order to develop an approach to future high needs provision and we will confirm plans for future high needs capital funding in due course.

■ **Students: Loans**

Rupert Lowe:

[\[11711\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the value was of student loans that were written off in each of the last five years; and what this was as a proportion of all outstanding student loans.

Janet Daby:

The table below shows the amount that has been cancelled or written off during each financial year requested, the total amount outstanding at the start of the financial year including interest and loans not yet due for repayment (after adjustments) and the proportion that write offs or cancellations make out of the starting balance.

The reasons for cancelled or written off loans are the following: death of borrower, age of borrower, disability, trivial balances, losses through fraud (including phishing) and other.

Please note that write-offs do not include trivial balance write-offs. Trivial balance write-offs occur if there is a +/- balance on an account of £25 or less and no contact can be established with the borrower (customers can request for this to be reversed). In the context of these figures these borrowers are considered fully repaid and are therefore not included. Cancellations involve the clearance of the remaining debt in line with the terms of the loan, for example when reaching a specific age or becoming permanently disabled. Write-offs for bankruptcy, Individual Voluntary Arrangement or

a trust deed, are no longer allowed against Student Loans balances. Any figures arise from retrospective clear up exercises.

These figures have been taken from Student Loans Company's Student loans in England publication that is updated in June each year. The publication, 'Student loans in England: 2023 to 2024' can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/student-loans-in-england-2023-to-2024>, and

the figures were taken from 'Table 1A' here:

<https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fassets.publishing.service.gov.uk%2Fmedia%2F6672d0e2f92bc4be25da7e13%2Fslcsp012024.xlsx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK>.

2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	
Amount cancelled or written off during the financial year (£m)	39.4	53.7	63.4	58.6	101.1
Total amount outstanding at the start of the financial year, including interest and loans not yet due for repayment (after adjustments) (£m)	121,813.3	140,092.8	160,593.5	181,612.3	205,568.8
Percentage of those written off out of total amount outstanding	0.03%	0.04%	0.04%	0.03%	0.05%

■ Teachers: Havering

Andrew Rosindell:

[11569]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to increase the (a) recruitment and (b) retention of teachers in the London Borough of Havering.

Catherine McKinnell:

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

The first crucial step towards achieving this is to ensure teaching is once again an attractive and respected profession, and to reset the relationship with the teaching profession. As part of this, it is important that teachers receive the pay they deserve, which is why this government has accepted in full the School Teachers' Review Body's recommendation of a 5.5% pay award for teachers and leaders in maintained schools from September 2024. Additionally, from 1 September 2024, schools are no longer required to use performance related pay as the basis for appraisals and decisions related to pay progression. This government is providing schools with almost £1.1 billion in additional funding in the 2024/25 financial year to support schools with overall costs.

Alongside teacher pay, the department is continuing to support teacher trainees with tax-free bursaries of up to £29,000 and scholarships of up to £31,000 in shortage subjects. To help with retention, new teachers of mathematics, physics, chemistry and computing in the first five years of their careers can also receive a Targeted Retention Incentive of up to £6,000 after-tax if working in disadvantaged schools. 13 schools in Havering are eligible for Targeted Retention Incentives.

The department has made available a range of resources to help address teacher workload and wellbeing, including its 'Improve workload and wellbeing for school staff' service and the 'education staff wellbeing charter'. Additionally, effective use of technology can automate tasks and help manage workload for teachers. For example, high quality AI tools have the potential to reduce the amount of time that teachers spend marking, whilst supporting effective feedback and tailored teaching which drive pupil progress.

In August 2024, we announced a £1 million fund to support innovators to develop proof of concept AI tools to support teachers with marking and providing feedback. Oak National Academy has also recently launched a sector-leading AI lesson planning assistant which enables teachers who choose to use it to create personalised and tailored lesson plans and resources in minutes. 40% of Oak users save around four hours per week.

The department is committed to supporting schools to implement flexible working practices including taking planning, preparation and assessment time remotely, to improve recruitment and retention of teachers. The department is also funding bespoke support provided by flexible working ambassador schools and multi-academy trusts. The named flexible working ambassador for schools in Havering is Charles Dickens Primary School.

The department has established Teaching School Hubs across the country, which provide approved high quality professional development to teachers at all stages of their careers. They play a significant role in delivering Initial Teacher Training, the Early Career Framework, National Professional Qualifications and Appropriate Body services. London District East Teaching School Hub is a centre of excellence supporting teacher training and development across Havering.

■ Teachers: Labour Turnover

Samantha Niblett:

[\[12194\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to increase teacher retention.

Catherine McKinnell:

High quality teaching is the factor that makes the biggest difference to a child's education, which is why we are committed to tackling the crisis in teacher recruitment and retention this government inherited.

It is vital to retain our existing teachers to ensure a sufficient high quality workforce, and the department is committed to tackling retention challenges, making work pay and supporting teachers to stay in the profession and thrive. A key first step is to ensure teaching is once again a respected and attractive profession and that teachers get the pay they deserve, which is why this government has accepted in full the School Teachers' Review Body's recommendation of a 5.5% pay award for teachers and leaders in maintained schools from September this year.

Alongside teacher pay, new teachers of mathematics, physics, chemistry and computing in the first five years of their careers can now also receive a targeted retention incentive of up to £6,000 after-tax if working in disadvantaged schools.

Helping teachers remain and thrive in the profession is not just about pay and financial reward, but also about workload and wellbeing. The department has made an early decision to remove the single headline Ofsted grade, which put unnecessary pressure on teachers and leaders. We have also made available a range of resources to help address teacher workload and wellbeing, including the 'Improve workload and wellbeing for school staff' service and the 'education staff wellbeing charter'.

The department is also committed to supporting schools to implement flexible working practices, including undertaking planning, preparation and assessment time remotely, to improve recruitment and retention of teachers. In addition, the department has also developed an online toolkit of resources and is funding free webinar training and bespoke peer support provided by flexible working ambassador schools and multi-academy trusts.

■ T-levels

Connor Naismith:

[\[11751\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to help raise awareness of the (a) potential merits of T Level qualifications for employers and (b) differences between T Levels and apprenticeships.

Janet Daby:

All T Levels provide students with direct experience of the workplace through a 45-day industry placement, offering employers a unique opportunity to build their talent pipelines and fill skills gaps. Almost a third of the first cohort of T Level students that progressed into employment and apprenticeships are employed by their industry placement organisation, demonstrating the value of T Levels for employers.

T Levels are promoted via the department's national Skills for Life communications campaign, and thousands of employers have taken advantage of our support to help them understand and deliver high quality industry placements. Our 700 member-strong T Level Ambassador Network are passionate advocates for technical education and work across the country to raise awareness and understanding of T Levels in their industries. The department's annual T Levels Week will take place between 2 to 6 December this year and will see providers, employers and ambassadors across the country sharing student stories to raise the profile of T Levels and their benefits.

The Skills for Life 'find training and employment schemes' website for businesses includes clear guidance on the differences between apprenticeships and T Levels and outlines the benefits of both programmes. This makes it clear that T Levels can help build a talent pipeline for apprenticeships, including through accelerated apprenticeships, which can reduce the time needed to complete an apprenticeship programme, saving businesses time and cost. The website can be accessed here: <https://find-employer-schemes.education.gov.uk/schemes/>.

■ Vocational Education: Qualifications

Chris Bloore:

[\[11627\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to ensure that students can continue to study applied general qualifications from September 2025.

Janet Daby:

The government is committed to ensuring that all young people can access a range of high quality vocational and technical qualifications which supports them to develop the skills they need to thrive at work and throughout life, including applied general qualifications. This is at the heart of the government's missions to break down the barriers to opportunity and to boost economic growth.

The government is currently conducting a review of level 3 qualifications focusing on those set to lose funding from 31 July 2025, which includes applied general qualifications. The outcomes of the review will be reported by the end of the year.

Additionally, the independent Curriculum and Assessment Review, will ensure meaningful, rigorous and high-value pathways for all at ages 16 to 19, with access to qualifications and training that will provide the skills they need to seize opportunity.

■ Young People: Gloucester

Alex McIntyre:

[\[11821\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to improve opportunities for young people in Gloucester.

Catherine McKinnell:

The Opportunity Mission will build opportunity for all by giving every child, including children across Gloucester the best start in life, helping them achieve and thrive, and building skills for opportunity and growth. This will be underpinned by family security, and we must tackle the underlying barriers to opportunity that hold too many young people back.

That is why the department is committed to recruiting 6,500 additional teachers, creating 3,000 new or expanded school-based nurseries, expanding childcare entitlements for eligible working families, providing free breakfast clubs in every primary school and launching Skills England to transform opportunities and drive growth. We are also investing more in children's services to set them on a sustainable trajectory and have announced new funding for kinship care and fostering to keep children safe and provide family security for our most vulnerable children.

We will also introduce the youth guarantee, which will help 18 to 21-year-olds to access education, training, or apprenticeships opportunities and receive employment support. This will give all young people the best start in their career, so they can secure good, skilled jobs in the future, both in Gloucester and across the country.

The government will also introduce new foundation apprenticeships for young people in targeted and growing sectors. Foundation apprenticeships are a work-based training offer that will give more young people a foot in the door and will support clear progression pathways into further work-based training and employment. We will work closely with the sector to ensure the design is fit for purpose and meets employers' needs and further detail will be set out in due course.

ENERGY SECURITY AND NET ZERO

■ British Coal Staff Superannuation Scheme: Cannock Chase

Josh Newbury:

[\[12155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, how many (a) pensioners and (b) dependents are recipients of the British Coal Staff Superannuation Scheme in Cannock Chase constituency.

Sarah Jones:

We are unable to provide the breakdown requested. However, information from the trustees shows that, as at October 2024, the number of pensioner and dependant members in Cannock Chase was 530.

Department for Energy Security and Net Zero: Official Cars**Charlie Dewhirst:**[\[11759\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, pursuant to the Answer of 14 October 2024 to Question 7001 on Department for Energy Security and Net Zero: Official Cars, which specific senior officials in his Department have use of the two cars; and whether those senior officials had access to a Government car before the 2024 general election.

Michael Shanks:

The two official cars DESNZ currently contracts with the Government Car Service are and have been for the use of Ministers.

Great British Energy: Staff**Mark Garnier:**[\[11876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what proportion of GB Energy staff will be based at its headquarters in Aberdeen.

Michael Shanks:

GBE's workforce planning is ongoing, and we are committed to ensuring we have the right skills, across the right locations, so that GBE can deliver maximum impact. A significant proportion of GBE's staff will be employed in Aberdeen, including the permanent CEO and most of the senior executive team. The first recruitment campaigns have been launched, with three Director positions advertised in Aberdeen. Once appointed, The Board will regularly spend time in Aberdeen, including with communities and businesses.

Nature Reserves: East of England**Sir John Hayes:**[\[11548\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, if he will make an assessment of the impact of proposed pylons in the Grimsby to Walpole scheme on the Wash National Nature Reserve.

Michael Shanks:

Developers of transmission projects and all nationally significant infrastructure projects in England and Wales must assess the impacts of their proposals. This includes conducting assessments of projects' impacts on the environment and habitats through Environmental Impact Assessments and Habitats Regulations Assessments. Additionally, developers engage with statutory and non-statutory stakeholders through consultations to ensure their feedback is considered and

incorporated into project proposals. All of this is considered in the project consenting process.

■ Nuclear Fusion: Finance

Mark Garnier: [\[11878\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, with reference to paragraph 3.71 of Autumn Budget 2024, HC 295, published on 30 October 2024, how much funding will be available for fusion energy research in the 2025-26 financial year.

Kerry McCarthy:

Confirmation of the amount of funding will be shared in due course.

■ Nuclear Power: Innovation

Andrew Bowie: [\[11606\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what steps he is taking to support (a) advanced reactors, (b) nuclear fusion and (c) other innovation in nuclear technology.

Michael Shanks:

Advanced Modular Reactors have the potential to help tackle hard-to-abate emissions in energy intensive industries. The Government continues to fund research and innovation to develop High Temperature Gas Reactor technology and their advanced fuels through the Advanced Nuclear Fund. The current programme is also providing funding to the UK's nuclear regulators to ensure they can develop capabilities to regulate novel reactor types.

The STEP (Spherical Tokamak for Energy Production) is the UK's flagship fusion programme, which aims to deliver a commercially viable fusion power plant prototype by the 2040s.

The commercial process for the STEP powerplant is underway, we are investing in cutting-edge fusion research programmes and facilities and are implementing the UK's proportionate regulatory framework to encourage investment.

■ Wind Power

Tom Hayes: [\[11789\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what steps he is taking to help increase domestic production of wind turbines for use in the UK.

Tom Hayes: [\[11790\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what funding the Government is providing to support domestic manufacturing of offshore wind turbines.

Michael Shanks:

The Government will soon be introducing supply chain support measures through the Contracts for Difference (CfD) scheme. These will initially apply to offshore wind for

the next CfD allocation round and may be broadened out to other technologies in the future depending on prevailing market conditions.

■ Wind Power: Seas and Oceans

Tom Hayes: [\[11786\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what assessment he has made of the capacity of domestic ports to facilitate the (a) delivery and (b) maintenance of offshore wind.

Michael Shanks:

Ports play a vital role in the deployment, operation, and maintenance of offshore wind, particularly for floating offshore wind. As it stands, the UK does not have the port capacity to enable the mass deployment of floating offshore wind. That is why the Government has taken the Port of Cromarty Firth and Port Talbot into due diligence and subsidy control assessment as part of the up to £160m Floating Offshore Wind Manufacturing Investment Scheme. Additionally, at least £5.8 billion of the National Wealth Fund's capital will focus on the sectors announced in the manifesto, including ports.

Tom Hayes: [\[11787\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what steps he is taking to increase the domestic ownership of UK-based offshore wind capacity.

Michael Shanks:

Economic growth is Government's top priority and investment is a key pillar of our growth strategy. The UK is open to investment from around the world. Great British Energy, which is fully owned by the British people, will own, manage, and operate clean energy projects across the UK, generating homegrown electricity. By partnering with The Crown Estate, GBE will help maximise the delivery of clean energy infrastructure, which could include offshore wind. As Great British Energy will be operationally independent, the exact mix of technologies it chooses to invest in will be determined in due course.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Agriculture and Horticulture: Import Controls

Helen Morgan: [\[12152\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he expects to agree new phytosanitary arrangements with the EU for (a) agricultural and (b) horticultural businesses.

Daniel Zeichner:

Following their meeting in Brussels on 2 October, the President of the European Commission and the Prime Minister have agreed to strengthen the relationship between the EU and UK. The UK and EU are like-minded partners with similarly high

standards. The Government has already committed to seek to negotiate a veterinary/sanitary and phytosanitary agreement to help boost trade and deliver benefits to businesses and consumers in the UK and the EU. The Government is unable to speculate on timings before we have begun formal discussions with the EU.

■ Agriculture: Brexit

Clive Jones: [\[11478\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the impact of the UK's withdrawal from the EU on farmers.

Daniel Zeichner:

Data relating to farmers are regularly published. Agriculture in the UK 2023 was published in June 2024. Farming evidence packs have been recently updated including key statistics and farm performance [Farming statistics evidence packs - GOV.UK](#). These set out an extensive range of data to provide an overview of agriculture in the UK, and the contribution of Direct Payments to farm incomes, including analysis by sector, location in England and type of land tenure.

We publish regular statistics on farm income, agricultural productivity and food production, including data earlier this year looking at how farm business income has changed since the start of the agricultural transition.

[Monitoring the agricultural transition period in England, 2022/23 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

We will continue to carry out appropriate and timely assessments of our interventions to inform policy development.

■ Animal Welfare

Abtisam Mohamed: [\[12236\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to strengthen animal welfare.

Daniel Zeichner:

This Government was elected on a mandate to introduce the most ambitious plans to improve animal welfare in a generation. That is exactly what we will do, and we will be outlining more detail in due course.

■ Animal Welfare: Fines

Stuart Anderson: [\[12292\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to improve the enforcement of animal welfare penalty notices.

Daniel Zeichner:

Enforcement authorities have been able to issue penalty notices for a range of animal health and welfare offences since 1 January 2024. At the end of each financial year, enforcement authorities are required to submit an annual report to Defra on how

many penalty notices they have issued. The first annual report from enforcement authorities on penalty notices issued is to be submitted to Defra by June 2025.

Defra is funding training to enforcement authorities such as local authorities and the police to support the effective implementation of penalty notices within their enforcement regime and their effective use as an enforcement tool.

■ **Beavers: Conservation**

Jayne Kirkham:

[\[12218\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of expanding schemes to reintroduce beavers into the wild.

Mary Creagh:

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

Yes, assessments of the potential merits of beaver reintroductions in England have been made.

Most notably, beginning in 2015, a 5-year trial for beaver wild release took place on the River Otter in Devon. In 2020, Natural England published assessment results for the trial. The trial was found to be successful, having brought many benefits to local ecology and communities, including creating wetland habitat and reducing downstream flood risk for housing.

Following successful completion of the trial, the Government conducted a public consultation on the approach to beaver reintroduction and management in England. In 2022, the Government published its response to this consultation. Work with Natural England to develop our approach to beaver reintroductions in England is continuing, including on wild release.

■ **Bottles: Deposit Return Schemes**

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[11843\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will bring forward the start date of the proposed bottle deposit and return scheme.

Mary Creagh:

This Government is committed to creating a circular economy that: uses our resources as efficiently and productively as possible, minimises environmental impacts, accelerates our progress on Net Zero, supports economic growth, and creates new jobs.

This Government is also committed to delivering the Deposit Return Scheme for drinks containers in October 2027, as agreed with the devolved Governments of the UK, and in accordance with the Joint Policy Statement published in April 2024.

■ Chemicals

Sir Ashley Fox:

[\[12020\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what his planned timetable is for the publication of the UK Chemicals Strategy.

Emma Hardy:

The Government is committed to protecting human health and the environment. This Government has wasted no time in announcing a rapid review of the Environmental Improvement Plan to deliver on our legally binding targets to save nature and this includes how best to manage chemicals. Further details will be provided in due course.

■ Equipment: Waste Disposal

Tom Hayes:

[\[11730\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to encourage (a) reuse and (b) repair of items that would otherwise be thrown away.

Mary Creagh:

This Government committed in its manifesto to reducing waste by moving to a circular economy. The Secretary of State has committed to developing a new Circular Economy Strategy for England to support economic growth, deliver green jobs, promote efficient and productive use of resources, minimise negative environmental impacts and accelerate to Net Zero.

We will work across Government, and with input from all parts of society, to create a Strategy which supports and encourages greater reuse and repair.

Defra has also published guidance [Guidance on applying the waste hierarchy - GOV.UK](#) on how businesses can use the waste hierarchy – a framework for dealing with waste which promotes re-use. The guidance shows how it works for a range of common materials and products and what businesses and public bodies need to do. It gives top priority to preventing waste in the first place. When waste is created, it gives priority to preparing it for re-use, then recycling, then recovery, and last of all disposal (e.g. landfill).

■ Food: Labelling

Rupert Lowe:

[\[11713\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of conducting a review into the food labelling system.

Daniel Zeichner:

Defra is in the process of conducting a Post Implementation Review of the Food Information Regulations 2014 and the Country of Origin of Certain Meats Regulations 2015 to assess their success against their origin policy objectives.

Furthermore, we plan to publish a summary of responses to a recent public consultation on fairer food labelling.

■ **Furs: Trade**

James Naish:

[\[11354\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to publish the results of the consultation entitled the Fur market in Great Britain, published on 31 May 2021.

Daniel Zeichner:

Ministers are reviewing policies, which will be announced in due course, including the consultation on the Fur Market in Great Britain. Defra is continuing to build the evidence base on the fur sector. This includes commissioning our expert Animal Welfare Committee on what constitutes responsible sourcing of fur. The report that they produce will support our understanding of the fur industry and help inform our next steps.

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

■ **Incinerators**

Steve Barclay:

[\[9453\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of changes to the mix of waste sent for incineration since 2017 on the carbon emissions of each unit of electricity generated by incinerators compared to (a) coal, (b) gas, (c) nuclear, (d) biomass, (e) offshore wind, (f) onshore wind and (g) solar.

Mary Creagh:

Defra made no assessment of the effect of changes in the mix of waste sent for incineration on the carbon emissions of each unit of electricity generated by energy recovery facilities when the Rt Hon member for North East Cambridgeshire was Secretary of State. Defra is currently undertaking a composition analysis study of residual waste treated at energy recovery facilities. This will enable us to better understand the overall composition of residual waste treated at energy recovery facilities and, in due course, can form the basis for a better understanding of the fossil carbon portion of waste sent to incineration.

■ **Poultry: Animal Welfare**

Irene Campbell:

[\[11633\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if his Department will take legislative steps to help improve welfare standards for (a) layer hens and (b) broiler chickens.

Daniel Zeichner:

All farm animals, are protected by comprehensive and robust animal health and welfare legislation: the Animal Welfare Act 2006 makes it an offence either to cause any captive animal unnecessary suffering or to fail to provide for the welfare needs of the animal; and The Welfare of Farmed Animals (England) Regulations 2007 set down detailed requirements on how farmed livestock, including laying hens and meat chickens, should be kept.

We are firmly committed to maintaining and improving animal welfare and want to work closely with the farming sector to deliver high standards.

Further details on our plans will be provided in due course.

■ Rights of Way**Dr Simon Opher:**[\[11621\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make it his policy to repeal the 2031 deadline for registering public rights of way.

Mary Creagh:

Ministers are considering the further implementation of the rights of way reform programme.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**■ Armenia: Azerbaijan****Clive Lewis:**[\[11658\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the Government plans to respond to recent alleged reports of violence against ethnic Armenians by Azerbaijan.

Stephen Doughty:

We are not aware of any recent reports of alleged violence against ethnic Armenians by Azerbaijan. However, we are clear that peaceful negotiation is the only route to a lasting resolution of the longstanding conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and we stand ready to support them to achieve this. I conveyed this sentiment in calls with the foreign ministers of both Armenia (on 11 October) and Azerbaijan (on 31 October).

■ British Indian Ocean Territory: Sovereignty**Bell Ribeiro-Addy:**[\[12146\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he plans to take to help ensure that Chagossians (a) in the UK and (b) globally are consulted before conclusion of a treaty on the transfer of sovereignty of the Chagos Islands to Mauritius.

Stephen Doughty:

Ministers and officials will continue to regularly engage with members of the Chagossian community on a range of issues, including on the implementation of the agreement reached between the United Kingdom and Mauritius. We recognise the huge importance of the islands to Chagossians and have worked to ensure this agreement reflects their interests.

Development Aid**Laura Kyrke-Smith:**[\[11810\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what proportion of Official Development Assistance is spent on (a) fragile and (b) conflict-affected states.

Anneliese Dodds:

In 2023, 64 per cent (£1.4 billion) of the of the UK's country-specific bilateral Official Development Assistance (ODA) was of scored to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) 2022 States of Fragility which provides a list fragile and conflict-affected states. This figure understates the true level as it does not include core contributions to multilateral organisations where funds cannot be directly tracked to benefitting countries. Additionally, this total does not include bilateral non-country specific ODA in the form of regional or centrally managed programmes, for which the beneficiary country cannot be individually identified.

Diego Garcia: Chagossians**Bell Ribeiro-Addy:**[\[12148\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if his Department will take steps to facilitate the return of Chagossians to Diego Garcia.

Stephen Doughty:

Following the agreement reached on 3 October, we will work with Mauritius to restart visits to the islands as soon as possible, including Diego Garcia, for Chagossians. In addition, Mauritius will be free to implement a programme of resettlement on the islands other than Diego Garcia.

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Industrial Disputes**Nick Timothy:**[\[11647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what industrial disputes are ongoing within (a) his Department and (b) each of the arm's length bodies connected to his Department; how many (i) staff and (ii) contractors are involved in each dispute; what the form of industrial action is in each dispute; which recognised trade union is involved in each dispute; what the substantive matter is that is being disputed in each case; and what steps he plans to take to end each dispute.

Catherine West:

PCS Union members are taking industrial action affecting the FM services at FCDO's facility in East Kilbride, known as Abercrombie House. The FM services affected include Soft Services and Security Guarding contracted by the Landlord: The Government Property Agency. The FCDO do not hold any contractual relationship with the employers of the PCS Union members, either OCS or G4S to influence negotiations regarding industrial action.

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Written Questions**Dame Harriett Baldwin:**[\[9454\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when he plans to respond to Question 7449 on Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Private Education, tabled by the Rt hon. Member for West Worcestershire on 7 October 2024.

Catherine West:

We are grateful to the Honourable member for bringing this matter to our attention. We apologise for the delay. The FCDO published a response to Question 7449 on 17 October 2024.

Gaza: Humanitarian Aid**Abtisam Mohamed:**[\[11613\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 15 October 2024 to Question 8316 Gaza: Humanitarian aid and with reference to the update published by Gisha on 23 October 2024 on the petition to the Israeli High Court by Gisha, Adalah, the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, HaMoked: Center for the Defence of the Individual and Physicians for Human Rights-Israel, what steps he is taking to help the entry of humanitarian aid into Gaza.

Mr Hamish Falconer:

The humanitarian situation in Gaza is intolerable. The UK condemns Israel's restrictions on aid - as the Prime Minister has said, the world will not tolerate any more excuses from Israel on humanitarian assistance. The Prime Minister stressed the importance of getting much more aid into Gaza in a call with Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu on 19 October; the Foreign Secretary reiterated this in his call with Foreign Minister Katz on 27 October. The UK is committed to alleviating the suffering in Gaza and we provide significant funding to partners to support those most in need, including matching up to £10 million of public donations to the Disasters Emergency Committee's Middle East humanitarian appeal.

■ Georgia: Elections

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[11919\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of potential irregularities in the recent elections in Georgia.

Stephen Doughty:

I made clear in a statement on 27 October my support for the findings of the preliminary report of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights election monitoring mission. I also outlined the need for irregularities to be investigated thoroughly and independently. The Georgian authorities must reverse their declining commitment to democratic values and we will work with our international partners to encourage Georgia to return to a Euro-Atlantic path.

■ Government Hospitality: Wines

Emily Thornberry:

[\[12253\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Government Hospitality wine cellar biennial report 2022 to 2024, published on 31 October 2024, for what occasion was a bottle of 1922 Hine Cognac consumed in the 2023-24 financial year.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[12254\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Government Hospitality wine cellar biennial report 2022 to 2024, published on 31 October 2024, for what occasions were six bottles of 1988 Echezeaux Domaine Dujac red Burgundy consumed in the 2023-24 financial year.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[12255\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Government Hospitality wine cellar biennial report 2022 to 2024, published on 31 October 2024, for what occasions were four bottles of 1983 Chateau Margaux Bordeaux consumed in the 2023-24 financial year.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[12256\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Government Hospitality wine cellar biennial report 2022 to 2024, published on 31 October 2024, for what occasions were three bottles of 1931 Quinta do Noval port consumed in the 2023-24 financial year.

Catherine West:

The cognac, wine, and port referenced were consumed at a Minister-led event to mark the centenary of the Government Wine Cellar in December 2023.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[12257\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Government Hospitality wine cellar biennial report 2022 to 2024, published on 31 October 2024, for what occasions were two bottles of 1989 Batard-Montrachet white Burgundy consumed in the 2022-23 financial year.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[12258\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Government Hospitality wine cellar biennial report 2022 to 2024, published on 31 October 2024, for what occasion was a half bottle of 1948 Frapin Grande Champagne Cognac consumed in the 2022-23 financial year.

Catherine West:

The cognac and wine referred to formed part of the Government Wine Committee's tasting. The Committee, which convenes three times a year, provides advice on the management of the Government Wine Cellar.

■ Israel: Arms Trade

Abtisam Mohamed:

[\[11612\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 15 October 2024 to Question 7719 on Israel: Arms Trade, what the basis is for a lack of sufficient verifiable evidence of possible breaches of International Humanitarian Law; and what account he has taken of submissions to his Department by (a) Al-Haq, (b) Global Legal Action Network, (c) Amnesty International, (d) Al-Mezan, (e) Human Rights Watch, (f) B'tselem, (g) Yesh-Din, and (h) Gisha.

Mr Hamish Falconer:

The International Humanitarian Law (IHL) assessment process gathers information from a wide range of sources, including reporting from international and multilateral bodies, NGOs on the ground, open-source evidence and internal reporting. We do not comment on individual pieces of evidence.

IHL assessments consider the three aspects of Israel's compliance: conduct of hostilities; humanitarian access and relief; and detainees. A lack of sufficient verifiable evidence applies only to the conduct of hostilities. This is in part due to the opaque and contested information environment in Gaza and the challenges of accessing specific and sensitive information, such as intended targets and anticipated civilian harm. However, the assessment's findings on Israel's compliance and commitment in the areas of humanitarian relief and treatment of detainees give cause for concern about its attitude and approach to the conduct of hostilities, as does the scale of the destruction and the number of civilian deaths. The Foreign Secretary has raised these concerns with the Government of Israel.

More information on the process can be found at: Summary of the IHL process, decision and the factors taken into account - GOV.UK.

■ Israel: UNRWA

Andy McDonald:

[\[11605\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make representations to his Israeli counterpart to urge that government to not implement the Knesset legislation on UNRWA passed on 28 October 2024.

Mr Hamish Falconer:

The Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary have expressed serious concern at the UNRWA bills that Israel's Knesset has now passed. This legislation risks making UNRWA's essential work for Palestinians impossible, jeopardising the entire international humanitarian response in Gaza and delivery of essential health and education services in the West Bank. The UK and six allies issued a joint statement on 27 October expressing our grave concern and urging Israel to ensure UNRWA can continue its lifesaving work. The Foreign Secretary reiterated this to Israel's Foreign Minister Katz on 27 October. We will continue working with our international partners and through the UN to press Israel to ensure that UNRWA can continue its vital operations.

■ Lebanon: Civilians

Steve Witherden:

[\[10827\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if his Department will take steps to help protect non-UK citizens in Lebanon who have siblings in (a) the UK and (b) Montgomeryshire and Glyndŵr constituency.

Mr Hamish Falconer:

Consular services are only open to British nationals (funded by a premium on all British passports), and the UK Government is unable directly to assist non-UK citizens in Lebanon. However, immediate family members of British citizens and those settled in the UK who wish to come and live in the UK can apply under one of the existing family visa routes, through the usual channels. Any application for a UK visa will be assessed against the requirements of the Immigration Rules.

The UK has been calling for an immediate ceasefire between Lebanese Hizbollah and Israel and has announced £15 million of life-saving aid to Lebanon since 25 September. This funding will respond to the mass displacement of people and the growing number of civilian casualties, as well support access to clean water, sanitation and health and nutrition supplies through UNICEF.

■ Nagorno Karabakh: Refugees

Clive Lewis:

[\[11659\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what the Government's policy is on (a) the right of return and (b) civil rights protections for ethnic Armenians displaced from the Nagorno-Karabakh region.

Stephen Doughty:

The Government has encouraged the Azerbaijani authorities to provide clarity on the rights and security of ethnic Armenians displaced by conflict who wish to return to the region. We commend the efforts of the Armenian government, which has supported those displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh to enable them to have a future in Armenia itself.

■ Pitcairn Islands: Visits Abroad**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[11565\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many officials of his Department have visited Pitcairn Island in each of the last 12 months.

Stephen Doughty:

The current resident Administrator is recruited by the FCDO. There have been two visits by FCDO officials within the last 12 months. The Deputy Governor (based in Auckland, New Zealand) visited the island in October 2023 and there was a visit by a Technical Works Officer in December 2023. The Governor visited in 2023. FCDO officials are in regular contact with their counterparts on Pitcairn Island. FCDO sponsored programmes are providing support virtually on matters such as healthcare and through visiting teams on issues such as environmental protection. I recently spoke to the Mayor and look forward to welcoming him to the JMC this month.

■ Prosecutions: Pitcairn Islands**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[11566\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many criminal (a) prosecutions and (b) convictions have taken place on the Pitcairn Islands in each of the last 10 years.

Stephen Doughty:

Government of Pitcairn hold the data on criminal prosecutions and convictions in the Pitcairn Islands.

■ Spain: Floods**Alicia Kearns:**[\[12168\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has allocated additional resources to the British Embassy and Consulates in Spain following the recent flooding.

Stephen Doughty:

Determining the safety and welfare of British nationals impacted by the severe floods in Spain, through our Embassy and Consulates in the country, is a top priority for the FCDO. We are regularly reviewing the situation and our resources in place to support this effort, working closely with the Spanish authorities, to ensure we continue to act in line with our commitment to provide support to affected British Nationals.

■ World Bank: Climate Change

Callum Anderson:

[\[11748\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has had discussions with the World Bank Group on the Government's climate finance commitments.

Anneliese Dodds:

Alongside the Chancellor and Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, I attended World Bank Group Annual Meetings. As my Governor's statement set out, the UK will continue to be a leading contributor to international climate finance, including support for nature and forests and the Bank is a key partner for us.

Alongside the Secretary of State, I called on the Bank to play a leading role in setting a new collective MDB climate finance target ahead of COP29. I discussed this with President Banga when he visited today.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Audiology: Paediatrics

Gregory Stafford:

[\[10930\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent progress has been made by the NHS England National Paediatric Hearing Improvement Programme; and what the findings were of its review of data for new-born babies.

Stephen Kinnock:

[Holding answer 1 November 2024]: The NHS England Paediatric Hearing Services Improvement Programme, led by the National Health Services' National Medical Director and Chief Scientific Officer, undertook a comprehensive review of all 140 paediatric audiology services across England to identify services not meeting the recommended standards of care.

NHS England is working with integrated care boards to ensure individual cases are reassessed and, where appropriate, that children are recalled for reassessment and onward referral to clinical services as necessary. NHS England aims to complete these reassessments by March 2025. In addition, NHS England has put in place workstreams to ensure high quality professional standards are adhered to in hospitals and in community services, and that the right workforce is in place to deliver these services. A national External Quality Assessment scheme is in development to improve diagnostic consistency and to highlight any areas for early intervention.

■ Breast Cancer: Diagnosis

Jim Shannon:

[\[11858\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential implications for his policies of the average time from women finding breast lumps to being referred for diagnostic tests.

Karin Smyth:

People presenting to their general practice (GP) with signs or symptoms that could indicate breast cancer may be referred on the suspected breast cancer referral pathway, or the breast symptoms referral pathway, depending on the details of their case. Suspected breast cancer contributes the highest number of referrals of any urgent suspected cancer pathway, with over 376,000 patients seen in 2023/24.

The National Health Service in England committed, in the NHS Long Term Plan, to provide faster diagnosis through the introduction of the Faster Diagnosis Standard (FDS). The standard ensures that people are told they have cancer, or that cancer is ruled out, within 28 days from referral. This applies to the suspected breast cancer pathway and the breast symptoms pathway. Further information on the NHS Long Term Plan is available at the following link:

<https://www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/>

In March 2024, NHS England published the [Breast Best Practice Timed Pathway Guidance](#) to support the ongoing improvement effort to shorten diagnosis pathways, reduce variation, improve experience of care, and meet the FDS. The most recent data, for August 2024, shows that 90.4% of patients with suspected breast cancer receive a diagnosis or all-clear within 28 days of referral.

The Department does not hold data on the average time from women finding breast lumps to being referred for diagnostic tests. However, data from the 2023 Cancer Patient Experience Survey indicates that the majority of respondents diagnosed with breast cancer had spoken to a health professional at their GP about their symptoms only once before being diagnosed.

■ Breast Cancer: Screening**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:****[11918]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of increasing the (a) acceptable and (b) achievable levels of S07b incident screenings for mammograms.

Andrew Gwynne:

As part of the NHS Breast Screening Programme, S07b is the 'screening standard' whereby 'incident screens', that is any subsequent breast screen after first screen, are referred for further assessment.

NHS England has advised that there is expected to be an initial light touch review of the breast screening standards by the end of March 2025, with a full review of all standards in screening year 2025/6. During the full review in 2025/26, the programme performance in 'percentage referrals to assessment' will be reviewed to determine whether the acceptable and achievable limits should be changed.

However, increasing the thresholds for this standard, will mean that the number of women referred for follow up tests, namely biopsy, mammograms, and ultrasound,

will increase, many of whom will have no cancer. Screening programmes must continue to maximise benefit while minimising harm.

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:

[\[11920\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve the number of breast cancer diagnoses at mammogram or other early stages.

Andrew Gwynne:

Lord Darzi's report has set out the scale of the challenges we face in fixing the National Health Service and the need to improve cancer waiting time performance and cancer survival, including for breast cancer. In particular, he has highlighted the need to improve the number of patients starting their treatment within 62 days of referral and to increase the number of patients diagnosed at an earlier stage.

The Government is committed to meeting all three NHS cancer waiting time standards across England within the next five years. Meeting these will ensure no patient waits longer than they should for diagnosis or treatment.

The NHS Breast Screening Programme offers all women in England from 50 years old up to their 71st birthday the opportunity to be screened every three years for breast cancer, to help detect abnormalities and intervene early to reduce the number of lives lost to invasive breast cancer.

NHS England has also developed a national plan in collaboration with key stakeholders such as cancer alliances to improve uptake within the breast screening programme. The plan sets out the priorities, interventions and monitoring of impact and outcomes to be achieved to improve uptake through: Expanding access, data and analytics, reducing inequalities, contracting, communication and IT developments.

■ **Charles Bonnet Syndrome: Diagnosis and Medical Treatments**

Steve Darling:

[\[11195\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department is taking steps to establish a formal pathway for the (a) diagnosis and (b) treatment of Charles Bonnet Syndrome.

Steve Darling:

[\[11196\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to increase the number of healthcare professionals trained to (a) diagnose and (b) treat Charles Bonnet Syndrome.

Stephen Kinnock:

Patients who experience Charles Bonnet symptoms who are already under hospital eye services can access support services via an Eye Care Liaison Officer within the hospital. Otherwise, a patient should contact their general practice (GP). The GP will make sure that the patients is not suffering hallucinations for any other reason, and

then refer them directly to local Low Vision Services, which will incorporate support for Charles Bonnet Syndrome.

Healthcare professionals are responsible for ensuring their clinical knowledge remains up-to-date and for identifying learning needs as part of their continuing professional development.

■ Congenital Hyperinsulinism

Sarah Hall:

[\[11469\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will update the NHS website to include (a) hyperinsulinism amongst rare diseases and (b) what to do should you or someone you know exhibit symptoms of hyperinsulinism.

Andrew Gwynne:

There are no current plans to update the National Health Service website to include information on hyperinsulinism. There are over 7,000 rare diseases often needing highly specialised input, and so the NHS website is not always the most appropriate platform to disseminate such information.

Congenital hyperinsulinism (CHI) is a rare and complex condition requiring specialised care through a multidisciplinary team led by an expert paediatric endocrinology service. CHI is present from birth, and a child usually starts to show symptoms within the first few days of life, although very occasionally symptoms may appear later in infancy. These patients may not be picked up in hospital after birth and will present often to their midwife or general practitioner with symptoms, and require referral to specialist care later on in infancy. Symptoms can include floppiness, shakiness, poor feeding, sleepiness, and seizures. It is important that anyone who is worried their child may be exhibiting these symptoms seeks urgent medical advice. Ideally, children with suspected CHI should be transferred to a specialist centre.

NHS England commissions this highly specialised service for CHI from three units: Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children; Royal Manchester Children's Hospital; and Alder Hey Children's Hospital.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

Lee Anderson:

[\[12106\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which locations in Ashfield are currently providing the Pfizer covid-19 vaccine for people who are unable to have the Moderna vaccine for health reasons.

Andrew Gwynne:

The Government is guided by the advice of the independent Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) for its immunisation and vaccination programmes. This includes eligibility for vaccination and the vaccines that may be used in the national programme.

Both the Moderna mRNA (Spikevax) COVID-19 vaccine and the Pfizer-BioNTech mRNA (Comirnaty) COVID-19 vaccine are approved for use in the United Kingdom and, in line with JCVI advice, may be used in the autumn 2024 COVID-19 national vaccination programme. NHS England advises that all sites in Ashfield are currently providing the Moderna vaccine, and that from November 2024 the Pfizer vaccine is also expected to be supplied. The vaccine or vaccines being supplied at individual sites or nationally is, within JCVI guidance, an operational matter. Further information on the JCVI's advice is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-autumn-2024-vaccination-programme-jcvi-advice-8-april-2024/>

Guidance from the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) states that there are very few individuals who cannot receive the COVID-19 vaccines approved in the UK. Anyone concerned about possible reactions to a vaccine should in the first instance speak to the clinician responsible for their care for advice.

Published UKHSA clinical guidance for health professionals and immunisation practitioners on COVID-19 vaccination includes guidance for the management of patients with a history of allergy, including circumstances where a person may be referred to an expert allergist and, after a review of the individual's risks and benefits of vaccination, where it is indicated, they could then be vaccinated in hospital under clinical supervision. NHS England will continue to follow this clinical guidance.

■ **Dementia: Aylesbury**

Laura Kyrke-Smith:

[7700]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve dementia care in Aylesbury constituency.

Stephen Kinnock:

Buckinghamshire Council have stood up a new Dementia Strategic Oversight Board to deliver on local priorities that span across the Well Pathway for Dementia. These priorities include raising awareness of dementia, building up the support available in the community and encouraging timely diagnoses.

Buckinghamshire was selected as one of NHS England's Diagnosing Advanced Dementia Mandate pilot sites. This pilot was delivered over a 12-month period starting in May 2023. The aim was to reduce the waiting list for assessment and restore the dementia diagnosis rate to pre-Covid levels. Over the course of this project, the Dementia Diagnosis Rate (DDR) has increased by 3.1% (from 56.2% in May 2023 to 59.5% in July 2024).

Buckinghamshire Council are re-commissioning the Dementia Support Service with the new provision due to start on 1st April 2025. This service offers advice, information, care and support for both those with memory concerns and a dementia diagnosis. It is being expanded to enable more residents to access the service and will provide an outreach service to engage clients that don't usually access dementia support.

■ Dental Services: Contracts**Rachael Maskell:** [\[9726\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his planned timescale is for reforming the NHS dental contract.

Stephen Kinnock:

We are working at pace with the British Dental Association and the dental sector to improve and reform the dental contract.

■ Dental Services: Finance**Neil O'Brien:** [\[9769\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what guidance his Department provides to integrated care boards on the use of funding for dentistry; and whether such funding is required to be ring-fenced for the provision of dentistry services.

Stephen Kinnock:

[Holding answer 22 October 2024]: NHS England has issued guidance on the ringfencing of dental budgets between 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/revenue-finance-and-contracting-guidance-for-2024-25/>

To ensure compliance against this requirement, and to strengthen oversight of funding that is used to deliver access to National Health Service dental care, NHS England will meet with and collect monthly returns from all integrated care boards to establish current and planned spend against the ringfenced dental allocations budget.

■ Dental Services: South Basildon and East Thurrock**James McMurdock:** [\[11812\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help support the (a) recruitment and (b) retention of dentists in South Basildon and East Thurrock constituency.

Stephen Kinnock:

We are determined to rebuild National Health Service dentistry, but it will take time and there are no quick fixes. Strengthening the workforce is key to our ambitions. We are exploring how we can better support the whole dental team to work in NHS dentistry.

To rebuild dentistry in the long term, we will reform the dental contract with the sector, with a shift to focus on prevention and the retention of NHS dentists. The NHS Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board was allocated three posts from the dental recruitment incentive scheme. Of these, two posts have so far been successfully filled. Further information on the dental recruitment incentive scheme is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/dental-recruitment-incentive-scheme-2024-25/>

■ Dentistry

James Wild:

[11620]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help reduce the time taken to process applications to the dental performers list.

Stephen Kinnock:

In May 2023, changes were made to the Performers List Regulations for England to accelerate the process for domestic and overseas dentists joining the Dental Performers List to be able to practise in the National Health Service. Further changes came into force in September 2023.

The Government is determined to rebuild NHS dentistry, and strengthening the workforce is key to our ambitions. Dentists that meet our high standards should be able to enter the workforce efficiently, and we are exploring the best ways to achieve this.

■ Dentistry: Migrant Workers

James Wild:

[11622]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a new provisional registration status for overseas-qualified dentists whose qualifications are not automatically recognised by General Dental Council.

Stephen Kinnock:

The Government is determined to rebuild National Health Service dentistry, and strengthening the workforce is key to our ambitions. Dentists that meet our high standards should be able to enter the workforce efficiently, and we are exploring the best ways to achieve this, including whether there is merit to the introduction of a provisional registration status for overseas-qualified dentists.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Staff

Rupert Lowe:

[11797]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many staff in their Department work outside of the UK; where these staff work; and what the cost is of salaries for these staff.

Karin Smyth:

The Department does not have any staff who work outside of the United Kingdom.

■ General Practitioners: Rural Areas**Dr Roz Savage:**[\[11815\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the restructuring of Out-of-Hours GP services in (a) Wiltshire, (b) Gloucestershire and (c) other rural areas does not restrict patient access to urgent care.

Stephen Kinnock:

General practices (GPs) are independent businesses who are contracted by National Health Service commissioners to perform medical services. The GP contract ensures that a consistent provision of healthcare is provided, including out of hours services which should be available to all patients, including in Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, and other rural areas.

Practices may provide out of hours services themselves, for which they will be paid, or they can opt out of providing these with their commissioner's approval. If a practice chooses to opt out of delivering these services, they must be made available from an alternative provider for that practice's registered patients. This is to provide practices with flexibility, as they are best placed to understand their own workforce and workloads. Any changes in services are determined by local commissioners.

■ Hospices: Finance**Richard Burgon:**[\[10102\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of funding for charitable hospices.

Richard Burgon:[\[10103\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of trends in the regional variation of funding for charitable hospices.

Stephen Kinnock:

[Holding answer 28 October 2024]: We want a society where every person receives high-quality, compassionate care from diagnosis through to the end of life. The Government is determined to shift more healthcare out of hospitals and into the community, to ensure patients and their families receive personalised care in the most appropriate setting and hospices will have a big role to play in that shift.

Most hospices are charitable, independent organisations which receive some statutory funding from the National Health Service. The amount of funding charitable hospices receive varies by integrated care board (ICB) area, and will, in part, be dependent on the local population need and a system-wide approach using a range of palliative and end of life care provision within their ICB footprint.

We have committed to develop a 10-year plan to deliver an NHS fit for the future, by driving three shifts in the way health care is delivered. We will carefully be considering policies, including those that impact people with palliative and end of life care needs, with input from the public, patients, health staff and our stakeholders as we develop the plan.

More information about how members of the public, patients, healthcare staff and stakeholder organisations can input into the 10-Year Health Plan is available at the following link:

<http://change.nhs.uk>

Jim Shannon:

[11587]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of funding for hospices in the last three years.

Stephen Kinnock:

Most hospices are charitable, independent organisations which receive some statutory funding from the National Health Service. The amount of funding each charitable hospice receives varies both within and between integrated care board (ICB) areas. This will vary depending on demand in that ICB area but will also be dependent on the totality and type of palliative and end of life care provision from both NHS and non-NHS services, including charitable hospices, within each ICB area.

■ **Hospitals: Milton Keynes**

Chris Curtis:

[11470]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding was (a) allocated to and (b) confirmed for the (i) Milton Keynes Women and Children's Hospital and (ii) New Hospital Programme by 2 July 2024.

Karin Smyth:

[Holding answer 31 October 2024]: Funding for each individual hospital, including Milton Keynes Hospital, will be determined through a business case process to ensure value for taxpayers' money. In line with this process, funding is confirmed following review and agreement of the Final Business Case. Milton Keynes has therefore not yet had full funding confirmed.

Up to the end of 2023/24, the total amount received by Milton Keynes University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust in funding for the Milton Keynes Hospital scheme was £13.7 million. This provided funding for several activities to develop their new hospital scheme including developing their business case, professional fees and early enabling works.

As announced in the Chancellor's Autumn Budget Statement, my rt. Hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, will set out further details of his review into the New Hospital Programme in the coming weeks, with a publication to follow in the new year.

■ Kidney Diseases: Health Education

Sir Ashley Fox:

[12019]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help improve public awareness of (a) the importance of early diagnosis of chronic kidney disease and (b) recognition of early symptoms.

Andrew Gwynne:

NHS England is working to detect people at risk of kidney disease through the NHS Health Check Programme. The programme, which is available for everyone between the ages of 40 and 74 years old, who is not already on a chronic disease register, assesses people's health and risk of developing certain health problems. Using this information, patients are supported to make behavioural changes and access treatment which helps to prevent and detect kidney disease earlier.

The UK National Screening Committee (UK NSC) reviewed chronic kidney disease (CKD) and glomerulonephritis in 2011, concluding that a population-wide screening programme would not be recommended. The UK NSC has not looked at the evidence for a targeted programme. The UK NSC can be alerted to any new published peer-reviewed evidence which may suggest the case for a new screening programme. More information is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-nsc-annual-call-submitting-a-screening-proposal/uk-nsc-annual-call-how-to-submit-a-proposal>

The National Health Service provides access to tests and therapies to diagnose, code, and treat patients with early-stage CKD. NHS England, through the Renal Services Transformation Programme (RSTP) and regional renal networks, is implementing initiatives to provide better integrated care, reduce health inequalities, and focus on prevention and timely intervention for kidney disease. Regional renal clinical networks prioritise CKD diagnosis and prevention within their transformation ambitions, facilitating earlier treatment. This includes considerations to develop a unified approach to testing populations at risk of developing CKD, and includes raising awareness of diagnostic tools like urine albumin creatinine tests, enabling CKD diagnosis at stages 1 and 2. NHS England aims to improve awareness and access to these important urine and blood tests across primary and secondary care. In addition, RSTP launched a renal toolkit earlier last year, for use by systems, that outlines principles to support better management of patients identified with CKD throughout their patient journey.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidance, Chronic kidney disease: Assessment and management [NG203], updated in November 2021, sets out best practice for clinicians in the diagnosis and management of CKD. The guidance covers the care and treatment of patients at risk of CKD. It includes recommendations on monitoring of patients at risk of CKD and aims to prevent or delay the progression of the disease. The guidance is available at the following link:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng203>

■ Long Covid: Clinics

Jim Shannon:

[\[11863\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many long covid clinics are active.

Andrew Gwynne:

Since 2020, the National Health Service in England has invested significantly in supporting people with long COVID. This includes setting up specialist post-COVID services nationwide for adults, and children and young people, as well as investing in ensuring general practice (GP) teams are equipped to support people affected by the condition.

As of 1 April 2024, there are over 90 adult post-COVID services across England, along with an additional ten children and young people's hubs. These services assess people with long COVID and direct them into care pathways which provide appropriate support and treatment. GPs will assess patients that have COVID-19 symptoms lasting longer than four weeks and refer them into a long COVID service where appropriate. Referral should be via a single point of access, which is managed by clinician-led triage.

■ Mental Health Act 1983

Tom Hayes:

[\[10335\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to reform the Mental Health Act 1983 to (a) abolish community treatment orders, (b) ensure people to have a right to appeal decisions, (c) ensure patients in a mental health hospital to automatically get an advocate and (d) ensure young people are not placed on adult wards.

Stephen Kinnock:

The Mental Health Bill announced in the King's Speech will deliver the Government's commitment to modernise the Mental Health Act 1983. The reforms will strengthen the voice of patients by adding statutory weight to patients' rights to be involved with planning for their care, and to make choices regarding the treatment they receive.

The reforms will also strengthen and improve the statutory roles which protect and support those who are detained, by introducing a new statutory role, the nominated person, who is chosen by the patient, to replace the nearest relative and extend access to Independent Mental Health Advocates to informal patients and introduce an opt-out system for formal patients.

■ Mental Health Services: Birmingham

Laurence Turner:

[\[11514\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 16 September 2024 to Question 3680 on Mental Health Services: Lincolnshire, if he will provide this information for each constituency in Birmingham.

Stephen Kinnock:

[Holding answer 31 October 2024]: The following table shows the number of Mental Health Support Teams across the Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board (ICB), broken down by the year in which they became operational, or are planned to become operational:

Due to the complexity of the accompanying table, the link below is to the web version of the answer:

[Written questions and answers - Written questions, answers and statements - UK Parliament](#)

Source: NHS Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board.

The ICB has advised that each team covers a cluster of schools in a broadly geographic area, but these are not defined on a parliamentary constituency or ward basis.

■ Mental Health Services: Schools**Dr Ben Spencer:****[10156]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what professional accreditations will new mental health practitioners employed in schools be required to hold.

Stephen Kinnock:

[Holding answer 24 October 2024]: We are currently working with colleagues at the Department for Education and NHS England to consider the options.

Tom Hayes:**[10298]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to deliver specialist mental health professionals in every school.

Stephen Kinnock:

The Department is working across the Government to consider how to deliver our commitment of a specialist mental health professional in every school. We need to ensure any support meets the needs of young people, teachers, parents, and carers. This includes considering the role of existing programmes of support with evidence of a positive impact, such as Mental Health Support Teams in schools and colleges.

Marie Goldman:**[11636]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of an NHS-funded salaried training route to becoming a school counsellor.

Stephen Kinnock:

We have no plans to do so, as there is already an existing National Health Service-funded salaried training route for education based mental health practitioners, which

enables them to work across education and healthcare to provide mental health support for children and young people in schools and colleges.

■ **Mental Health Services: Schools and Further Education**

Damian Hinds:

[\[6015\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the NHS England web page entitled Mental health support in schools and colleges, what the roll-out schedule is for mental health support teams.

Damian Hinds:

[\[6016\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the NHS England web page entitled Mental health support in schools and colleges, what his policy is on the (a) number and (b) types of regions that will be covered by the roll-out of Mental Health Support Teams.

Stephen Kinnock:

The Department is working with the Department for Education and NHS England to deliver our commitment of a specialist mental health professional in every school.

■ **MMR Vaccine: Children**

Jim Shannon:

[\[11859\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of children who have been fully vaccinated for MMR in the last year.

Andrew Gwynne:

Official childhood vaccine coverage estimates, including for the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine, are published annually by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and NHS England, and also quarterly by UKHSA. Coverage of childhood vaccines are measured when children reach their first, second, and fifth birthdays.

Annually published coverage figures from the Cover of Vaccination Evaluated Rapidly surveillance scheme show that for 2023/24, at two years old, 649,287 out of 726,395 children, or 89.4%, have one dose of MMR coverage. At five years old, 721,672 out of 781,492 children, or 92.3%, have one dose of MMR coverage, and 660,680 out of 781,492 children, or 84.5%, have two doses.

■ **NHS Trusts: Translation Services**

Rupert Lowe:

[\[11106\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much has been spent on (a) translation and (b) interpretation by (i) all NHS Trusts, (ii) James Paget University Hospitals Trust and (iii) the Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust in each of the last five years.

Karin Smyth:

It is important for translation services to be provided so that all patients can access safe healthcare. The Department does not hold this information for all provider trusts; rather it is held by the relevant integrated care boards.

The following table shows how much has been spent on translation and interpretation services by Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust (NSFT):

FINANCIAL YEAR	NSFT TOTAL
2020/21	£126,000
2021/22	£211,000
2022/23	£266,000
2023/24	£321,000

The following table shows how much has been spent on translation and interpretation services by James Paget University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (JPUH):

FINANCIAL YEAR	JPUH TOTAL
2019/20	£68,095
2020/21	£37,352
2021/22	£46,680
2022/23	£71,501
2023/24	£85,671

Notes:

1. The figures provided above are for both translation and interpretation, as they are coded the same on their financial systems.
2. NSFT is unable to provide figures for 2019/2020 due to a change in their financial system meaning they cannot access the records.

■ **NHS: Fraud**

Josh Newbury:[\[11607\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much was lost to fraud in the NHS in each of the last five years.

Karin Smyth:

[Holding answer 5 November 2024]: The following table shows fraud losses in the National Health Service in England, for each of the last five years:

YEAR	FRAUD LOSS
2019/20	£17,400,000
2020/21	£12,400,000
2021/22	£20,700,000
2022/23	£26,400,000
2023/24	£24,200,000

Source: NHS Counter Fraud Authority Consolidated Data Report.

Notes:

- figures shown in this table are gross losses that do not include monies subsequently recovered as a result of loss recovery activity; and
- figures shown relate to cases closed in the relevant year.

■ NHS: LGBT+ People

Rupert Lowe:

[\[11721\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much was spent by NHS Trusts on celebrating Pride Month in June (a) 2023 and (b) 2024.

Karin Smyth:

This information is not collected by NHS England.

■ NHS: Translation Services

Rupert Lowe:

[\[11203\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much his Department has spent on (a) external tenders and (b) contracts for (i) translation and (ii) interpretation services in the NHS in each of the last five years.

Karin Smyth:

The following table shows the Department's expenditure against current and expired contracts with external suppliers of translation or interpretation services, in each of the last five financial years:

YEAR	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Expenditure	£9,857	£72,898	£898,354	£133,148	£28,830

The majority of this work has been for supporting different initiatives and functions within the National Health Service.

*The significant increase in expenditure was due to additional services required to support the response to Covid-19 in the NHS e.g. at vaccination and testing sites.

■ Nitazenes

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[11893\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help prevent the use of nitazenes.

Andrew Gwynne:

The Department is actively monitoring the threat posed by synthetic opioids such as nitazenes, and is working to increase awareness of their dangers and prevent people using them. Information on synthetic opioids and the dangers they pose is available from the helpline and website, talktofrank.com, provided by FRANK, the national drug information and advice service, supported by the Government.

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

To improve surveillance, the OHID has been working with partners in Government to create a new, enhanced Drugs Early Warning System. This collates information from a wider range of sources, for example ambulance callout data, and will produce regular reports for local areas on current threats, including nitazenes.

Drug and alcohol treatment services and local authority public health teams raise awareness of the risk of drug use through targeted campaigns with their local populations, and the OHID supports them in this.

■ Nurses

Dr Beccy Cooper:

[\[11739\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of increases in levels of demand for patient care on the capacity of the nursing workforce.

Karin Smyth:

We are committed to training the staff we need to ensure that patients are cared for by the right professional, when and where they need it. The Long Term Workforce Plan, which included assessments of nursing demand and supply, will be reviewed following the recommendations of 10-Year Health Plan.

Dr Beccy Cooper:[\[11740\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to support the (a) mental health and (b) wellbeing of nursing staff.

Karin Smyth:

It is important that National Health Service staff are able to work in a supportive and compassionate environment that prioritises their health and wellbeing. NHS England has a wide-ranging package of mental health and wellbeing support for all staff, including nurses, which includes access to counselling services, a self-check wellbeing tool, free access to a range of wellbeing apps, and a health and wellbeing guardian role to provide board level scrutiny within NHS organisations. NHS England is also leading work with partner organisations to strengthen occupational health and wellbeing services for NHS staff.

■ Nurses: Schools**Neil Duncan-Jordan:**[\[11960\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of the number of school nurses.

Andrew Gwynne:

Too many children are not receiving the start in life they deserve, and the Government is committed to creating the healthiest generation of children in our history by shifting the focus from treatment to prevention. School nurses have an important role to play, leading the delivery of the 5-19 components of the Healthy Child Programme.

My Rt Hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care is aware that school nurse numbers have decreased, with 27% fewer now than in October 2015. In June 2024 there were 1,985 school nurses of all grades employed within the National Health Service. The Chief Public Health Nurse Office has established a programme of work which aims to improve the delivery of the Healthy Child Programme, which includes school nursing.

■ Palliative Care**James McMurdock:**[\[10350\]](#)

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

Stephen Kinnock:

The Government is determined to shift more healthcare out of hospitals and into the community, to ensure that patients and their families receive personalised care in the most appropriate setting, and palliative and end of life care services will have a big role to play in that shift.

Palliative care services are included in the list of services an integrated care board (ICB) must commission. This promotes a more consistent national approach and

supports commissioners in prioritising palliative and end of life care. To support ICBs in this duty, NHS England has published statutory guidance and service specifications.

I recently met NHS England and discussions have begun on how to reduce inequalities and variation in access to, and the quality of, palliative and end of life care. We are also in active discussions with NHS England about maintaining the £25 million of annual funding for children and young people's hospices in 2025/26, with further information to follow in due course.

Additionally, we have committed to develop a 10-year plan to deliver a National Health Service fit for the future, by driving three shifts in the way health care is delivered. We will carefully be considering policies, including those that impact people with palliative and end of life care needs, with input from the public, patients, health staff, and our stakeholders as we develop the plan.

More information about how members of the public, patients, healthcare staff and stakeholder organisations can input into the 10-Year Health Plan is available at the following link:

<https://change.nhs.uk/>

■ Physician Associates

Peter Prinsley:

[11415]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to (a) bring forward legislative proposals to further regulate and (b) publish guidance on the (i) definition of the scope of practice and (ii) supervisory requirements for physician associates.

Karin Smyth:

The legislation to introduce statutory regulation for Physician Associates (PAs) and Anaesthesia Associates (AAs) was debated in the Scottish Parliament and both Houses of Parliament earlier this year.

Regulation by the General Medical Council (GMC) will begin in December 2024. The GMC will set standards of practice, education, and training, and will operate fitness-to-practice procedures to ensure that PAs and AAs can be held to account if serious concerns are raised.

Whilst statutory regulation is an important part of ensuring patient safety, it is also achieved through robust clinical governance processes within healthcare organisations, which are required to have systems of oversight and supervision for their staff.

NHS England has issued clear guidance on the deployment of PAs and AAs in the National Health Service, which describes the expectations of how organisations providing NHS care should deploy them so that they can contribute to the delivery of safe and effective healthcare in a supportive environment. This guidance is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/summary-of-existing-guidance-on-the-deployment-of-medical-associate-professions-in-nhs-healthcare-settings/>

James Naish:

[6725]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to encourage practices to create salaried GP roles instead of using physician associates.

Stephen Kinnock:

We have committed to training thousands more GPs across the country which will increase capacity in the system and take the pressure off those currently working in the system. NHS England is working to address training bottlenecks so the health service has enough staff for the future and we are providing £82 million to fund the recruitment of over 1,000 newly qualified GPs, via the additional roles reimbursement scheme, so patients can get the care they need.

Physician associates (PAs) can make a valuable contribution to patient care providing appointments and performing clinical and administrative tasks as part of the wider General Practice multi-disciplinary team with appropriate supervision. But they must not substitute the role of the GP within general practice.

GP practices are self-employed contractors to the NHS and it is largely up to employers to determine how best to staff their primary care network (PCN) or GP practice to best meet the needs of their population.

■ Prostate Cancer: Blood Tests

Lee Anderson:

[12107]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department plans to take to ensure that men at risk of prostate cancer can access the PSA blood test.

Andrew Gwynne:

Currently, men who have symptoms that could be associated with prostate cancer may be offered the Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) test, which looks at levels of PSA in the blood, in line with National Institute for Health and Care Excellence cancer recognition and referral guidance.

However, due to the levels of inaccuracy, the PSA test is not recommended as a screening tool for healthy men with no symptoms. This is because high level of inaccuracy could lead to unnecessary tests and treatments that carry risks of life-changing harm, such as urinary and faecal incontinence, and sexual dysfunction, as well as a smaller but serious risk of sepsis. Additionally, some prostate cancers may not produce elevated PSA levels, leading to false-negative results that provide deceptive reassurance.

Instead, men should be encouraged to know the symptoms of prostate cancer and look out for changes in their body, and should seek advice from a general practitioner if these changes occur.

■ Prostate Cancer: Screening

Matt Western:

[\[12296\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the informed choice framework for prostate cancer screening.

Andrew Gwynne:

Screening for prostate cancer is currently not recommended by the UK National Screening Committees. This is because of the inaccuracy of the current best test called Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA).

The Prostate Cancer Risk Management Programme provides general practitioners with information and guidance to counsel men who have no symptoms about the potential benefits and harms of PSA testing so they can make an informed decision about whether to have the test.

Matt Western:

[\[12297\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of potential disparities in access to prostate cancer screening among men of different (a) races and (b) socio-economic statuses.

Andrew Gwynne:

Screening for prostate cancer is currently not recommended by the UK National Screening Committees (UK NSC). This is because of the inaccuracy of the current best test, called Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA).

The UK NSC is carrying out an evidence review of prostate cancer screening which includes looking at the evidence for targeted screening of specific high-risk groups, such as Black Men and those with a family history. This will determine whether a PSA test-based screening programme for high-risk groups could provide more good than harm.

■ Psoriasis: Children and Young People

Jim Shannon:

[\[11861\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people aged between 16 and 25 are medically treated for psoriasis in England, broken down by (a) age and (b) gender.

Stephen Kinnock:

A table showing a count of Finished Admission Episodes (FAEs) for patients aged 16 to 25 years old with a recorded primary diagnosis of psoriasis, broken down by patient age and gender, for the period 2019/20 to 2023/24, and in English National Health Service hospitals, is attached.

Please be aware that the majority of psoriasis is treated by a general practitioner or elsewhere in the community, with only a small minority of cases, typically the most serious, requiring hospital admission. The data presented will, therefore, only represent a small proportion of the total number of cases that were treated.

Attachments:

1. TABLE FOR 11861 [TABLE FOR 11861.docx]

■ Public Health: Finance**Priti Patel:**[\[12268\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding he plans to allocate to public health grants for local authorities in each of the next five years.

Andrew Gwynne:

We will confirm 2025/26 public health grant allocations later this year, and will confirm future years' allocations following the upcoming Spending Review in Spring 2025.

■ Radiotherapy: Medical Equipment**Richard Burgon:**[\[10104\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Government plans to replace all radiotherapy machines older than ten years.

Karin Smyth:

The Government announced last week that £70million will be spent on new radiotherapy machines, which will help ensure that the most advanced treatment is available to patients who need it.

■ Smoking: Children and Young People**Dr Beccy Cooper:**[\[11741\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help increase the uptake of NHS stop smoking services amongst underage smokers.

Andrew Gwynne:

On 5 November 2024, the Government introduced the Tobacco and Vapes Bill, which stands to be the most significant public health intervention in a generation. It will create the first smoke-free generation, as children turning 15 years old this year or younger can never legally be sold tobacco, whilst those who currently legally smoke are able to continue doing so. The bill sits alongside wider support across the health service to assist smokers in quitting for good.

We remain committed to helping existing smokers to quit with effective support, which is three times as effective as making an unassisted quit attempt. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence recommends nicotine replacement therapy for young people aged 12 years old and over, and if prescribed, that behavioural support is also provided. Local authority funding has been boosted with an additional £70 million in 2024/25 to build capacity and demand for local stop smoking support.

■ Social Services: Carers

Jim Shannon:

[\[11583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of local authority charges for social care services on vulnerable unpaid carers.

Stephen Kinnock:

Adult social care charging policy is designed to ensure that people who are drawing on care are only charged what they can afford for their care and support. Under the Care Act 2014, local authorities are required to deliver a wide range of sustainable, high-quality care and support services, including support for carers. This includes undertaking a carer's assessment to support people caring for family or friends, and to meet their eligible needs when requested.

■ Tobacco: Sales

Dr Beccy Cooper:

[\[11742\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will include enforcement measures in the Tobacco and Vapes Bill to prevent the sale of tobacco products on the internet to those under age.

Andrew Gwynne:

Selling tobacco to someone underage, whether in person or online, is a serious criminal offence which carries a fine of up to £2,500 on conviction in a magistrates' court. It is the responsibility of all retailers including those online to ensure their customers are over the age of sale. The Tobacco and Vapes Bill, introduced to Parliament on 5 November 2024, is the biggest public health intervention in a generation, and takes significant action to strengthen enforcement to ensure that current and new sales regulations are successfully implemented.

The Bill introduces a new £200 fixed penalty notice in England and Wales, which will enable Trading Standards Officers to act 'on the spot' to clamp down on rogue retailers selling tobacco, vapes or nicotine products to people underage, whether in-person or online. The Bill also provides powers in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland to introduce a licensing scheme for the retail sale of these products. Once the scheme is introduced, it will be a criminal offence to sell these products, either in person or online, without a licence. Licensing offences will carry significant financial penalties, and those who commit sales offences could face licence revocation, enabling Trading Standards to further clamp down on rogue retailers. The details of the licensing scheme including licence conditions will be subject to consultation ahead of introduction.

Alongside the Bill, the Government is exploring how we can further tackle online underage sales. The Department for Science, Innovation and Technology is creating a framework of standards and governance, namely the UK digital identity and attributes trust framework, underpinned by legislation, to enable the widespread use of trusted digital identity services. This framework provides a potential opportunity for

companies providing age verification services to be certified, to prove they are delivering age assurance solutions that meet Government standards.

HOME OFFICE

■ Community Policing: Finance

David Simmonds:

[11934]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to paragraph 4.20 of the Autumn Budget 2024, HC 295, published on 30 October 2024, how much funding will be provided to police forces to help increase the number of neighbourhood officers and Police Community Support Officers; and in which financial years will this funding be made available.

Dame Diana Johnson:

The Autumn Budget confirmed that the core government grant for police forces will increase. Further details and force level allocations will be set out at the provisional settlement in December.

■ Community Policing: Lancashire

Chris Webb:

[11644]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many police officers are currently employed in neighbourhood policing in Lancashire.

Dame Diana Johnson:

The Home Office collects and publishes data annually on the primary function of police officers, as at 31 March each year, in the 'Police workforce, England and Wales' statistical bulletin which can be accessed here:

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

■ Home Office and Police: Pitcairn Islands

Andrew Rosindell:

[11564]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many (a) officials from her Department and (b) police officers have visited Pitcairn Island in each of the last 12 months.

Dame Diana Johnson:

I can confirm that no officials from the Home Office or UK police officers have visited Pitcairn Island in the last 12 months.

■ Home Office: Staff

Rupert Lowe:

[11726]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many staff in their Department work outside of the UK; where these staff work; and what the cost is of salaries for these staff.

Dame Diana Johnson:

For security reasons, we do not give out figures of how many operational staff are working at a given time or on a specific operational deployment.

■ **Immigration: Homelessness****Neil Coyle:**[\[12077\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many assessments for destitution her Department has made for people subject to No Recourse to Public Funds conditions in each of the last five years.

Seema Malhotra:

We are unable to provide this information as it is not routinely published, and it can only be obtained at a disproportionate cost.

When an individual goes through the process of assessment for Change of Conditions, various No Recourse to Public Funds conditions are checked, with 'destitution' being one of these conditions.

■ **Knives: Crime****Jim Shannon:**[\[11576\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have been arrested due to instances of violence involving a machete in the last 12 months.

Dame Diana Johnson:

The Home Office does not currently hold data centrally on the number of people arrested due to instances of violence involving a machete.

The Home Office collects and publishes data on the number of arrests made by police in England and Wales, broken down by offence group, on an annual basis. The latest data, covering the period to March 2024, is available here: [Stop and search, arrests and mental health detentions, March 2024 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/stop-and-search-arrests-and-mental-health-detentions-march-2024)

However, the data is collected by broader offence group only, such as 'Violence against the person', and further details are not provided.

Policing is a devolved matter.

■ **Police: LGBT+ people****Rupert Lowe:**[\[11722\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much was spent by police forces on celebrating Pride Month in June (a) 2023 and (b) 2024.

Dame Diana Johnson:

The Home Office does not hold this information.

Decisions on how funding and resources are utilised are an operational matter for Chief Constables and locally elected Police and Crime Commissioners, who are best

placed to make resourcing decisions within their communities based on their local knowledge and experience.

■ **Shoplifting: Lincolnshire**

Sir John Hayes:

[11547]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she has taken with relevant authorities to reduce shop lifting in (a) South Holland and the Deepings constituency and (b) Lincolnshire.

Dame Diana Johnson:

Shoplifting increased at an unacceptable level under the previous government, and we have seen more and more offenders using violence and abuse against shopworkers. We will not stand for this. Everybody has a right to feel safe on the job.

To that end, this Government will end the effective immunity, introduced by the previous Government, granted to low level shoplifting of goods under £200, and introduce a new offence of assaulting a retail worker to protect the hardworking and dedicated staff that work in stores.

■ **Terrorism: Reading East**

Paula Barker:

[11903]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has responded to the regulation 28 prevention of future deaths report issued on 20 May 2024 in the case of deaths in the Forbury Gardens terror attack of 20 June 2020, to which a response was due under statute by 15 July 2024.

Paula Barker:

[11904]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to address the intelligence failings outlined in the regulation 28 prevention of future deaths report issued on 20 May 2024 in the case of deaths in the Forbury Gardens terror attack of 20 June 2020.

Dan Jarvis:

The deaths of James Furlong, Joseph Ritchie-Bennett and David Wails in the Forbury Gardens terror attack of 20 June 2020 were a tragedy. Our thoughts and deepest condolences are with the families and loved ones of James, Joseph and David, and with all of those individuals impacted by this incident.

The Home Office response to the Regulation 28 Report to Prevent Future Deaths was submitted to the Judge Coroner on 9 September 2024 and can now be viewed on the Courts and Tribunals Judiciary website: <https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/2024-0276-Response-from-the-Home-Office.pdf>. The Home Office and other interested persons received an extension from the original deadline of 15 July 2024 due to the timing of the General Election.

In this response, the Home Secretary fully supported the Judge Coroner's conclusion that the Home Office has made improvements since this tragic incident and that

effective monitoring of these improvements is required. The Home Secretary will be overseeing the rigorous and robust implementation of recommendations and new commitments made.

■ Young Futures Hubs

Alex McIntyre: [\[11799\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent steps she has taken to establish Young Futures Hubs in (a) Gloucester and (b) across the country.

Dame Diana Johnson:

The Government is committed to rolling out a new Youth Futures programme, including a network of Young Futures Hubs which will bring together services to help improve the way young people can access the support they need.

Officials from across a range of departments are already working together, using evidence of what works to start to shape how the prevention partnerships and hubs will work in practice. As part of this we are engaging with local communities, the police, charities, and other key partners to support the design of the programme and explore options for its delivery, ensuring we are making use of the vast knowledge and experience that already exists. This includes considerations of the most suitable locations as well as how best to engage with those young people who would benefit most from their support.

We will provide further detail on the future timelines for delivery as the work develops.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Affordable Housing

Liam Conlon: [\[11635\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps her Department is taking to deliver affordable housing through the Affordable Homes Programme in (a) Beckenham and Penge constituency and (b) England.

Matthew Pennycook:

I refer my Hon Friend to the answer I gave to Question UIN [11383](#) on 31 October 2024.

■ Affordable Housing: Community Land Trusts

Liam Conlon: [\[12210\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether her Department plans to work with Community Land Trusts in providing affordable housing as part of the Government's Affordable Homes Programme.

Matthew Pennycook:

Community Land Trusts can apply to our delivery partners Homes England and the Greater London Authority for funding through the Affordable Housing Programme. If

the development includes low cost rented tenures, they will also need to be a registered provider of social housing to receive funding or work in partnership with a registered provider.

■ Affordable Housing: Regional Planning and Development

Tom Hayes:

[\[11792\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether she has made an assessment of the potential merits of a regional planning policy to help deliver more affordable homes.

Matthew Pennycook:

The Government has no plans to reintroduce regional level planning frameworks for the regions of England outside London.

In our recent consultation on proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework, we made clear we intend to introduce formal strategic planning mechanisms through new legislation as part of a move to a model of universal strategic planning within the next five years.

■ Arms Length Management Organisations

Sir Ashley Fox:

[\[12281\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of (a) section 42 of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 and (b) fire safety regulations introduced since the Grenfell Tower fire on the financial viability of arms-length management organisations.

Sir Ashley Fox:

[\[12282\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of (a) section 42 of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 and (b) fire safety regulations introduced since the Grenfell Tower fire on the level of social housebuilding.

Sir Ashley Fox:

[\[12283\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of proposals to require all rented homes to reach an EPC C standard by 2030 on the level of social housebuilding.

Alex Norris:

In the Housing Minister's answer to Question UIN [11383](#) on 31 October 2024, he set out the measures the Government is taking to deliver the biggest increase in social and affordable housebuilding in a generation.

The Government is committed to working with social housing providers to ensure that homes are safe, decent, warm and free from damp and mould. That is why we have committed to bringing forward regulations to improve the quality of social housing, for example Awaab's Law, and to ensuring that landlords meet fire safety regulations.

The costs and impacts of new regulatory requirements are set out alongside the relevant consultation and subsequent consultation response.

The Government is providing funding for social housing landlords through the Social Sector ACM Cladding Remediation Fund, the Building Safety Fund and Cladding Safety Scheme for 11m+ buildings. The Government's Warm Homes Plan also offers grants and low interest loans which support investment in insulation, low carbon heating and other improvements.

As we set out in July, details of future Government investment in social and affordable housing will be brought forwards at the Spending Review.

■ Building Safety Regulator

Noah Law: [\[12315\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps she is taking to ensure that the building safety regulator is sufficiently resourced to adequately perform its functions.

Alex Norris:

MHCLG remain committed to ensuring the BSR are properly funded to deliver the most significant changes to building safety for generations. The BSR's mission is to protect people and places, stewarding a built environment where buildings are long-lasting and confidence is restored in residents' safety and the competence of the sector.

The BSR has been building capacity and developing operational functions to deliver its statutory duties under the Building Safety Act 2022. We have ramped up work with local authorities and regulators to speed up remediation and will set out a Remediation Acceleration plan shortly. Funding provided to the BSR remains in line with best regulatory practice, taking a transparent and proportionate approach to deliver this mission.

■ Combined Authorities

Tom Hayes: [\[11793\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether she has had discussions with local authorities on the proposed establishment of a Central South Combined Authority.

Jim McMahon:

In July, the Deputy Prime Minister wrote to places without devolution agreements, including across this area, asking them to come forward with proposals for their areas. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is reviewing the proposals received through this process, in tandem with finalising our new devolution offer to be published soon as part of the English Devolution White Paper.

This Government believes that the benefits of devolution are best achieved through the establishment of combined authorities or combined county authorities, supported

by a mayor and established over sensible economic geographies. We want to see all parts of England represented by a Mayor on the Council of Nations and Regions, with strong and effective partnerships in place with councils and other partners to deliver through devolution the missions we have set out to transform the country.

■ Council Housing: Mould

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[11562\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps she has taken to work with local authorities to help prevent mould-related (a) deaths and (b) illnesses of people living in local authority provided housing.

Matthew Pennycook:

The respiratory effects of damp and mould can cause serious illness and, in the most severe cases, death. The tragic death of Awaab Ishak was the result of a severe respiratory condition due to prolonged exposure to mould in a home with inadequate ventilation. The presence of damp and mould can also affect tenants' mental health. This could be due to worries about the health impacts of damp and mould, unpleasant living conditions, and destruction of property and belongings, among other concerns. Everyone is vulnerable to the health impacts of damp and mould, but people with certain health conditions, children and older adults are at greater risk of more severe health impacts.

The Government is committed to working with social housing providers to ensure that homes are safe, decent, warm, and free from damp and mould. We have committed to bringing forward the regulations necessary to introduce Awaab's Law in the Social Rented Sector this Autumn. This will set new time limits for social landlords to fix dangerous hazards, including damp and mould. We have also committed to extending Awaab's Law to the private rented sector.

Social rented sector homes must also meet the Decent Homes Standard and all rented homes must be free of serious 'category 1' hazards, including damp and mould, as defined by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System. The Government has published consolidated guidance on the health impacts of damp and mould.

We also intend to consult on and implement a new Decent Homes Standard and Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards early next year.

■ Economic Growth: Lincolnshire and Yorkshire and the Humber

Mark Swards:

[\[11686\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps Department is taking to help support economic growth across (a) Yorkshire and (b) northern Lincolnshire.

Alex Norris:

This Government is developing a modern industrial strategy to deliver the certainty and stability for business to invest and creating the National Wealth Fund to support

its delivery and mobilise billions of pounds of investment in the UK's growth industries. The Government is investing in total over £2.5 billion over 30 years in West Yorkshire, South Yorkshire and York and North Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authorities to support growth and business investment. Through the Government owned British Business Bank, we are also investing over £1 billion through their regional Investment Fund programmes, including supporting growing businesses across Yorkshire and northern Lincolnshire.

■ Estate Agents and Property Management Companies

Neil Coyle: [\[12082\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether her Department will distinguish between (a) relocation, (b) estate and (c) property agents within the housing sector in the context of the draft Leasehold and Commonhold Reform Bill.

Neil Coyle: [\[12083\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether she has made an assessment of the potential impact of the draft Leasehold and Commonhold Reform Bill on relocation agents.

Matthew Pennycook:

The Government is committed to ensuring that those living in the rented and leasehold sectors are protected from abuse and poor service at the hands of unscrupulous property agents. The Government will set out its position on the regulation of letting, managing and estate agents in due course.

The Government has also made clear it intends to publish draft legislation on leasehold and commonhold reform in this session so that it may be subject to broad consultation and additional parliamentary scrutiny. We will announce further details in due course.

■ Homelessness: Stoke-on-Trent North

David Williams: [\[11736\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps her Department is taking to tackle youth homelessness in (a) Stoke-on-Trent North constituency and (b) Kidsgrove.

David Williams: [\[11743\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps her Department is taking to support local authorities to provide temporary accommodation to families in (a) Stoke-on-Trent North and (b) Kidsgrove in a way that does not have a detrimental impact on (i) local people and (ii) town centres.

Rushanara Ali:

Homelessness levels are far too high, and this can have a devastating impact on those affected. The Government is taking action by setting up a dedicated Inter-

Ministerial Group (IMG) which the Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) will chair, bringing together ministers from across government to develop a long-term strategy to put us back on track to ending homelessness, including youth homelessness.

As announced at the Budget on 30 October, funding for homelessness services is increasing next year by £233 million compared to this year (2024/25). The increased spending will help to prevent rises in the number of families in temporary accommodation and help to prevent rough sleeping and brings the total spend to nearly £1 billion in 2025/26. We also confirmed a further £450 million for councils through the Local Authority Housing Fund enabling councils to obtain better quality temporary accommodation for homeless families.

More widely, we are taking action to tackle the root causes of homelessness, including: delivering the biggest increase in social and affordable housebuilding in a generation and building 1.5 million new homes over the next parliament; and abolishing Section 21 'no fault' evictions, preventing private renters being exploited and discriminated against, and empowering people to challenge unreasonable rent increases.

■ Homes for Ukraine Scheme

Marie Goldman:

[\[11663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of oversight of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme by her Department; and what steps she is taking to prevent abuse of that scheme.

Alex Norris:

The British public has shown a true generosity of spirit by opening their homes to Ukrainians seeking sanctuary from Putin's illegal full-scale invasion of Ukraine. This generosity should not be abused, and taxpayers' money must be used to support the intended beneficiaries of the scheme.

Local authorities are responsible for the prevention and detection of sponsor payment related fraud on the Homes for Ukraine scheme. The department has engaged local authorities and found they have counter-fraud measures in place and are recovering payments where fraud has been identified. As part of ongoing efforts to identify and reduce instances of fraudulent sponsorship and other abuses of the Homes for Ukraine scheme, existing guidance on GOV.UK has been expanded to improve information for guests, sponsors and local authorities on how to recognise and avoid fraudulent sponsorship or misuse of the scheme. Further mitigations to minimise the impacts of these issues on the Homes for Ukraine scheme are kept under constant review.

Guidance on reporting suspected fraud is available at: [Reporting fraud: Homes for Ukraine - GOV.UK](#) for guests, [Reporting fraud: Homes for Ukraine - guidance for sponsors - GOV.UK](#) for sponsors and [Handling suspected fraud: Homes for Ukraine - GOV.UK](#) for councils.

■ Housing: Older People**Mr Lee Dillon:**[\[11701\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps her Department is taking to help ensure that private homes are safe for elderly people.

Matthew Pennycook:

The Government provides the Disabled Facilities Grant, a capital grant administered by local authorities that can help pay the cost of adapting eligible disabled and older people's homes, regardless of tenure, to allow them to live safely and independently. Local authorities have a statutory duty to provide adaptations for people who satisfy a needs assessment, eligibility criteria and a means test. An additional £86 million for the DFG for 2025-26 was announced in the Budget, bringing the total to £711 million.

We are also taking action to improve standards within the private rented sector in England through the Renters' Rights Bill, including through introducing the Decent Homes Standard to the sector for the first time. We are also applying 'Awaab's Law' to the sector which will set clear legal expectations about the timeframes within which landlords in the private rented sector must make homes safe where they contain serious hazards. All elderly people should be able to live in a safe and decent home and these changes will have a positive impact on improving the health and wellbeing of older tenants.

■ Housing: Safety and Standards**Mr Lee Dillon:**[\[11700\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps her Department is taking to help improve the (a) quality and (b) safety of homes.

Alex Norris:

The Building Regulations set standards for the design and construction of new building work covering safety, security, accessibility, water and energy use. They are intended to protect people's health and welfare and may apply when somebody is putting up a new building, making material changes to a building, extending an existing building or altering building services. The Regulations apply to new building work and are supported by guidance set out in Approved Documents. Recent significant updates to the Building Regulations and fire safety guidance in Approved Document B have included the ban on combustible materials in and on the external walls of new residential buildings higher than 18 metres; setting a threshold for provision of sprinklers in new blocks of flats taller than 11 metres; making provision for wayfinding signage for fire fighters in residential buildings above 11 metres; and providing additional guidance on evacuation alert systems in new residential buildings over 18 metres in height. An 18-metre threshold height for second staircases in new residential buildings has been introduced from March 2024. The Building Safety Act 2022 requires the safety and standard of buildings to be kept under review; Building Regulations can then be updated as needed. This mechanism offers Government a

source of evidence if Regulations or guidance need amendment or to reflect advances in building safety knowledge and technologies.

■ **Park Homes: Sales**

Richard Tice: [\[11773\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of the maximum level of commission charge paid to site owners for the sale of park homes on park home owners.

Dr Simon Opher: [\[11995\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether her department has any plans to review the 10% commission charge applied to the sale of park homes by site owner.

Matthew Pennycook:

The park homes sector is an important part of the housing market and must be a safe and secure place for residents.

The Government recognises that there are longstanding concerns about the requirement to pay site owners a commission upon sale of a park home.

The Government will set out its position on this matter in due course.

■ **Property Management Companies**

Dr Al Pinkerton: [\[11683\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps she is taking to ensure that not-for-profit freeholders are held accountable for their management practices.

Matthew Pennycook:

I have interpreted not-for-profit freeholders as referring to registered social landlords (RSLs).

All RSLs are required to meet the outcomes of the regulatory standards set by the independent Regulator of Social Housing. The Regulator holds private registered providers accountable for meeting the economic standards and both local authorities and private registered providers accountable on consumer standards. Appropriate action is taken when the outcomes of the standards are not being delivered.

Since April 2024, the Regulator has begun proactively seeking assurance that registered providers are meeting the standards through routine regulatory inspections. Where social tenants are unhappy with the quality of homes or services provided by their landlord they can complain to the Housing Ombudsman Service.

■ Social Rented Housing: Asylum**James McMurdock:** [\[11808\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many social housing places are accommodating asylum seekers in South Basildon and East Thurrock constituency.

Matthew Pennycook:

I refer the Hon Member to the answer I gave to Question UIN [8700](#) on 21 October 2024.

■ Temporary Accommodation: Gloucester**Alex McIntyre:** [\[11800\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment her Department has made of the number of (a) adults and (b) children living in temporary accommodation in the Gloucester constituency.

Alex McIntyre: [\[11801\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps her Department is taking to help reduce the number of people sleeping rough in Gloucester; and if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of publishing a long term plan to end rough sleeping.

Rushanara Ali:

Homelessness and rough sleeping levels are far too high. This can have a devastating impact on those affected. This Government will address this and deliver long term solutions to combat the need to sleep rough. We will develop a new cross-government strategy, working with mayors and councils across the country to get us on back on track to ending homelessness and rough sleeping once and for all.

Whilst we develop our new cross governmental strategy, the £547 million Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) which runs from April 2022 to March 2025 will continue its support to up to 300 local authorities across England including Gloucester City Council by funding local, tailored rough sleeping services.

On 31 March 2024, there were 198 households in temporary accommodation in Gloucester. Of these, there were 94 families with 204 children. This information is available at table TA1 [Detailed LA 202403.xlsx](#).

JUSTICE**■ Ministry of Justice: Official Cars****Charlie Dewhirst:** [\[11760\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 14 October 2024 to Question 7024 on Ministry of Justice: Official Cars, how many of the five vehicles are electric cars.

Charlie Dewhirst:

[\[11761\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 14 October 2024 to Question 7025 on Ministry of Justice: Official Cars, which specific senior officials in the Department have use of the five cars; and whether these senior officials had access to a government car before the general election.

Alex Davies-Jones:

For security reasons specific details of allocations including make and model of vehicles are not issued.

The arrangements relating to the usage of vehicles in the Government Car Service are set out in the Civil Service Management Code.

■ Prison Sentences

Jim Shannon:

[\[11574\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent guidance her Department has provided to the judiciary on the use of custodial sentences in the context of prison capacity.

Sir Nicholas Dakin:

Sentencing decisions are a matter for the independent judiciary, and judges are able to take into account a range of factors when handing down sentences.

■ Prosecutions

Ben Goldsborough:

[\[11680\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether her Department has had discussions with the Magistrates Association on reports of the use of targets for the number of Single Justice Procedures completed.

Heidi Alexander:

Magistrates are free to take as long as they need when making decisions on any criminal case, including those dealt with under the Single Justice Procedure (SJP).

There is no set target for the number of cases decided in an SJP session and courts have been reminded of this.

We have not discussed this matter with the Magistrates' Association.

Ben Goldsborough:

[\[11682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that people engaging in the Single Justice Procedure are aware of the HM Courts and Tribunal Service guidance which states that courts should not issue targets for the number of Single Justice cases that must be completed.

Heidi Alexander:

Courts have been reminded that no targets have been set for the number of cases to be completed in a session.

Listing is a judicial responsibility and function. Local Judicial Business Groups decide how much work is assigned to court hearings, including Single Justice Procedure (SJP) sessions. If a magistrate does not complete the cases allocated to a SJP session, the cases can be picked up in a subsequent session.

The Government has listened to the concerns raised on SJP and as a first step has asked HM Courts and Tribunals to redesign the SJP Notice. We will also be calling in SJP prosecutors to discuss ways in which we could ensure public interest is considered by them in advance of making prosecutions. The SJP is vital for the efficient running of the magistrates court. However, it must operate fairly and effectively. We will not tolerate poor practice, and we will not hesitate to fundamentally reform the system if that is required.

■ Rape: Mental Health Services

Jim Shannon:

[\[11579\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will make it her policy to ensure that ongoing mental health support is available to victims of rape (a) before, (b) during and (c) after criminal trials relating to their case.

Alex Davies-Jones:

This Government is committed to ensuring that all victims and survivors of rape and sexual abuse have the information and support they need. This is irrespective of whether they engage with the criminal justice system or not. If they do engage, support is provided irrespective of where they are in the criminal justice system.

Between August 2023 and March 2025, the Department provided £26 million through the Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Fund to over 60 specialist support organisations. These organisations offer tailored support programmes, including counselling, therapeutic services, advocacy, outreach and group activities to victims and survivors of all ages to help them cope with their experiences and move forward with their lives.

The Ministry of Justice-commissioned 24/7 Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Line also provides victims and survivors access to vital help and information whenever they need it. Free and confidential emotional and listening support is available to all victims and survivors of rape and sexual abuse aged 16 and over. Where appropriate, the service will signpost victims to longer-term support services, including therapeutic support. This service is delivered by Rape Crisis England and Wales.

■ Sexual Offences: Victim Support Schemes

Alex McIntyre:

[\[11819\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps her Department is taking to support victims of rape and sexual violence in Gloucester.

Alex Davies-Jones:

The Ministry of Justice has significantly increased funding for victim and witness support over recent years. As part of this, the Department provides Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) with annual grant funding to commission local practical, emotional, and therapeutic support services for victims of all crime types.

For the financial year 24/25, we are providing £41 million of ringfenced funding for Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs) and Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) roles, and £21 million of ringfenced funding for community-based domestic abuse and sexual violence services. This is in addition to the core funding the Ministry of Justice provides to PCCs to allocate at their discretion, based on their assessment of local need. Gloucestershire PCC received £1,343,073 in financial year 24/25 to support victims.

Additionally, the MOJ-commissioned 24/7 Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Line, delivered by Rape Crisis England and Wales, provides victims and survivors access to vital help and information whenever they need it. Free and confidential emotional and listening support is available to all victims and survivors of rape and sexual abuse aged 16 and over. Where appropriate, the service will signpost victims to longer-term support services, including therapeutic support.

Since May 2024, the Ministry of Justice has also been running a pilot providing free sentencing remarks to victims of rape and serious sexual offences. We will be evaluating the pilot to understand cost, uptake and impact on victims when it ends in May 2025.

NORTHERN IRELAND**■ Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Act 2023****Alex Burghart:**[\[12293\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, whether his Department plans to appeal the Dillon judgement handed down in the Belfast Court of Appeal on 20 September 2024, NICA 59.

Hilary Benn:

The Government is committed to repealing and replacing the Legacy Act, and to implementing legacy mechanisms that are compliant with human rights and can be supported by communities across Northern Ireland.

We are considering the implications of the Court of Appeal judgement, which are complex and wide-ranging, and I will update the House as soon as possible.

In the meantime, the Government has lodged an application with the Court of Appeal seeking leave to appeal the judgement.

■ Police Service of Northern Ireland: Finance**Alex Burghart:** [\[12284\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, how much additional security funding the Government plans to provide to the Police Service of Northern Ireland in the 2025-26 financial year.

Hilary Benn:

Recognising the unique security situation in Northern Ireland, the UK Government makes an additional contribution to the PSNI through Additional Security Funding.

As we announced in the Spending Review last week we have increased Additional Security Funding (ASF) for the financial year 2025-26 to £37.8 million . ASF was previously c£32m a year.

This increased funding from the Government will provide the PSNI with more resources they need to tackle the threat posed by Northern Ireland related terrorism in Northern Ireland, and so help them to continue to keep people safe.

SCIENCE, INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY**■ Data Protection: Publishing****Jim Shannon:** [\[11590\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, whether the Information Commissioner plans to review the data privacy practices of major academic publishers.

Chris Bryant:

The ICO rigorously oversees and enforces compliance with UK data protection law across the whole economy where it relates to the processing of personal data. It does this in a range of ways, including by receiving complaints from members of the public, issuing guidance for organisations and where necessary investigating potential non-compliance. Whilst the ICO is not undertaking specific work to review academic publishers' privacy practices, this may change if evidence comes to light during the undertaking of its regulatory duties.

■ Mobile Phones: Rural Areas**Richard Foord:** [\[11631\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that mobile network providers maintain (a) reliable coverage and (b) service quality in rural areas.

Chris Bryant:

Government wants all areas of the UK to benefit from reliable and good quality mobile coverage. That is why our ambition is for all populated areas, including rural areas, to have higher-quality standalone 5G by 2030, and to increase 4G coverage to

95% of the UK landmass by the end of 2025 through the Shared Rural Network programme.

Ofcom is responsible for measuring and reporting on mobile network coverage. Far too often the data published by Ofcom does not match consumers' experience of using mobile networks. I recently wrote to Ofcom asking them to set out steps to improve their mobile coverage reporting.

■ Springer Nature

Jim Shannon:

[\[11591\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of the market dominance of (a) Springer Nature and (b) other major academic publishers on access to publicly funded research.

Feryal Clark:

The UK mandates open access to publicly funded research via funders such as UK Research and Innovation. Negotiations between Higher Education and academic publishers, including Springer Nature, are supported by Jisc. They seek value for money and off-set read subscriptions and publishing charges, while enabling open access in accordance with UK funder policies.

Jisc is negotiating new agreements with publishers in 2025. These focus on pace of change to open access models, financial sustainability, and equity to benefit wider audiences. Also, funders and universities, encourage a diversity of outputs from research, beyond publication, including preprints.

TRANSPORT

■ Airports: Security

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[11842\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether she plans to lift the restriction on carrying liquids over 100ml in hand luggage on flights departing from UK airports; and if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of bringing forward legislative proposals to require all airports to introduce CT security scanners within the next six months.

Mike Kane:

The UK already has some of the most robust aviation security measures in the world, and the implementation of new cutting-edge technology enhances security and will boost the passenger experience. Restrictions on the carriage of liquids to up to 100ml need to remain in place for security reasons but the Department is moving at pace to enable larger volume of liquids to be carried when it is appropriate to do so. The department keeps aviation security regulatory requirements under constant review. All airports have been required by regulation to upgrade cabin baggage screening technology and processes to meet enhanced standards.

■ Bus Services: Schools**Neil Duncan-Jordan:** [\[11823\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the new cap on bus fares will include services that are solely for the transport of pupils to and from their place of education.

Simon Lightwood:

The new fare cap will be designed to be as equitable as possible in terms of its support for passengers across England. One of the key principles of the scheme will be to include 'open' services which allow any member of public to board. 'Closed' school services, defined as a service which would not allow a member of the general public to board, and school services which operate in term-time only will not be eligible for inclusion. This is in keeping with the approach of the previous fare cap scheme, which did not allow for the inclusion of closed school services.

Services from participating operators that serve schools, are open to members of the public and run all year round will be eligible for inclusion in the scheme.

■ Crewe Station: Standards**Connor Naismith:** [\[11750\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the condition of Crewe Railway Station.

Simon Lightwood:

There is a clear need for interventions at Crewe station including to ageing roof and canopies. The Department expects Avanti West Coast, which manages the day-to-day running of the station, to work closely on behalf of passengers with Network Rail, which is responsible for asset repairs.

■ Rail Delivery Group and Rail Partners: Membership**Grahame Morris:** [\[11167\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much (a) Northern Rail, (b) London North Eastern Railway, (c) TransPennine Express and (d) Southeastern pay annually in membership fees to (i) the Rail Delivery Group and (ii) Rail Partners.

Simon Lightwood:

In 2024/25, the annual membership fee paid by each of Northern Trains Limited, London North-Eastern Railway Limited and South Eastern Trains Limited to the Rail Partners is £70,350 (exclusive of VAT). The annual membership fee paid by Transpennine Trains Limited to the Rail Partners is £57,750 (exclusive of VAT).

Rail Partners have two distinct functions – Policy and Advocacy, and Operator Services. The operators in question are currently members of the latter, which brings together industry leaders to discuss matters of operations and engineering. These memberships are historic and subject to review.

Operators do not pay a membership fee to the Rail Delivery Group but rather pay for services that are delivered on behalf of the operators, such as National Rail Enquiries.

■ **Railway Stations: Disability**

Priti Patel: [\[11849\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if she will provide funding to improve step-free access at railway stations.

Simon Lightwood:

The Government is committed to improving the accessibility of the railway and recognises the social and economic benefits this brings to communities. Since its launch in 2006, the Access for All programme has delivered step free access at more than 250 stations across Great Britain.

Since April 2024, Access for All projects have entered into passenger service at nine stations, with a further 25 stations scheduled to enter into passenger service by April 2025.

■ **Railways: Freight**

Charlotte Nichols: [\[12280\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether she plans to take steps to increase the amount of freight transported by rail.

Simon Lightwood:

The Government recognises that the economic and environmental potential of rail freight is significant and is committed to supporting its growth.

There will be a statutory duty on Great British Railways to promote the use of rail freight and there will be an overall rail freight growth target set by the Secretary of State, with clear and meaningful targets for rail freight growth within pre-defined periods.

■ **Railways: Swindon**

Will Stone: [\[11664\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress her Department has made on the potential opening of public direct travel between Swindon and Oxford using the current freight track.

Lilian Greenwood:

In September, Great Western Railway began a trial of direct services between Bristol, Bath, Swindon and Oxford. This trial is on Saturdays only with two direct services in each direction. It will run until May 2025, to understand levels of passenger demand for this service.

No decisions have yet been made on whether this service will continue beyond then and any expansion of the service would require additional rolling stock which is currently unidentified and unfunded.

■ **Shipping: Air Pollution**

Siân Berry: [\[11809\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps she plans to take to (a) reduce emissions of harmful air pollutants from ships at ports in England and (b) incorporate the requirements of the environmental principles policy statement into maritime policy.

Mike Kane:

Greening transport, which includes tackling air pollution, is a key priority for the Secretary of State. The UK has consistently supported ambitious international efforts to limit air pollutant emissions from global shipping at the International Maritime Organization, including adopting the North Sea ECA for SO_x emissions in 2005 which was expanded to include NO_x emissions in 2021. Since April 2010, the UK has also applied equivalent SO_x regulations to inland-water vessels and ships at berth in all ports.

The Department considers the environmental principles policy statement across all policy areas, in line with our legal duty.

■ **Transport: Falkland Islands**

Andrew Rosindell: [\[11567\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps she is taking to help improve (a) access and (b) transport links to the Falkland Islands.

Mike Kane:

The DfT is working closely with the Falkland Islands Government, aviation stakeholders and the Maritime & Coastguard Agency to improve access and transport links.

Flights to and from the Falkland Islands are a devolved decision for the Falkland Islands Government. The announcement on 24 September 2024 between the Foreign Secretary and the Argentine Foreign Minister Mondino on South Atlantic cooperation included an intention to resume the weekly commercial flight between Sao Paulo (Brazil) and the Falkland Islands which stopped once a month in Cordoba, Argentina. We are working with the Falkland Islands Government and the Argentine Government to put into effect the resumption of the flight.

The UK has a large number of bilateral air services agreements (ASAs) that grant traffic rights for the operation of flights from countries around the world to the UK. The majority of these ASAs include the ability to fly to the UK Overseas Territories. The DfT works closely with the Falkland Islands Civil Aviation Department to ensure they are aware of the traffic rights available to airlines operating to the Falklands.

TREASURY■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Graham Stuart:****[12247]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to her Oral Statement of 30 October 2024 on Financial Statement and Budget Report, Official Report, column 819, what the evidential basis is for the estimate that 75% of family farms will not be affected by the changes to agricultural property relief.

James Murray:

The Government has published information about reforms to agricultural property relief at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/what-are-the-changes-to-agricultural-property-relief>.

Almost three-quarters of estates claiming agricultural property relief (or those claiming agricultural property relief and business property relief together) in 2026-27 are expected to be unaffected by these reforms.

Historic data published by HMRC shows that in 2021-22, 73% of estates making agricultural property relief claims did so on total amounts worth less than £1m.

HMRC is commissioned by the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) at each fiscal event to produce Inheritance Tax receipts forecasts. More information behind this process is published on the OBR website: <https://obr.uk/forecasts-in-depth/tax-by-tax-spend-by-spend/inheritance-tax/>.

HMRC analysis suggests that in 2026-27, 500 estates claiming agricultural property relief will receive a lower financial benefit as a result of the Government's reforms, out of a projected total of 1,800 estates making agricultural property relief claims in that year. This means that around three-quarters of estates making agricultural property relief claims will be unaffected by this measure.

■ **Agriculture: Business Rates****David Simmonds:****[11937]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what data the Valuation Office Agency holds on the rateable value of (a) farms and (b) farmland.

James Murray:

Farms and farmland, if used by the occupier for agricultural purposes, are exempt from non-domestic rating under Schedule 5 to the Local Government Finance Act 1988. Consequently, agricultural land and buildings are not included in rating lists and no rateable values are shown, so the Valuation Office Agency does not hold any relevant information.

■ Agriculture: Inheritance Tax**Graham Stuart:** [12052]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to paragraph 2.51 of the Autumn Budget 2024, on what evidential basis she reduced Agricultural Property Relief on combined agricultural and business assets valued over £1 million.

Steve Barclay: [12075]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to page 118 of Autumn Budget 2024, HC 295, and page 32 of the Budget Policy Costings document, if she will publish the (a) methodology and (b) data sources on how the revenue from the (i) agricultural property relief and (ii) business property relief was estimated.

Ben Maguire: [12238]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of implementing a change to the Agricultural Property Relief rate.

James Murray:

The Government has published information about reforms to agricultural property relief at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/what-are-the-changes-to-agricultural-property-relief>.

Almost three-quarters of estates claiming agricultural property relief (or those claiming agricultural property relief and business property relief together) in 2026-27 are expected to be unaffected by these reforms.

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■ Asylum: Finance**David Simmonds:** [11933]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to paragraph 2.8 of the Autumn Budget 2024, HC 295, if she will publish the methodology used to forecast the delivery of savings of (a) £2.2 billion and (b) £4 billion on asylum in those years.

Darren Jones:

This government has already ended the Rwanda Migration and Economic Development Partnership and is reforming the asylum system by streamlining capacity to process asylum seekers and returning those that do not have the right to stay in the UK. This will start the process of ending the use of hotels for asylum seekers and deliver over £4 billion in savings in the next two years.

This is based on Home Office modelling projecting the costs of the asylum support system following the measures taken since July. The savings are generated against the Home Office's forecasts of the costs of the asylum support system under the previous Government's policies.

Business Rates**Mr Lee Dillon:**[\[11693\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment has she made of the impact of the level of business rates on high street shops; and what steps she plans to take to support businesses with high business rates.

James Murray:

High street businesses are contending with changing consumer shopping habits and have faced a series of economic headwinds in recent years, including the pandemic. As set out in its manifesto, the government wants to ensure that the weight of business rates is permanently rebalanced and high street businesses are protected.

The government announced at the Budget an intention to introduce permanently lower tax rates for retail, hospitality, and leisure (RHL) properties from 2026-27.

During the interim period, for 2025-26, RHL properties will receive a 40% relief on business rates bills up to a cash cap of £110,000 per business. The small business multiplier paid by properties with RVs below £51,000 will also be frozen for a further year.

Business Rates: Tax Yields**David Simmonds:**[\[11930\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to her Department's discussion paper entitled Transforming Business Rates, published on 30 October 2024, what the estimated yearly increase is in business rate receipts from the higher multiplier on hereditaments with a Rateable Value of above £50,000 from 2026-27.

David Simmonds:[\[11931\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to her Department's discussion paper entitled Transforming Business Rates, published on 30 October 2024, what the estimated yearly decrease is in business rate receipts from the lower multiplier for Retail, Hospitality and Leisure hereditaments from 2026-27.

James Murray:

To protect the high street, the government intends to introduce permanently lower tax rates for high street Retail, Hospitality and Leisure properties from 2026-27. This tax cut must be sustainably funded, and the government intends to introduce a Large Business Multiplier from 2026-27, which will apply a higher rate on the most valuable properties (with rateable values of £500,000 and above). The rates for new multipliers will be set at Budget 2025 so that the government can factor into its decision-making the next revaluation outcomes and the broader economic and fiscal context.

Employers' Contributions: Business**Rupert Lowe:**[\[11999\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to paragraph 2.40 of the Autumn Budget 2024, HC 295, published on 30 October 2024, if she will make an assessment of the potential impact of the planned rise in employer's national insurance contributions on businesses.

James Murray:

Raising the revenue required to fix the public finances and restore economic stability requires difficult decisions on tax, which is why we are asking employers to contribute more.

The government will protect the smallest businesses by increasing the Employment Allowance to £10,500 and removing the £100,000 eligibility threshold. This means that next year, 865,000 employers will pay no National Insurance contributions at all and more than half of employers will see no change or will gain overall from this package.

Employers' Contributions: Essex**Priti Patel:**[\[11845\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to paragraph 2.40 of the Autumn Budget 2024, HC 295, published on 30 October 2024, whether she has made an estimate of (a) the number of (i) businesses and (ii) employers in (A) Witham constituency and (B) Essex that will be affected by the proposed increase in the rate of employer National Insurance Contributions (NIC) and (b) the amount of employer NIC revenue that will be raised from those areas in each of the next five years as a result.

James Murray:

Estimates of the number of businesses nor revenue raised from businesses in Witham and Essex from changes to Employer NICs announced at Autumn Budget 2024 are not available.

Employers' Contributions: Ministry of Defence**James Cartlidge:**[\[12294\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Autumn Budget 2024, published on 30 October 2024, HC 295, what estimate her Department has made of the

cost of the increase to employer's national insurance contributions on the Ministry of Defence.

James Murray:

The Government will be supporting departments with the cost of additional employer national insurance contributions. This is in line with the Government's usual approach to supporting the public sector, as was the case with the previous government's Health and Social Care Levy. The allocation for the Ministry of Defence, along with all other departments, will be set out in due course.

■ **EU Countries**

Rupert Lowe:

[\[11712\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much was paid to the EU in each year since 2021.

Darren Jones:

The UK continues to make payments to the EU in relation to the liabilities arising from the period of the UK's membership under the legally binding Withdrawal Agreement. Between the UK's departure from the EU on 30th January 2020 and the end of 2023, such payments amounted to £23.8bn (net of assets returned to the UK and estimated receipts to UK beneficiaries from the EU Budget).

Further details of payments are set out in the European Union Finances Statement (EUFS) 2023, available on Gov.uk and in the library of the House. These figures do not include payments to the EU for other purposes such as those in relation to continued UK association to certain EU programmes under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement; such payments are reported in the relevant departments' annual accounts and as part of normal budgetary disclosures.

■ **Fuels: Excise Duties**

Jim Shannon:

[\[11578\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if she will make an estimate of the proportion of the reduction in fuel duty made in 2022 that was passed on to consumers by petrol stations.

James Murray:

Fuel duty rates were first reduced by 5p in March 2022 by the government at the time.

The Competition and Markets Authority's [Road Fuel Review](#) into fuel prices, published on 8 July 2022, found that the 5p cut had largely been passed on to consumers.

At Autumn Budget 2024, the Government announced continued support for families and businesses, by extending the temporary 5p fuel duty cut for one year and cancelling the planned inflation increase for 2025-26. This maintains fuel duty rates at

the levels set on 23 March 2022 for an additional 12 months and represents a saving of £59 for the average car driver in 2025-26.

■ Offshore Industry: North Sea

Mark Garnier: [\[11877\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether she has made an assessment of the potential impact of the removal of the investment allowance on the amount of (a) oil and (b) gas extracted from the North Sea in the next five years.

James Murray:

At Autumn Budget 2024 the government confirmed that from 1 November 2024, the Energy Profits Levy (EPL) rate would increase by 3 percentage points to 38%, the EPL investment allowance would be abolished and the EPL decarbonisation allowance rate would be adjusted to 66%. The government also confirmed an extension to the period the levy applies from 31 March 2029 until 31 March 2030. To support jobs in future and existing industries, the government decided to make no additional changes to the availability of capital allowances in the EPL.

The government has carefully considered the impact of the removal of the EPL's investment allowance. HM Treasury publishes impacts in summary form for tax measures in tax information and impact notes (TIINs) alongside the Finance Bill. The summary of impacts from these changes to the EPL can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/energy-profits-levy-reforms-2024>

■ Prime Minister: Pensions

John Glen: [\[11594\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the Government plans to take legislative steps to amend the Pensions Increase (Pension Scheme for Keir Starmer QC) Regulations 2013.

Darren Jones:

There are no plans to amend the regulations.

■ Private Education: VAT

Blake Stephenson: [\[11615\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment her Department has made of the impact of imposing VAT on private school fees on the UK's relations with European and international allies.

Blake Stephenson: [\[11616\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment her Department has made of the impact of imposing VAT on private school fees on the UK's global reputation.

James Murray:

On 30th October, at Budget, the Government confirmed that, as of 1 January 2025, all education, boarding, and vocational training provided for a charge by a private school in the UK will be subject to VAT at the standard rate of 20 per cent.

International schools make an important contribution to the connections between the UK and its international partners, which the Government remains committed to strengthening and deepening further. While they can be subsidised by foreign governments, depending on their funding structure, many international schools still charge fees comparable to that of a lot of British private schools, many of which do not necessarily follow the UK curriculum, nor teach exclusively in English. It would therefore be unfair to carve international schools out of policy changes whilst comparable independent schools remain within scope.

Public Expenditure: Impact Assessments**Charlie Dewhirst:**[\[11977\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 15 October 2024 to Question 6995 on Public Expenditure: Impact Assessments, if she will publish the equality and environmental assessment that her Department conducted.

Darren Jones:

As highlighted previously, officials conducted Equalities and Environmental impact assessments of the savings measures put forward by Departments within the July 'Fixing the Foundations' statement, and HM Treasury has processes in place to ensure that it complies with its legal requirements.

Impact assessments are a core part of the internal decision-making process, and they are not usually published.

Treasury: Official Cars**Charlie Dewhirst:**[\[11754\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 14 October 2024 to Question 7020 on Treasury: Official Cars, what form of vehicular transport does the Chancellor of the Exchequer use to travel on official business; and what was the cost of this transport in (a) July 2024, (b) August 2024, (c) September 2024 and (d) October 2024.

James Murray:

We do not comment on the specific arrangements in place for the Chancellor because of security.

Charlie Dewhirst:[\[11755\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 14 October 2024 to Question 7020 on Treasury: Official Cars, whether the car is an electric car.

James Murray:

Due to driver working patterns HM Treasury's pool car is not always the same make and model. Cars used include ones that are electric, plug-in hybrid petrol or hybrid petrol.

Charlie Dewhirst:[\[11756\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 14 October 2024 to Question 7021 on Treasury: Official Cars, whether the Car Service in her Department is provided to senior officials for departmental travel.

James Murray:

HM Treasury has one departmental car that is available to the Chief Secretary or other junior ministers for official travel. HM Treasury follows the guidance set out by the Propriety and Ethics team in the Cabinet Office on use by Senior Officials.

■ **Treasury: Staff****Rupert Lowe:**[\[11794\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many staff in their Departmental work outside of the UK; where these staff work; and what the cost is of salaries for these staff.

James Murray:

a) Total number of HM Treasury employees working overseas as at 30th October 2024.

51

b) Where these staff work.

- Australian Treasury
- British Embassy, U.A.E.
- Canadian Finance Ministry
- FCDO
- German Finance Ministry
- International Monetary Fund, U.S.
- International Trade, India
- MONEYVAL, Council of Europe, France
- National Institute of Public Service, France
- New Zealand Treasury
- Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development, France
- Ministry of Economy, Finance and Industrial and Digital Sovereignty, France
- U.S. Treasury
- UK Mission to the EU, Belgium

- World Bank, U.S.
 - c) Annual salary cost to HM Treasury for these staff
£506,989

WALES

■ Social Services: Wales

Jamie Stone:

[\[901050\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, whether she has had discussions with the Welsh Government on support for care services for elderly people in rural areas in Wales.

Dame Nia Griffith:

We are committed to resetting the relationship with the Welsh Government, and my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales meets regularly with the First Minister to discuss a range of issues.

The Department for Health and Social Care also works collaboratively with the Devolved Governments on shared objectives. The First Minister for Wales has said improving access to social care in Wales is one of her priorities.

■ Speed Limits: Wales

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[901048\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what assessment she has made of the economic impact of the 20mph speed limit on Welsh roads.

Jo Stevens:

The Welsh Government has been clear that the primary objective of this policy is to save lives and reduce casualties.

From April-June 2024, both collisions and casualties on 20mph and 30mph roads have fallen by **almost a quarter** compared to the same period of 2023.

■ UK Internal Trade: Northern Ireland

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[901047\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what meetings she has had on levels of regulation related to the supply of goods from businesses in Wales to customers in Northern Ireland since 4 July 2024.

Dame Nia Griffith:

The Government is committed to implementing the Windsor Framework and to protecting the UK internal market, including trade between Wales and Northern Ireland.

We will continue to work constructively with all stakeholders: the EU, the devolved administrations and businesses in this aim.

WORK AND PENSIONS**■ Child Maintenance Service**

Rebecca Smith: [\[12184\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she has made an assessment of the potential impact of the Child Maintenance Service on the mental health of paying parents.

Andrew Western:

The Child Maintenance Service (CMS) is committed to ensuring that it delivers a safe service that is sensitive to the needs of all the parents that use it. We recognise that some parents may face difficult circumstances, particularly at a time of separation.

The CMS is well prepared to respond quickly and effectively if it becomes aware that the safety of any of its customers are at risk, and caseworkers receive extensive training and follow a well-managed process with clear steps to support vulnerable clients.

The CMS also has a toolkit for its caseworkers, which includes clear steps to follow in order to support customers and signpost to support organisations, where appropriate. This Toolkit is regularly reviewed and strengthened on the basis of customer insight.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Official Cars

Charlie Dewhirst: [\[11764\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 14 October 2024 to Question 7030 on Department for Work and Pensions: Official Cars, if she will name which specific senior officials have access to a Government car; and whether those senior officials had access to a Government car before the 2024 general election.

Charlie Dewhirst: [\[11765\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 14 October 2024 to Question 7029 on Department for Work and Pensions: Official Cars, whether the vehicle is an electric car.

Andrew Western:

For security reasons specific details of allocations including make and model of vehicles are not issued. The arrangements relating to the usage of vehicles in the Government Car Service are set out in the Civil Service Management Code.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Staff

Rupert Lowe: [\[11796\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many staff in their Departmental work outside of the UK; where these staff work; and what the cost is of salaries for these staff.

Andrew Western:

None of the DWP's employees work outside the UK.

Flexible Support Fund: Universal Credit**Mr Lee Dillon:**[\[11691\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what guidance her Department provides to parents on Universal Credit on using the Flexible Support Fund to cover upfront childcare costs.

Alison McGovern:

The Flexible Support Fund can be used to pay 100% of the upfront costs of up to one month of childcare. This is designed to ensure that any costs that the Universal Credit customer incurs in relation to childcare when starting work or increasing their hours is not a barrier to taking up this work.

The Government website 'Childcare Choices' is a key source of childcare information for parents. It advises that UC customers might be eligible for upfront childcare costs, and to speak to their work coach. We also issue guidance to Jobcentre Plus work coaches on the eligibility and awarding criteria for the Flexible Support Fund and upfront childcare costs.

Customers who have received an upfront childcare award can make a Universal Credit childcare claim for up to 85% of their childcare costs thereafter. The Universal Credit childcare claim is paid to the customer through their UC award, which they can use to pay for the next month's costs, thereby easing UC customers into the UC childcare costs payment cycle.

Household Support Fund**Priti Patel:**[\[11852\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when she will provide local authorities with (a) their allocation of the Household Support Fund for 2025-26 and (b) guidance for the use of that fund.

Alison McGovern:

In the Autumn Budget on 30 October 2024, the Chancellor announced that the Government will provide £1 billion, including Barnett impact, to extend the Household Support Fund (HSF) in England and maintain Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) in England and Wales in 2025-2026.

The Household Support Fund scheme guidance and individual Local Authority funding allocations for the forthcoming extension will be announced as soon as possible ahead of the scheme beginning on 1 April 2025.

■ Jobcentres: Food Banks**Mr Lee Dillon:**[\[11685\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of preventing Job Centres from distributing food vouchers on levels of access to foodbanks.

Alison McGovern:

Under the previous administration, the Government introduced a new food charity signposting slip to replace the one previously used, removing personal data to better comply with our departmental obligations, including our GDPR responsibilities, and to improve our signposting process. The new slip does not change our DWP policy, and our Jobcentres continue to provide customers with guidance to find additional support, including signposting to emergency food support when appropriate.

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ Jimmy Lai

Sir Iain Duncan Smith:

[\[8097\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will have discussions with his Chinese counterparts on the release of Jimmy Lai during his visit to China in October 2024.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 14 October 2024. The correct answer should have been:

Catherine West:

Jimmy Lai is the founder of Apple Daily, a former leading pro-democracy newspaper in Hong Kong. Lai is a British citizen and has been detained since December 2020. He has been convicted of fraud and faces more serious charges of foreign collusion under Hong Kong's national security law. Lai's national security trial, which began on 18 December 2023, will resume on 20 November 2024, when Lai will take to the stand in his own defence. I met with Sebastien Lai and Jimmy Lai's international legal team on Tuesday 8 October.

Consular officials submitted our latest request for consular access to Mr. Lai to the Hong Kong Prison Service on 2 October, also seeking assurances of appropriate medical treatment. Requests for consular access continue to be refused on the basis that China does not accept dual nationality.

I met with Sebastien Lai and Jimmy Lai's international legal team on Tuesday 8 October in my capacity as Minister for the Indo-Pacific. The Foreign Secretary raised Jimmy Lai's case in his first meeting with China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi at the ASEAN Summit on 26 July and his case remains a priority for this Government. We will continue to call on the Hong Kong authorities to end their politically motivated prosecution and immediately release Jimmy Lai. We will continue to press for consular access.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

CABINET OFFICE

■ Transparency and Accountability

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Pat McFadden):

[\[HCWS198\]](#)

Statement

The Ministerial Code

The Government has today published an updated Ministerial Code. The Code is available on GOV.UK.

The new Code will be instrumental in setting out the high standards that the British people expect and that Ministers must follow.

Changes to the Code include incorporating the Seven Principles of Public Life directly into the Code; strengthening the powers of the Prime Minister's Independent Adviser on Ministerial Standards; setting out guiding principles for Ministers on gifts and hospitality; and introducing improved transparency arrangements to align more closely the publication of ministerial gifts and hospitality with the House of Commons register.

The new Code has also been restructured into three distinct sections: Ministers' Standards of Conduct; Ministers' Interests; and Ministers and Government Procedures. This brings ethical standards to the forefront of the new Code, ending the confusing blend of public service values and everyday governing processes found in previous versions.

The new Ministerial Code also:

- Reinserts an explicit reference to international law and treaty obligations as part of ministers' overarching duty to comply with the law.
- Includes updated terms of reference for the Prime Minister's Independent Adviser on Ministerial Standards (previously the Independent Adviser on Ministers' Interests).
- Ensures the Code reflects existing rules, guidance and procedure, including the guidance on use of non-corporate communications channels for Government business, quasi-judicial decisions, and public appointments.

This new Ministerial Code will help to restore the public's trust in politics, and shape this Government's mission to return Britain to the service of working people.

The List of Ministers' Interests

The List of Ministers' Interests is also being published today on GOV.UK by the Independent Adviser on Ministerial Standards. The list provides details of the personal interests of members of the Government that are judged by the Independent Adviser to be relevant to their ministerial portfolios and duties.

The List of Ministerial Responsibilities

The Government will today be publishing the List of Ministerial Responsibilities and the List of Non-Ministerial Departments and Executive Agencies on GOV.UK. I have requested that a copy of the List of Ministerial Responsibilities be deposited in the libraries of the Houses of Parliament.

The List of Ministerial Responsibilities includes details of ministerial departments, their correspondence contact details, the Ministers within each department, and their portfolio responsibilities.

The List of Non-Ministerial Departments and Executive Agencies includes details of each of these organisations, along with associated correspondence contact details, the parent department and the responsible government minister.

The Special Adviser Code of Conduct

The Government has today published an updated Code of Conduct for Special Advisers, in line with the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010. The Code is available on GOV.UK.

Alongside establishing the key responsibilities of special advisers, the updated Code of Conduct for Special Advisers sets out the standards of behaviour this Government expects of them and formalises the existing policy for managing interests.

The Code of Conduct for Special Advisers is part of special advisers' terms and conditions of service.

The Special Adviser Contract

The Government has today published an updated Special Adviser Model Contract which is available on GOV.UK. The Model Contract sets out the terms and conditions that apply to all special advisers appointed by ministers and employed by government departments.

This Government has introduced a small number of changes to the terms of the Model Contract. These are:

- To require special advisers to obtain the required level of security clearance for their role within the first 4 months of starting in post.
- To enable special advisers to leave government with a severance payment at the start of the pre-election period before a general election (or at the dissolution of Parliament).
- To confirm that special advisers are entitled to an annual review of their salary, and the process for determining any increases in salary.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Consultation on updating the media mergers regime to include online news

Minister for Sport, Media, Civil Society and Youth (Stephanie Peacock):

[\[HCWS191\]](#)

The government is committed to a pluralistic media landscape, where citizens are able to access information from a range of sources in order to form opinions. The public's ability to access a wide range of news, views and information about the world in which we live is central to the health of our democracy.

The Enterprise Act 2002 gives the Secretary of State the power to intervene in media mergers if she believes one or more public interest considerations may be relevant. The Secretary of State may ultimately order a media merger to be blocked or unwound if she decides that it has operated or may be expected to operate against the public interest.

However, the media landscape has changed significantly since the Enterprise Act became law more than two decades ago. The world has changed; Ofcom's news consumption survey, published in September 2024, shows over two thirds (71%) of UK adults now access news online. It is essential that our regimes move with the times, are fit for purpose, and are future-proofed to protect the availability of a wide range of accurate and high-quality news, particularly for younger audiences, as technology and news habits evolve.

To reflect the way news is increasingly consumed and the need to protect the freedom of the press as a cornerstone of democracy, I am today launching a six week technical public consultation on expanding the legislation which governs media mergers, to allow the Secretary of State to intervene in mergers involving a wider range of print news publications, online news publications and news programmes. This follows advice from Ofcom as part of its 2021 Statement on the Future of Media Plurality.

The consultation will seek views from industry, Parliament, and the public, on whether our proposed updates to the regime achieve our desired effects.

DEFENCE

■ Defence Nuclear Enterprise

Secretary of State for Defence (John Healey):

[\[HCWS193\]](#)

The UK is exploring options to re-establish a nuclear fuel cycle for reactor fuel for defence purposes. The Government is committed to modernising defence nuclear fuel production under the Defence Nuclear Enterprise. We are commencing engagement with industry to develop options for how this requirement can be delivered.

The UK takes its nuclear responsibilities and obligations seriously. This fuel production cycle will be fully consistent with the UK's international obligations, including the Treaty

on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). It will also be fully consistent with the UK's voluntary moratorium, established in 1995, on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

The UK will continue to maintain the highest standards of safeguarding of civil nuclear materials, ensuring a separation from defence materials and complying with our obligations under the UK's Voluntary Offer Agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

ENERGY SECURITY AND NET ZERO

■ Energy Infrastructure Planning Projects

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Minister for Energy) (Michael Shanks):
[\[HCWS195\]](#)

My Noble Friend, the Minister of State for Energy Security and Net Zero (Lord Hunt of Kings Heath OBE), made the following statement today.

This Statement concerns an application for development consent made under the Planning Act 2008 by West Burton Solar Project Limited for the construction, operation, maintenance and decommissioning of a solar photovoltaic array electricity generating station situated in Lincolnshire.

Under section 107(1) of the Planning Act 2008, the Secretary of State must make a decision on an application within three months of the receipt of the Examining Authority's report unless exercising the power under section 107(3) of the Act to set a new deadline. Where a new deadline is set, the Secretary of State must make a Statement to Parliament to announce it.

The current statutory deadline for the decision on the West Burton Solar Project application is 8 November 2024.

I have decided to allow a short extension and to set a new deadline of 24 January 2025 to allow time for necessary public consultation on potential variations to the application.

The decision to set the new deadline for this application is without prejudice to the decision on whether to grant or refuse development consent.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Outcomes from Nature COP16, Cali, Colombia

Minister for Nature (Mary Creagh): [\[HCWS196\]](#)

The climate and nature crisis defines our times and it is the most vulnerable who bear the brunt. Over half of global GDP is moderately or highly dependent on nature. Loss of biodiversity poses a serious risk to global food security by undermining the resilience of many agricultural systems to threats such as pests, pathogens and climate change. The government is committed to ending poverty on a liveable planet.

The UN Biodiversity Summit (CBD COP16) held in Colombia closed on the morning of Saturday 2 November. The UK Government took a leading role in driving forward key elements of work necessary to mobilise more international finance for nature and deliver on our mission to halt and reverse nature loss. The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and I led the UK delegation.

The conclusion of complex negotiations on Digital Sequence Information (DSI) means that businesses have the option of voluntarily contributing to a new fund – known as the Cali Fund – if they use this genetic information from nature. DNA that has been sequenced from the natural world is available online for use in research. This research can be applied to important work across agriculture, conservation, medicine and public health. This Fund will then support further use of DSI and the conservation and sustainable use of nature, with a significant proportion flowing to Indigenous People and local communities. Progress was made on several fronts, including the UK launching the Biodiversity Finance Trends dashboard to increase transparency and demonstrate that nature finance flows are increasing. The government welcomed the launch of the Framework for high integrity biodiversity credits markets developed by the Independent Advisory on Biodiversity Credits (IAPB) which was sponsored by the UK and France. Alongside the Framework, the IAPB also showcased a suite of pilot projects in Cali as a meaningful way to illustrate the current state of the market and its development prospects.

At the conference, the Secretary of State set out new criteria to meet our 30by30 targets, which commit to the protection of 30% of land and ocean by 2030. A newly [published update](#) outlined criteria for eligible land in England and laid out next steps to achieve this milestone, essential for nature conservation and biodiversity.

The UK was pleased that a new permanent body for Indigenous Peoples and local communities was created at COP16 to increase their formal decision making power, given that they live on an estimated 50% of the world's land. I launched the principles for Inclusive, Gender-Responsive, Locally-Led Biodiversity Action which will help focus and co-ordinate action to strengthen the gender equality and social inclusion aspects of the transformative change required to implement the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and tackle the biodiversity crisis. The Secretary of State and I made commitments to increase support to the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund and join the Legacy Landscapes Fund.

The UK was however, disappointed that COP16 concluded before reaching an agreement on international strategies for mobilising nature finance. It is only through our international action and leadership that we the tackle the twin threats of climate change and biodiversity loss which threatens growth, our future prosperity and wellbeing.

■ Statement on Water

Minister for Water and Flooding (Emma Hardy):

[[HCWS200](#)]

The Government is fixing the foundations to put public finances on a sustainable path to restore stability and taking difficult decisions on tax, welfare and spending. This includes

needing to address a £22 billion black hole. To support this effort, the taxpayer-funded contribution to the water and sewerage bills of South West Water (SWW) household customers will end after 31 March 2025.

The rebate was originally introduced in 2013 because SWW customers faced significantly higher water bills than customers in other regions due to the level of investment the company was required to make in the region's infrastructure to meet environmental and water quality standards. Over the last decade the difference between water bills in the South West region and others has decreased. Over the next Price Review period (2025-2029) Ofwat's latest projections are that SWW customers will have similar bills to those in other regions.

The Government is committed to taking action to address water poverty and help vulnerable customers with their water bills. All water companies have measures in place for people who struggle to pay for their water and wastewater services, including measures such as WaterSure, social tariffs, payment breaks and holidays, and debt management support. We expect all water companies to proactively engage with their customers to ensure they know what support schemes are available and how to use them.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Strategic Partnership with Oxford Nanopore Technologies

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Public Health and Prevention (Andrew Gwynne): [\[HCWS199\]](#)

My noble friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Patient Safety, Women's Health and Mental Health (Baroness Merron) has made the following Written Statement:

We have announced the Government's intention to enter into a strategic partnership with Oxford Nanopore – a world-leading UK-based life sciences company whose technology is used to advance biomedical research and translate discoveries for improved patient care across cancer, genetic disease and infectious disease. This collaboration also involves NHS England and two of our world-leading scientific institutions – Genomics England and UK Biobank.

The collaboration will seek to utilise Oxford Nanopore's technology to enhance research and, using insights from the UK's genetic databases, could pave the way for new treatments for cancer and rare diseases.

The collaboration is another vote of confidence in the UK's life sciences sector, which will help kickstart economic growth and support the 10-Year Health Plan's ambition to shift the health service from analogue to digital and from sickness to prevention, helping keep patients out of hospital. The collaboration also builds on the Chancellor's commitment to support UK spinouts announced as part of the Budget.

Separately, following a successful pilot at Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital, we are announcing the scale-up of NHS England's Respiratory Metagenomics Programme,

offering fast track genetic testing for patients with suspected respiratory infectious diseases. Through this programme, Nanopore's sequencing technology will be rolled out from 10 to up to 30 NHS sites to detect new pathogens emerging in the UK. Patients suspected of having severe acute respiratory infections will now be diagnosed within six hours thanks to this technology, compared to the previous norm of around three days.

This will create an 'early warning system' for future pandemics, supporting the Government to take quicker action on emerging infectious disease, and monitor the threat of future pandemics.

I will provide further updates to the House on this collaboration as it develops.

HOME OFFICE

■ Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023 - Guidance for the corporate offence of Failure to Prevent Fraud

The Minister of State for Security (Dan Jarvis):

[\[HCWS192\]](#)

My noble Friend the Minister of State, Home Office (Lord Hanson of Flint) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

To strengthen corporate criminal liability a new offence of failure to prevent fraud was included in the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023. The offence is intended to hold large organisations to account if they profit from fraud and to drive a culture change towards improved fraud prevention procedures.

The offence will hold corporates to account if they fail to prevent a fraud that benefits them, or in some circumstances, their clients. It is limited to large organisations and partnerships only.

Organisations will have a defence in court if they can prove that they had reasonable procedures in place to prevent the fraud, or if it was not reasonable, in all the circumstances, to have any procedures in place. The Government is required to publish guidance to explain the fraud prevention procedures that organisations should have in place to have a defence in the event of prosecution.

The guidance is similar in structure to the guidance for the existing offences of failure to prevent bribery in the Bribery Act 2010 and failure to prevent the criminal facilitation of tax evasion in the Criminal Finances Act 2017. Most organisations subject to the offence will therefore be familiar with the concepts and approach set out in the guidance.

In developing the guidance, the Home Office has worked closely with prosecutors, regulators and across Government. We have also engaged with industry, including trade/professional bodies. The Devolved Governments have also been consulted.

The guidance has been published today and is available on GOV.UK.

To allow organisations to prepare and develop their fraud prevention procedures, Government intends to commence the offence nine months after publication of this guidance.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**■ Inter-Ministerial Group on Tackling Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Winter Pressures 2024/25 Funding**

**Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Homelessness and Democracy
(Rushanara Ali):**

[\[HCWS194\]](#)

I am pleased to announce to the House, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has today taken an important step towards tackling homelessness.

The Deputy Prime Minister will chair the first cross-government Inter-Ministerial Group on Homelessness and Rough Sleeping, following the confirmation at Budget of nearly £1 billion to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping. Further, my department will be providing £10 million of Rough Sleeping Winter Pressures Funding to local authorities across England this winter.

The Inter-Ministerial Group will bring together ministers from across Government to drive progress on the development of our strategy to get back on track to ending homelessness, making sure we are working across government, and in partnership with local authorities and Mayors, to tackle the root causes. This first meeting marks an important step to developing our strategy and follows the announcement at Budget of nearly £1 billion of funding for homelessness and rough sleeping for 2025/26, an increase of £233million on 2024/25. This will help to prevent the rising number of families in temporary accommodation and help to prevent rough sleeping.

The £10 million funding allocated across London and to 115 local authorities outside London will provide a range of services to tackle rough sleeping this winter in the areas with greatest rough sleeping pressures. This includes specialist support to vulnerable groups such as veterans, care leavers and victims of domestic abuse sleeping rough. It also includes support to people at risk of rough sleeping as well as immediate off-the-street accommodation and support to prevent individuals returning to the streets. Services provided from the Winter Pressures 2024/25 funding will enable local authorities to act during periods of extreme weather over winter and help save lives.

Today's announcement is a further demonstration of our commitment to getting back on track to ending homelessness, and I hope that colleagues across the House will work with me in this endeavour.

TREASURY**■ Report on the Use of the Bank of England's Transfer Power to Resolve Silicon Valley Bank UK**

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (Tulip Siddiq):

[\[HCWS197\]](#)

In March 2023, the Bank of England used its transfer power under the Special Resolution Regime (provided for by the Banking Act 2009, as amended) to resolve Silicon Valley Bank UK by transferring ownership of the firm to HSBC UK.

Section 79A of the Banking Act 2009 requires the Bank to provide a report to the Chancellor of the Exchequer where it has used the power to make share transfer instruments or property transfer instruments to sell a firm in whole or in part to a commercial purchaser.

The Bank has provided this report to the Chancellor. The government and the Bank of England are committed to transparency concerning the application of its resolution powers so copies of the report have been deposited in the Libraries of both Houses and the report is also available on the Bank's website, www.bankofengland.co.uk.

I thank the Bank of England's staff for the dedication they demonstrated when they took swift and decisive action to protect financial stability and secure a good outcome for Silicon Valley Bank UK's customers.