



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 26 November 2024 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:38 P.M., 26 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

BUSINESS AND TRADE

■ Beer and Public Houses

Neil Duncan-Jordan: [\[14848\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, with reference to paragraph 5.99 of the Autumn Budget 2024, published on 30 October, if he will publish a list of organisations that will be consulted over guest beers; and whether the Campaign for Pubs will be consulted.

Gareth Thomas:

The Government will consult a range of organisations across the brewing and hospitality sectors on market access for local brewers and will give all those with an interest an opportunity to give their views.

■ Bicycles: Manufacturing Industries

Chi Onwurah: [\[14941\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what steps his Department is taking to support (a) innovation and (b) growth in the bicycle manufacturing industry.

Sarah Jones:

Small businesses and manufacturers are vital to high streets and communities, and essential to the success of the Government's growth mission.

At the Budget, the Government announced we would be continuing funding for key business support programmes in 2025-26: Growth Hubs in England, and the Help to Grow: Management programme. We also announced we are extending Made Smarter Innovation with up to £37m funding. Funding for the Made Smarter Adoption programme will double to £16 million in 2025-26, supporting more small manufacturing businesses to adopt advanced digital technologies and enabling the programme to be expanded to all nine English regions.

■ Business: Finance

Tom Hayes: [\[15131\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, whether he has had discussions with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on making localised funding available to support businesses working together to help local economies.

Gareth Thomas:

The Government's forthcoming Small Business Strategy will set out how national and local business-support schemes can align to increase growth and productivity. Existing offers available include the Business Support Service, local Growth Hubs across England and The Help to Grow scheme.

Financial support is available to businesses through the Government-backed British Business Bank (BBB) to improve access to finance for investment and growth. In Bournemouth East, businesses can access resources such as the South-West Investment Fund, offering loans to SMEs through the BBB, and the joint Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council/UK Shared Prosperity Fund economic development programme

■ **Business: Slough**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[14668\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what support his Department is providing to businesses in Slough to increase levels of exports of (a) goods and (b) services.

Gareth Thomas:

DBT supports companies like Montmartre Patisserie in Slough to export to locations such as Japan, Singapore and Spain.

UK businesses, including those in Slough, can access DBT's wealth of export support via Great.gov.uk. This comprises an online support offer and our wider network of support, which could include the Export Academy, our International Markets network, UK Export Finance and our International Trade Advisers, who use their experience of exporting and knowledge of SMEs to provide one-to-one tailored support to targeted businesses. Alongside this, across the UK, our Export Champions are sharing their experience of trading internationally, encouraging other businesses to export.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[14669\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what steps his Department is taking to support local businesses in Slough High Street.

Gareth Thomas:

This government is committed to supporting businesses and communities that make our high streets, including those in Slough, successful.

This means addressing anti-social behaviour and crime, rolling out banking hubs, stamping out late payments, empowering communities to make the most of the vacant properties, strengthening the Post Office network, reforming the apprenticeship levy, and reforming business rates.

We will also use High Street Rental Auctions, to provide local authorities in England with a tool to tackle vacancy, promote minimum letting standards for commercial units and flexible rents.

Slough council have used UK Shared Prosperity Fund money to establish a new weekly market in Slough high street. Small businesses in Slough also benefit from DBT's Berkshire Growth Hub funding.

Our Small Business Strategy Command Paper, to be published in 2025, will set out this government's intentions on supporting small businesses across key areas, including thriving high streets.

■ Elon Musk**Mike Wood:** [\[15163\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, whether Elon Musk was invited to attend the International Investment Summit in October 2024.

Sarah Jones:

We are unable to comment on individual invitations. Invitees were made up of global business leaders and UK businesses critical to economic growth.

■ Film and Television: Trade Promotion**Neil Coyle:** [\[14616\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing grants to enable small and medium-sized film and TV production companies to attend trade fairs.

Gareth Thomas:

The Department for Business and Trade (DBT) supports film and TV businesses to meet international buyers and partners at key events both in the UK and overseas. In addition, businesses can access DBT's export services via Great.gov.uk, including the UK Export Academy, International Trade Advisers in England, Help to Grow and the Export Support Service.

The creative industries are one of the Industrial Strategy's growth-driving sectors. The Industrial Strategy will be published alongside a Creative Industries Sector Plan in Spring 2025 which will set out a 10-year plan to drive growth in the creative sector. We are reviewing our Export Services as part of our work in the Industrial Strategy, our Trade White Paper and on better support for small businesses.

■ Food: Lincolnshire**Sir John Hayes:** [\[14906\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what steps he is taking to support food producers from Lincolnshire to increase exports.

Gareth Thomas:

DBT provides a wide-ranging package of export support for food and drink businesses in Lincolnshire and the whole of the UK. This includes educational support to upskill food producers via our Export Academy and one to one support from International Trade Advisors and our extensive overseas network, with trade advisors promoting UK food in over 100 countries. Overseas we deliver a comprehensive programme of trade shows, trade missions and events to connect exporters with buyer and new market opportunities. Our UK Export Finance agency helps companies access export finance, with a dedicated finance manager covering Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire and Rutland.

■ Intellectual Property

Neil O'Brien:

[\[14666\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what steps he is taking to safeguard intellectual property for the UK following the collapse of Reaction Engines.

Sarah Jones:

The Government recognises that the UK's aerospace and space industry is world-leading. Although the Government cannot comment on individual commercial cases, where appropriate officials will work with companies and administrators to consider how best to retain valuable Intellectual Property in the UK.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Advisory Committee on Business Appointments

Alex Burghart:

[\[14114\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will publish the framework agreement between his Department and the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments.

Georgia Gould:

The Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (ACoBA) is an independent body sponsored and funded by the Cabinet Office. ACoBA is part of the 'Independent Offices' and shares a secretariat and Accounting Officer with the Civil Service Commission and the Office for the Commissioner for Public Appointments. Work is well advanced on a new Framework Document for the 'Independent Offices' which will be published in due course.

■ Cabinet Office: Monitoring

Mr Richard Holden:

[\[14711\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to his Department's publication entitled Business Critical Models in the Cabinet Office, published on 31 October 2024, if he will publish his Department's Register of British Interests.

Ms Abena Oppong-Asare:

The Register of British Interests is a report that contains national security and commercial sensitivities. As a result, it is not released to the public, as has been longstanding practice including under the last administration.

■ Civil Servants: Business Interests

Mr Richard Holden:

[\[14347\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether former civil servants are required to make a business appointment rules application to undertake (a) temporary and (b) one-off items of work during the regulated period after their departure from Crown employment.

Georgia Gould:

Civil servants at SCS payband 2 and below only have to make business appointment rules applications if their proposed role meets one of the seven triggers set out in the Rules. Civil servants at ACOBA level (SCS payband 3 and above) have to make an application for all roles that they wish to take up, including temporary roles.

ACOBA does not regard 'one-off' activities such as speeches, broadcasts, or newspaper articles to be in scope of the Rules. These rules and processes are the same as under the previous administration.

■ Civil Servants: Pay**Alex Burghart:**[\[14107\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether (a) the Cabinet Office and (b) Civil Service Pensions holds data on the salary of each civil servant.

Georgia Gould:

1. The Cabinet Office holds data of the salary of each civil servant as at the 31st March in each year, through the Annual Civil Service Employment Survey collection.
2. The pension scheme administrator, MyCSP, holds essential contribution, salary and other scheme data which is provided by employers monthly via an electronic monthly interface.

■ Civil Servants: Secondment**Mr Richard Holden:**[\[14769\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what progress he has made on implementing the recommendations on secondments in his Department's report entitled A report by Nigel Boardman into the Development and Use of Supply Chain Finance (and associated schemes) related to Greensill Capital in Government: Recommendations and Suggestions, published on 21 July 2021.

Georgia Gould:

The Civil Service is committed to ensuring we attract, develop and retain talented people from a diverse range of backgrounds, to create a modern Civil Service, now and for the future.

Secondments into the Civil Service from other sectors are an important route to bring in essential skills and experience, enabling talented individuals from outside the Civil Service to contribute to the work of Government, and share critical capabilities and innovative thinking for a set period of time.

All departments, functions, and professions have been commissioned to embed secondments as a key part of their resourcing and skills strategies. Cabinet Office works closely with secondment leads across government, providing support and advice as required. A number of guidance products have been developed which

provide practical advice to vacancy holders and secondees, enabling them to navigate the process and maximise the potential of secondments.

■ **House of Lords Appointments Commission**

Alex Burghart:

[\[14115\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will publish the framework agreement between his Department and the House of Lords Appointments Commission.

Georgia Gould:

The House of Lords Appointments Commission (HOLAC) is an independent advisory non-departmental body of the Cabinet Office. As was the case when the honourable member was a Minister in the department, there is not currently a Framework Document between HOLAC and the Cabinet Office. As with all independent advisory bodies, the Government keeps its arrangements with HOLAC under review to ensure they reflect current best practice and standards of corporate governance.

■ **Office for Budget Responsibility: Forecasts**

John Glen:

[\[14628\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the published correspondence from the Office for Budget Responsibility of 27 October 2024 to the Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will place in the Library a copy of the advice provided by the Cabinet Office to the Office for Budget Responsibility.

Georgia Gould:

It is a longstanding principle, maintained across multiple administrations, that official advice remains confidential. As such I do not intend to publish any official advice in relation to this matter.

■ **Permanent Secretaries: Dismissal and Recruitment**

Mike Wood:

[\[14099\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether he plans to implement the recommendations of the Government response to the House of Lords Constitution Select Committee's 17th Report on Permanent Secretaries: their appointment and removal, published in January 2024.

Georgia Gould:

Implementation of the recommendations of the Government response to the House of Lords Constitution Select Committee's 17th Report on Permanent Secretaries: their appointment and removal, published in January 2024, is ongoing.

■ **Permanent Secretary Remuneration Committee**

Alex Burghart:

[\[14113\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will list the members of the Permanent Secretary Remuneration Committee.

Georgia Gould:

The Committee is chaired by the Government Lead Non-Executive. Membership includes two other Departmental Non-Executive Directors and the Chair of the Senior Salaries Review Body. The Civil Service members are: the Cabinet Secretary/Head of the Civil Service, the Chief Operating Officer for the Civil Service and Permanent Secretary to the Cabinet Office, the Chair of the Senior Leadership Committee, and the Permanent Secretary of HM Treasury. The Director of Senior Talent in the Cabinet Office also attends in an advisory capacity.

■ **Prime Minister: Aviation**

Mr Richard Holden: [\[14705\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, which public authorities hold information for the purposes of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 on (a) which (i) domestic and (ii) overseas flights for Prime Ministerial travel have been carbon offset and (b) whether Sustainable Aviation Fuel was used on those flights.

Georgia Gould:

I refer the Rt Hon Member to my answer of 21 October 2024, Official Report, 8434.

■ **Prime Minister: Official Gifts**

Mike Wood: [\[14635\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will list the gifts and hospitality received by the Prime Minister since 5 July 2024 and subsequently repaid or returned, broken down by (a) the nature of each gift or hospitality donated, (b) value, (c) donor, (d) date accepted and (e) date returned or reimbursed.

Georgia Gould:

I refer the Hon Member to the Register of Members' Financial Interests.

■ **Prime Minister: Staff**

Mike Wood: [\[14092\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many staff are in the parliamentary branch of 10 Downing Street.

Georgia Gould:

Due to the small number of staff employed in the Parliamentary branch of 10 Downing Street, release of this information would disclose personal data of the Civil Servants involved. The size of the team has not changed since the General Election.

■ **Prime Minister: TikTok**

Mike Wood: [\[14636\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether (a) the Prime Minister, (b) his special advisers and (c) officials in his Department met with representatives of Tiktok between 5 July and 7 October 2024.

Georgia Gould:

Details of ministerial meetings with external organisations are published on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) as part of the government's transparency agenda.

■ **Public Sector: Staff****Gareth Davies:**[\[15531\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what information his Department holds on the number of contracted employees in the public sector.

Georgia Gould:

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

A response to the Hon. Gentleman's Parliamentary Question of 21 November is attached.

Attachments:

1. [Letter from the National Statistician](#) [PQ15531.pdf]

■ **Special Advisers: Codes of Practice****Mike Wood:**[\[14093\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether he plans to update guidance for special advisers on the acceptance of gifts and hospitality, further to the te special advisers' code of conduct, in the context of updated guidance for Ministers.

Georgia Gould:

I refer to the answer to PQ 8999. The Ministerial Code guidance on hospitality applies to ministers.

There are no plans to update the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers in respect of gift and hospitality.

■ **Special Advisers: Vetting****Mike Wood:**[\[15190\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to section 6b of the Special Adviser Model Contract, last updated on 29 July 2024, how many special advisers have had their contracts terminated during their probationary period because they did not pass security vetting since 5 July 2024.

Georgia Gould:

All special adviser appointments are made in line with the terms of the Model Contract for Special Advisers. It is longstanding practice not to comment on HR matters.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ Charities: Employers' Contributions****Sir John Hayes:**[\[14579\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, if she will make an assessment of the impact of the increase in employers' National Insurance contributions on the charity sector.

Stephanie Peacock:

The recent Budget took the tough choices needed to fix the foundations and restore economic stability. DCMS Ministers have spoken to representatives from the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector and are aware of their concerns about the impacts of the increase to employer National Insurance Contributions (NICs).

The government acknowledges that these changes will affect all sectors of the economy, which is why we have put in place mitigations to protect smaller organisations in particular, by more than doubling the Employment Allowance to £10,500. This means that next year, 865,000 employers (43%) will pay no NICs at all, and more than half of employers will see no change or gain overall from this package.

We are also expanding eligibility of the Employment Allowance by removing the £100,000 eligibility threshold, to simplify and reform employer NICs so that all eligible employers now benefit. Employers will also continue to benefit from employer NICs reliefs including for hiring under 21s and under 25 apprentices, where eligible.

Within the tax system, we provide support to charities through a range of reliefs and exemptions, including reliefs for charitable giving. Our tax regime for charities, including exemption from paying business rates, is among the most generous of anywhere in the world, with more than £6 billion in charitable reliefs provided to charities, Community Amateur Sports Clubs and their donors in 2023 to 2024. The biggest individual reliefs provided are Gift Aid at £1.6 billion and business rates relief at nearly £2.4 billion.

■ Gambling: Reform**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[14015\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of pursuing machine ratio reforms to the land-based gambling industry.

Stephanie Peacock:

We are considering the best available evidence in respect of machine ratio reforms, and the Minister for Gambling has met with a wide range of stakeholders including industry trade bodies. We will provide further updates to the House soon.

■ Gaming: Retail Trade

Mary Glendon: [\[14325\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment her Department has made of the financial impact of Adult Gaming Centres on the high street economy.

Mary Glendon: [\[14326\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment her Department has made of the impact of Adult Gaming Centres on (a) the jobs market and (b) the exchequer.

Stephanie Peacock:

Official statistics from a range of sources provide the Government with insights into the economic contribution of the betting and gaming industry as a whole. The latest headline statistics show that the gambling sector contributed £4.9bn to Gross Value Added (GVA) in 2022, accounting for 0.2% of UK GVA. In the financial year 2023/24, the gambling sector employed around 94,000 people in Britain (provisional), accounting for 0.2% of UK jobs and paid approximately £3.4bn in betting and gaming duty. We do not hold official statistics on GVA, employment or tax revenue for adult gaming centres specifically.

The [Gambling Commission's industry statistics](#) show that between April 2022 and March 2023, gross gambling yield for adult gaming centres was £533m. This represented c. 11% of gross gambling yield generated by non-remote casinos, arcades, betting and bingo.

■ Health Lottery: Finance

Alex Sobel: [\[14693\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what proportion of revenue the Health Lottery has given to charity in each year since 2019.

Stephanie Peacock:

All society lotteries, including the Health Lottery, are required to publish information on their websites about the proportion of revenue they return to good causes. This data is available on the Health Lottery's website. The Department does not hold data on individual society lottery operators.

■ Health Lottery: Inquiries

Alex Sobel: [\[14695\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what steps the Gambling Commission took in 2011 in response to the announcement of an inquiry into the Health Lottery.

Stephanie Peacock:

From 2011 onwards, the Gambling Commission has provided advice and worked with the Health Lottery to ensure it remains compliant with its statutory responsibilities. The ongoing assessment of the Health Lottery has been in line with the Commission's usual approach.

More information about licensing, compliance and enforcement under the Gambling Act 2005 can be found on the Gambling Commission's website [here](#). Where the Commission takes regulatory action against an operator, it publishes the details on its [website](#).

Health Lottery: Licensing

Alex Sobel: [\[14694\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of reviewing the Health Lottery's licence to operate.

Alex Sobel: [\[14696\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, whether she has made an assessment of whether the current Health Lottery licence holder meets the fit and proper person test.

Stephanie Peacock:

The oversight of both operating and personal management licences for society lotteries, including assessing an applicant's suitability to hold a licence, is a matter for the Gambling Commission.

More information about the Gambling Commission's principles for licensing and regulation and licensing, compliance and enforcement under the Gambling Act 2005 can be found on the Commission's website [here](#) and [here](#).

Independent Football Regulator

Mr James Frith: [\[14663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, if she will take steps to ensure that (a) the Independent Football Regulator plays an integral role in the process to settle the distribution deal and (b) the distribution deal must pass parameters set by the regulator.

Stephanie Peacock:

The Independent Football Regulator will only have the power to intervene on distributions as a last resort. The backstop mechanism has been designed to give the industry the opportunity and incentives to reach a timely, industry-led solution to distributions and it is right that the Regulator only steps in as a last resort.

If the relevant leagues cannot reach an agreement independently, they can apply to trigger the backstop. Then, if certain thresholds are met, the backstop can be triggered.

First, the relevant leagues will enter into a period of mediation and, if there is still no agreement, they will move to a final proposal stage.

At this point, the Regulator would convene an independent expert panel that will set out the relevant questions that need to be addressed through the arbitration and invite final proposals from both relevant leagues with accompanying analysis. The independent expert panel will then choose the proposal most consistent with the regulator's objectives with consideration to potential burden on the commercial interests of the leagues. If neither proposal is consistent, the regulator will terminate the process without making a distribution order.

■ Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme

Marsha De Cordova:

[15289]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the (a) effectiveness of the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme and (b) potential impact of that scheme on local cultural heritage in areas of low economic activity.

Chris Bryant:

The Department continues to monitor the Listed Places of Worship grant scheme through the regular reporting of the grant administrator, EMB. Since 2010, the Government has returned over £350 million to listed churches, synagogues, mosques and temples through the grant scheme continuing their work as centres of worship and community assets, in places all over the country, including areas of low economic activity.

■ Lotteries: Accountability

Alex Sobel:

[14697]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, if she will request that the Gambling Commission provide an overview of where (a) the Health Lottery and (b) other large scale lotteries have not fulfilled their social responsibility duties; and if she will take steps as a result of this overview.

Stephanie Peacock:

The oversight of operating licences for large scale lotteries such as the Health Lottery, including compliance with social responsibility duties, is a matter for the Gambling Commission. Where the Commission takes regulatory action against an operator, it publishes the details on its [website](#).

■ Press: Privacy

Siân Berry:

[14872]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, if she will publish a response to the recommendations of the report by the Press Recognition Panel entitled Press Intrusion and Regulation, published on 28 August 2024.

Stephanie Peacock:

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport does not have policy responsibility for the Press Recognition Panel in order to ensure that there is no Government interference in its independent work.

■ UK Youth Parliament: Finance**Neil Duncan-Jordan:**[\[14845\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, whether her Department has plans to continue funding the UK Youth Parliament after March 2026.

Stephanie Peacock:

This government values the contribution young people have to make on decision making at all levels of government and understand this leads to better, more impactful policy locally, regionally and nationally. We are committed to ensuring young people have a voice on issues that matter to them and affect their lives. Through our new national youth strategy we will lead the way on effective youth participation in decision making at all levels and adopting approaches which can be used across government.

The UK Youth Parliament (UKYP) is one of the existing youth voice programmes. Through this programme, a number of young people can learn about the democratic process, engage with policy, and debate issues that matter to them. Whilst we are currently working towards the next spending review, future spending cannot be confirmed at this stage.

■ Voluntary Work: Young People**Lee Anderson:**[\[14647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of the decision to end the National Citizen Service on the number of (a) volunteering and (b) training opportunities available to young people.

Stephanie Peacock:

NCS programmes will continue to be delivered as planned up until March 2025. The new youth strategy will guide our transition over the next year, and we are committed to supporting young people throughout this process to mitigate any adverse impacts of the closure of NCS. Our priority is co-producing this new strategy with young people to understand how we can best support them moving forward. While the strategy is being developed, there are opportunities available for young people to access training and volunteering opportunities through other DCMS funded programmes such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award and the #iwill fund. Next financial year, we are increasing the total funding for other DCMS youth programmes which support young people's access to opportunities, including volunteering and training opportunities, as well as local authorities' capacity to provide an impactful offer for young people.

Lee Anderson:

[14648]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, for what reason she has decided to end the National Citizen Service.

Stephanie Peacock:

NCS has enabled over a million young people to connect across backgrounds, build confidence, and gain vital life and work skills. However, the challenges young people face today are vastly different from when NCS was created. The world has changed and, as the Secretary of State [set out to the House](#) on 12 November, we need a youth strategy and youth organisations that reflects that. We are moving away from one-size-fits all approaches and bringing power back to young people and their communities.

■ Young Audiences Content Fund

Mr James Frith:

[14661]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, whether she plans to re-introduce the Young Audience Content Fund.

Chris Bryant:

The Government has no plans to re-introduce the Young Audiences Content Fund which concluded on 31 March 2022. However, the Government is committed to the success of our world-leading TV production sector. UK-wide television and film tax reliefs, including for children's television programming, continue to play a vital role in driving production, with more than £4 billion of expenditure supported in 2023.

DEFENCE

■ Armed Forces: Housing

Paula Barker:

[15112]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many service personnel were living in (a) single living accommodation and (b) grade four rated single living accommodation per local authority on (i) 1 May 2010 and (ii) 3 July 2024.

Al Carns:

The attached supporting tables show a count of the number of Armed Forces Personnel living in single living accommodation and grade four rated single living accommodation per local authority on 1 May 2010 and 3 July 2024.

The tables have been broken down by region as recorded on the Joint Personnel Administration System.

Attachments:

1. [Single Living Accommodation: AF Personnel](#) [20241120-PQN-24-25-2024-22544-Barker-Supporting Tables-O1.xlsx]

■ Defence Fire and Rescue Service: Older Workers**Jon Trickett:** [\[15410\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the ability of Defence Fire and Rescue Service workers aged over 60 to carry out their role.

Al Carns:

All Defence Fire and Rescue Service personnel aged over 60 are required to be in date with their operation fitness assessment which is undertaken annually. These fitness standards are in line with The UK National Fire Fighter Fitness Standards.

■ Military Aircraft: Helicopters**Helen Morgan:** [\[14375\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of exposure to (a) Sea King (b) Westland Wessex (c) Puma and (d) CH-47 Chinook helicopter (i) fuel and (ii) exhaust fumes on aircrew's (A) health and (B) risk of developing cancer.

Helen Morgan: [\[14377\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many legal claims made against his Department in relation to the impact of aircrew's exposure to helicopter fuel and exhaust fumes were outstanding on 14 November 2024.

Helen Morgan: [\[14384\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when his Department first became aware of the potential link between long exposure to exhaust fumes from helicopters used by the Armed Forces and the risk of cancer.

Helen Morgan: [\[14387\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many compensation payments have been made by his Department for health issues relating to Armed Forces helicopters since 23 April 2023; and what was the total value of those payments.

Helen Morgan: [\[15107\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to protect aircrew members from exposure to helicopter (a) fuel and (b) exhaust fumes.

Al Carns:

Common law claims alleging adverse impact from helicopter fuel and exhaust fumes were first received in 2019.

Without any admission of liability, since 23 April 2023 the Ministry of Defence has made five compensation payments, totalling £3,578,566 in relation to common law claims alleging adverse impact from helicopter fuel and exhaust fumes. As of the 14 November 2024 there are six related, continuing common law compensation claims.

The department is in the process of testing the exhaust emissions of in-service helicopters, including Chinook and Puma to ensure we are meeting our duty of care for personnel. It is essential that we can assure our people of their safety at work.

The Westland Sea king was retired in 2018. The Westland Wessex was retired in 2003.

Helen Morgan:

[\[15106\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he has had discussions with his (a) German and (b) Dutch counterpart on longer exhausts in (a) CH-47 Chinook, (b) Puma, (c) Sea King and (d) Westland Wessex helicopters.

AI Carns:

We have found no record of any discussions with Dutch or German counterparts regarding longer exhausts on Chinook and Puma aircraft. The German military does not operate Chinook nor Puma helicopters. The Netherlands does not operate Puma helicopters.

Due to their out of service dates of 2003 and 2018, no relevant information is held within Ministry of Defence relating to Sea King and Wessex helicopters; however, the Netherlands did not operate Sea King helicopters and neither country operated the Wessex.

Helen Morgan:

[\[15109\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the highest individual settlement paid to an aircrew member has been for the impact of helicopter exhaust fume exposure in each of the last five years.

AI Carns:

In the last five financial years, damages have been paid in 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2023-24 to former aircrew who have made common law compensation claims alleging adverse impacts of helicopter exhaust fumes. I have concerns that disclosing individual damages awards risks revealing the identity of individual claimants and I am, therefore, withholding the individual settlements under Freedom of Information Act Section 40(2) to protect personal information as governed by the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR.

■ **Ukraine: Military Aid**

Alicia Kearns:

[\[R\] \[15259\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, for what reason was Kosovo not mentioned as a contributory nation to Operation Interflex on a social media post made by his Department on 20 November 2024.

Luke Pollard:

The UK's support for Ukraine is ironclad, and we are grateful for the contributions of Kosovo and 11 other partner nations to our programme of basic military training for Ukrainian recruits - Operation Interflex - which recently passed the milestone of 50,000 recruits trained since summer 2022.

Our other communications have referenced Kosovo as a contributor.

These include last week's announcement press release detailing the 50,000 recruits trained milestone and a similar social media post two days earlier on 18 November:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-marks-1000th-day-of-full-scale-invasion-of-ukraine-as-training-programme-hits-50000>

<https://x.com/DefenceHQ/status/1858573602762719382>

I would be very happy to meet with the hon. Member to discuss this further.

■ USA: Veterans

Dr Andrew Murrison:

[\[14931\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what access to compensation from his Department family members of UK service personnel stationed at Camp Lejeune have for illness resulting from contamination.

AI Carns:

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.

The contamination of water at Camp Lejeune was known for almost two years before this was brought to the attention of the new Ministerial team. I will continue to advocate for our Service personnel, veterans, and their families where they have been affected.

For spouses and civil partners of Service personnel, they may be able to claim through the War Widows Pension scheme, should they be eligible, and support can be provided to dependants via the Veterans Welfare Services. Further details for both can be found at Gov.uk

■ Veterans: Homelessness

Rupert Lowe:

[\[14735\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate his Department has made of the number of homeless veterans.

AI Carns:

This is a Government of service that will always stand up for those who serve our country. I am working across Government and with civil society to ensure veterans across the UK have access to the support they need with regard to housing, as well as health, employment and other areas.

According to data collected by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), in 2023-24, there were 2,270 households in England where someone that had served in the Armed Forces were assessed as being owed a homelessness prevention or relief duty. This represents 0.7% of all households in

England who were assessed as being owed a prevention or relief duty, a similar proportion to previous years.

To ensure veterans have access to housing support, the Government has committed a further £3.5 million to the Reducing Veteran Homelessness Programme. This includes Op FORTITUDE, the single referral pathway for veterans at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

Veterans represent the very best of our country. The government is committed to honouring their sacrifices and ensuring homes will be there for heroes across the UK.

■ Veterans: Radiation Exposure

Sir John Hayes:

[\[14583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether British servicemen at UK nuclear weapons tests had their blood counts monitored after the programme had concluded.

AI Carns:

Nuclear Test Veterans made a huge contribution to UK security, including helping to establish the UK's nuclear deterrent, which to this day keeps our country safe.

Like all Service personnel, those who were present at the UK nuclear weapon tests may have had medical testing undertaken throughout their career. I have asked Ministry of Defence officials to look at records to fully understand what information the Department holds in relation to the medical testing of Service personnel who took part in the UK nuclear weapons tests.

I will provide an update on this in due course.

Sir John Hayes:

[\[14584\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will make it his policy to support a one-year special tribunal for nuclear test veterans, in the context of their access to (a) medical records and (b) compensation.

AI Carns:

The Government is deeply grateful to all Service personnel who participated in the UK nuclear testing programme. We recognise the huge contribution they have made to our national security.

I have met with MPs and groups in the nuclear test veteran community to discuss a range of topics relating to their experiences and the challenges they face. These efforts have resulted in us expanding the criteria for the commemorative Nuclear Test Medal.

I am committed to looking into unresolved questions regarding medical records and look forward to further engagement with Nuclear Test Veterans and their representatives over the coming months.

Nuclear test veterans who believe they have suffered ill health due to service have the existing and long-standing right to apply for no-fault compensation under the War Pensions Scheme.

EDUCATION**■ Academies: Finance****Nick Timothy:**[\[14807\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the potential financial impact of her decision to close the trust capacity and most establishment and growth funds on schools planning to academise.

Catherine McKinnell:

Across the public sector there have been tough decisions to take on how money is spent to achieve the best value for taxpayers. This government is committed to fixing the foundations of the economy and ensuring public spending is on a sustainable footing. The government recognises the important contribution that high quality trusts have played, and continue to play, in raising standards. The department is focused on ensuring that spending helps to support every child so they can achieve and thrive.

The department keeps all of its programmes under review to ensure funding is targeted where it is needed most and on 1 November, we announced that we would be ending the academy conversion grant from 1 January 2025. At the same time, the department also informed trusts that had submitted grant applications for the Trust Capacity Fund, including the Trust Establishment and Growth Fund, that the most recent Window 4 funding round had been cancelled and that there were no plans for future rounds.

The academy trust sector is in relatively good financial health. The latest published data shows that 98.2% of academy trusts in 2021/22 had a cumulative surplus or a zero balance. At Budget, we announced an additional £2.3 billion for mainstream schools and young people with high needs for 2025/26, compared to 2024/25. This means that overall core school funding will total almost £63.9 billion next year, compared to £61.6 billion in 2024/25 after technical adjustments.

We will continue to support the institutions we fund by building financial management, school business and governance capability, and working with providers facing financial challenge.

■ Carers**Liam Conlon:**[\[14795\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking with local authorities to help support kinship carers in (a) Beckenham and Penge constituency and (b) other areas.

Janet Daby:

The department recognises the important role that kinship carers play in caring for some of the most vulnerable children and the role of local authorities to support them.

The government has recently announced a £40 million package to trial a new Kinship Allowance in up to ten local authorities to test whether paying an allowance to cover certain costs, such as supporting children to settle into a new home with relatives or for activities to support their wellbeing, can help increase the number of children taken in by family members and friends. This trial will help us make decisions about future national rollout. The department will share further detail on the process for selecting the local authorities taking part in the programme in due course.

The government recently published updated guidance for local authorities, the Kinship Care statutory guidance. This guidance outlines the framework for the provision of support for kinship children and their carers.

The department also appointed the first National Kinship Care Ambassador, who will work alongside local authorities to help improve their kinship practice and local policies, and ensure they are following national guidance. As well as providing bespoke support to some local authority teams, they will share learning nationally so that more local authorities can benefit from evidence of best practice.

■ Carers' Benefits

Liam Conlon:

[\[14796\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what her planned timetable is for the introduction of the trial kinship carer allowance.

Janet Daby:

The department recognises the important role that kinship carers play in caring for some of the most vulnerable children and the role of local authorities to support them.

The government has recently announced a £40 million package to trial a new Kinship Allowance in up to ten local authorities to test whether paying an allowance to cover certain costs, such as supporting children to settle into a new home with relatives, or for activities to support their wellbeing, can help increase the number of children taken in by family members and friends.

The programme will begin in 2025 and decisions about future national rollout will be informed by the findings of the evaluation. The department will share further detail on the timetable and delivery of the programme in due course.

■ Children and Young People: Mental Health

Liam Conlon:

[\[14794\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department has taken to increase the availability of peer support groups in (a) Beckenham and Penge constituency and (b) other areas.

Janet Daby:

As part of the department's measures to champion kinship care, the government has extended the delivery of over 140 peer support groups across England, available for

all kinship carers to access, where they can come together to share stories, exchange advice and support each other.

The department is also delivering a package of training and support that all kinship carers across England can access.

■ Children in Care: Migrants

Rupert Lowe: [\[14736\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many children in the care system are from non-UK citizenship families; and what the total cost to the public purse is of their care.

Janet Daby:

The information on the nationality of children looked after by local authorities in England is not held centrally by the department. Therefore, we are not able to provide the figures requested.

■ Erasmus+ Programme

Susan Murray: [\[14799\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans she has to provide students with support in place of the Erasmus+ programme.

Janet Daby:

The Turing Scheme is the UK government's global programme to provide grants for students to do study and work placements anywhere in the world, including in the EU. Students can develop new skills, gain international experience and boost their employability. Since its introduction following the UK's departure from the Erasmus+ programme, the Turing Scheme has provided funding to support more than 160,000 international placements. In addition to travel and living costs, for students from disadvantaged backgrounds the Turing Scheme covers items that students may need to be able to travel, including vaccinations, visa applications, passports and insurance costs.

For the 2024/25 academic year, over £105 million has been allocated to send more than 43,000 students from across the UK on study and work placements around the world.

■ Free Schools

James Wild: [\[14755\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answers of 29 October to Question 11052 and of 8 November to Question 12117 on Free Schools, for what reason she has not provided the list requested.

Stephen Morgan:

The government confirmed a review of mainstream free school projects to ensure that they continue to meet a need for places, offer value for money for the taxpayer and are not to the detriment of the other schools in the local area.

The department is currently in discussion with trusts, local authorities and other partners to gather more information in relation to projects. It would be unhelpful to increase speculation about individual projects at this stage.

No final decisions have been made at this point, and the department will publicly communicate the outcomes of the review in due course. It is also established departmental process that all cancellations and withdrawals are routinely published on GOV.UK. These can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/free-schools-successful-applications>.

■ Home Education**Lee Anderson:****[14649]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to her Department's statistics entitled Academic year 2023/24: Elective home education, published on 29 February 2024, if she will take steps to ensure that children remain in mainstream education rather than home education.

Stephen Morgan:

All parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child receives a suitable, full-time education and they have the right to choose how their child receives that education. For example, by attendance at school or by home educating them.

The number of children in home education has risen significantly since the COVID-19 pandemic, with an estimated 92,000 children believed to be home educated as of October 2023. There is also an increase in parents reporting that they are moving their children into home education due to mental health concerns or special educational needs.

The department intends to introduce a package of measures to help ensure that children receive a safe, suitable education regardless of the setting they attend. The 'Keeping children safe, helping families thrive' policy paper, published on 18 November, confirmed the department's intention to create a new requirement whereby parents will need local authority consent to home educate if a child registered at a school is subject to an enquiry under section 47 of the Children's Act 1989 or on a child protection plan. If a child is subject to a section 47 Children Act enquiry or on a child protection plan and is already being home educated, the local authority will be able to require them to attend school.

We also intend to make improvements to the School Attendance Order process and, as announced in the King's Speech, the government will introduce compulsory Children Not in School registers in every local authority in England as part of the Children's Wellbeing Bill.

■ Music and Dance Scheme

Mr James Frith:

[\[14662\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she plans to reinstate the Music and Dance Scheme.

Catherine McKinnell:

The Music and Dance Scheme (MDS) is a programme currently in operation, supporting exceptionally talented children and young people to access specialist education and training in music and dance.

Funding of approximately £32 million is committed for the 2024/25 academic year for the MDS, giving opportunities for young people and allowing them access to specialist training and a pathway into the creative industries.

■ Special Educational Needs

Edward Morello:

[\[14836\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to help improve access to SEND services for children who need specific adaptations for their educational needs.

Catherine McKinnell:

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

The department wants to drive a consistent and inclusive approach to supporting children and young people with SEND through early identification, effective support, high quality teaching and effective allocation of resources.

Educational psychologists play a critical role in the support available to children and young people, including those with SEND. To improve early identification and provision of support, the department is taking measures to help education settings have better access to educational psychology services by investing in the training of educational psychologists. The department is investing over £21 million to train 400 more educational psychologists from this year. This builds on the £10 million which is already being invested for the over 200 educational psychologists who began their training in September 2023.

High quality teaching is central to ensuring that pupils with SEND are given the best possible opportunity to achieve in their education and the department is committed to recruiting an additional 6,500 new expert teachers over the course of this parliament. To support all teachers, the department is implementing a range of teacher training reforms to ensure teachers have the skills to support all pupils to succeed, including those with SEND. On 1 September 2024, the government introduced a new mandatory leadership level national professional qualification (NPQ) for special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs). The NPQ will play a key role in improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND by ensuring SENCOs

consistently receive high quality, evidence-based training. This is crucial given the central role SENCOs play in supporting pupils with SEND.

The government has also launched an independent Curriculum and Assessment Review to look closely at the key challenges to attainment that children and young people face, in particular those with SEND, to ensure that all pupils benefit from a rich and broad curriculum.

The department is providing an increase of almost £1 billion for high needs budgets in the 2025/26 financial year, bringing total high needs funding for children and young people with complex SEND to £11.9 billion. This funding will help local authorities and schools with the increasing costs of supporting children and young people with SEND.

Neil Duncan-Jordan:

[14846]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what her Department's policy is on the future of the SEND Change Programme.

Catherine McKinnell:

Change Programme Partnerships (CPP) have provided valuable insights and learning across the special educational needs and disabilities and alternative provision system. This includes informing government's thinking about effective, inclusive, mainstream practice. The Change Programme will continue to work with the CPP to test, learn and promote effective inclusive practice. This will include understanding what works and why, to make the proposed changes work until the end March 2025. Decisions around the future of the programme will be made in due course.

Neil Duncan-Jordan:

[14889]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the reasons for the increase in the number of children with Special Educational Needs.

Catherine McKinnell:

Over the last ten years, there has been an international increase in children identified with special educational needs (SEN). Between 2016/17 and 2021/22, England saw a 40% increase in pupils with an official SEN designation. For France it was 49% and for Germany 19%, according to the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education. Further information is available here: <https://www.european-agency.org/activities/data/cross-country-reports>.

Definitions and systems vary considerably between countries, but overall, international studies suggest this increase is driven by a combination of better understanding and diagnosis of need, as well as social and medical factors. Over the same period, there was also a steeper rise in England in special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) that attract a statutory plan compared to other similar countries. This started after the 2014 reforms and has been driven by more use of statutory plans for some types of need. Social, emotional and mental health needs,

speech, language and communication needs and autistic spectrum disorder make up 88% of the total increase seen in education, health and care (EHC) plans since 2014.

Examples of the factors behind rises in needs are a greater awareness and understanding of conditions within families, the medical profession and schools, a cultural shift towards greater acceptance and support for those with SEN, and advancing parental age and increases in pre-term birth survival.

Between and within local areas, there is significant variation in the identification of SEND. In 2021, the Education Policy Institute published a paper examining the factors that predicted the probability of a child being identified for SEND support or an EHC plan. The research found that which school a child attends makes more difference to their chances of being identified with SEND than anything about them as an individual, their experiences or what local authority they live in. This paper can be accessed at: <https://epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/identifying-send/>.

The government is carrying out a programme of work as part of a SEND and alternative provision data strategy to ensure we take stock of our system health indicators and data flows, as well as the regular data and insights needed as we embark on a programme of reform. This work will be an integral part of programme governance going forward.

■ **Special Educational Needs: Finance**

James Wild:

[14758]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of the £1 billion funding for Special Educational Needs announced in the Budget she expects to be used (a) by local authorities to reduce deficits and (b) to improve support for pupils.

Catherine McKinnell:

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

The department is providing the almost £1 billion increase in high needs funding to help meet the rise in costs faced by local authorities next year, as they in turn provide support to schools and children with SEND.

Local authorities' responsibility to provide the required support remains unchanged. No part of the additional funding that is being provided has been ear-marked for use by local authorities to reduce existing dedicated schools grant deficits.

Marie Goldman:

[14763]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make an assessment of the potential impact of the (a) reduction to the National Insurance threshold and (b) costs for employing part-time (i) teaching assistants and (ii) school support staff on (A) special education providers and (B) local authorities' high needs budgets.

Catherine McKinnell:

The government has agreed that the department will be compensated for the increase in National Insurance Contributions (NICs) paid by state-funding schools. Work is underway to determine how much the department will receive for those employers within its remit.

Compensation for special education providers funded from local authorities' high needs budgets will be additional to the £1 billion increase to high needs funding announced at the Autumn Budget 2024. Due to timing constraints, NICs funding will need to be provided as a separate grant, alongside the dedicated schools grant, in 2025/26.

Neil Duncan-Jordan:[\[14895\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to provide financial support to local authorities for SEND provision after March 2026.

Catherine McKinnell:

Funding for special educational needs and disabilities provision beyond March 2026 will be determined in the next stage of the government's spending review, in spring 2025.

Jack Rankin:[\[14898\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she is aware of any situations in which SEND money is being used by schools for (a) non-SEND related facilities and (b) on non-SEND pupils.

Catherine McKinnell:

The department does not collect data from schools which specifically distinguishes spending on non-special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) related facilities or non-SEND pupils.

Local authorities retain the legal duty to ensure appropriate support is provided for children with SEND. Local authorities can allocate high needs top-up funding to schools in respect of a particular pupil with more complex SEND, normally to secure the provision set out in an education, health and care plan, and they determine how much extra funding to allocate.

■ Special Educational Needs: Rural Areas**Edward Morello:**[\[14834\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to help reduce waiting times for SEND assessments by local authorities in rural areas with fewer staff.

Catherine McKinnell:

The department wants to ensure that, where required, education, health and care (EHC) plan assessments are progressed promptly and, if needed, plans are issued as quickly as possible so that children and young people can access the support they need.

Local authorities have a statutory responsibility to assess whether children and young people have special educational needs that require an EHC plan. EHC plans must be issued within 20 weeks of the needs assessment commencing so that children and young people can access the support they need. In 2023, there were 138,200 initial requests for an EHC plan and 90,500 assessments took place. 50.3% of new EHC plans in 2023 were issued within 20 weeks.

The department knows that local authorities have seen an increase in the number of assessment requests and that more needs to be done to ensure that local areas deliver effective and timely services. This includes better communication with schools and families.

The department continues to monitor and work closely with local authorities that have issues with EHC plan timeliness. Where there are concerns about a local authority's capacity to make the required improvements, we help the local authority to identify the barriers and put in place an effective recovery plan. This includes, where needed, securing specialist SEND Adviser support to help identify the barriers to EHC plan process timeliness and put in place practical plans for recovery.

Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) carried out a full SEND inspection of Dorset local area in March 2024. Their published report found that the local area partnership's SEND arrangements typically lead to positive experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND and the local area partnership is taking action where improvements are needed.

Dorset are not subject to formal intervention from the department or NHS England and the next full area SEND inspection by Ofsted and the CQC will be within approximately five years.

Edward Morello:

[14835]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will take steps to allocate more funding for SEND provision in rural areas.

Catherine McKinnell:

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

The department is providing an increase of almost £1 billion for local authorities' high needs budgets in the 2025/26 financial year, bringing total high needs funding for children and young people with complex SEND to £11.9 billion.

The department is now in the process of calculating indicative high needs funding allocations for local authorities next year through the national funding formula, which it expects to publish shortly.

This government is taking time to consider the funding formula that the department uses to allocate funding for children and young people with SEND. It is important that there is a fair education funding system, that directs funding to where it is needed, including funding for provision in rural areas.

ENERGY SECURITY AND NET ZERO**Batteries: Storage****Sir Alec Shelbrooke:**[\[15436\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what steps his Department is taking to help mitigate the risk of thermal runaways in battery energy storage facilities.

Michael Shanks:

Grid-scale batteries are regulated by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) within a framework which requires battery designers, installers and operators to take the necessary measures to ensure health and safety throughout all stages of the system's construction, operation and decommissioning.

The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) is considering options, including environmental permitting, to further mitigate thermal runaway risk in battery storage facilities. The Department's officials are supporting this work.

Carbon Emissions**Richard Tice:**[\[15609\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what data his Department holds on (a) the annual costs incurred to date in implementing Net Zero policies and (b) the measurable reductions in greenhouse gas emissions achieved as a direct result of those policies.

Kerry McCarthy:

The Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR) published its analysis of the cost of reaching net zero by 2050 in chapter 3 of the July 2021 edition of its UK Fiscal Risk Report. As the OBR has noted, "the costs of failing to get climate change under control would be much larger than those of bringing emissions down to net zero."

The UK has halved its emissions, having cut them by around 53% between 1990 and 2023.

Each year the department publishes updated energy projections, analysing and projecting future energy use and greenhouse gas emissions in the UK. They take into account climate change policies where decisions on policy design and funding are sufficiently advanced to allow robust estimates of policy impacts to be made. These projections allow us to monitor progress towards meeting the UK's carbon budgets.

The latest published projections can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/energy-and-emissions-projections-2022-to-2040>

Final estimates of UK greenhouse gas emissions are also published annually.

■ Department for Energy Security and Net Zero: Aviation**Rupert Lowe:**[\[14738\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what the total number of (a) air miles and (b) flights conducted by his Department's staff was in each of the last ten years.

Michael Shanks:

The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) was created in February 2023, so no information is held for periods prior to that date. For the information requested, anything prior to January 2024 was all still recorded as BEIS, so it mixes all three departments together and is unable to be split.

The total air miles conducted in DESNZ from January 2024 to September 2024 was 3,211,644 and the total number of flights was 1130. Some of these flights were single flights whilst others were round trips.

■ Department for Energy Security and Net Zero: Climate Change Convention**Rupert Lowe:**[\[14729\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, how many delegates the Government has sent to attend COP 29; and what the cost to the public purse is of the Government's involvement in COP 29.

Kerry McCarthy:

The final list of COP29 delegates should be published by the UNFCCC shortly. The UK delegation includes officials (some already based in Baku) and Ministers as well as businesses, Arm's Length Bodies, Devolved Administrations, Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories, parliamentarians and civil society speakers. Many attended at their own cost, with the UK providing accreditation. The Government currently estimates that nearly 470 people have attended COP29 in person with UK accreditation.

Until travel and expense claims are confirmed, the overall cost of Departmental attendance cannot be calculated. The Department will not hold this information for other Government departments.

The UK Pavilion and Delegation Office are fully funded through private sector sponsorship.

Mark Garnier:[\[15175\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, how many gifts were received by Ministers in his Department for travel to COP conferences in the last 12 months.

Kerry McCarthy:

No gifts were received by Ministers for travel to COP conferences in the last 12 months.

■ Department for Energy Security and Net Zero: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution**Mark Garnier:** [\[15176\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, with reference to the data on Departmental spending over £500 with an electronic purchasing card solution, when he plans to publish this data for (a) October and (b) November 2024.

Michael Shanks:

The Department intends to publish the October and November data on Departmental spending over £500 with an electronic purchasing card before the end of the financial year.

Mark Garnier: [\[15179\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, how many purchases with a value of less than £500 were made by his Department using an electronic purchasing card solution in October 2024, what the value was of those purchases; and if he will take steps to publish this information for (a) November 2024 and (b) subsequent months.

Michael Shanks:

This data is not published by the Department, in line with Section 8.2 Transparency in the Crown Commercial Services' Procurement Cards Pan-Government Policy.

■ Department for Energy Security and Net Zero: Official Cars**Nick Timothy:** [\[14814\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, how many ministerial cars are used by (a) him and (b) Ministers in his Department; and what is the model of those cars.

Michael Shanks:

I refer the hon Member to the answers I gave to the hon Member for Bridlington and The Wolds (Charlie Dewhirst) on 14 October to Question UIN [7001](#) and on 6 November to Question UIN [11759](#).

■ Department for Energy Security and Net Zero: Staff**Mark Garnier:** [\[15174\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, how many officials in his Department work full-time on COP summits.

Kerry McCarthy:

The annual UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP) is a crucial opportunity to tackle climate change internationally. As a top Government priority, officials across HMG are involved in making these summits as successful as they can be, from negotiations, logistics and Ministerial support to policy and stakeholder engagement. They typically do this as part of a broader role.

■ Energy: Housing**Mr Clive Betts:**[\[15170\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, how the funding for the warm homes policy will be targeted; and what steps he plans to take to ensure the funding is distributed to those most in need.

Miatta Fahnbulleh:

As the first step towards the Warm Homes Plan, the Government has committed an initial £3.4 billion over the next 3 years towards heat decarbonisation and household energy efficiency, with £1bn of this allocated to next year. Additional funding will be considered in Phase 2 of the Spending Review, as the Warm Homes Plan is further developed.

The £3.4 billion includes £1.8 billion to support fuel poverty schemes, helping over 225,000 households reduce their energy bills by over £200. In addition, the Government recently announced Wave 3 of the Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund in England, which will replace the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund to support social housing providers and tenants, with delivery expected in 2025. We have also announced a new Warm Homes: Local Grant to help low-income homeowners and private tenants in England with energy performance upgrades and cleaner heating.

■ Methane: Pollution Control**Jim Shannon:**[\[14608\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what assessment he has made of implications for his policies of the level of methane emissions in (a) 2010 and (b) 2024; and what steps he is taking to reduce those emissions to help the UK meet its 2030 net zero targets.

Kerry McCarthy:

The UK has committed to the fastest reduction in GHG emissions between 1990 and 2030 of any major economy. Between 1990 and 2022, UK methane emissions dropped by 62%. As part of the Clean Energy Superpower Mission, we are leading the way towards rapid national and global action to reduce short-lived climate pollutants, including methane, and are taking domestic action across the waste, agriculture and energy sectors.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS**■ Agriculture: Inheritance Tax****Ben Obese-Jecty:**[\[15296\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he first discussed changes to (a) agricultural and (b) business property relief with the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Daniel Zeichner:

The Secretary of State has regular discussions with Cabinet colleagues on a range of issues, and Cabinet discussions are considered confidential.

■ Agriculture: Subsidies**Dr Luke Evans:**[\[14691\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 11 November 2024 to Question 12597 on Agriculture: Subsidies, what steps his Department is taking to consult (a) fruit and (b) vegetable growers on future financial aid schemes for the sector.

Dr Luke Evans:[\[14817\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 11 November 2024 to Question 12597 on Agriculture: Subsidies, when he plans to make a decision on future financial aid schemes for the sector.

Dr Luke Evans:[\[14819\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 11 November to Question 12597 on Agriculture: Subsidies, if he will (a) meet with UK fruit and vegetable growers and (b) provide a communication portal for the submission of views about future financial aid schemes for the sector.

Daniel Zeichner:

The Government appreciates and values the vital work of our fruit and vegetable growers and recognises their important role in maintaining a secure supply of home – grown fresh produce.

As part of our mission-driven Government, and in partnership with the sector, the Department is considering how we can achieve our ambitious, measurable and long-term goals for the sector, including how to recognise the sector's diversity and specialist needs.

Defra meets regularly with growers to discuss a range of issues. These discussions help inform future policy development and help us understand what support the sector needs to help it thrive.

■ Agriculture: Supply Chains**Richard Tice:**[\[14773\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of the Autumn Budget 2024 on the (a) resilience of the agricultural supply chain and (b) ability of the sector to meet domestic food demand.

Daniel Zeichner:

Part (a) - The UK has a resilient food supply chain and is equipped to deal with situations with the potential to cause disruption. We produce 62% of all the food we

need, and 75% of food which we can grow or rear in the UK for all or part of the year. Food security is built on supply from diverse sources, strong domestic production as well as imports through stable trade routes.

UK consumers have access through international trade to food products that cannot be produced here, or at least not on a year-round basis. This supplements domestic production, and also ensures that any disruption from risks such as adverse weather or disease does not affect the UK's overall security of supply.

Defra works with industry and across Government to monitor risks that may arise. This includes extensive, regular and ongoing engagement in preparedness for, and response to, issues with the potential to cause disruption to food supply chains.

Part (b) - Farmers are the backbone of Britain, and we recognise the strength of feeling expressed by farming and rural communities in recent weeks. We are steadfast in our commitment to Britain's farming industry because food security is national security.

Around 500 claims each year will be impacted and farm-owning couples can pass on up to £3m without paying any inheritance tax.

Not only is the Government confident that these reforms will not impact food production, our Budget has set out a £5 billion farming budget over two years – dedicating more money than ever before to sustainable food production.

■ **Bluetongue Disease: Disease Control**

Andrew Rosindell:

[14922]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the guidance entitled Bluetongue movement licences and designated slaughterhouses, last updated on 15 November 2023, what further steps he plans to take to tackle bluetongue.

Daniel Zeichner:

Defra acted quickly to contain bluetongue serotype 3 (BTV-3) when the first case this season was detected on 26 August, implementing zones with movement controls on susceptible livestock to prevent spread. Disease control restrictions have been adapted in response to new findings and there is now a single restricted zone (RZ) covering the east coast and some inland areas in England.

As disease controls have developed, advice on movement licences and designated slaughterhouses has been regularly updated to reflect changes to controls and permitted movements, for example advice on applying for licences to move animals from the RZ to slaughter and breeding markets outside the zone:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/bluetongue-movement-licences-and-designated-slaughterhouses>

Defra and the Animal and Plant Health Agency continue surveillance and epidemiological assessments, remaining vigilant for any changes, and are working

closely with key industry stakeholders to review how we approach controls for BTV-3 for the coming winter months, in 2025 and beyond.

■ Farms: Tenants

Cat Smith:

[\[14983\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a right to buy for tenant farmers.

Daniel Zeichner:

This Government recognises the importance of tenant farmers in contributing to a resilient and thriving farming sector. The Government has not made an assessment on the potential merits of introducing a right to buy for tenant farmers but is committed to ensuring agricultural tenancies are fair and collaborative.

■ Fishing Vessels: Licensing

Richard Tice:

[\[14801\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many enforcement actions his Department has taken against foreign fishing vessels operating illegally in UK waters in each of the last five years.

Daniel Zeichner:

The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) is responsible for licensing foreign vessels to fish in English waters and for fisheries enforcement of vessels within English waters. The MMO has boarded and inspected foreign vessels at sea on 1451 occasions since the start of 2019 to the 31 October 2024. Infringements were detected during 585 of these inspections. In addition to these inspections at sea, 36 infringements by foreign vessels were detected remotely. The number of enforcement actions the MMO has taken against foreign fishing vessels operating illegally in English waters in each of the last five years is:

2024(YTD 31 October)	156
2023	115
2022	127
2021	127
2020	47
2019	112

Fisheries control and enforcement is a devolved matter and, as such, Fisheries Authorities in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are responsible for managing fisheries risk and conducting inspections in their respective waters.

■ Fly-tipping: Northern Ireland**Jim Shannon:**[\[14936\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions he has had with the Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland on tackling fly tipping.

Mary Creagh:

I have not discussed fly-tipping specifically with the Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland. Environmental policy making, including with respect to fly-tipping, is devolved.

The Secretary of State chaired the Inter-Ministerial Group for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in September 2024 which the Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs attended. The group discussed reducing waste and pollution.

■ Peatlands: Conservation**Claire Young:**[\[15057\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to increase the target for peatland restoration to help meet net zero targets.

Mary Creagh:

The Government recognises the importance of England's peatlands, and in our manifesto, we committed to expanding nature-rich habitats such as peatlands. Our peatland restoration targets will support the Government's mission to make Britain a clean-energy superpower and accelerate towards net zero.

■ Waste Disposal**Mrs Lorraine Beavers:**[\[14174\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department has taken recent steps to strengthen the Environment Agency's due diligence processes for (a) awarding and (b) transferring environmental permits.

Emma Hardy:

Guidance on due diligence checks for a) awarding and b) transferring environmental permits under the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016 are set out in the legal and operator competence guidance and the relevant convictions guidance published on GOV.UK. The legal and operator competence guidance was last updated in 2019 ([/www.gov.uk/guidance/legal-operator-and-competence-requirements-environmental-permits](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/legal-operator-and-competence-requirements-environmental-permits)) and the relevant convictions guidance in July 2023 (www.gov.uk/government/publications/relevant-conviction-guidance-for-permit-applications-for-waste-activities-and-installations-only).

Defra works closely with the Environment Agency to monitor its performance and ensure it enforces environmental protection laws and delivers for the public.

Defra also continuously evaluates the effectiveness of the environmental permitting framework in upholding environmental and human health protections. The most recent Post Implementation Review published in June last year (www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2016/1154/pdfs/uksiod_20161154_en_003.pdf) found that the regulations appeared to be functioning effectively.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Patrick Hurley: [\[901455\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to support Ukraine.

Dr Jeevun Sandher: [\[901456\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to support Ukraine.

Alan Strickland: [\[901457\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to support Ukraine.

Stephen Doughty:

In chairing the UN Security Council on 18 November, the Foreign Secretary made clear that UK support for Ukraine is ironclad. We have stepped up the delivery of vital military equipment, led the way in investing in Ukraine's defence industrial base, and imposed major new sanctions upon Russia. As the Prime Minister has said, we must double down and give Ukraine the support it needs for as long as it needs.

Alice Macdonald: [\[901458\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to help tackle global hunger.

Anneliese Dodds:

We are urgently addressing catastrophic forms of hunger through diplomatic and humanitarian channels. The Foreign Secretary recently committed to doubling our aid for those affected by war in Sudan. Last week, the Prime Minister announced the UK's Board-level role in the Global Alliance against Hunger and Poverty. This will pool resources and expertise for long-term solutions, backed by new £70m UK support, including for climate-resilient food production.

Dave Robertson: [\[901460\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what diplomatic steps he is taking with international partners to help tackle irregular migration to the UK.

Baggy Shanker:[\[901463\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what diplomatic steps he is taking with international partners to help tackle irregular migration to the UK.

Anneliese Dodds:

We engage regularly with our international partners on irregular migration, with a commitment to tackling people trafficking and the gangs profiting from it. In July we announced steps to reinforce our cooperation with Europol and, through our new Border Security Command, we will intensify efforts in transit countries to break the business models of these gangs.

Tracy Gilbert:[\[901461\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when he last discussed women's rights with the Iranian ambassador to the UK.

Mr Hamish Falconer:

There is currently no Iranian ambassador to the UK. However, we regularly deliver robust messages on human rights directly to the Iranian regime, including through our Ambassador in Tehran. On 13 August, I highlighted, via X, the UK's continued support for Iranian women and girls and our commitment to calling out the regime's unacceptable behaviour.

Rachel Blake:[\[901464\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what diplomatic steps he is taking to help secure the release of Jimmy Lai.

Catherine West:

We call on Hong Kong authorities to end their politically motivated prosecution of Jimmy Lai. The Prime Minister raised his case with President Xi at last week's G20 Summit; the Foreign Secretary raised with China's Foreign Minister last month; and I raised with Hong Kong officials earlier this month. Diplomats from our Consulate-General in Hong Kong are attending his court proceedings on a regular basis. We continually press for consular access and progress on broader human rights concerns.

Marsha De Cordova:[\[901465\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to encourage the Israeli authorities to help protect rescue workers in the Middle East.

Anneliese Dodds:

We continue to press Israel to do more to protect civilians, aid and health workers in Gaza. Israel must comply with international law. We call on Israel to co-operate fully with humanitarian agencies, to make provisions for humanitarians to carry out their work safely and effectively. Restricting their work is unacceptable. The Minister for

the Middle East raised concerns about hospitals and healthcare workers coming under fire with the Israeli Ambassador on 5 November.

■ **China and Hong Kong: British National (Overseas)**

Ms Marie Rimmer:

[\[14639\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Indo-Pacific) made representations on the non-recognition of the BNO passport by (a) China and (b) Hong Kong during her recent visit to Hong Kong.

Catherine West:

I visited Hong Kong in November for a two-day programme of engagements. I met with stakeholders across the Hong Kong Government, the business community and public to discuss areas of co-operation and challenge on areas of contention.

■ **Gubad Ibadoghlu**

Alicia Kearns:

[\[14478\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the Prime Minister made representations to his Azeri counterpart on the case of Gubad Ibadoghlu during his recent visit to Baku.

Alicia Kearns:

[\[14481\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he made representations to his Azeri counterpart on the case of Gubad Ibadoghlu during his recent visit to Baku.

Stephen Doughty:

The UK consistently advocates for Dr Ibadoghlu to receive all appropriate medical access and treatment, and for a fair legal process.

■ **Hong Kong: Human Rights**

Phil Brickell:

[\[14702\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of the meeting between the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Indo-Pacific and Hong Kong's Convenor of the Executive Council on the human rights situation in Hong Kong.

Catherine West:

I met Regina Ip on 31 October. Human rights were raised as part of the discussion. The UK will continue to speak often and candidly with Hong Kong authorities across both areas of contention as well as areas for cooperation. Engagement with representatives of Hong Kong and China is pragmatic and necessary to support UK interests.

■ Malaysia: Religious Freedom**Jim Shannon:**[\[14620\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Malaysian counterpart on reports of persecution of (a) Shia and (b) Ahmadiyya Muslims in that country.

Catherine West:

The Foreign Secretary has not had discussions with his counterpart on reports of persecution of Shia and Ahmadiyya Muslims in Malaysia.

However, the UK is committed to promoting and defending Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB). The UK High Commission in Malaysia raises concerns about limitations on freedom of expression and other human rights issues, including freedom of religion, on a regular basis, both publicly and in private. We also work through the UN to promote and protect these rights, including raising country specific issues at the UN Human Rights Council.

■ Taipei Representative Office in the UK**Alicia Kearns:**[\[15533\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether (a) he and (b) other Ministers in his Department have held meetings with Taiwan's Representative in London in the last six months.

Catherine West:

The Foreign Secretary and other FCDO ministers have not held meetings with the Taipei Representative in London in the last six months.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ Bereavement Counselling: Mothers and Families****Liam Conlon:**[\[14797\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to (a) to raise awareness of (i) pregnancy and (ii) baby loss and (b) improve bereavement care for (A) mothers and (B) families impacted.

Karin Smyth:

The Government is committed to ensuring that all women and babies receive safe, compassionate, and personalised care, particularly when things go wrong. In February 2024, the Department launched the Baby Loss Certificate service. This service is a non-statutory, voluntary scheme to enable those who have experienced any pregnancy loss to record and receive a certificate to provide recognition of their loss, if they wish to do so.

To support the reduction of preventable baby loss, all trusts are implementing the third version of the Saving Babies Lives Care Bundle, which provides maternity units

with detailed guidance and a package of interventions to reduce stillbirths, neonatal brain injury, neonatal death, and preterm birth.

Many trusts have specialist bereavement midwives, who are trained to care for and support parents and families who have suffered the loss of their baby. All trusts are now signed up to The National Bereavement Care Pathway, which acts as a set of standards and guidance that trusts should follow when a patient has suffered a baby loss.

Paid Parental Bereavement Leave was introduced in 2020. This entitlement is available to parents who lose a child under 18 years old, including where a baby is stillborn after 24 weeks of pregnancy.

In May 2024, NHS England published a new national policy framework to provide all National Health Service staff who suffer a miscarriage with up to 10 days additional paid leave. Women who experience a miscarriage in the first 24 weeks of pregnancy are offered up to 10 days paid leave, and their partners are offered up to five. The new guidance supports NHS employees and provides managers and colleagues with advice on how to support people affected by baby loss, including ensuring that staff who return from work after their pregnancy loss are offered occupational health support, including referrals to specialist services at their trust, or specialist miscarriage and baby loss charities and organisations.

■ **Cataracts: Surgery**

Ian Byrne:

[\[14239\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the use of the independent sector to deliver cataract surgery on waiting times for (a) cataract patients and (b) patients waiting for other ophthalmology services.

Stephen Kinnock:

Tackling waiting lists is a key part of our Health Mission and a top priority for the Government, as we get the National Health Service back on its feet. This includes ensuring that patients waiting for cataract and ophthalmology services are seen on time. The ophthalmology waiting list stood at approximately 640,00 in September 2023.

Whilst a formal assessment of the potential impact of the use of the independent sector for cataract and ophthalmology services has not been undertaken, independent sector providers have a role to play in supporting the NHS to recover elective services, including in ophthalmology, to ensure that patients can choose the service best for them, are seen on time, and have the best possible experience during their care. We will continue to work with the independent sector to support our commitment of getting waiting lists down, whilst ensuring this provides value for money, and that NHS care is always free at the point of use.

■ Dementia: Training**Lewis Cocking:** [R] [14710]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to introduce mandatory dementia training for adult social care workers.

Freddie van Mierlo: [14891]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress he has made on dementia care in his plans for social care workforce reform; and if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of making dementia training mandatory for adult social care workers as a part of that reform.

Stephen Kinnock:

Providers must provide sufficient numbers of suitably qualified, competent, skilled, and experienced staff to meet the needs of the people using the service. Staff must receive the support, training, professional development, supervision, and appraisals that are necessary for them to carry out their role.

We now have a national career framework for adult social care, the Care Workforce Pathway, which is linked to a number of existing competency frameworks, including the dementia training standards framework.

The Department has also launched a new Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate qualification which links to the outcomes in the Care Workforce Pathway. This contains the baseline knowledge required to provide quality care, and will make sure that those who are starting out their careers have an informed awareness of dementia.

■ Endometriosis: Medical Treatments**Jim Shannon:** [14610]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has had discussions with the Department of Health in Northern Ireland on improving health outcomes for people on waiting lists for the treatment of endometriosis.

Karin Smyth:

It is unacceptable that patients across the United Kingdom continue to wait lengthy periods for treatment, including for endometriosis. Cutting waiting lists is a key priority for the Government. We recognise the challenges faced by women with endometriosis and the significant impact it has on their lives, their relationships and their participation in education and the workforce.

Departmental officials have met and continue to meet with counterparts across the four nations to share learning across a range of women's health policy issues, including menstrual health. Together we aim to deliver faster, improved, and more equitable health outcomes for all patients across the UK, and to strengthen our collaboration in achieving these common goals.

The Department of Health in Northern Ireland has identified challenges within gynaecology care, including for endometriosis and commissioned NHS England's Getting It Right First Time (GIRFT) programme to conduct an independent review of gynaecology waiting lists in Northern Ireland, published in January 2024. The report set out a number of recommendations and is available at the following link:

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/gynaecology-girft-report-january-2024>

■ **Epilepsy: Medical Treatments**

Peter Fortune:

[15352]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to support individuals with epilepsy whose condition is not well-controlled by existing therapies; and what funding his Department has allocated to support research in this area.

Andrew Gwynne:

We want a society where every person, including those with long-term conditions such as epilepsy, receives high-quality, compassionate continuity of care, with their families and carers supported. We will change the National Health Service so that it becomes not just a sickness service, but one able to prevent ill health in the first place. This will help us be better prepared for the change in the nature of disease and allow our services to focus more on the management of chronic, long-term conditions, including epilepsy.

At the national level, there are a number of initiatives supporting service improvement and better care for patients with epilepsy, including the RightCare Epilepsy Toolkit, and the Getting It Right First Time Programme for Neurology.

The Department funds research into epilepsy via the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR). The NIHR spent almost £19 million on 46 epilepsy research projects in the five years from April 2019 to March 2024. Additionally, over this period, more than 9,500 people were enabled to participate in epilepsy research by the NIHR Clinical Research Network, now the NIHR Research Delivery Network.

The NIHR welcomes funding applications for research into any aspect of human health, including epilepsy. Applications are subject to peer review and judged in open competition, with awards being made on the basis of the importance of the topic to patients and health and care services, value for money, and scientific quality.

The NIHR also works closely with other Government funders, including UK Research and Innovation, which is funded by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology and includes the Medical Research Council, to fund research into epilepsy to improve treatments and prevent poor health outcomes for patients.

■ Family Hubs: Lambeth**Bell Ribeiro-Addy:**[\[15505\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to support Start for Life services in Lambeth; and if he will extend the funding of such services beyond 1 April 2025.

Andrew Gwynne:

The Family Hubs and Start for Life programme is central to delivering the Government's commitments to give every baby the best start in life, and to deliver the healthiest generation of children ever. Lambeth is one of 75 local authorities the Government is funding to ensure parents and carers can access Start for Life services, from conception to the age of two years old.

We work closely with Lambeth to support programme implementation across all funded strands, and they have opened six Family Hub sites with Start for Life services at their heart since 2023. We also signpost policy toolkits, provide guidance, and facilitate the sharing of good practice between local authorities.

The Autumn Budget announcement included £69 million to continue delivery of a network of Family Hubs in 2025/26. The Department will confirm Start for Life funding in due course.

■ Food: Advertising**Lee Barron:**[\[15133\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with stakeholders on regulating advertisements of products that are high in (a) fat, (b) salt and (c) sugar (i) on TV and (ii) online.

Andrew Gwynne:

The Department has engaged with a range of stakeholders on the advertising restrictions for less healthy food or drink, also known as products high in fat, salt or sugar, on television and online. The Department will continue to engage with stakeholders as we progress the implementation of the policy.

■ Health Services: Digital Technology**Richard Burgon:**[\[14657\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to support people with communication needs access (a) online appointment bookings and (b) other digital healthcare services.

Karin Smyth:

All National Health Service organisations and publicly funded social care providers in England are required to meet the Accessible Information Standard in order to meet the communication needs of patients and carers with a disability, impairment, or sensory loss.

Patients are able to request general practice appointments and manage secondary care appointments through local online tools and the NHS App, which can also be accessed through a web browser. The NHS App is designed to meet international accessibility standards and the services are routinely tested with a range of people with accessibility issues. User reviews and research show the NHS App and website to be highly usable and simple to use. Local online tools must also meet minimum accessibility standards.

Digital healthcare services are part of a multi-channel offering, and patients unable to use digital channels can continue to access services via telephone and through traditional face to face services. Digital services must be designed to alleviate healthcare inequalities rather than exacerbate them. Our goal is to ensure that reducing healthcare inequalities and improving digital inclusion have due focus in wider inclusive user design and delivery for all digital health products and services, including through implementation of the NHS England Digital Inclusion Framework.

■ Health Services: Information

Gill Furniss:

[14679]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help ensure greater accessibility to healthcare (a) information and (b) communication for people with sensory impairments.

Stephen Kinnock:

National Health Service organisations and publicly funded social care providers are required to adhere to the Accessible Information Standard (AIS), to meet the communication needs of patients and carers with a disability, impairment, or sensory loss. The AIS conformance criteria, published in 2016, set out how organisations should comply with the AIS, with further information available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/about/equality/equality-hub/patient-equalities-programme/equality-frameworks-and-information-standards/accessibleinfo/resources/assess-conformance/>

The responsibility for monitoring compliance with the AIS sits with the commissioner of the service.

NHS England has completed a review of the AIS to help ensure that the communication needs of people with a disability, impairment, or sensory loss are met in health and care provision.

A revised AIS is being reviewed with a view to publication, and in the meantime NHS England is continuing to work to support implementation with awareness raising, communication and engagement, and a review of the current e-learning modules on the AIS. The intention is to ensure that staff and organisations in the NHS are aware of the AIS and the importance of meeting the information and communication needs of disabled people using these services.

■ Hospices and Palliative Care: Finance

Sarah Hall:

[\[14720\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions (a) he and (b) his officials have had with the hospice and end of life care sector on future funding for the sector.

Stephen Kinnock:

I have met with NHS England to discuss how to reduce inequalities and variation in access to, and the quality of, palliative and end of life care. I also recently met Together for Short Lives and one of the chairs of the Children Who Need Palliative Care All Party Parliamentary Group to discuss children's palliative and end of life care, and funding was discussed at length at this meeting.

Department officials meet regularly with palliative and end of life care stakeholders, including Hospice UK, Sue Ryder, Marie Curie, and Together for Short Lives. We, alongside key partners NHS England, will continue to proactively engage with our stakeholders, including the voluntary sector and independent hospices, on an ongoing basis, in order to understand the issues they face. We will consider next steps on palliative and end of life care, including funding, in the coming months.

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 to input into the 10-Year Health Plan is available at the following link:

<https://change.nhs.uk/en-GB/>

We have been actively encouraging our stakeholders to engage with that process to allow us to fully understand what improvements could be made.

■ Hospices: Employers' Contributions

Leigh Ingham:

[\[14897\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of changes to (a) funding and (b) National Insurance contributions at the Autumn Budget 2024 on hospices.

Stephen Kinnock:

[Holding answer 21 November 2024]: Palliative care services are included in the list of services an integrated care board (ICB) must commission. Whilst the majority of palliative and end of life care is provided by National Health Service staff and services, we recognise the vital part that voluntary sector organisations, including hospices, also play in providing support to people at end of life, and their loved ones.

The amount of funding each charitable hospice receives varies both within and between 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.

At the Autumn Budget 2024, we have taken necessary decisions to fix the foundations in the public finances, enabling the Spending Review settlement of a £22.6 billion increase in resource spending for the Department from 2023/24 outturn to 2025/26. The employer National Insurance contributions (ENICs) rise will be implemented in April 2025, and the Department will set out further details on the allocation of funding for next year in due course.

The Government recognises the need to protect the smallest businesses and charities, like hospices, which is why we have more than doubled the Employment Allowance to £10,500, meaning more than half of businesses with ENIC liabilities either gain or see no change next year. Businesses and charities will still be able to claim ENIC reliefs, including those for under 21-year-old and under 25-year-old apprentices, where eligible.

■ **Menopause: Health Services**

Nick Timothy:

[\[14813\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 13 November 2024 to Question 12788 on Menopause: Health Services, when the curriculum was introduced; and whether any additional training is provided to GPs after qualifying.

Karin Smyth:

The Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) is responsible for publishing the postgraduate curriculum for general practitioners (GPs), and ensuring that it remains up to date. The RCGP curriculum was last updated in 2019. It is scheduled to be updated again in August 2025, pending approval by the General Medical Council.

GPs are responsible for ensuring that their own clinical knowledge remains up-to-date, and for identifying learning needs as part of their continuing professional development. The RCGP Women's Health Library contains educational resources and guidelines on women's health that are relevant to GPs and other primary healthcare professionals. It brings together national guidance and resources produced and accredited by the RCGP, and resources from the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, and the Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare. Further information on the RCGP Women's Health Library is available at the following link:

<https://elearning.rcgp.org.uk/course/index.php?categoryid=57>

■ **Mental Health Services: Children**

Josh Babarinde:

[\[14725\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to reduce waiting times for children from Eastbourne constituency to access support from Sussex CAMHS.

Stephen Kinnock:

It is unacceptable that too many children and young people are not receiving the mental health care they need, and we know that waits for mental health services are far too long, including in areas such as the Eastbourne constituency. That is why we will recruit 8,500 additional mental health workers across both adult, and children and young people's mental health services.

The Department for Health and Social Care is working with the Department for Education to consider how to deliver our commitment of providing access to a specialist mental health professional in every school. Alongside this, we are working towards rolling out Young Futures hubs in every community, offering open access mental health services for young people.

■ Pharmacy: West Dorset

Edward Morello: [\[13991\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he plans to take to support community pharmacies in West Dorset

Edward Morello: [\[13992\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help improve the sustainability of pharmacies in rural communities that lack alternative healthcare access.

Stephen Kinnock:

Pharmacies play a vital role in our healthcare system. We are committed to expanding the role of pharmacies and better utilising the skills of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians. That includes making prescribing part of the services delivered by community pharmacists, as we shift care from the hospital to the community.

Integrated care boards (ICBs) are responsible for understanding the health needs of their areas, and commissioning services to meet those needs. Local authorities are required to undertake a pharmaceutical needs assessment every three years to assess whether their population, such as the constituency of West Dorset, are adequately served, and they must keep these assessments under review. These assessments inform ICBs when reviewing applications for National Health Service pharmacies. The Pharmacy Access Scheme provides additional funding to pharmacies in areas where there are fewer pharmacies. In rural areas where there is no pharmacy, general practices are permitted to dispense medicines. Patients can also choose to access medicines and pharmacy services through any of the nearly 400 NHS online pharmacies that are contractually required to deliver prescription medicines free of charge to patients.

Now that the Budget for Government has been set, we will shortly be resuming our consultation with Community Pharmacy England regarding the funding arrangements. We are unable to say more until these have been concluded.

■ Respiratory Diseases

Wera Hobhouse:

[\[901293\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether respiratory health conditions will be prioritised in the new NHS 10-year plan.

Andrew Gwynne:

Respiratory health conditions make up some of the biggest killers in our country and are a clinical priority, and I look forward to meeting with the Respiratory Health APPG soon. This government is committed to fixing our broken NHS in order to deliver better access to diagnosis and care. I thank the Honourable Lady for raising the 10 year plan for health and would encourage her to follow thousands of others in having her say through change.nhs.uk.

■ Social Services: Employers' Contributions

Mark Pritchard:

[\[14046\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the proposed increase in the rate of employers' National Insurance contributions on social care services.

Stephen Kinnock:

The Government is providing at least £600 million of new grant funding for social care in 2025/26, as part of the broader estimated real-terms uplift to core local government spending power of approximately 3.2%. We will continue to work with the adult social care sector to understand the pressures on adult social care delivery and local authority budgets.

HOME OFFICE

■ Asylum: Deportation

Neil O'Brien:

[\[14670\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people were served with a notice of liability to remove in each year since 2004.

Dame Angela Eagle:

The Home Office does not routinely report on numbers of individuals served with notices of liability to removal, and that information could only be obtained for the purposes of this question at disproportionate cost.

Rupert Lowe:

[\[14737\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many repeat deportations there were in each of the last ten years.

Dame Angela Eagle:

Available statistics on the returns of foreign national offenders (FNOs) are published on a quarterly basis in the Returns Detailed Datasets, and are currently available to

the end of June 2024, which are available at: [Immigration system statistics quarterly release - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/immigration-system-statistics-quarterly-release) The next update will be published on 28 November 2024.

A deportation order requires a person to leave the UK and prohibits them from lawfully entering the UK while it remains in force. Entering in breach of a deportation order is a criminal offence under section 24(1)(a) of the 1971 Act, with a maximum sentence of five years.

Any FNO who enters the UK in breach of a deportation order will be returned to custody to finish any remaining time of their custodial sentence and will be swiftly removed on completion of their sentence.

We have already begun delivering a major surge in immigration enforcement and returns activity to remove people with no right to be in the UK, with 9,400 people already being returned since the new government came into power.

Rupert Lowe: [\[14746\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many deportations have been prevented through use of the European Convention on Human Rights in each of the last 10 years.

Dame Angela Eagle:

The Home Office does not regularly publish information about the basis of foreign national offender (FNO) appeals. However, in February 2022 [an ad hoc study was published](#) on FNO lodged and allowed appeals, covering some of the period covered in this question.

This includes the number allowed at the First-tier Tribunal, pursuant to the European Convention on Human Rights.

■ Asylum: Health Services

Nick Timothy: [\[14805\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what contracts have been agreed with private companies to provide healthcare for asylum seekers and refugees since 5 July 2024.

Dame Angela Eagle:

The Home Office has agreed to no such contracts.

■ Asylum: Hotels

Julia Lopez: [\[14681\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many new hotels she has awarded contracts to for housing asylum seekers since 4 July 2024.

Dame Angela Eagle:

I refer the Honourable Member to my response to the Urgent Question tabled by the Right Honourable Member for Stone, Great Wyrley and Penkridge on 20 November,

which can be found at – [Asylum Seekers: Hotel Accommodation - Hansard - UK Parliament](#).

■ Biometric Residence Permits and Visas

Neil Coyle: **[15187]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what guidance her Department has issued on the end of (a) biometric residence permits, (b) biometric residence cards and (c) e-visas.

Neil Coyle: **[15188]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an estimate of the number of people whose (a) biometric residence permit and (b) biometric residence card are scheduled to end on 31 December 2024 but haven't yet accessed an e-visa.

Neil Coyle: **[15189]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an estimate of the number of people that need to register for an e-visa before 1 January 2025.

Seema Malhotra:

An extensive communications campaign is being delivered in support of the transition to eVisas, which includes guidance available at: www.gov.uk/evisa, as well as direct messaging to individuals with Biometric Residence Permits (BRPs), out of home advertising, print and social media alongside engagement activity through multicultural community organisations, embassies and stakeholder events. We have also produced an eVisa partner pack, which includes guidance for those who check immigration statuses, informative factsheets and a range of social media assets which stakeholders can use on their channels.

Over 4 million BRPs and over 200,000 BRCs are due to expire on 31 December 2024. BRC holders granted status under the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) already have an eVisa, and do not need to take any action to obtain one. As part of the transition to eVisas, we are closely monitoring the volume of customers who have registered for a UKVI account and the forecast total volume of affected customers, and we will shortly publish updated data on the number and breakdown of UKVI registrations.

For many, the expiry of BRPs and BRCs on 31 December 2024 will have no immediate impact; most people don't need to prove their immigration status on a day-to-day basis, and many of the checks performed will be unaffected by the expiry of biometric residence permits (BRPs). The underlying status of the customer's current immigration status will also not be affected upon creation of a UKVI account. BRP holders will still be able to use the online right to work and rent services to prove their rights once their BRP expires – provided they still have valid status. They will also be able to create a UKVI account to access their eVisa using an expired BRP. We are planning to update the biometric registration regulations to make this clear.

While we are encouraging legacy immigration document holders to transition to eVisas, they can still use their legacy documents to prove their rights as they do today, where these are permitted.

■ Counter-terrorism

Lee Anderson: [\[15502\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is doing to improve counter-terrorism measures.

Dan Jarvis:

The UK has one of the strongest counter-terrorism frameworks in the world.

Counter-terrorism is a whole of government effort in response to a substantial terrorist threat which is diverse, dynamic and complex. This system is underpinned by the UK's counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST. CONTEST is a framework covering all types of terrorism. It has remained effective since 2003 and is a flexible and adaptable framework through which we continuously work to improve our delivery. As set out in the latest iteration of the strategy, the Government is making transformational improvements in response to the evolving threat.

The entire strategy, including our counter-terrorism powers, terrorist offences and risk management tools are kept under close review to ensure they remain fit for purpose in the context of emerging threats. This is supported through both internal and independent scrutiny, including via the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation.

■ Deportation: Albania

Mr Peter Bedford: [\[14893\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Albanian nationals have been deported in 2024; and whether any individuals deported in 2024 have since re-entered the UK.

Dame Angela Eagle:

Available statistics on the returns of foreign national offenders (FNOs) and their nationality are published on a quarterly basis in the Returns Detailed Datasets, which are available at: [Immigration system statistics quarterly release - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-system-statistics-quarterly-release). The next update will be published on 28 November 2024.

Any foreign national who enters the UK in breach of a deportation order will be returned to custody to finish the remainder of their custodial sentence. Entering in breach of a deportation order is a criminal offence under section 24(1)(a) of the 1971 Act, with a maximum sentence of five years.

■ Fire and Rescue Services: Floods

Blake Stephenson:

[\[15069\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a statutory duty for firefighters in England to respond to flooding.

Dame Diana Johnson:

Defra is the Lead Government Department for flooding, and they are responsible for the response to and prevention of flooding. Fire and Rescue Authorities have duties under the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) to prepare for emergencies, including major flooding. Fire Rescue Authorities also have discretionary powers to respond to incidents under their general powers in the Fire and Rescue Services Act (2004) and in response to the risks set out in their Community Risk Management Plans prepared under the National Framework.

The Home Office is undertaking further work alongside Defra, National Fire Chiefs Council and other relevant stakeholders to understand in more detail if there are gaps in the Fire and Rescue Services flooding response and resilience system.

■ Fire and Rescue Services: Standards

Daisy Cooper:

[\[14690\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she has taken to work with stakeholders in the Fire and Rescue services to establish national standards.

Dame Diana Johnson:

The Home Office funds the independent Fire Standards Board (FSB) to develop and maintain a comprehensive set of professional standards for fire and rescue services in England.

The FSB has published 19 national standards for fire and rescue services covering a range of topics from emergency response driving to leading and developing people and a code of ethics.

The Home Office will continue to work with stakeholders to build on the work of the FSB in the context of the Government's fire and rescue service reform agenda. As part of this agenda in December I will chair the first meeting of a Ministerial Advisory Group, with representation from across the fire and rescue sector.

■ Firearms: Licensing

Richard Tice:

[\[14790\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many police officers have surrendered firearms licences in the last 12 months; and what data her Department holds on the reasons recorded for those surrenders.

Dame Diana Johnson:

The Home Office collects and publishes information annually on the number of armed police officers in the Police use of firearms statistics. The latest available data is for the year ending 31 March 2024 and can be accessed at the following link:

Police use of firearms statistics: [Police use of firearms statistics, April 2023 to March 2024 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-use-of-firearms-statistics-april-2023-to-march-2024)

The number of armed police officers and, of those, the number that were operationally deployable can be found in data table 2.

Foreign Relations: Turkey

Mike Tapp: [\[15602\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has had discussions with her Turkish counterpart on a cooperation and security agreement; and whether she plans to hold such discussions before the end of the year.

Dame Angela Eagle:

The Home Office continues to work closely with a wide range of agencies and governments around the world to pursue our shared objectives to tackle organised immigration crime. However, I can advise the Honourable Member that media reports suggesting that the UK is intending to negotiate a cooperation and security agreement with the government of Turkey are wholly inaccurate and misleading, and do not reflect any of the discussions that Home Office ministers and officials have had with their Turkish counterparts in recent months. We look forward to continuing our warm, productive and equal partnership with the government of Turkey on a range of issues of mutual benefit to both countries, but the idea of an 'Italy-style deal' invented by media outlets has been and will remain no part of those discussions.

Home Office: Crime and Non-crime Hate Incidents

Richard Tice: [\[14789\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what data her Department holds on the staff time taken to (a) record and (b) investigate (i) non-crime hate incidents and (ii) suspected criminal offences in each of the last five years; what the cost of that work was; and what proportion of total (A) spending and (B) staff time was spent on such work.

Dame Diana Johnson:

The Home Office holds data on notifiable crimes recorded by the police in England and Wales including the date when they were recorded and the date when a resulting investigation has been closed.

This data is routinely published as official statistics.

The Home Office does not currently hold or collate information on the number of non-crime hate incidents recorded by police forces.

■ Home Office: HOPE not hate

Nick Timothy:

[\[14748\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the answer of 14 November 2024 to Question 12771 on Home Office: Hope not Hate, what information her Department holds on (a) the name of, (b) the purpose of and (c) other organisations invited to the stakeholder forums that officials attended with Hope not Hate.

Dame Diana Johnson:

The wider stakeholder forums in question were not organised by the Home Office, and it is not for the department to publish lists of attendees.

■ Immigration

Richard Tice:

[\[14770\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many individuals have been granted indefinite leave to remain in each of the last five years, broken down by (a) visa category and (b) country of origin.

Richard Tice:

[\[14771\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many individuals have been granted indefinite leave to remain in each of the last five years, broken down by the individual's (a) occupation and (b) employment sector.

Seema Malhotra:

The Home Office publishes data on Settlement by country of nationality and by visa category in the '[Immigration System Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'. Visa Category relates to type of leave held immediately prior to being granted settlement.

The published statistics can be found in the [Settlement data tables](#). Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data relate to 2024 Q2.

■ Immigration: Slavery

Ellie Chowns:

[\[14885\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of the disbanding of Multi-Agency Assurance Panels on independent assurance of National Referral Mechanism decisions in the review of negative Conclusive Grounds decisions by the Single Competent Authority and Immigration Enforcement Competent Authority to identify victims of modern slavery; and if she will make it her policy to reinstate a MAAP assurance process that (a) tests consistency of decision-making and (b) protects the individual concerned.

Jess Phillips:

The number of referrals into the National Referral Mechanism has continued to grow year on year (17,004 individuals were referred into the NRM in 2023), and the

pressure on the timeliness of decision-making in the NRM has only continued to increase.

The previous government concluded that the design of the Multi-Agency Assurance Panels (MAAPs) process contributed to the number of days being added to the decision-making timelines for those exiting the NRM as non-victims, and therefore, to help provide greater certainty sooner to that cohort of individuals, MAAPs were removed in December 2022.

To further improve the timeliness of decision-making in the NRM, this Government has made arrangements for an additional 200 Home Office decision makers to be recruited in order to eradicate the backlog of decisions on modern slavery cases within 2 years.

Regarding assurances of decision making, both competent authorities employ a Quality Strategy intended to support the vision of delivering quality outcomes for victims of modern slavery by regularly reporting quality assurance outcomes to decision making teams.

All negative decisions taken by Competent Authorities are reviewed by a second caseworker or manager in line with statutory obligations. This includes negative Reasonable Grounds decisions, negative Conclusive Grounds decisions, and Public Order Disqualification and Bad Faith disqualification decisions. The quality assurance of decisions made also includes random sampling of positive decisions.

The Home Office continues to keep the assurance of decision making in the competent authorities under review, including whether independent assurance would be beneficial to decision making outcomes.

■ Migrants: Domestic Abuse

Tracy Gilbert: [\[14759\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to support migrant victims of domestic abuse.

Tracy Gilbert: [\[14760\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department plans to continue to fund the Support for Migrant Victims Scheme beyond March 2025.

Seema Malhotra:

We keep under constant review the support we provide to migrant victims of domestic abuse, including how we can increase their confidence to report to the police and their ability to access help from specialist agencies.

This government continues to support the Support for Migrant Victims scheme which provides vital support for migrant victims of domestic abuse, including accommodation, subsistence, counselling and legal advice. All decisions on funding for the next financial year will be made in due course as part of the Spending Review process.

■ Offenders: Asylum

Rupert Lowe: [\[14761\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many individuals with Application Registration Cards were (a) arrested and (b) convicted in the last 12 months.

Dame Angela Eagle:

Available information on arrests for notifiable offences in England and Wales is published annually and the latest available data covering the year ending March 2024 can be found here: [Stop and search, arrests and mental health detentions, March 2024 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/stop-and-search-arrests-and-mental-health-detentions-march-2024)

It is not possible from this data to identify whether someone has an Application Registration Card.

Prosecutions are a matter for the Ministry of Justice.

■ Terrorism

Rupert Lowe: [\[14534\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 14 November to Question 12319 on Terrorism, if she will publish (a) a breakdown by ideological motivation of those late stage attacks that would not affect either on-going investigations and (b) the most common ideological motivation of the 43 late stage attacks.

Dan Jarvis:

As the Director General of MI5 said in their annual threat report, MI5's counter terrorist work remains roughly 75% Islamist extremist, 25% extreme right-wing terrorism.

Further detail on disruptions is not disclosable without jeopardising ongoing investigations and wider national security operations.

■ Undocumented Migrants

Rupert Lowe: [\[14345\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 13 November to Question 12585 on Undocumented Migrants, if she will make an estimate of the number of asylum seekers for which her Department doesn't have an address listed.

Dame Angela Eagle:

There is no data published regarding asylum claimants without an address.

The Home Office publishes statistics on the number of people in asylum accommodation in table Asy_D09 of the quarterly Immigration System Statistics: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/immigration-system-statistics-data-tables>. Not all asylum seekers will be housed in Home Office accommodation as some will be supported by friends and family, for example.

The Home Office maintains records of addresses of asylum claimants and updates these records in the event the Department is informed an asylum claimant moves address.

Asylum claimants must maintain contact with the Home Office and report changes of their circumstances, such as change in address, as soon as reasonably possible, as referenced in paragraph 358B of Immigration rules:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules>.

If an asylum claimant fails to update the Home Office with change of circumstances, such as an address, as soon as reasonably possible their asylum claim may be withdrawn, as referenced in Paragraph 333C of the Immigration Rules. More information can be found at the Implicit Withdrawals section of the Withdrawals Guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/withdrawing-asylum-applications/withdrawing-asylum-claims-accessible>.

■ **Undocumented Migrants: Crimes of Violence**

Rupert Lowe:

[14539]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 5 November 2024 to Question 11414 on Undocumented Migrants: Crimes of Violence, whether her Department collects data on incidents of assault by irregular migrants against Departmental staff.

Dame Angela Eagle:

Immigration Enforcement capture all recorded incidents of assault against staff, regardless of the immigration status.

■ **Undocumented Migrants: Detainees and Deportation**

Richard Tice:

[14779]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will take steps to ensure that illegal entrants to the United Kingdom are (a) detained and (b) promptly removed; and how many and what proportion of those illegal entrants have been (i) detained and (ii) removed in each of the last five years.

Dame Angela Eagle:

Data on how many people are in immigration detention and how many people have been removed in each of the last five years is available up to year ending June 2024, and can be found within the Returns and Detention data tables at,

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-system-statistics-year-ending-june-2024/how-many-people-are-detained-or-returned#data-tables>.

■ Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

Rupert Lowe:

[\[14508\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many (a) people and (b) boats have been prevented from crossing the English Channel by the French authorities since the start of UK payments for this purpose.

Dame Angela Eagle:

The UK began funding French operations to counter crossings of the Channel by migrants in small boats in January 2019. Since that time, over 5,000 boats carrying more than 115,000 persons have been prevented from crossing.

[Weekly summary of small boat arrivals and preventions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

■ Undocumented Migrants: Expenditure

Richard Tice:

[\[14776\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much was spent on (a) housing and (b) supporting individuals who entered the United Kingdom illegally in each of the last five years.

Dame Angela Eagle:

Overall asylum support costs are published in the Home Office's Annual Report and Accounts, which is available through the following link:

[Home Office annual reports and accounts - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Data for Financial Year for 2024-25 will be published following the end of the financial year and once the accounts have been laid before Parliament.

■ Undocumented Migrants: Vietnam

Sir John Hayes:

[\[14580\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has had recent discussions with her Vietnamese counterpart on illegal immigration into the UK.

Sir John Hayes:

[\[14581\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has had recent discussions with her Turkish counterpart on illegal immigration into the UK.

Dame Angela Eagle:

Home Office Ministers and officials are in regular communication with a wide range of international partner countries working together to tackle organised immigration crime.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION**■ Members' Constituency Work: Artificial Intelligence****Chi Onwurah:****[14618]**

To ask the hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent and Rhymney, representing the House of Commons Commission, what progress the Commission has made in making AI technology available to help hon. members in their constituency work.

Nick Smith:

The House Administration actively considers how AI can benefit Members. This consideration has a number of threads:

(1) Exploring the use of AI

Teams across Parliament are working together through Parliament's AI Working Group to consider how AI may be used in a Parliamentary context (in line with the [response provided on 17 October](#)). The intent is to work closely with Members to identify opportunities for the use of AI, including to support their constituency duties. The House Administration will work with Members to assess whether AI is viable for the opportunities that are identified.

(2) Guidance and learning for Members and their staff

AI is increasingly embedded into the services and digital tools we all use. The Parliamentary Digital Service is producing guidance to support Members and staff to use these new technologies safely. This guidance will be considered by the relevant governance bodies in coming weeks.

In addition, resources developed by the House of Commons Library for Members and their staff to learn more about AI are being promoted. PDS and the House of Commons Library have also developed an interactive seminar for Members and their staff to participate in. The first such seminar took place on 19 November as part of the New Parliament Fair and teaches Members what AI is, how to use it safely and how it can be applied to Members' work.

(3) Learning from other parliaments

Many other parliaments are exploring how AI may support their Members. We have ongoing engagement with them to identify potential uses and learn from others about how AI is being used to support Members in their parliamentary and constituency duties.

All Members will be invited to share ideas for where AI might be useful in supporting them, and the AI Working Group is preparing engagement plans with Members and their staff to assess what might be viable.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Affordable Housing: Social Services

Richard Burgon:

[\[14658\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether her Department is taking steps to help ensure that people working in the social care sector have access to social and affordable housing in proximity of their place of work and community networks; and what plans she has to increase the supply of affordable housing stock in areas of high demand.

Matthew Pennycook:

As set out in my answer to Question UIN [11383](#) on 31 October 2024, this government has committed to delivering the biggest increase in social and affordable housebuilding in a generation, including in areas of high demand.

Local authorities are responsible for designing and managing their own housing allocations policies to meet local need.

To ensure sufficient social and affordable housing is available for those working in the social care sector in proximity to their place of work and community networks, S.166A(6)(b) HA96 allows local authorities to set local lettings policies i.e., to allocate accommodation to people of a particular description such as people working in the care sector. Housing associations can apply a similar principle when allocating Affordable Rent homes.

■ Almshouses: Affordable Housing

Neil O'Brien:

[\[14671\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether she plans to amend the National Planning Policy Framework to allow almshouse charities that are not registered providers to receive Section 106 funds for the provision of affordable housing.

Matthew Pennycook:

I refer the Hon Member to the answer I gave to Question UIN [8305](#) on 18 October 2024.

■ Community Housing

James MacCleary:

[\[14838\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if she will support investment in (a) community-led developments and (b) co-housing.

Matthew Pennycook:

The government recognises that community-led housing delivers a wide range of benefits, including additional housing supply, empowering communities, achieving high quality design and strengthening the co-operative economy.

Our recent consultation on proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework specifically included proposals designed to strengthen support for community-led housing, including changes to the size limit on community-led exception sites and a broadening of the definition of organisations able to deliver community-led housing. The consultation closed on the 24 September and officials in my department are currently analysing responses with a view to publishing a government response before the end of the year.

I am committed to working with representatives of the sector to consider how the government may support the growth of community led housing over the long term and I recently met with the Chief Executive of the Community Land Trust Network and other stakeholders to that end.

■ **Community Relations: Departmental Coordination**

Dr Simon Opher:

[\[15488\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps her Department is taking to promote cross-departmental work to strengthen community cohesion.

Alex Norris:

The Government has made £15 million available to the places most severely affected by disorder through the Community Recovery Fund to support the immediate recovery. Officials from my department have also carried out an extensive engagement process with these places to understand and address the underlying causes of the unrest.

The disorder that affected communities across the UK following the Southport tragedy this summer has made clear that a new approach to community cohesion is urgently needed. This is a priority for the Government and I have stood up a cross-government Communities & Recovery Steering Group to oversee this work.

We are listening to communities across the country to understand the challenges they face and this will inform how this government works to empower communities and build greater cohesion.

■ **Homelessness**

James McMurdock:

[\[14876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if she will make an assessment of levels of local authority compliance with her Department's Homelessness code of guidance for local authorities, published on 22 February 2018, in each of the last five years.

Rushanara Ali:

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is responsible for setting the national framework for housing, including the legislation and Homelessness Code of Guidance to which councils must have regard.

Compliance with legislation, guidance, and the statutory homelessness duties rests with local councils. It is the responsibility of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman to investigate individual complaints and take action where they consider councils have not applied their duties correctly.

The Government recognises that homelessness levels are far too high and we will develop a long-term, cross government strategy to put us on track to end homelessness for good.

■ Housing

Rebecca Smith:

[\[14900\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment she has made of the implications for her Department's policies of the recommendations in the report entitled Homes for All published by the Church of England and the Nationwide Foundation in April 2024.

Matthew Pennycook:

As part of the process of developing and implementing housing and planning policy, the government engages with a wide range of experts and organisations. Our plans to tackle the housing crisis, including by building 1.5 million new homes in this Parliament and delivering the biggest increase in social and affordable housebuilding in a generation, will address several important points raised in the report in question. The government also intends to publish a long-term housing strategy and we will consider reports such as this one, in developing it.

■ Housing: Solar Power

Satvir Kaur:

[\[14851\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps she has taken to increase the number of solar panels on new housing developments.

Alex Norris:

The Government's approach to Building Regulations remains technology-neutral, to ensure housebuilders have the flexibility to choose the most appropriate and cost-effective solutions for their site. However, we appreciate the benefits of solar panels, including lower bills for households and greater security from fluctuations in electricity prices. That is why in the 2021 uplift to the Building Regulations the performance standards for new buildings were set at a level that means many new homes are already likely to be built with solar panels.

We are clear that rooftop solar, where appropriate, should play an important role as part of new standards to be introduced next year for new homes and buildings. These standards will set our new homes and buildings on a path that moves away from relying on volatile fossil fuels and ensures they are fit for a net zero future.

Furthermore, as part of our plans to triple solar capacity, we are consulting on extra

measures in the National Planning Policy Framework that highlight the importance of solar power to our clean energy ambitions.

■ Local Government Finance

James McMurdock: [\[14875\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what her planned timetable is for changes to the exceptional financial support framework for local authorities.

Jim McMahon:

On Monday 21 October, I wrote to all MPs to confirm that we will continue to operate a process to support councils in the most difficult positions. As I set out in that letter, while Government expects councils to make sure they are doing all they can locally to deliver for residents, this process will be collaborative and supportive of councils. We will treat all discussions in confidence, with respect and determination to find a solution together.

My letter also confirmed that we would not look to replicate conditions under the previous government's framework, that make borrowing more expensive where councils have no other choice.

■ National Landscapes

Freddie van Mierlo: [\[14870\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of increasing protections for (a) the Chilterns national landscape and (b) other national landscapes under the national planning policy framework.

Matthew Pennycook:

The government is committed to ensuring that our most important and cherished landscapes are appropriately protected so they can be enjoyed by future generations.

Planning policy is clear that planning policies and decisions should recognise the character and beauty of the countryside, and local authorities are expected to protect heritage assets which can include landscape and setting of listed buildings.

Only local authorities or the Secretary of State can give permission for development in, or affecting, a National Landscape (previously known as AONB). Local planning authorities must make sure that any proposals have regard for the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape.

The National Planning Policy Framework states that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Landscapes, and that the scale and extent of any development in these areas should be limited.

■ Planning: Floods

Blake Stephenson:

[\[14527\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if she will take steps to ensure that local planning authorities use the Environment Agency's forthcoming NaFRA2 data.

Matthew Pennycook:

National planning policy and guidance expects flood risk assessments to consider all sources of flooding, and to take the most up-to-date information into account, which will include the Environment Agency's forthcoming NaFRA2 data.

During the course of next year, the Environment Agency is expected to publish new national risk information for flooding and coastal erosion that will be used to inform these assessments.

■ Planning: Inspections

Amanda Hack:

[\[14754\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent steps her Department has taken to reduce backlogs of cases before the Planning Inspectorate.

Matthew Pennycook:

The Planning Inspectorate has been performing well across a number of key areas such as local plan examinations, nationally significant infrastructure project applications, s62a applications and planning appeals proceeding by hearings and inquiries. It is, for example:

- meeting all statutory timeframes for national infrastructure applications;
- increasingly deciding planning appeals by hearing and inquiry in around 26 weeks (the ministerial measure), having already cleared a backlog of casework; and
- beginning to decide enforcement appeals by hearing and inquiry in around 26 weeks (the ministerial measure) for the first time in many years, as it clears a long-standing backlog of casework.

The Inspectorate is implementing actions to maintain performance in these areas and to improve end-to-end times for other casework such as those cases decided after a written exchange of evidence. In the short term those actions are focused around increasing capacity by:

- increasing the available capacity for inspectors/other decision makers by recruiting more. The Inspectorate has significantly increased the number of inspectors it employs over the past 18 months and is on track to recruit additional inspectors later this year;
- using contract (non-salaried) inspectors to the full extent of their availability and expanding the range of casework they determine; and training inspectors to handle different casework to increase flexibility; and

- moving more inspectors onto enforcement written representations casework in Spring 2025 once the work on improving hearings performance has progressed further.

In addition, the Inspectorate has designed and developed a new digital Appeals Service currently in Beta phase. This new service improves the process for submitting appeals, including reducing the number of invalid appeals submitted. In turn, this reduces the number of validation checks required and will speed up the time taken to validate appeals. The new service has been expanded to cover all local planning authority areas. Later this year the existing website will be closed so that all new appeals are submitted via the new service.

JUSTICE

■ Courts: Fines

Rupert Lowe: [\[15371\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what proportion of payments of court fines were made by benefit payment deductions in each of the last ten years.

Heidi Alexander:

There is no central data available on the proportion of court fine payments made through benefit deduction payments. Gathering this information would incur disproportionate cost.

■ Criminal Injuries Compensation

Melanie Ward: [\[14842\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the average processing time for the Criminal Injury Compensation Scheme was in each of the last five years.

Alex Davies-Jones:

The Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA) is responsible for implementing the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme. CICA recognises that timely compensation can help victims in their recovery both practically and emotionally and is committed to deciding 40% of new applications within 6 months of receiving the application, and 70% within 12 months. CICA performance information is available in the CICA Annual Report and Accounts; the latest version can be found at [CICA Annual Report and Accounts 2023-24](#).

The following table shows the average number of days from an application being received until a decision is made. This information is taken from the latest period for which data is available which can be found here: [Statistics at CICA - Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

FINANCIAL YEAR	AVERAGE DAYS TO DECISION
2023-24	361

FINANCIAL YEAR	AVERAGE DAYS TO DECISION
2022-23	391
2021-22	386
2020-21	337
2019-20	363

■ Legal Aid Scheme: Social Security Benefits

Luke Akehurst:

[\[14768\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of legal aid provision in cases relating to disputes in the benefits system.

Heidi Alexander:

This Government inherited a legal aid system facing significant challenges. The Ministry of Justice has recently undertaken a lengthy, evidence-based, and wholesale review of the operation of civil legal aid across all eleven categories of civil legal aid, including welfare benefits, known as the Review of Civil Legal Aid (RoCLA). The Lord Chancellor will consider the provision of welfare benefits legal aid services, together with the overall provision of civil legal services, in light of the evidence that has been obtained through RoCLA and the Legal Aid Agency's own engagement with providers.

Under the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012, legal aid is in scope, subject to means and merits tests, for advice concerning welfare benefits-related appeals on a point of law in the Upper Tribunal, Court of Appeal or Supreme Court, and appeals on a point of law regarding a council tax reduction scheme in the High Court, Court of Appeal or Supreme Court. Where an issue falls outside the scope of legal aid, individuals can apply for Exceptional Case Funding (ECF), where there is a risk that their human rights may be breached. ECF applications are determined by the Legal Aid Agency (LAA) on an individual basis and are subject to a means and merits test.

There are currently 27 providers who offer legal aid services in relation to the Welfare Benefits category of legal aid operating out of 31 offices across England and Wales. The LAA monitors supply across its legal aid contracts on an ongoing basis and, where additional supply is needed, takes action within its operational powers to secure additional provision to ensure the continuity of legal aid-funded services.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE**■ Gender Identity Services for Children and Young People Independent Review****Nick Timothy:**[\[14804\]](#)

To ask the Leader of the House, pursuant to her Answer in Business Questions of 17 October 2024, Official Report, column 1000, whether she has asked the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to come to the House with an update on the Cass review.

Lucy Powell:

As the Hon. Member will know from my correspondence with him, following the Business Question on the 17th October 2024, I wrote to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on the 25th October and asked that the House be provided with an update on the Cass Review. I have raised this matter with the Department of Health and Social Care, and the Secretary of State is now actively considering the timing of this, such that it can be of most use to the House.

SCIENCE, INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY**■ Gender Based Violence****Sarah Champion:**[\[14637\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, if he will amend the Online Safety Act 2023 to include a statutory code of practice on gendered violence.

Feryal Clark:

It is a priority under the Online Safety Act for platforms to proactively tackle the most harmful illegal content, much of which disproportionately targets women and girls. This includes harassment, sexual exploitation, extreme pornography, and controlling or coercive behaviour.

Ofcom's codes of practice will set out how companies can comply with their duties, including how companies should tackle harms facing women and girls online.

In February 2025, Ofcom will also publish draft guidance for consultation on protecting and empowering women and girls.

■ Telecommunications: Outages**Caroline Voaden:**[\[14882\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, whether he has made a recent assessment of the potential merits of requiring all communications providers to issue automatic compensation for service outages.

Chris Bryant:

Consumers should expect high-quality, reliable services. Operators have statutory obligations to keep services available and take all appropriate and proportionate measures to prepare for and minimise any disruption or outages.

In 2019, Ofcom - the independent regulator - worked with telecoms operators to introduce a voluntary, automatic compensation scheme for domestic broadband. 10 internet service providers are signatories to the scheme and collectively cover over 90% of home broadband consumers.

We will continue to work with Ofcom to monitor the market to ensure that consumers are receiving reliable services and recourse for when things go wrong.

SCOTLAND

■ Bereavement Counselling: Scotland

Angus MacDonald:

[\[15363\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, whether his Department has had recent discussions with the Scottish Government on ensuring that bereaved families in Scotland are provided with a key worker to support them after the loss of a child.

Ian Murray:

The UK Government is committed to supporting those who have experienced the loss of a child through a range of reserved measures, including Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay and Leave.

My officials have regular discussions with their Scottish Government counterparts on a wide range of policy matters. Provision of social care for bereaved families is a devolved matter and my department stands ready to assist the Scottish Government to ensure this care is accessible to those who need it.

TRANSPORT

■ Active Travel: Infrastructure

Steve Race:

[\[14706\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much funding his Department plans to provide for active travel infrastructure in each of the next three financial years.

Simon Lightwood:

This Government announced an additional £100 million investment in cycling and walking infrastructure in 2025-26 at the Autumn budget. Final levels of funding for 2025-26 will be confirmed following completion of the Department for Transport's business planning process. Funding for the next two years will be a matter for the Spending Review.

■ Bus Services: Standards

Alex Mayer:

[\[14734\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether she has made an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a national standards for bus stops in England and Wales.

Simon Lightwood:

The design of bus stations and stops can have a significant impact on the ability and willingness of people to use bus services. The Department has provided advice on the provision of bus stops in Local Transport Note 1/24, Bus User Priority, and further guidance on accessible bus stop design in the Inclusive Mobility document.

It is the responsibility of local authorities to install and update facilities such as bus stops, and they should ensure that this reflects best practice in accessibility and safety, while being mindful of their duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Transport in Wales is a devolved issue. The Welsh Government is responsible for setting strategic transport policies and priorities.

Electric Vehicles**Julia Buckley:**[\[14749\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment she has made of the (a) adequacy of schemes offered by the Government to encourage more people to buy electric vehicles and (b) effectiveness of those schemes in helping the UK reach its net zero targets.

Lilian Greenwood:

This Government is committed to the transition to electric vehicles (EV) and is encouraging uptake through a range of taxation incentives and grants.

Drivers of zero emission vehicles (ZEVs) will continue to benefit from favourable tax rates, such as generous company car tax incentives, which have been set until March 2030. ZEVs remain exempt from vehicle excise duty (VED) until April 2025, after which they will still have preferential first year rates.

In addition, the Government has announced £120m for next financial year to support the purchase of new electric vans and manufacturing of wheelchair accessible vehicles.

The Government is also committed to accelerating the rollout of charging infrastructure so that everyone, no matter where they live or work, can make the transition to an EV. As of 1 November, there are over 71,000 publicly available charging devices in the UK, alongside 680,000 private chargepoints in England alone, supporting drivers to switch to EVs.

Large Goods Vehicles: Concrete**Alex Mayer:**[\[15302\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of revising the permitted weight limits on volumetric concrete mixers.

Lilian Greenwood:

The Department ran a call for evidence from October to December 2023 seeking views on three potential options on weight limits for volumetric concrete mixers (VCMs). Any potential changes to the current policy position on VCM weight limits will

need to consider the implications for road safety, infrastructure, the environment, and maintaining fair competition in the market. The Department is currently reviewing the outcomes and will publish its findings in due course.

Alex Mayer:

[\[15313\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of permitted weight limits on volumetric concrete mixers on the financial sustainability of the haulage industry.

Lilian Greenwood:

The Department ran a call for evidence from October to December 2023 seeking views on three potential options on weight limits for volumetric concrete mixers (VCMs). Any potential changes to the current policy position on VCM weight limits will need to consider the implications for maintaining fair competition in the market. No formal impact assessment was produced, as the costs implied were estimated to be below the threshold at which this is considered proportionate. The Department is currently reviewing the outcomes and will publish its findings in due course.

Alex Mayer:

[\[15314\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of permitted weight limits on volumetric concrete mixers on trends in the levels of carbon emissions.

Lilian Greenwood:

The Department ran a call for evidence from October to December 2023 seeking views on three potential options on weight limits for Volumetric Concrete Mixers (VCMs). Evidence was provided to the Department on both the pros and cons of allowing VCMs to continue to operate at higher weights. The Department has reviewed the evidence provided and will publish its findings in due course. Any potential changes to the current policy position on VCM weight limits will need to consider the implications for road safety, infrastructure, the environment, and maintaining fair competition in the market.

As part of its consideration of the evidence, the Department has assessed the potential environmental impacts in accordance with the Environment Act 2021 which requires Ministers of the Crown to have 'due regard' to the environmental principles policy statement when making policy.

■ Parking Offences

Grahame Morris:

[\[15420\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what guidance her Department issues on the powers available to (a) local authorities and (b) the police to (i) remove and (ii) seize a vehicle parked on a public highway that does not have a valid MOT.

Lilian Greenwood:

The Department for Transport does not issue such guidance. The police can check if a vehicle has a valid MOT by using Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR)

cameras and conducting random stops, and they are able to seize a vehicle without a valid MOT. Local authorities already have parking enforcement powers and can remove vehicles parked illegally, and many also enable the public to report vehicles without valid MOTs online.

Grahame Morris:

[15421]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what guidance her Department issues on the powers available to (a) local authorities and (b) the police to (i) remove and (ii) seize a vehicle parked on a public highway that does not have valid insurance.

Lilian Greenwood:

The Government takes uninsured driving very seriously and is determined to see a reduction in this offence. Since 2005, the police have had the power to seize vehicles that are being driven without insurance and as of 2020, two million vehicles had been seized in Great Britain. We do not currently issue guidance on vehicle seizure for vehicles without insurance.

■ Railways

Alex Mayer:

[14733]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Network Rail regions will be redrawn.

Simon Lightwood:

There are no plans to change Network Rail's existing structures.

We expect to introduce the legislation to create Great British Railways (GBR) and enable transformation of the rail sector later in this parliamentary session.

GBR will be a new organisation taking on Network Rail's existing functions and train operating companies, with a new culture dedicated single-mindedly to delivering for passengers, freight customers and taxpayers. Decisions on GBR's management structures will be made in due course.

■ Railways: Access

Blake Stephenson:

[14709]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether she has had discussions with Network Rail on accelerating the delivery of Access for All schemes.

Simon Lightwood:

The Rail Minister has had several meetings with Network Rail about improving delivery of access for all and can report that 32 stations are due to complete this financial year, the most since the programme was launched in 2006.

■ Railways: Fares

Tom Hayes:

[\[14765\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of creating a commuter pass similar to the Swiss Half Fare card that allows individuals to pay an upfront premium for a yearly pass and receive half price rail travel.

Simon Lightwood:

There are many Railcards that provide eligible passengers a one third discount off the cost of most rail fares. Some Railcards in this suite can be used during the morning peak, although the 16-25, 26-30 and Veterans' Railcards have a £12 minimum fare before 10:00 am.

Tom Hayes:

[\[14767\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if she will take legislative steps to limit the increase in the cost of single journey rail tickets relative to return tickets.

Simon Lightwood:

Regulated fares make up around 45 per cent of rail fares and include commuter fares, such as season ticket and shorter-distance peak return, alongside longer-distance off-peak returns to ensure an affordable, walk-up option is available for leisure passengers. Where there are no return fares, the single fare is regulated.

We have been exploring options to improve flexibility for passengers. This has included working with London North Eastern Railway (LNER) to trial switching the regulated fare from the return fare to the single fare. This has reduced the price of many single fares on LNER so that all singles are now priced at around half the cost of the old return fare. The impact of this trial is being evaluated and will be published in due course. We will consider the evaluation carefully before taking further decisions.

■ Railways: Tickets

Tom Hayes:

[\[14766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if she will take steps to cap the administration fee charged by third party train ticket websites.

Simon Lightwood:

Third-party retailers have the option to charge a booking fee on their website, though not all of them do. Passengers can book rail tickets without a booking fee by purchasing direct from one of the train operating company websites/apps.

Last year the Office of Rail and Road published its 'Review of the Transparency of Fees Charged when Purchasing Rail Tickets Online'. We disseminated this report to all rail ticket retailers and asked them to ensure consumers understand the fees that will be charged and can make informed purchasing decisions.

The maximum administration fees that can be charged for refunds was reduced from £10 to £5 earlier this year, as per the National Rail Conditions of Travel. This doesn't apply to Advance tickets, which are normally non-refundable, nor to refunds on Season Tickets.

■ Rented Housing: Charging Points

Julia Buckley: [\[14750\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of granting a presumptive right to install electric vehicle chargers at their own cost to people living in rented accommodation.

Lilian Greenwood:

The Government already provides support for people living in rented accommodation to install chargepoints, through its Electric Vehicle Chargepoint Grant. This provides up to £350 toward the costs of purchasing and installing an electric vehicle chargepoint. We will continue to review whether further steps are needed.

■ Roads: Chichester

Jess Brown-Fuller: [\[15701\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much funding her Department has provided for the repair of potholes in Chichester constituency.

Lilian Greenwood:

The Government takes the condition of local roads very seriously and is committed to maintaining and renewing the local highway network. West Sussex County Council is the local highway authority for the Chichester constituency, and it is therefore responsible for the condition of its local network. In the current financial year the Department has provided a little over £19 million of highway maintenance funding to West Sussex County Council.

This Government has a commitment to enable local highway authorities in England to fix up to a million more potholes a year. At Budget 2024, the Chancellor announced an extra £500 million for local highway maintenance for the 2025/26 financial year, an increase of nearly 50% compared to the current financial year exceeding this Government's manifesto commitment on repairing local roads. The Government will confirm funding allocations to English local highway authorities in due course.

TREASURY

■ Agriculture: Inheritance Tax

Mike Amesbury: [\[14640\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for what reason Agricultural Property Relief will be reduced by 50% for farms worth more than £1 million.

James Murray:

At Autumn Budget 2024, the Government took a number of difficult but necessary decisions on tax, welfare, and spending to restore economic stability, fix the public finances, and support public services.

The Government published information about the reforms to agricultural property relief and business property relief at

www.gov.uk/government/publications/agricultural-property-relief-and-business-property-relief-reforms, and further explanatory information at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/what-are-the-changes-to-agricultural-property-relief>.

The government believes this approach strikes the right balance between protecting family farms and fixing the public finances in a fair way. The government's commitment to farmers and the vital role they play in feeding our nation remains steadfast.

Richard Tice:**[14772]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of the Autumn Budget 2024 on the (a) profitability and (b) sustainability of farming businesses.

James Murray:

The Government published information about the reforms to agricultural property relief and business property relief at

www.gov.uk/government/publications/agricultural-property-relief-and-business-property-relief-reforms, and further explanatory information at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/what-are-the-changes-to-agricultural-property-relief>.

In accordance with standard practice, a tax information and impact note will be published alongside the draft legislation before the relevant Finance Bill.

Freddie van Mierlo:**[14860]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of proposed business property relief changes on small family businesses.

James Murray:

At Autumn Budget 2024, the Government took a number of difficult but necessary decisions on tax, welfare, and spending to restore economic stability, fix the public finances, and support public services.

The Government published information about the reforms to agricultural property relief and business property relief at

www.gov.uk/government/publications/agricultural-property-relief-and-business-property-relief-reforms.

In accordance with standard practice, a tax information and impact note will be published alongside the draft legislation before the relevant Finance Bill.

James McMurdock:

[14881]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate she has made of the number of farms that will be affected by changes to agricultural property relief in Essex in each of the next five years.

James Murray:

I refer the Honourable Member to the PQ referenced 12861 published on 15th November 2024 at <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-11-05/12861>.

The Chancellor also recently wrote to the Chair of the Treasury Select Committee, and her letter may be of interest:

<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/45691/documents/226235/default/>.

David Davis:

[14908]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether her Department plans to publish risk assessments of proposed changes to (a) Agricultural Property Relief and (b) Business Property Relief.

James Murray:

At Autumn Budget 2024, the Government took a number of difficult but necessary decisions on tax, welfare, and spending to restore economic stability, fix the public finances, and support public services.

The Government published information about the reforms to agricultural property relief and business property relief at

www.gov.uk/government/publications/agricultural-property-relief-and-business-property-relief-reforms/summary-of-reforms-to-agricultural-property-relief-and-business-property-relief. Further explanatory information is also set out at www.gov.uk/government/news/what-are-the-changes-to-agricultural-property-relief.

In accordance with standard practice, a tax information and impact note will be published alongside the draft legislation before the relevant Finance Bill.

■ Bank Services

Andrew Cooper:

[15091]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent steps she has taken to help ensure people in (a) Mid Cheshire constituency, (b) Cheshire and (c) England have access to banking services.

Tulip Siddiq:

The Government understands the importance of face-to-face banking to communities in Cheshire and across the country and is committed to championing sufficient access for all as a priority. This is why the Government is working closely with industry to roll out 350 banking hubs across the UK. The UK banking sector has committed to deliver these hubs by the end of this parliament. Over 80 banking hubs are already open.

The specific location of these hubs is determined independently by LINK, the operator of the UK's largest ATM network. LINK considers certain criteria, such as whether another bank branch remains nearby, the local population, the number of cash-accepting businesses and the financial vulnerability of the community.

Alternative options to access everyday banking services can be via telephone banking, through digital means such as mobile or online banking and via the Post Office. The Post Office Banking Framework allows personal and business customers to withdraw and deposit cash, check their balance, pay bills and cash cheques at 11,500 Post Office branches across the UK.

■ Business Rates: Tax Allowances

Kevin Hollinrake:

[\[15445\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Autumn Budget 2024, HC 295, what the revenue effect will be of the combination from 2026-27 of the ending of 75% retail, hospitality and leisure (RHL) rate relief, the new RHL lower multiplier, and the higher £50,000+ multiplier.

James Murray:

As set out at Budget, the government intends to introduce permanently lower tax rates for high-street retail, hospitality, and leisure (RHL) properties from 2026-27. However, this plan to provide support for the high street must be sustainable. That is why we intend to apply a higher rate from 2026-27 on the most valuable properties - those with a Rateable Value of £500,000 and above.

The Government will confirm the rates for the new multipliers at Budget 2025, taking account of the outcomes of the 2026 revaluation as well as the broader economic and fiscal context. As set out at Budget, the Government intends for the lower multipliers to be funded by the new higher multiplier.

Ahead of these changes being made, we have prevented the cliff-edge of RHL relief ending in April 2025 by extending it for one year (2025-26) at 40 per cent up to a cash cap of £110,000 per business.

■ Business: Finance

Tom Hayes:

[\[15132\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if she will make it her policy to make localised funding available to support businesses to help local economies.

Darren Jones:

Sustained economic growth is the only route to improving the prosperity of our country and the living standards of working people, and ensuring growth is realised everywhere across the UK is key to the government's Growth Mission.

The government will therefore work with Mayors and local leaders, giving them to the tools they need to boost their economies and drive local growth, including supporting businesses.

The government will also set out its long-term vision for local growth at the multi-year spending review in the Spring, moving away from the short-termist, competitive approach of the past, to better support local leaders to drive growth in the areas that need it most. The government will also set out more detail on its strategy for regional growth alongside, and integrated with, plans for infrastructure, investment, and the Industrial Strategy.

■ Employers' Contributions: Charities

Wera Hobhouse:

[\[14689\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of changes made to National Insurance contributions at the Autumn Budget 2024 on not-for-profit social care providers.

James Murray:

The Budget will provide support for government departments and other public sector employers for additional Employer NICs costs. Private sector firms or charities, including social care providers, that are contracted by central or local government will not be exempt from these changes.

This is consistent with the approach to previous Employer NICs changes, as was the case with the previous government's Health and Social Care Levy.

The government considered the cost pressures facing adult social care and wider local government spending as part of the Spending Review process.

The government is providing a real-terms uplift to core local government spending power of around 3.2% which includes £1.3bn of new grant funding for 2025-26 – at least £600 million of which is new grant funding to support social care.

The government also provides support for charities, including hospices, via our tax regime, which is among the most generous of anywhere in the world, with tax reliefs for charities and their donors, worth just over £6 billion for the tax year to April 2024.

Nick Timothy:

[\[14806\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment she has made of the impact of increasing employer's National Insurance contributions on charities in (a) the East of England and (b) the rest of the UK.

James Murray:

The Government recognises the important role charities play in our society, and has made it a priority to reset the relationship with civil society by developing a Civil Society Covenant.

To repair the public finances and help raise the revenue required to increase funding for public services, the government has taken the difficult decision to increase employer National Insurance.

The Government recognises the need to protect the smallest businesses and charities, which is why we have more than doubled the Employment Allowance to

£10,500, meaning more than half of employers with NICs liabilities either gain or see no change next year. Charities will still be able to claim employer NICs reliefs including those for under 21s and under 25 apprentices, where eligible.

More broadly, within the tax system, we provide support to charities through a range of reliefs and exemptions, including reliefs for charitable giving, with more than £6 billion in charitable reliefs provided to charities, CASCs and their donors in 2023 to 2024.

■ Employers' Contributions: Devolution

John Glen:

[\[14624\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the answer of 11 November 2024 to Question 12552 on Employers' Contributions: Hospices, what definition of the public sector her Department plans to use to decide whether to allocate funding for the cost of higher National Insurance; and how funding will be allocated to devolved public bodies in (a) Wales, (b) Scotland and (c) Northern Ireland.

Darren Jones:

The UK Government will provide support for departments and other public sector employers for additional employer National Insurance contributions costs. This funding will be allocated to UK Government departments, with the Barnett formula applying in the usual way for the devolved governments.

For the purposes of defining support for Employer NICs costs, the Government has used the Office for National Statistics (ONS) classification of the public sector boundary. This is the usual approach for classification of the public sector boundary, for example in relation to public sector spending, public sector borrowing and public sector debt.

This funding will be in addition to the devolved governments' record Spending Review settlements for 2025-26, which are the largest in real terms of any settlements since devolution.

■ Employers' Contributions: Refuges

John Glen:

[\[14601\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if she will reimburse women's domestic violence refuges from the higher cost of employers national insurance contributions.

James Murray:

To repair the public finances and help raise the revenue required to increase funding for public services, the government has taken the difficult decision to increase employer National Insurance.

The Government recognises the need to protect the smallest businesses and charities, which is why we have more than doubled the Employment Allowance to £10,500, meaning more than half of employers with NICs liabilities either gain or see

no change next year. Charities will still be able to claim employer NICs reliefs including those for under 21s and under 25 apprentices, where eligible.

■ **Employers' Contributions: Social Services**

John Glen: [\[14626\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 11 November 2024 to Question 12848, on Employers' Contributions: GP's, what (a) assessment she has made of the impact of changes to National Insurance contributions on social care providers and (b) estimate she has made of how much and what proportion of local authorities' social care budgets will be spent on increases to social care costs.

Darren Jones:

The government considered the cost pressures facing adult social care and wider local government spending as part of the Spending Review process.

The government is providing a real-terms uplift to core local government spending power of around 3.2% which includes £1.3bn of new grant funding for 2025-26 – at least £600 million of which is new grant funding to support social care.

■ **Environmental Protection: Taxation**

Julia Buckley: [\[14751\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if she will make an assessment of the potential (a) impact of green levies on electricity bills on electric vehicle drivers who charge their vehicles at home and (b) merits of imposing green levies on gas only.

James Murray:

The government keeps all taxes, including those levied through energy bills, under review.

■ **Government Departments: Cost Effectiveness**

John Glen: [\[14629\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 4 October 2024 to Question 4696 on Government Department: Cost Effectiveness, if she will list each efficiency saving and its value for the (a) 2024-25 and (b) 2025-26 financial years.

Darren Jones:

In July the Government published a list of immediate savings for both 2024-25 and 2025-26 within the Fixing the foundations: public spending audit 2024-25. These savings included reducing spending on consultancy, administration budgets, communications, and public sector estates.

At the recent Spending Review for 2025-26 the government set a 2% target for efficiency, productivity and savings for all departments. Departments are responsible for managing their budgets and delivering efficiency savings. Departments are not currently mandated to publish their efficiency savings.

The Government will set out its further plans on efficiencies in the multi-year Spending Review that will conclude Spring 2025.

■ Inheritance Tax

John Glen:

[\[14600\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if she will make an estimate of the number of estates that will be eligible to pay inheritance tax for each year till 2028.

James Murray:

The OBR has published Table 3.13 as a part of the detailed forecast tables from the October 2024 Economic and fiscal outlook at <https://obr.uk/download/october-2024-economic-and-fiscal-outlook-detailed-forecast-tables-receipts/?tmstv=1732014425>.

Table 3.13 has the estimated outturn of the number of deaths subject to inheritance tax for 2022-23 and 2023-24, and the forecasted number of deaths subject to inheritance tax for 2024-25 up until 2029-30. A simplified version of the table is below which has the number of estates that will be eligible to pay inheritance tax till 2028.

	ESTIMATED		FORECAST					
	OUTTURN							
	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
Number of deaths subject to inheritance tax	35,000	33,300	37,700	40,100	43,900	57,600	62,300	66,600

■ Labour Force Survey

Yuan Yang:

[\[15396\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 4 November 2024 to Question 11774 on Labour Force Survey, when her Department plans to use Office for National Statistics Transformed Labour Force Survey data to inform its policies.

Yuan Yang:

[\[15397\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 4 November 2024 to Question 11774 on Labour Force Survey, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of the designation of Labour Force Survey data as official statistics in development on her Department's policy-making.

Darren Jones:

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) has observed falling response rates, resulting in increased volatility in labour market data [1]. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is undertaking work to address these quality issues and continuing to develop the Transformed Labour Force Survey (TLFS) as the long-term solution for collecting

labour market data. In July 2024, the ONS have provided the latest update on its plans for labour market transformation [2].

While these improvements are underway, LFS estimates are currently designated as 'official statistics in development', and the ONS advise caution when interpreting changes in headline LFS rates.

In line with ONS recommendations [3], LFS estimates are used alongside a number of other ONS labour market indicators, including Workforce Jobs (WFJ), Claimant Count data, and Pay As You Earn (PAYE) Real Time Information (RTI), to support policy-making.

The ONS' ambition for the TLFS is to allow a more adaptive and responsive survey to meet user needs, which will improve the quality of the labour market statistics [4] that the Department uses to support the development of policy.

[1] [LFS performance and quality monitoring report: July to September 2024](#)

[2] [Labour market transformation – update on progress and plans - Office for National Statistics](#)

[3]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/uklabourmarket/november2024>

[4] [Labour market transformation – update on progress and plans - Office for National Statistics](#)

■ National Income

Rupert Lowe:

[15140]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 19 November 2024 to Question 13562 on National Income, if she will make an assessment of the potential impact of immigration numbers on recent trends in the rate of (a) economy growth and (b) GDP per capita.

Tulip Siddiq:

The impact of migration on GDP and GDP per capita will depend, among other factors, on the age, education, skill level, and participation rate of migrants, as well as the investment response of businesses.

The latest data indicates that net migration has fallen from a peak of 764,000 in the year ending December 2022 to 685,000 in the year ending December 2023.

The independent OBR make a net migration forecast to underpin their economic and fiscal forecasts.

■ National Insurance: Proof of Identity

Alex Easton: [\[14883\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if her Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of adding a photograph to National Insurance cards issued at the age of 16 to provide photographic identification.

James Murray:

HMRC is responsible for issuing National Insurance Numbers (NINos) to the children of people receiving Child Benefit and Tax-Free Childcare . As a young person approaches age 16, HMRC informs them of their NINo via a letter. Cards have not been sent since 2011. The NINo is an internal reference number to support the administration of tax and social security; not proof of identity.

■ Public Sector: Pensions

Dr Caroline Johnson: [\[R\] \[15278\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate her Department has made of the Government's financial liability for public sector defined benefit pensions in each of the next ten years.

Darren Jones:

The total liability for public service pensions stands at around £3 trillion, as per HM Treasury's most recent Whole of Government Accounts report of 2021-22.

This includes the unfunded public service pension liabilities of £2.6 trillion and the liabilities of the funded schemes, such as the Local Government Pension Scheme, of £449 billion.

The Office for Budget Responsibility publishes forecasts of the cashflows of unfunded public service pension schemes and changes in public sector pension liabilities in their Economic and Fiscal Outlook (EFO) reports and supporting documents

■ Railways: Pay

John Glen: [\[14630\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 22 October 2024 to Question 8130 on Public Sector: Pay, what the gross cost was of the pay mandates for rail staff.

Darren Jones:

Indicative DfT analysis estimates that the pay award mandates issued since July 2024 for rail staff could cost approximately £135m in FY 24/25. These estimates reflect the cost above prior TOC and Network Rail budgets. Rail strikes under the last government have cost the taxpayer £850m since July 2022.

■ Sovereign Grant

Ian Byrne:

[\[14798\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of ending the Sovereign Grant and redirecting those funds to help tackle increases in the cost-of-living for low income households.

Darren Jones:

Under the Sovereign Grant Act 2011, the Sovereign Grant is determined in accordance with a formula. That formula operates with a reference to a percentage of The Crown Estate's profits two financial years previously. The percentage is currently set at 12 per cent. In exchange for the Sovereign Grant, the Monarch surrenders the revenue from The Crown Estate to the government – more than £4 billion over the last ten years.

Regarding support for low-income families, the government is announcing measures to support households who face the greatest hardships. This package of measures will improve economic security and resilience for those who need it most.

At Autumn Budget 2024, the Government announced the Fair Repayment Rate which lowers the cap on deductions in Universal Credit to 15 per cent of the standard allowance from April 2025. This will benefit 1.2 million households, with families expected to be better off by around £420 a year on average. This measure supports the government's ambition to tackle child poverty – with 700,000 of the poorest families with children benefitting as a result of this change.

In addition, the Government will provide £1 billion (including Barnett impact) to extend the Household Support Fund in England, and Discretionary Housing Payments in England and Wales. This will help individuals and families facing the greatest hardship, including supporting them with the cost of essentials such as food, energy and housing. This builds on the previous investment of £500 million (including Barnett impact) to extend the Household Support Fund to 31 March 2025.

■ Wines: Excise Duties

Marie Goldman:

[\[14800\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if she will make an assessment of the potential impact of proposed changes to alcohol duty on the wine industry.

James Murray:

At the recent Budget, the Chancellor announced that she would uprate alcohol duty in line with RPI inflation on 1 February 2025, except on qualifying draught products.

This decision weighed the impacts on businesses, cost-of-living pressures on people who drink moderately and responsibly, and the public health case for higher duties to tackle increasing alcohol-related deaths, as well as economic inactivity.

A Tax Information and Impact Note was published alongside this Budget announcement. This is available here: [Alcohol Duty uprating - GOV.UK](#)

The Budget also confirmed that the current temporary wine easement will end as planned from 1 February 2025. By this time, the wine industry will have had over two years to adapt to the strength-based alcohol duty system. The summary of impacts from the alcohol duty reforms announced at Spring Budget 2023, including the wine easement, can be found here: [Alcohol Duty Reforms - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/alcohol-duty-reforms)

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Access to Work Programme

Claire Hazelgrove: [\[14879\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to ensure that applicants' wellbeing is considered when undergoing an Access to Work assessment.

Alison McGovern:

Access to Work applications are reviewed by Case Managers who work with customers to understand what barriers they may be experiencing within the workplace in relation to their health condition or disability. Staff take part in training events that provide them with information on a range of disabilities and health conditions so that they can better understand the challenges experienced by applicants.

When required, staff will work with specialist teams that help to identify customers who are vulnerable or have complex needs who require more advanced support.

■ Child Maintenance Service

Neil Duncan-Jordan: [\[14866\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department plans to review the customer relations services of the Child Maintenance Service.

Andrew Western:

The Child Maintenance Service (CMS) continually reviews the service it provides to ensure it best meets the needs of its customers.

The aim of CMS is to create a modern, accessible service through our digital transformation and Service Modernisation programmes, allowing customers to have greater choice of how and when they contact us.

CMS regularly gathers feedback from customers through the Customer Experience Survey to understand their experiences. This insight is then used to inform ways to review and improve our service.

■ English Language: Education

Rupert Lowe: [\[14785\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of people who took an English for Speakers of Other Languages class claimed Universal

Credit in the last 12 months; and what the cost to the public purse was of the provision of those classes in the same period.

Sir Stephen Timms:

The information requested is not held by the Department for Work and Pensions. English for Speakers of Other Languages and other skills data is held by Department for Education for England only. Devolved administrations will hold data on participants on ESOL courses.

■ **Housing: Asylum**

Bell Ribeiro-Addy: [\[15526\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will amend guidance on homelessness hostel exemption to recognise asylum accommodation as an exemption from the shared accommodation rate.

Sir Stephen Timms:

We are aware of the challenge some people face in finding shared accommodation, and we are working across government to find appropriate solutions including engaging with the newly formed Inter-Ministerial Group on tackling homelessness and rough sleeping.

The Shared Accommodation Rate (SAR) of the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) applies to those claiming Housing Benefit or Universal Credit who are under 35 years of age, living on their own, and renting privately. These individuals will be entitled to the SAR regardless of the size of property they rent.

There are exemptions from the SAR for those who would find it difficult to share accommodation. The exemptions are not designed to tackle supply challenges and therefore we are not considering an exemption for those leaving asylum accommodation. Exempt individuals can claim the higher one-bedroom LHA rate, and these include former residents of homeless hostels and victims of modern slavery.

The homeless hostel exemption was introduced in 2012 to support former rough sleepers following the increase in the SAR from age 25 to 35. The exemption supports homeless people and former rough sleepers to find suitable, stable move on accommodation after receiving appropriate care, supervision and support for at least 3 months within a hostel for homeless people.

■ **Social Security Benefits: Disability**

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[15225\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of the accessibility of the assessment process for (a) Personal Independence Payments and (b) other disability benefits for people with (i) brain injury and (ii) neurological conditions.

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[15226\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the equality of the consideration given in the assessment process for (a) Personal Independence Payments and (b) other disability benefits to (i) neurological, (ii) physical and (iii) psychological conditions.

Sir Stephen Timms:

We take our responsibility to ensure all individuals have access to our services without disadvantage, very seriously. We have a range of provisions in place to ensure assessments are accessible to all individuals, including those with brain injury and neurological conditions, in line with the standards under the Equality Act 2010.

Health assessments are designed to treat all individuals with health conditions and impairments fairly. The assessment criteria take account of the impact of all impairments on an individual's ability to carry out a broad range of everyday activities.

As part of the functional health assessment process, the feasibility of a paper-based assessment will always be considered in the first instance for all cases. Health professionals (HPs) may contact GPs, any named specialist medical professionals or the claimant if they need more information to undertake a paper-based review. In the circumstances that a paper-based review is not possible the claimant will be invited to an assessment. Before an invitation to assessment is sent, consideration will be given to claimants who need a specific assessment channel due to their health condition or circumstances.

Companions are encouraged to attend and can play an active role during the assessment. This is helpful for claimants with mental, cognitive, or intellectual impairments who may not be able to provide an accurate account of their condition, due to a lack of understanding or unrealistic expectations of their ability. Companions can join the telephony assessment, as they would have for a face-to-face assessment. All assessment suppliers have introduced the capacity for four-way calls for assessments. This means the claimant and the HP can be joined by a companion or advocate as well as an interpreter if required. This gives claimants the opportunity to have the appropriate support during a remote assessment.

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

EDUCATION

■ Pupils: Per Capita Costs

Laurence Turner:

[\[759\]](#)

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

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 26 July 2024. The correct answer should have been:

Catherine McKinnell:

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

For Birmingham, the West Midlands and England, the figures represent the funding provided through the schools block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). All of the figures in table one exclude growth funding but include premises and additional funding from grants.

The DSG is allocated at local authority level, and as such the equivalent figures are not available for Birmingham Northfield constituency. The constituency level data for Birmingham Northfield is therefore instead calculated based on the notional schools national funding formula (NFF) allocations for all mainstream schools in the constituency. The figures in table two are not comparable to those in table one, not only because DSG funding cannot be aggregated down to constituency level, but also because the context of the funding figures are not the same. The figures in table two do not include the money that schools in the Birmingham Northfield constituency have received through additional grants, such as the Schools Supplementary Grant (SSG) and the Mainstream Schools Additional Grant (MSAG), therefore making the constituency-level funding appear to rise slower than that of the others presented.

Table one

YEAR	DSG SCHOOLS BLOCK PER-PUPIL FUNDING		
	Birmingham	West Midlands	England
2020-21	£5,162	£4,823	£4,845
2021-22	£5,518	£5,198	£5,212 £5,228
2022-23	£5,830	£5,506	£5,534
2023-24	£6,144	£5,815	£5,838
2024-25	£6,244	£5,931	£5,957

Table two

NFF SCHOOLS BLOCK PER-PUPIL FUNDING *

Year	Birmingham Northfield constituency
2020-21	£5,429
2021-22	£5,562
2022-23	£5,707
2023-24	£5,991
2024-25	£6,304

* The allocations that schools within a constituency actually receive are determined by the local funding formula in their area.

■ Schools: Finance

Mark Ferguson:

[\[3283\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the average funding per pupil was in mainstream schools in (a) Gateshead Central and Whickham constituency, (b) the North East Combined Authority Area and (c) England in each of the last five years.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 9 September 2024. The correct answer should have been:

Catherine McKinnell:

The table below sets out funding statistics for the North East and England in each of the last five years.

The figures represent the funding provided through the schools block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). All of the figures in the table exclude growth funding but include premises. The figures do not include the additional grant funding that schools across the country have received to support pay and pensions increases in 2024/25.

The DSG is allocated at local authority level and, as such, the equivalent figures are not available for Gateshead Central and Whickham constituency. The allocations that schools within a constituency receive are determined by the local funding formula in their area.

The table below provides average per-pupil funding for the last five years, from the 2020/21 to 2024/25 financial years:

Year	DSG SCHOOLS BLOCK PER-PUPIL FUNDING	
	North East *	England
2020/21	£4,828	£5,055 £4,845
2021/22	£5,220	£5,212 £5,228
2022/23	£5,538	£5,534
2023/24	£5,869	£5,838
2024/25	£5,993	£5,957

* The data the department holds for the North East is for the North East region, as opposed to the North East Combined Authority Area.

Anneliese Midgley:

[3294]

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

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 4 September 2024. The correct answer should have been:

Catherine McKinnell:

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

The department cannot provide comparable funding data for each of the last 10 years due to the changes in the funding system since that time. The scope of the per pupil funding before and after 2018/19 are not directly comparable. In particular, funding for the central services provided by local authorities was split out from the schools block funding in 2018/19, and instead funded separately through the central school services block from that year onwards.

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

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

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

Table one

YEAR	DSG SCHOOLS BLOCK PER PUPIL FUNDING *		
	Knowsley local authority	North West	England
2020/21	£5,382	£4,838	£5,055 £4,845
2021/22	£5,752	£5,221	£5,212 £5,228
2022/23	£6,082	£5,524	£5,534
2023/24	£6,465	£5,835	£5,838
2024/25	£6,651	£5,962	£5,957

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

Table two

NFF SCHOOLS BLOCK PER PUPIL FUNDING **	
Year	Knowsley constituency
2020/21	£5,619
2021/22	£5,760
2022/23	£5,932
2023/24	£6,272
2024/25	£6,867

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

Andrew Lewin:

[3853]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the average funding per pupil was in mainstream schools in (a) Welwyn Hatfield constituency, (b) Hertfordshire and (c) England in over the past five academic years.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 10 September 2024. The correct answer should have been:

Catherine McKinnell:

The tables below set out funding statistics for Welwyn Hatfield constituency, Hertfordshire and England in each of the last five years. The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding cycle is on a financial year basis, rather than an academic one, so this is what has been provided in this answer.

For Hertfordshire and England, the figures represent the funding provided through the schools block of the DSG. The figures in table one include premises funding but exclude falling rolls and growth funding (funding for local authorities to support schools with significant increases or decreases in pupil numbers).

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

The tables below provide average per-pupil funding for the last five years, 2020/21 to 2024/25:

Table one

YEAR	DSG SCHOOLS BLOCK PER-PUPIL FUNDING *	
	Hertfordshire	England
2020/21	£4,642	£5,055 £4,845
2021/22	£5,024	£5,212 £5,228
2022/23	£5,330	£5,534
2023/24	£5,634	£5,838
2024/25	£5,764	£5,957

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

Table two

NFF SCHOOLS BLOCK PER-PUPIL FUNDING *	
Year	Welwyn Hatfield
2020/21	£4,806

NFF SCHOOLS BLOCK PER-PUPIL FUNDING *

2021/22	£4,981
2022/23	£5,150
2023/24	£5,445
2024/25	£5,755

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

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**Health Services: Information****Gill Furniss:**[\[14676\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to publish the sixth stage of the Accessible Information Standard.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 25 November 2024. The correct answer should have been:

Stephen Kinnock:

Under the Equality Act 2010, health and social care organisations must make reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled people are not disadvantaged. Since 2016, all National Health Service organisations and publicly funded social care providers are required to meet the Accessible Information Standard (AIS), to meet the communication needs of patients and carers with a disability, impairment, or sensory loss, including deaf people.

NHS England has undertaken a review of the AIS. The review considered its effectiveness, how it is implemented and enforced in practice, and identified recommendations for improvement.

The revised standard is being reviewed with a view to publication, in the meantime NHS England will continue work to support implementation with awareness raising, communication and engagement and a review of the current e-learning modules on the AIS. The intention is to ensure by several routes that staff and organisations in the NHS are aware of the current standard implemented in 2016 and the importance of meeting the needs of disabled people using services.

A revised Accessible Information Standard (AIS) is being reviewed with a view to publication, and will include the sixth stage. The sixth stage requires consistent and regular reviews of people's information and communication

needs in patient or service user records on clinical management or administration systems.

In the meantime, NHS England is continuing to work to support implementation of the AIS with awareness raising, communication and engagement, and a review of the current e-learning modules on the AIS. The intention is to ensure that staff and organisations in the National Health Service are aware of the AIS and the importance of meeting the information and communication needs of disabled people using these services.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Consultation on proposals to regulate NHS managers

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Wes Streeting): [\[HCWS251\]](#)

Ensuring strong and accountable NHS leadership will be critical to fixing a broken NHS and delivering our Health Mission. We know the important role that high quality leadership plays in fostering a positive, compassionate, and transparent culture within the NHS while ensuring that local organisations are anchors of growth and opportunity in the areas that they serve.

Currently, NHS managers and leaders are not a regulated profession. Today, I am announcing that the Department of Health and Social Care is launching a 12-week consultation on options for the regulation of NHS managers, as part of a programme of work to meet the government's manifesto commitment to introduce professional standards for, and regulation of, NHS managers.

This issue, and the related question of the duty of candour, has been variously highlighted by the Kark review (2019), the Infected Blood Inquiry (2024) and the ongoing Thirlwall Inquiry into events at the Countess of Chester hospital.

It is essential that managers are also supported with the skills they need to deliver transformation and increase productivity in the NHS, which is why today's consultation forms part of a wider programme of leadership and management development work to equip the NHS with the leaders needed to deliver our 10 Year Plan. This includes establishing a College of Executive and Clinical Leadership to champion and enhance the support available to NHS leaders, and asking Sir Gordon Messenger, through the 10 Year Plan process, to look at how we can accelerate efforts to develop more systematic talent management in the NHS.

This consultation seeks views from all partners, including health and care organisations, regulators, professional bodies, health and care managers and senior leaders, the public, patients, and other health and care staff on the most effective way to strengthen oversight and accountability of NHS managers.

We are seeking views on:

- the type of regulation that may be most appropriate for managers
- which managers should be in scope for any future regulatory system
- what kind of body should exercise such a regulatory function
- what types of standards managers should be required to demonstrate as part of a future system of regulation

- the sequencing of the introduction of a regulatory regime for NHS managers, alongside work that is already being undertaken by NHS England to support their development
- a new professional duty of candour to cover NHS managers, and making managers accountable for responding to concerns about patient safety.

We are today also publishing a separate report on the findings of the department's call for evidence (launched in April 2024) on the existing statutory duty of candour on providers, which is a key step to fulfilling a recommendation from the Infected Blood Inquiry. We will use the findings of our consultation on manager regulation, and the call for evidence, to help inform the final response to the department's review of the statutory duty of candour.

Views from partners will be critical in informing further policy decisions during the next phase of this work to support and improve NHS leadership. We will publish our findings and set out next steps following the closure of the consultation.

■ Shortage of Radioisotopes

Minister of State for Health (Secondary Care) (Karin Smyth):

[\[HCWS248\]](#)

I am today updating the House that the temporary reduction in the production of radioisotopes has been resolved and that the supply of affected radioisotopes has returned to normal.

Throughout the shortage, my Department worked with industry, the NHS, in particular the radiopharmacy community, and the Devolved Governments to make best use of available stock ensuring critical patients were prioritised. Suppliers and NHS Trusts and hospitals displayed great flexibility throughout this incident. Thanks to this collaborative approach from all parts of the system, we were able to manage the unique challenges presented by radioisotope shortages and help ensure fair and equitable access for UK patients.

This will have been a challenging time for patients and their loved ones as well as healthcare professionals. Services are returning to normal, and the NHS are working to book in patients who have had scans delayed, whilst continuing to ensure patients with the most critical needs are prioritised.

My Department will continue to monitor supplies of the affected radioisotope.

HOME OFFICE

■ Statement of Changes in Immigration Rules

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

[\[HCWS250\]](#)

My rt hon Friend the Home Secretary is today laying before the House a Statement of Changes in Immigration Rules.

Introduction of a Visa requirement on Colombia

We are today introducing a visa requirement on all visitors from Colombia. Nationals of Colombia will also be required to obtain a Direct Airside Transit Visa if they intend to transit via the UK having booked travel to another country. The visa requirement comes into force at 15:00 GMT today.

Consequential to this, the planned change to allow nationals of Colombia to apply for an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) from 27 November 2024, for travel to the UK from 8 January 2025, will no longer be introduced.

There will be a four-week, visa-free transition period for those who already hold confirmed bookings to the UK obtained on or before 15:00 GMT 26 November 2024 where arrival in the UK is no later than 15:00 GMT 24 December 2024.

Arrangements are in place so that Colombian nationals can apply for visas. We are publicising the changes so travellers are aware and can plan accordingly.

We are taking this action due to an increase in the number of Colombian nationals travelling to the UK for purposes other than those permitted under visitor rules since the visa requirement was lifted in November 2022. This has included a significant and sustained increase in asylum claims, and high rates of refusals at the border due to people travelling without the intention of visiting for a permitted purpose. This increase in asylum claims and refusals has added significantly to operational pressures at the border, resulting in frontline resource being diverted from other operational priorities.

The decision to introduce a visa requirement has been taken solely for migration and border security reasons. Our relationship with Colombia remains a strong and friendly one. Any decision to change a visa status is not taken lightly and we keep the border and immigration system under regular review to ensure it continues to work in the UK national interest.

Changes relating to the Ukraine Schemes

Almost three years on from the start of the conflict, we continue to stand firm with the people of Ukraine and show that those who need our help are still warmly welcomed in the UK. We have extended that welcome to nearly 250,000 people who have come to the UK (or had their existing permission in the UK extended) under the Ukraine schemes. To provide future certainty, in February, the UK Government announced that Ukrainians with permission under one of the Ukraine Schemes would be able to extend their permission for a further 18 months through the creation of a new Ukraine Permission Extension (UPE) Scheme. Applications are due to open in early 2025 and the Immigration Rules we lay today, will provide people with further certainty about their future by outlining the requirements of the new scheme.

The bespoke scheme will provide the same rights and entitlements to access work, benefits, healthcare, and education that Ukrainians have enjoyed under the existing schemes. The scheme will also be fee-free, with applications being accepted within the last 28-days of their current permission expiring – in line with most other visas routes – to ensure Ukrainians have sufficient time to apply to the scheme.

Ukraine Permission Extension (UPE) scheme opening

The overarching principle of UPE is to provide continued sanctuary in the UK for those who still need it whilst the war in Ukraine continues. Under the principles of the Ukraine Schemes, UPE will continue our generous offer to Ukrainians, and their eligible family members, already here by ensuring it is open to those who have previously been granted permission in the UK under the Ukraine schemes (or with Leave Outside the Rules on the same basis), who meet the criteria to apply.

Applicants will also be required to have been resident in the UK (and Islands) and/or Ukraine since holding permission under the Ukraine Schemes.

Individuals should apply before their current permission expires. This is important, because like in all other visa routes, those who allow their permission to lapse will lose their rights to receive benefits, work, healthcare and rent. Work is underway to mitigate any risks associated with this and my department will continue to work closely with other departments, in particular with my Rt Hon friend the Secretary of State for Works and Pensions, to ensure people make an application in time.

Under UPE, children will need adequate care and accommodation arrangements in place in order to meet our safeguarding obligations. Where a child is not in the UK with their parent, we will seek parental consent to confirm their current living situation. In some cases, referral to the Local Authority where the child is living will be necessary.

We are also aware that different members of some family units under the Ukraine Schemes will currently have differing periods of permission, as they may have applied to come to the UK at different times due to their personal circumstances. Due to this, where a Ukrainian child is resident in the UK with their parent and both hold permission under the Ukraine Schemes, the child's period of permission granted to them under UPE will be aligned with that of their parent. We believe there is merit in aligning with the parent in the best interests of the child.

Ukraine Extension Scheme (UES) closure

In May this year, we closed the Ukraine Extension Scheme (UES) to all individuals, except to UK-born children with a parent who has, or has had, Ukraine scheme permission who have still been able to apply under UES to regularise their permission in the UK. Upon the opening of the UPE scheme in early 2025, we will close the UES route completely and UK-born children will instead apply through UPE, though they will not need to have had prior permission. This will streamline the visa routes by channelling all in-country applications through UPE, removing any confusion that might otherwise be created by having two 'extension' schemes open at the same time. There is no change to the eligibility requirements for UK-born children in this regard.

Ending use of open-ended permission to travel (PTT) letters

Additionally, we are ending the use of permission to travel (PTT) letters on the Ukraine schemes. PTT letters were issued as part of an exceptional biometric deferral application process, implemented in response to the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, to allow those fleeing war to quickly reach sanctuary in the UK. However, this process closed to new

applicants on 7 December 2023 and all Ukraine scheme applicants are now required to attend a Visa Application Centre (VAC) to provide their biometrics before travelling.

We have provided advanced notice to applicants who have been issued with a PTT letter but not yet travelled to the UK, to ensure that any individual who wishes to use it has the opportunity to do so before restrictions take effect. Any applicants who have not travelled to the UK when the restrictions take effect will be informed that their PTT letters can no longer be used. The Homes for Ukraine scheme will remain open and uncapped for those who wish to reapply for sanctuary in the UK. This change is therefore not a reduction of support for Ukraine and the UK government remains steadfast in its support for Ukraine and the Ukrainian people.

Changes to Long Residence route

We have always been clear that the Ukraine schemes provide temporary sanctuary in the UK only while the war in Ukraine remains ongoing, and that they are not a route to settlement in the UK. This is in line with the express wishes of the Ukrainian government, who will need their nationals to return to help rebuild the country when it is safe to do so.

To reflect this, we are making a minor change to the eligibility requirements for the Long Residence route to make clear that permission to stay in the UK under the Ukraine Schemes, including the new UPE, cannot be used to qualify for permission to stay or settlement under the Long Residence route. This change brings the Rules in step with the already established policy position.

These changes to the Immigration Rules are being laid on 26 November 2024. For the changes that introduce a Visa requirement on Colombia, due to safeguarding the operation of the UK's immigration system, those changes will come into effect at 15:00 GMT on 26 November 2024.

The changes regarding the Long Residence route will come into effect on 18 December 2024; the changes to open the Ukraine Permission Extension Scheme and close the Ukraine Extension Scheme will come into effect on 4 February 2025 and; the changes to end the use of open-ended permission to travel letters will come into effect on 13 February 2025.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Older People's Housing Taskforce

Minister of State for Housing and Planning (Matthew Pennycook): [\[HCWS249\]](#)

The Government has today published the report of the Older People's Housing Taskforce. Copies will also be deposited in the House Library.

Concluding in May 2024, the Older People's Housing Taskforce undertook an assessment of public and private specialised and supported older people's housing, with a particular focus on the private market for those on middle incomes, and explored options for the provision of greater choice, quality and security of housing for older people. There is rightly significant national interest in the Taskforce's findings.

I would like to offer my sincere thanks to the Chair of the Taskforce, Professor Julienne Meyer, and all its members for producing such a comprehensive, detailed and well-researched report. I would also like to express my gratitude to the many stakeholders who contributed to the work of the Taskforce.

The Government recognises the importance of increased supply and improving the housing options for older people in later life, and we will give careful consideration to the many recommendations set out in the report.

Providing a range of safe, suitable housing for older people in later life helps them live independently, safely and well, for longer. It can enhance the wellbeing of our senior citizens and reduce demand on adult social care services and the National Health Service. The Government has committed to building 1.5 million new homes over the next five years, including those to meet the needs of older people, and we will consider this issue further as we develop our long-term housing strategy.

We are determined to create a more diverse housing market; one that delivers homes quickly and responds to the needs of a range of communities. Through the recent consultation on proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework, we tested proposals to promote the delivery of mixed-use sites, including housing designed for specific groups such as older people. We have also indicated our intention to consider further planning policy changes in the future as we move to produce a more streamlined and accessible suite of policies and we will ensure that considerations around older people's housing inform our approach.

We are also working with the Planning Advisory Service to meet the recommendation of the Taskforce for guidance to provide more clarity on how planning use classes apply to specialist Older People's Housing.

As the report also makes clear, older people's housing has not been immune to the challenges faced by other residential leaseholders across the country. The Government remain fully committed to providing homeowners with greater rights, powers and protections over their homes by quickly implementing the provisions of the Leasehold and Freehold Reform Act 2024.

We will also take further steps over the parliament to bring the feudal leasehold system to an end, including reinvigorating commonhold by modernising the legal framework as well as restricting the sale of new leasehold flats. We will consult on the best way to achieve this, and consider the needs of all parts of the housing market as we do this, including older people's housing.

The Government is committed to helping older people to live comfortably and independently at home for as long as possible. My Hon Friend, the Care Minister, Stephen Kinnock MP, and I thank the Taskforce for their important contribution to this agenda.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Get Britain Working White Paper

Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Liz Kendall):

[\[HCWS252\]](#)

Today, the Government has published the Get Britain Working White Paper – bringing forward the biggest reforms to employment support in a generation and turning a department of welfare into a genuine department for work. This takes the first steps towards delivering our bold ambition of an 80% employment rate, through a decade of national renewal.

The UK is the only country in the G7 whose employment rate hasn't returned to pre-pandemic levels. We have a near record 2.8 million people out of work due to long-term sickness or disability. Almost a million young people are not in education, employment or training. Millions are stuck in low paid, insecure work.

To turn the page on this, nothing short of a fundamentally different approach is needed. Our White Paper brings in three major reforms to:

1) Create a new jobs and careers service, overhauling Jobcentres from a one size fits all service that overwhelmingly focuses on administering benefits into a genuine public employment service providing personalised help and support . We will bring Jobcentres together with the National Careers Service in England, beginning with a pathfinder early next year. We'll work closely with mayors and local leaders to ensure the new service is rooted in local communities and properly joined up with local health and skills support. We'll work closely with employers so it better meets their needs. We will also test, trial and develop a radically improved digital offer, using the latest technologies and AI to provide up to date information on jobs, skills and other support, and to free up work coach time. This is backed with £55m of initial funding.

2) Establish a new Youth Guarantee in England to ensure every young person is earning or learning . We will bring together all the different support for 18- to 21-year-olds under the leadership of Mayors and local areas to ensure all young people have access to education, training, and employment opportunities once they reach 18, and that no-one misses out. Backed with £45m of funding, we have announced eight trailblazers for our youth guarantee (in Liverpool City Region, the West Midlands, Tees Valley, East Midlands, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, West of England, and 2 areas within Greater London). We have also announced a new national partnership to provide exciting new opportunities for young people in sports, arts and culture. We will invest in young people and give them the choices and chances they deserve, but in return they will have a responsibility to take up the training or work that's on offer.

3) Address the growing and unsustainable problem of people being out of work due to poor health . We are already taking action to drive down waiting lists, including with targeted support at the 20 NHS Trusts with the highest economic inactivity. We're joining up employment and health support, for example by expanding Individual Placement Support and piloting new WorkWell services. However, we need to go much further and faster to tackle this issue.

To meet the scale of the challenge, **we will devolve new funding, powers and responsibilities to tackle economic inactivity to Mayors and local areas. Because local leaders know their communities best.** We will support all areas in England to produce local Get Britain Working Plans – joining up work, health and skills support. Today we have announced 8 trailblazers, backed by £125m of funding (in West Yorkshire, North East, South Yorkshire, Greater Manchester, Wales, York and North Yorkshire, and 2 Greater London areas). To kick start this work, we're funding a new supported employment programme called Connect to Work – backed by £115 million of initial funding for next year.

Alongside this action, **we have announced an independent “Keep Britain Working” review.** This will look at the role of UK employers and government in tackling health-related economic inactivity and creating and maintaining healthy workplaces. This will be led by the former Chair of John Lewis, Sir Charlie Mayfield and report in the Autumn.

And **we will bring forward in the Spring a Green Paper setting out proposals on reforming the health and disability benefits system.** This will ensure disabled people and those with health conditions have the same rights and opportunities as everybody else including the right to work, that they are treated with dignity and respect, and so that the system responds to the complex and fluctuating nature of the health conditions that so many people living with today. We will work closely with disabled people and representative organisations as we develop our proposals.

Many of the policy areas described in this White Paper are devolved in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Where this is the case, the focus of this paper is on the actions the UK Government will take in England. The UK Government will work closely with the Devolved Governments to maximise positive outcomes and learning across the UK whilst respecting devolution settlements. Within Great Britain we will work with the Scottish and Welsh Government to ensure all aspects of our new approach to delivering employment support partner effectively with devolved provision, including but not limited to skills, health and careers as well as Scottish and Welsh Government-funded employment support.

To deliver change, we need action across government, which is why this White Paper has been developed with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Secretary of State for Education and with input from the Department for Health and Social Care and many other departments.

Our Get Britain Working White Paper brings forward the real reforms needed to help more people into better jobs, to give young people the chance of a better life, and to make sure our employment and social security system understands that a healthy nation and a healthy economy are two sides of the same coin. This is how we get Britain working again and how we get Britain growing again.