



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 6 December 2024 and the information is correct at the time of publication (03:56 P.M., 06 December 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

■ Aerospace Industry

Dame Harriett Baldwin: [\[17094\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of Autumn Budget 2024 on the aerospace sector.

Sarah Jones:

The Budget confirmed £975m over 5 years to the Aerospace sector. This provides continued stability and confidence for industry to invest in long-term R&D projects – delivering economic growth, supporting high skilled jobs across all parts of the UK, and advancing aviation's net zero transition. Between 2013 and 2030, industry and government will invest over £5bn developing transformational aircraft technology. Long-term R&D co-investment is a core pillar of the Aerospace Growth Partnership's 2022 strategy, where the UK sector committed to invest at least £20bn of further private investment to 2040 and abate 125 MtCO₂ of UK attributable global aviation CO₂ emissions.

■ Agriculture: Vehicles

Sir John Hayes: [\[17070\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what steps he is taking to reduce the (a) risk of and (b) impact from fires in agricultural vehicles.

Justin Madders:

The Supply of Machinery (Safety) Regulations 2008 set out the essential requirements that must be met before a machinery product is placed on the UK market, in order to protect users of that machinery from any undue harm. This includes agricultural vehicles in scope.

As part of those existing requirements, machinery must be designed and constructed in such a way as to avoid any risk of fire or overheating posed by the machinery itself or by gases, liquids, dust, vapours or other substances produced or used by the machinery.

Joe Morris: [\[17312\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of requiring manufacturers of agricultural vehicles to fit fire suppression kits.

Justin Madders:

The Supply of Machinery (Safety) Regulations 2008 set out the essential requirements that must be met before a machinery product is placed on the UK

market, in order to protect users of that machinery from any undue harm. This includes agricultural vehicles in scope.

As part of those existing requirements, machinery must be designed and constructed in such a way as to avoid any risk of fire or overheating posed by the machinery itself or by gases, liquids, dust, vapours or other substances produced or used by the machinery.

■ Construction

Alison Griffiths: [\[17391\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what assessment he has made of Autumn Budget 2024 on the construction sector.

Sarah Jones:

The Government is committed to supporting growth and investment in the construction sector. At the Budget, plans were announced to boost capital investment by over £100 billion over the next five years, including in transport and housing, to help unlock long-term growth.

We are providing over £5 billion of investment in housing next year, increasing the affordable homes programme to £3.1 billion and providing £3 billion of guarantees to boost the supply of homes and support small house builders. Alongside our planning reforms and our new Industrial Strategy, we are providing the stability needed to enable a thriving construction sector.

■ Department for Business and Trade: Aviation

Rupert Lowe: [\[16875\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, how many international (a) air miles and (b) flights have been completed by (i) Ministers and (ii) officials in their Department since 5 July 2024.

Justin Madders:

Data on minister's overseas travel and on senior civil servant's business expenses is published on a quarterly basis. This can be found here:

Ministers - [DBT: ministerial gifts, hospitality, overseas travel and meetings - GOV.UK](#)

Senior Officials - [DBT: senior officials' business expenses, hospitality, and meetings - GOV.UK](#)

■ Department for Business and Trade: Policy

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[16798\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, how their Department defines strategy.

Justin Madders:

The definition is detailed in the Functional Standards Common Glossary, which is published on the gov.uk website.

■ Employment Rights Bill: Manufacturing Industries

Dame Harriett Baldwin: [\[17528\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the Employment Rights Bill on the advanced manufacturing sector.

Dame Harriett Baldwin: [\[17529\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the Employment Rights Bill on the automotive sector.

Dame Harriett Baldwin: [\[17530\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the Employment Rights Bill on the aerospace sector.

Dame Harriett Baldwin: [\[17531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the Employment Rights Bill on the (a) chemicals and (b) plastics sector.

Justin Madders:

On Monday 21 October, the Government published a comprehensive package of analysis on the impact of the Employment Rights Bill [\[http://www.gov.uk/guidance/employment-rights-bill-impact-assessments\]](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/employment-rights-bill-impact-assessments).

The majority of employees will benefit from new protections in the Bill, however, our assessment finds that workers in the low-paying sectors including social care, hospitality, retail, and some manufacturing sectors such as the manufacture of food-items will benefit the most from the Bill.

The Bill will also deliver wider benefits for the business environment by improving wellbeing, incentivising higher productivity, and creating a more level playing field for good employers. This could have a positive knock-on impact on productivity and growth.

■ Employment Rights Bill: Migrant Workers

Tim Farron: [\[16712\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of the Employment Rights Bill on the employment rights of migrant workers.

Tim Farron: [\[16713\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of the Employment Rights Bill on the prevention of exploitation of migrant workers by employers that threaten to cancel visas.

Justin Madders:

The Employment Rights Bill will provide a new baseline of security for all workers, including those working on a visa. These protections include day one protection from unfair dismissal, increasing protection from harassment, strengthening Statutory Sick Pay and ending exploitative zero hours contracts.

The new Fair Work Agency will help ensure new minimum standards are being upheld across the country, by increasing awareness and accessibility of workers' rights by providing a single point of contact, as well as supporting businesses to access clearer rules, information and advice to comply with the law.

Foreign Investment in UK: Berkshire**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[17003\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what estimate his Department has made of the number of jobs that were created as a result of foreign direct investment in the Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership area in the last three years.

Sarah Jones:

The Department for Business and Trade (DBT) works closely with local authorities and investment partners to monitor and support the impact of foreign direct investment in the Berkshire area.

Official statistics at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/dbt-inward-investment-results-2023-to-2024> show that Foreign Direct Investment projects created 1,270 new jobs in Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) in 2021-22, 746 in 2022-23 and 399 in 2023-24.

Iron and Steel: Manufacturing Industries**Alison Griffiths:** [\[17393\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the Autumn Budget 2024 on the steel sector.

Sarah Jones:

The Budget has made a positive impact on the steel sector by confirming the funding required for work to begin on the new Electric Arc Furnace at Port Talbot. This £500 million grant not only secures the future of steelmaking in south Wales and up to 5,000 jobs but also ensures workers have enhanced support during the transition period.

More widely, after the budget, the National Wealth Fund is now in a position to consider funding propositions for investments in steel.

■ Living Wage: Part-time Employment

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[17511\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 2 December 2024 to question 16452 Living Wage Living Wage, what the average number of hours worked by those in part-time employment and who paid the National Living Wage was in 2024 to date.

Justin Madders:

This will be included in the Impact Assessment that we plan to publish alongside the legislation that implements the increase to the National Living Wage in 2025.

■ Living Wage: Young People

Helen Whately:

[\[16783\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of proposed changes to the National Living Wage on youth (a) inactivity, (b) unemployment and (c) employment.

Justin Madders:

In April 2025, the National Living Wage, payable to eligible workers who are 21 years old and over, will increase by 6.7% to £12.21 per hour. The impact of wage levels on youth employment, unemployment and inactivity (usually defined as 16-24-year-olds) and on incentives to remain in education and training is a key consideration of the Low Pay Commission when it makes recommendations.

This Government is committed to setting the National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage rates in a way that does not have a detrimental impact, and the Impact Assessment for annual rises will consider this issue.

■ Manufacturing Industries

Dame Harriett Baldwin:

[\[17092\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the Autumn Budget 2024 on the advanced manufacturing sector.

Sarah Jones:

Advanced Manufacturing is vital to UK prosperity. The Autumn Budget awarded over £2.5bn towards advanced manufacturing, including £16m to continue the Made Smarter digitalisation programme for SMEs, £2bn towards the automotive sector, £975m to aerospace, and £520m for Life Sciences.

Shortly before the budget, Advanced Manufacturing was announced as one of eight growth-driving sectors that will feature in *Invest 2035: the UK's modern industrial strategy*. A targeted Advanced Manufacturing Sector Plan is currently being developed in partnership with business, devolved governments, regions, experts and a range of stakeholders. The Industrial Strategy will be published in spring 2025, aligned with the multi-year Spending Review.

Andrew Griffith: [\[17271\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the Autumn Budget 2024 on the chemicals and plastics sector.

Sarah Jones:

As members of the chemicals and plastics sectors have themselves noted, this budget had many positive points for manufacturers. This includes measures based around the key pillars of our industrial strategy, including net zero, skills, regional growth and innovation.

Notably, industry has welcomed the announcement that a 'Mass Balance' approach to chemically recycled plastic will be introduced, encouraging innovation and investment in new recycling technologies within the UK.

The Budget also announced continued support for Energy Intensive Industries through around £350M of funding across 2024-25 and 2025-26 – this includes chemicals and plastics companies.

Alison Griffiths: [\[17394\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the Autumn Budget 2024 on the (a) materials and (b) critical minerals sector.

Sarah Jones:

I can confirm that the Budget will support growth for our critical minerals industry. Already, following decisions made at the Autumn Budget, the National Wealth Fund has confirmed it can co-invest in domestic critical mineral projects to support our clean energy transition.

Furthermore, the Chancellor has expanded UK Export Finance's mandate to enable it to finance overseas critical minerals projects that secure supply for the UK's high-growth export industries. I will continue to engage with industry to develop a new, targeted Critical Minerals Strategy, matched to UK strengths, set for publication next year.

■ Minimum Wage: Young People

Helen Whately: [\[16970\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of removing minimum pay age bands for the National Minimum Wage on youth (a) inactivity and (b) unemployment.

Justin Madders:

In April 2025, the National Minimum Wage (NMW) rates for workers aged 18 to 20, workers under 18, and apprentices will increase significantly – narrowing the gap between those rates and the National Living Wage.

The impact of wage levels on youth employment and on incentives to remain in education and training is a key consideration of the Low Pay Commission when it

makes recommendations. This Government is committed to removing pay bands in a way that does not have a detrimental impact, and the Impact Assessment for annual rises will consider this issue.

■ Motor Vehicles: Manufacturing Industries

Dame Harriett Baldwin:

[\[17093\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of Autumn Budget 2024 on the automotive sector.

Sarah Jones:

The Budget's announcements represent a vote of confidence in our automotive industry, enabling future jobs and growth.

Over £2bn of capital and R&D funding to 2030 will support the latest research and development, accelerate commercial scale up, and unlock capital investment in zero emission vehicles, batteries and the wider supply chain.

In addition, Government is investing £200m in 2025-26 to expand electric vehicle (EV) chargepoints, £120m for new electric van grants, and strengthening consumer incentives by widening the differentials in Vehicle Excise Duty First Year Rates between EVs and hybrids vs. internal combustion engine cars.

Andrew Griffith:

[\[17270\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what recent assessment he has made of trends in the (a) number of factory closures and (b) levels of employment in the automotive industry.

Sarah Jones:

The number of registered business births (registrations), deaths (de-registrations) and stock of active automotive manufacturing businesses from 2018 to 2023 were as follows:

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Births	510	445	395	570	435	320
Deaths	390	365	425	440	480	400
Stock	3,820	3,830	3,875	4,080	4,005	3,890

Source: ONS Business Demography

Employment levels (employees and self-employed) in automotive manufacturing between 2018 and 2023 were as follows:

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Employment 168 (‘000s)	167	166	165	151	152	

Source: ONS Employee Jobs and Self-employed Jobs

■ Shipbuilding and Shipping

Alison Griffiths:

[\[17392\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of Autumn Budget 2024 on the (a) maritime and (b) shipbuilding sectors.

Sarah Jones:

This Budget is focused on delivery of the government’s Growth Mission and the development and delivery of the government’s modern Industrial Strategy. The creation of the National Wealth Fund, catalysing over £70bn of private investment, will potentially benefit the maritime sector, where at least £5.8bn of NWF’s capital will focus on the five sectors announced in the manifesto, including ports. Shipbuilding supports 42,600 jobs nationwide and adds £2.4 billion to the economy every year and Government is committed to supporting vibrant and successful enterprises, and the skilled workforce who deliver them, in all parts of the UK.

■ Stellantis

Dame Harriett Baldwin:

[\[17527\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, on what dates the (a) Minister for Employment Rights, Competition and Markets and (b) Minister for Trade Policy and Economic Security has met with representatives from Stellantis.

Sarah Jones:

My Department has had regular engagement with representatives of the automotive industry and automotive companies covering a wide range of automotive issues. I along with Secretary of State for Business and Trade have engaged with representatives from Stellantis.

Neither the Minister for Employment Rights, Competition and Markets nor the Minister for Trade Policy and Economic Security have met with representatives from Stellantis since 5 July 2024.

Andrew Griffith:

[\[17620\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, on what dates the Minister for Industry has met with representatives from Stellantis since 5 July 2024.

Sarah Jones:

My Department has had regular engagement with representatives of the automotive industry and automotive companies covering a wide range of automotive issues.

In addition to my wider engagement with the automotive sector, I met with representatives of Stellantis on 24 July.

Andrew Griffith: [\[17621\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, on what dates he has met with representatives of Stellantis since 5 July 2024.

Sarah Jones:

My Department has had regular engagement with representatives of the automotive industry and automotive companies covering a wide range of automotive issues.

In addition to his wider engagement with the automotive sector, the Secretary of State met with representatives of Stellantis on 15 July, 19 July, 24 July and 26 November.

Andrew Griffith: [\[17622\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, on what dates the Minister for Services, Small Business and Exports has met with representatives from Stellantis since 5 July 2024.

Sarah Jones:

My Department has had regular engagement with representatives of the automotive industry and automotive companies covering a wide range of automotive issues.

The Minister for Services, Small Business and Exports has not met with representatives from Stellantis since 5 July 2024.

Andrew Griffith: [\[17623\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, on what dates the Minister for Investment has met with representatives from Stellantis since 5 July 2024.

Sarah Jones:

My Department has had regular engagement with representatives of the automotive industry and automotive companies covering a wide range of automotive issues.

The Minister for Investment has not met with representatives from Stellantis since 5 July 2024. The Minister for Investment was only appointed on 10th October 2024.

■ Vauxhall Motors: Luton

Chris Hinchliff: [\[16579\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, whether his Department is holding discussions with Stellantis on the announced closure of its Vauxhall plant in Luton.

Sarah Jones:

The Secretary of State has been in contact with Stellantis since July to discuss the pressures in their UK and global business and the future of the Luton plant. He met them again on 26 November where they regrettably shared their proposals to consult on the closure Luton and consolidation at Ellesmere Port.

We know this will be a concerning time for the families of employees at Luton who may be affected, and we will continue to work closely with Stellantis, as well as trade unions and Luton Borough Council on the next steps of their proposals and how to mitigate the impact on employees affected and the local area.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Department for Culture, Media and Sport: Aviation

Rupert Lowe: [\[16876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, how many international (a) air miles and (b) flights have been completed by (i) Ministers and (ii) officials in their Department since 5 July 2024.

Stephanie Peacock:

Data on ministers' overseas travel and on senior civil servants' business expenses is published on a quarterly basis. This can be found [here](#).

■ Department for Culture, Media and Sport: Policy

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[16799\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, how their Department defines strategy.

Stephanie Peacock:

The definition is detailed in the Functional Standards Common Glossary, which is published on the gov.uk website.

■ Gambling: Taxation

Sir John Hayes: [\[16704\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, if she will make it her policy to ensure that a proportion of the money raised from the statutory levy on gambling operators will be allocated to (a) charities and (b) other organisations that focus on the prevention of gambling harms and that are not sponsored by the gambling industry.

Stephanie Peacock:

As set out in the Government's [response](#) to the consultation on the statutory levy, we will introduce a statutory levy charged to all licensed gambling operators to fund the research, prevention and treatment of gambling-related harm.

The government is clear that the third sector will play an important role in the future levy system. NHS England, and appropriate bodies in Scotland and Wales, will commission treatment and support services, working collaboratively with the third sector. The levy will also provide sustainable funding to support the development of a coordinated approach to prevention, providing investment for organisations, including in the third sector, to develop and deliver harm reduction activities across Great Britain. Prevention remains a crucial part of the Government's efforts to tackle

gambling-related harm and it is important we take the time to get the policy right. The Department will continue to carefully consider the most effective approach to prevention and will publish a further response document setting out our final decisions in the coming months.

■ Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme

Robin Swann: [\[17444\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what her policy is on future funding arrangements for the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme.

Chris Bryant:

Departmental settlements have been set following the Budget announcement on October 30. Individual programmes will now be assessed during the departmental Business Planning process.

■ Lotteries: Taxation

Dr Scott Arthur: [R] [\[16654\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, whether she has had recent representations on the potential merits of zero-rating society lotteries under any future statutory levy on gambling operators.

Stephanie Peacock:

As set out in the Government's [response](#) to the consultation on the statutory levy, we will introduce a statutory levy charged to all licensed gambling operators. Society lotteries will be charged the levy at the lowest rate of 0.1%, in recognition of the low rates of harm associated with participation in society lotteries and the important benefits they bring to good cause fundraising. The Gambling Act 2005 is clear that all licensees are in scope of the levy, but to minimise disruption this 0.1% will be charged as a proportion of proceeds retained after good causes.

■ Musicians: Mental Health Services

Richard Baker: [\[17413\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, if she will take steps with the music industry to ensure performing artists have access to adequate mental health support.

Chris Bryant:

This government recognises the importance of ensuring that everyone has access to support and resources for their mental health and wellbeing, including creative professionals such as musicians and performers.

This government welcomes efforts by the music industry to support artists, such as the Musicians' Union's Wellbeing Support Service and Help Musicians' Music Minds Matter helpline. We would encourage more organisations across the sector to follow

suit in order to foster an environment where mental health is prioritised, and artists are empowered to thrive both personally and professionally.

We are working closely with industry stakeholders as they seek to address the recommendations of the Good Work Review, a sectoral deep dive funded by DCMS into job quality and working practice. This sets out a number of priorities to improve job quality in the sector, including developing dedicated support and guidance for self-employed creators.

The arts and creative industries are also crucial to supporting peoples' health and wellbeing. As part of the Government's 'an NHS fit for the future' Mission, we will review the evidence and recommendations from stakeholders, including the National Centre for Creative Health. The Creative Industries Council has also established a Health and Wellbeing Forum, whose outputs we will consider.

Additionally, the Arts Council England invests £145 million annually in National Portfolio Organisations to deliver projects including creative health, and in 2022 they published a Creative Health and Wellbeing Strategy to integrate health and wellbeing into the arts sector's core outcomes.

■ Prize Money

Dr Scott Arthur:

[R] [\[16653\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what her planned timetable is for publishing proposals on regulating large scale commercial prize draws.

Stephanie Peacock:

Large scale commercial prize draws are a significant and growing market. Whilst not regulated as a gambling product under the Gambling Act, we want people who participate in large scale commercial prize draws to be confident that proportionate protections are in place. The department is grateful for the voluntary action taken so far by the sector to act transparently and apply player protection measures. We want to ensure high standards in this area and the Minister for Gambling will be meeting the sector to discuss this work.

■ Tourism

Saqib Bhatti:

[\[16829\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to her Department's press release entitled New ambition for 50 million annual visits to UK announced by Tourism Minister, published on 27 November 2024, what steps she plans to take to meet this target.

Chris Bryant:

The new Visitor Economy Advisory Council will work closely with industry and government to develop a national strategy for growth in the sector to achieve this target. We believe it is important to set this ambitious target, because although the UK attracted 41 million visitors in 2019, it only managed 38 million last year under the previous government. We are clear that growth in the tourism industry beyond

London will be at the heart of this strategy, and that will require VisitBritain/VisitEngland to champion visits to the British countryside and rural areas to a worldwide audience and expanding the number of Local Visitor Economy Partnerships —including in rural and coastal areas. This is part of our commitment to spreading tourism's benefits and creating an inclusive, regional growth model.

■ Voluntary Organisations: Employers' Contributions

Dan Carden:

[\[16787\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of extending reimbursement of employer National Insurance contributions to the voluntary sector.

Stephanie Peacock:

At the recent Budget, the government took a number of difficult decisions on tax, welfare, and spending to fix the foundations of the public finances, fund public services, and restore economic stability.

Ministers have met with representatives from the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector to discuss this issue and the department is aware of their concerns about the impacts of the increase to employer National Insurance Contributions (NICs).

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. This means that more than half of businesses (including charities) with NICs liabilities will either gain or see no change next year.

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. Businesses and charities will still be able to claim employer NICs reliefs including those for under 21s and under 25 apprentices, where eligible.

The Government publishes Tax Information and Impact Notes (TIINs) for tax policy changes, which give a clear explanation of the policy objective and an assessment of the impacts. The TIIN for the employer NICs changes was [published on 13 November 2024](#).

Within the tax system, we provide support to charities through a range of reliefs and exemptions, including reliefs for charitable giving. More than £6 billion in charitable reliefs was 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.

■ Youth Services: Finance**Natasha Irons:**[\[16355\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, how will funding for local youth transformation pilots be distributed to local authorities; and what funding can Croydon Council expect to receive.

Stephanie Peacock:

On 12 November, the DCMS Secretary of State announced the launch of the Local Youth Transformation pilot in 2025/26 to start building back local authorities' lost capability in the youth space, sowing the seeds for a much-needed rejuvenation of local youth services. We will be designing the programme and confirming delivery approaches over the coming months and will share more information in due course.

DEFENCE**■ Ministry of Defence: Occupations****Grahame Morris:**[\[17524\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the non-standard occupation groups in his Department are.

Al Carns:

Ministry of Defence (MOD) Non-Standard Occupational Groups (NSOG) are groups of staff for whom some aspects of their terms and conditions of service are different from the MOD broader-banded grade structure as aligned to civil service standard grades i.e. the core civilian workforce in Defence. NSOG groups are distinguished because they have an analogue link to an outside counterpart and their pay and other terms and conditions of service are either directly linked or influenced by their outside public sector comparator grade.

The MOD has five main NSOG groups:

1. Ministry of Defence Police
2. MOD clinical grades - NHS Agenda for Change grades, NHS Civilian Consultants, Civilian Medical Practitioner (doctors), Civilian Dental Practitioners (dentists)
3. Defence Fire Rescue Service grades
4. Teaching/educational grades
5. Youth and Community grades

■ Ministry of Defence: Policy**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[16813\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how their Department defines strategy.

Luke Pollard:

As defined in the Functional Standards Common Glossary, “a strategy outlines longer term objectives, outcomes and outputs, and the means to achieve them, to inform future decisions and planning”. The Functional Standards Common Glossary is published on the Gov.uk website.

EDUCATION■ **Apprentices: Energy****Tom Hayes:**[\[16672\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to expand (a) skills training and (b) apprenticeship schemes in the (i) renewable energy and (ii) energy efficiency sectors.

Janet Daby:

The government is committed to the UK becoming a Clean Energy Superpower, achieving clean power by 2030 and net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

The government is working to ensure that the current and future skills system in England supports workers to retrain for the low carbon economy, including for critical sectors such as renewable energy and energy efficiency. The department's initiatives include the new growth and skills offer, which will prioritise investment that supports economic growth, increases opportunity, better meets employers' skills needs and increases investment in skills shortage areas. The Autumn Budget 2024 announced an additional £300 million for our further education (FE) sector, as well as £300 million of capital funding for FE condition, to support the development of the skills the country needs.

Over 40 of the occupational standards that underpin technical education in England directly support the clean energy industry. Others support insulation and energy efficiency in construction.

The government is committed to delivering the Lifelong Learning Entitlement, which will launch in the 2026/27 academic year for courses starting from January 2027. This will broaden access to high-quality, flexible education and training by providing funding for full courses as well as modules of high-value courses. Skills Bootcamps are available to support the workforce to gain new skills, including skills for the low carbon economy.

Skills England is a new national body which will bring together key partners to meet the skills needs of the next decade across all the regions and create a shared national ambition to boost England's skills. It will provide authoritative assessments of skills needs, ensure a comprehensive suite of apprenticeships, training, and technical qualifications and work with devolved areas and regional organisations to ensure skills needs are met.

Skills England will work closely with the Office for Clean Energy Jobs at the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, which has been set up with a focus on developing a skilled workforce in core energy and net zero sectors. Skills England published its first report in September, highlighting the skills needed to support targets on net zero, the Clean Energy Mission and UK targets for environmental improvements.

Designated employer representative bodies are leading local skills improvement plans (LSIPs) across England. Education and training providers must have regard to the LSIP when making decisions on relevant provision. In order to approve an LSIP, my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education must be satisfied that due consideration was given to the skills, capabilities and expertise required for jobs that directly contribute to, or indirectly support, net zero targets and adaptation to climate change or that meet other environmental goals.

■ Apprentices: Training

Jo White:

[\[16819\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many employers who (a) pay and (b) do not pay the apprenticeship levy started new learners on apprenticeship programmes in the 2023-24 financial year.

Janet Daby:

The below table shows the number of apprenticeship service employers accounts with apprenticeship starts in the 2023/24 academic year.

EMPLOYER TYPE	2023/24
Levy	13,157
Non-levy	57,017
Total	70,174

The figures are for the number of employer accounts instead of employers. An employer may have more than one apprenticeship service employer account.

■ Department for Education: Policy

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[16800\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how their Department defines strategy.

Janet Daby:

The definition is detailed in the Functional Standards Common Glossary, which is published on the GOV.UK website.

■ Nurseries: Costs

Laura Trott: [\[17246\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the mean annual costs are for nurseries in England by (a) nursery class childcare settings, (b) maintained nursery schools, (c) school-based providers, (d) private group-based providers, (e) voluntary group-based providers, (f) all group-based providers and (g) all nurseries.

Stephen Morgan:

Data collected by the 2024 survey of childcare and early years providers has been used to estimate the average unit costs of delivering childcare per child in a setting. This data can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/673b14b8fc572967fe66a92e/Providers_finances_Evidence_from_the_2023_Survey_of_Childcare_and_Early_Years_Providers.pdf.

The department no longer publishes providers' total costs as differences between providers largely reflect differences in the average number of children that attend them and the average number of hours that they attend for.

There are limitations to the unit cost measure because of some challenges in gathering information from providers on total costs, such as the difficulty in estimating costs shared with other settings for group-based providers that are part of a chain. Furthermore, the number of hours of care provided was estimated. As a result, caution should be applied to the interpretation of the unit cost measures.

■ Pupil Exclusions

Mrs Lorraine Beavers: [\[17689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to help tackle the practice of off-rolling.

Stephen Morgan:

The government is clear that off-rolling is an unacceptable practice and the department continues to work with Ofsted to tackle it.

Ofsted takes any use of unlawful exclusions and off-rolling very seriously. Where evidence of off-rolling is found by inspectors, it will impact the school's leadership and management judgement.

This government is committed to reforming Ofsted to enhance the inspection regime by replacing a single headline grade with a new report card system telling parents clearly how schools are performing and introduce a new annual review of safeguarding, attendance, and off-rolling.

■ Schools and Local Government

Shaun Davies: [\[17631\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to secure shared use agreements between schools and councils.

Stephen Morgan:

Many schools across the country will either allow others to make use of their facilities, or themselves be making use of land shared with their local communities. The department encourages schools to open their sites in this way. Shared use agreements or other arrangements to facilitate this are primarily a matter for local discussion between schools, their landowners and local authorities, who will all appreciate the individual local needs.

However, in specific circumstances, such as when a school converts to become an academy and the department is involved in agreeing how the academy will access land, the department can and will help schools and councils consider their options. Our good estate management for schools (GEMS) guidance also contains information for schools on allowing others to use their premises. More information about GEMS can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/good-estate-management-for-schools>.

■ Special Educational Needs

Mrs Sureena Brackenridge: [\[17354\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether SEND schools will be exempt from proposed changes to charitable business rate relief.

Stephen Morgan:

Local authorities will continue to fund places at independent special schools for pupils who need them due to their education, health and care (EHC) plan and will be able to reclaim VAT applied to fees.

The Non-Domestic Rating (Multipliers and Private Schools) Bill provides that private schools that are charities that wholly or mainly provide education for pupils with an EHC plan remain eligible for charitable rates relief. In business rates, wholly or mainly generally means more than 50%. In practice, the government believes that this will ensure most special schools, which predominantly serve pupils with EHC plans, will not be affected by the measure.

Private schools that benefit from the existing rates exemption for properties that are wholly used for the training or welfare of disabled people will continue to do so.

■ Springer Nature: China

Gregory Stafford: [\[15379\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of reports that Springer Nature has restricted access to

academic articles in China on (a) human rights, (b) democracy and (c) other politically sensitive topics.

Janet Daby:

This government is absolutely committed to, and will continue to protect, academic freedom.

The department recognises the concerns of overseas interference in the academic sector and regularly works with colleagues from across government, the Office for Students, and other stakeholders to ensure that overseas influence does not interfere with academic freedom and related policies.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ African Swine Fever: Disease Control

Sir Alec Shelbrooke:

[\[16731\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to his Department's press release of 26 September 2024 entitled Immediate measures to step up safeguards against African swine fever from Europe, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of banning all personal imports of (a) pork and (b) pork products including those manufactured and packaged to EU commercial standards.

Daniel Zeichner:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to PQ [12666](#) on 5 December 2024.

Sir Alec Shelbrooke:

[\[16732\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to his Department's press release of 26 September 2024 entitled Immediate measures to step up safeguards against African swine fever from Europe, what additional resource has been allocated to (a) Border Force and (b) Port Health Authorities to help implement those measures.

Daniel Zeichner:

Defra continues to monitor and review the impact of the Border Target Operating Model (BTOM), including the Border Control Post at Sevington. We are working closely with industry, trade partners and enforcement agencies to minimise disruption and costs to trade, while continuing to protect our biosecurity. The effectiveness of the import controls has been demonstrated throughout September and October by the interception at Sevington of 34 consignments of plants infested with *Pochazia Shantungensis*, a fruit tree pest native to China but now present in mainland Europe. The consignments were destroyed, preventing the potential for a damaging outbreak for UK fruit growers.

The BTOM is designed to assure the biosecurity of commercial imports. Illegal imports of products of animal origin are dealt with through separate intelligence led

checks, conducted at the border by Border Force, in Border Force facilities, with the assistance of Port Health Authorities.

■ **Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Aviation**

Rupert Lowe: [16878]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many international (a) air miles and (b) flights have been completed by (i) Ministers and (ii) officials in their Department since 5 July 2024.

Daniel Zeichner:

Data on Ministers' overseas travel and on senior civil servants' business expenses is published on a quarterly basis. This can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ministers-hospitality-gifts-meetings-overseas-travel>

■ **Domestic Waste: Waste Disposal**

Mr Andrew Snowden: [17636]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 3 December 2024 to Question 16313 on Domestic Waste: Waste Disposal, what his planned timetable is for Government to issue payments to local councils to procure the resources needed to carry out this service.

Mary Creagh:

Waste collection authorities received their capital new burdens funding allocations for providing household food waste collections in February this year and will receive transitional resource allocations for the 24/25 financial year in early 2025. We aim to provide 2025/26 payments early in the financial year.

■ **Food: Advertising**

Andrew Griffith: [17624]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Health on the potential impact of the Advertising (Less Healthy Food Definitions and Exemptions) Regulations 2024 to (a) porridge oats, (b) pork rind-based snacks and (c) roast potatoes on the food and drink industry.

Daniel Zeichner:

The Government is delivering on its manifesto commitment to ban junk food advertising to children by introducing the Advertising (Less Healthy Food Definitions and Exemptions) Regulations 2024. This was agreed in the usual way across the Government through proper development and consultation processes. As the lead department, DHSC has published an impact assessment including costs to business, and published guidance for industry on the food and drink categories in scope of the restrictions.

■ Nature Reserves: Lancashire

Peter Fortune: [\[16894\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the adequacy of the accessibility of the consultation entitled Open access restriction at Woodnook Valley (3), published on 20 November 2024.

Peter Fortune: [\[16902\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the adequacy of the accessibility of the consultation on Open access restriction at Sandy Gulls and others: how to comment, published on 22 November 2024.

Mary Creagh:

Natural England (NE) is a relevant authority under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 for statutory restrictions and exclusions on access land. NE has a duty to publish a notice when it reviews these restrictions. NE uses existing Government websites for this purpose, posting a notification on GOV.UK that points to a Consultation Summary Report on Defra's Citizen Space website. NE ensures its consultation information meets the accessibility requirements for these websites. The accessibility statement for the website is available [here](#). This sets out what steps have been taken to make the website as accessible as possible. The accessibility statement for gov.uk is found here [Accessibility statement for www.gov.uk - GOV.UK](#)

These are the pages for the consultations on Woodnook Valley and the Sandy Gulls and others restrictions:

[Open access restriction at Woodnook Valley \(3\): how to comment - GOV.UK](#)

[Open access restriction at Woodnook Valley \(case number 2005090101\) - Defra - Citizen Space](#)

[Open access restriction at Sandy Gulls and others: how to comment - GOV.UK](#)

[Open access restriction at Sandy Gulls Trimmingham House Beeston Regis and Laburnum camp and caravan parks \(case numbers 2014117438 & 2014117440\) - Defra - Citizen Space.](#)

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ British Council: Loans

Charlotte Nichols: [\[17254\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the British Council has to repay its pandemic loan on commercial terms.

Mr Hamish Falconer:

The previous Government made available up to £200 million in loans during the Covid-19 pandemic to ensure the British Council remained solvent, to support

restructuring, and to help the British Council return to surplus. The loan was made on commercial terms to ensure compliance with the UK subsidy control regime.

The Government remains committed to recovering the loan as soon as the British Council's finances allow.

■ **British Indian Ocean Territory: Sovereignty**

Priti Patel: [\[16721\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will publish details of the (a) travel and (b) costs associated with Jonathan Powell's role in the negotiations on the future sovereignty of the British Indian Ocean Territory.

Stephen Doughty:

A decision on publishing details of costs associated with his appointment will be made in accordance with FCDO policy on Direct Ministerial Appointments at a later date. Jonathan Powell has carried out limited overseas engagements in his capacity as envoy, including in Mauritius and the United States.

Priti Patel: [\[16722\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what further visits he expects Jonathan Powell to make in his role negotiating the future sovereignty of the British Indian Ocean Territory; and when he expects that role to end.

Stephen Doughty:

Jonathan Powell started his role as National Security Adviser on 2 December. In this role he will continue to engage on matters related to the British Indian Ocean Territory as well as a range of other national security issues, both in the UK and overseas.

Priti Patel: [\[16723\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what provision he has made for the costs associated with the proposed Treaty with Mauritius on the future sovereignty of the British Indian Ocean Territory in his Departmental Budget for (a) 2025/26 and (b) future years.

Stephen Doughty:

This Agreement will be underpinned by a financial package which will support a new era of economic partnership between the UK and Mauritius and demonstrate the commitment of both parties to support the welfare of Chagossian communities.

A financial element was crucial to securing the agreement. This government will not scrimp on security.

Financial obligations arising from this agreement, including departmental budgetary responsibilities, will be managed responsibly within the government's fiscal framework.

Priti Patel: [\[16724\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what funds he plans to provide to the Trust Fund for the benefit of Chagossians as part of the proposed Treaty with Mauritius on the future sovereignty of the British Indian Ocean Territory.

Stephen Doughty:

Financial obligations arising from this agreement, including departmental budgetary responsibilities, will be managed responsibly within the government's fiscal framework.

This government is committed to supporting Chagossians. Further details about UK support to Chagossians will be made available in due course.

Priti Patel: [\[16725\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what funds he plans to provide to the economic partnership with Mauritius as part of the proposed Treaty with Mauritius on the future sovereignty of the British Indian Ocean Territory.

Stephen Doughty:

Financial obligations arising from this agreement, including departmental budgetary responsibilities, will be managed responsibly within the Government's fiscal framework.

The Government intends to share further details of the future economic partnership with Mauritius in due course.

Priti Patel: [\[16726\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he expects to conclude negotiations with Mauritius on the future sovereignty of the British Indian Ocean Territory before 20 January 2025.

Stephen Doughty:

This agreement is in the shared interests of both Mauritius and the UK, including by ensuring the long-term and effective operation of the joint UK-US base on Diego Garcia. It has been welcomed by our mutual partners the US and India and opens a new era of security and economic cooperation. We look forward to working with the new Mauritian Government to finalise the Treaty and will update the house in due course on timelines for signature and laying of the Treaty following the usual process.

■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Aviation

Rupert Lowe: [\[16883\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many international (a) air miles and (b) flights have been completed by (i) Ministers and (ii) officials in their Department since 5 July 2024.

Catherine West:

Data on ministers' overseas travel and on senior civil servants' business expenses is published on a quarterly basis. This can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

■ **Ghana: General Elections****Wendy Morton:**[\[17542\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential implications for his policies of Russian interference in the upcoming Ghanaian general election.

Anneliese Dodds:

Foreign actors, including Russia, attempt to use information manipulation and interference to manipulate social discourse, skew national and international debates on subjects of critical importance, and try to undermine democratic institutions and national security. In Africa, Russia-linked media and influence organisations are using disinformation to garner support for Russian activity and discredit others.

We are working with our African partners to strengthen resilience to malign activity through strategic security and defence relationships alongside humanitarian, development and stabilisation programmes. The UK and Ghana are strong partners and we support the integrity of its elections and strength of its democracy. The UK's approach to supporting Ghana's resilience, including during its elections period, is focused on partnering with civil society, which has an essential role in ensuring a credible and transparent process. The UK's £5 million Ghana Governance Programme is working to support democracy and strong governance. This includes delivering communication and media relations training to counter and tackle mis/disinformation during the election.

During his visit to Ghana in September, Lord Collins met with the President and the two main Presidential candidates and welcomed Ghana's commitment to democracy, highlighting the importance of credible, transparent and inclusive elections.

■ **Hong Kong: National Security****Priti Patel:**[\[16754\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will publish the occasions on which he has directly raised with his Chinese counterpart the impact of the Hong Kong National Security Law on Hong Kongers.

Catherine West:

The UK has called for the National Security Law to be repealed and for an end to the prosecution of all individuals charged under it.

The Foreign Secretary met Foreign Minister Wang Yi during his visit to Beijing on 18 October where he raised serious concerns around the implementation of the National Security Law and the ongoing treatment of British national Jimmy Lai, again calling for his release.

■ Jimmy Lai**Priti Patel:** [\[16753\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will list the occasions he has directly raised the case of Jimmy Lai with his Chinese counterpart.

Catherine West:

British national Jimmy Lai's case is a priority for the UK Government. The Foreign Secretary raised his case in his first meeting with China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi at the ASEAN Summit on 26 July, and again during their second meeting in Beijing on 18 October. I raised his case with the Hong Kong and Chinese authorities when I visited Hong Kong on 14-15 November. The Prime Minister also raised Mr Lai's case with President Xi on 18 November.

■ Kosovo: Inland Waterways**Alicia Kearns:** [\[R\] \[17612\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has had discussions with his Kosovan counterpart on the attack on the Iber Lepenci water canal on 28 November 2024.

Stephen Doughty:

The Foreign Secretary messaged Kosovo's President Osmani on 30 November, following the attack on critical infrastructure in northern Kosovo the previous day. He expressed his shock and welcomed the swift work of emergency engineers to contain the damage. He underlined the importance of a full, evidence-based investigation and set out the UK's staunch support for Kosovo as it works to bring the perpetrators to account and to prevent further attacks in coordination with the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) and the Kosovo Force (KFOR).

Alicia Kearns: [\[R\] \[17613\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has made an assessment of the potential implications for his policies of the attack on the Iber Lepenci water canal in Kosovo on 28 November 2024.

Stephen Doughty:

Following the 29 November attack on critical infrastructure in northern Kosovo, our immediate priorities are to demonstrate our support and solidarity with Kosovo; to work with Kosovo and international partners to ensure a credible, evidence-based investigation is conducted; and to manage down risks of escalation. I spoke to Kosovo's Prime Minister Kurti and Serbia's Foreign Minister Djuric on 1 December and urged against rhetoric that increases tensions.

Alicia Kearns: [\[17614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when his Department last discussed the Banjska attack with the Serbian Government.

Stephen Doughty:

We continue to engage at senior levels with the Serbian government to urge Serbia to bring to account the perpetrators of the September 2023 Banjska attack and the May 2023 attack on Kosovo Force (KFOR) troops. Most recently, I underlined the importance of accountability for these attacks in my conversation with Serbian Foreign Minister Djuric on 1 December. I also made this point to Foreign Minister Djuric in the margins of the Berlin Process Foreign Ministers' meeting in October.

Alicia Kearns:**[R] [17615]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will increase the number of British military personnel deployed to KFOR following the attack on the Iber Lepenci water canal on 28 November 2024.

Stephen Doughty:

The size and shape of NATO's Kosovo Force (KFOR) mission is an operational matter for NATO. The UK would consider any request from NATO, through its established process and procedure, for an increase in the number of military personnel deployed to Kosovo. We remain a key part of KFOR - including with our Strategic Reserve, which deployed for three months at less than five days' notice after the attack at Banjska in the north of Kosovo in September 2023.

Alicia Kearns:**[R] [17616]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has discussed the attack on the Iber Lepenci water canal in Kosovo with the Foreign Ministers of (a) the EU, (b) the USA, (c) France, (d) Italy and (e) Germany.

Stephen Doughty:

I discussed the attack on critical infrastructure in northern Kosovo on 3 December with French Minister for European Affairs. I also discussed the situation with fellow NATO members at the NATO Foreign Ministerial Meeting on 3 December. On the same day, the Prime Minister's Special Envoy, Lord Peach, discussed the attack with EU Special Representative Lajcak. This followed the immediate engagement of our Ambassadors in Pristina and Belgrade with their EU, French, Italian, US and German counterparts, with whom we are working to encourage a full and evidence-based investigation to establish the facts of the attack, and to urge against rhetoric that heightens tensions. I will continue to engage with counterparts.

■ Russia: Sanctions**Laurence Turner:****[16659]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the impact of (a) UK and (b) other sanctions on Russian economic performance.

Stephen Doughty:

Our Russia sanctions are restricting Putin's war machine and degrading his military. Sanctions have deprived Russia of over \$400 billion since February 2022, equivalent

to four more years of funding for the invasion. We have sanctioned 73 vessels forming part of Russia's 'Shadow Fleet', more than any other country. Many of these ships have been left idling at sea, and have struggled to fully re-enter the Russian oil trade. In September 2024 we sanctioned carriers transporting Russian Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG), followed by a second set of vessels sanctioned in October. These carriers were involved in the shipping of LNG from Russia's Arctic LNG 2 project which has recently been forced to cease production as a result of sanctions, denying Russia a key source of revenue. The FCDO regularly reviews the effectiveness and impact of our sanction regimes and remains committed to continuing to impose and enforce sanctions, alongside our partners, to constrain Russia's remaining sources of revenue.

■ Sanctions: Reviews

Calum Miller:

[\[17471\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to his oral response of 26 November 2024, Official Report column 631, what the terms of reference are for the review of the enforcement of sanctions; who is conducting it; when it was commissioned; when it will report; and whether he plans to publish the results.

Stephen Doughty:

I launched a cross-Government review of sanctions enforcement at the first Small Ministerial Group in October. The review is examining whether we have the right powers, approach, capacity and resourcing on policy, implementation and enforcement, with an urgent focus on strengthening the latter. It is being led by the FCDO in collaboration with key sanctions Departments. We will update Parliament as the review progresses.

■ South Korea: Politics and Government

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[17515\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he plans to raise the (a) declaration of martial law in South Korea and (b) potential implications of that decision at the UN.

Catherine West:

I issued a statement on 3 December expressing deep concern about the events in Seoul of 3 December. We welcome the decision made following a vote in the National Assembly to withdraw the martial law decree. South Korea is a proud democracy, and events have shown that their systems and processes seem able to resolve situations like this one. Our Embassy team in Seoul are monitoring developments. The UN has not made a statement regarding the situation.

■ Sudan: Internally Displaced People**Stephen Gethins:****[R] [17546]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential implications for his policies of recent reports of the Zamzam displacement camp in Sudan being shelled by Rapid Support Forces.

Anneliese Dodds:

The UK is appalled by recent reports of the Rapid Support Forces' indiscriminate shelling of Zamzam camp, the largest camp for internally displaced persons (IDP) in Sudan. There are an estimated 500,000 people living in Zamzam camp, where famine was declared by The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Committee in August. The warring parties must fulfil the commitments they made in Jeddah to prevent harm to civilians and abide by International Humanitarian Law. The UK is in touch with partners to ensure we support the response, including to those who may be displaced from the camp by the violence. The UK is one of the biggest supporters to the Sudan Humanitarian Fund, which provides support to local responders including the Emergency Response Rooms.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ HIV Infection: Diagnosis****Mr Richard Holden:****[17255]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many cases of (a) HIV and (b) AIDS have been diagnosed due to mandatory opt-out testing in hospitals.

Andrew Gwynne:

The bloodborne viruses (BBVs) opt-out testing in emergency departments programme has identified 391 people with new HIV diagnoses between April 2022 and December 2023. In addition, 314 people were identified with HIV who had been previously diagnosed. Data on AIDS is not collected via the emergency department opt-out BBV testing programme. The published report is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hiv-monitoring-and-evaluation-framework/hiv-action-plan-monitoring-and-evaluation-framework-2024-report>

HOME OFFICE**■ Anti-social Behaviour and Theft: Surrey****Dr Al Pinkerton:****[16888]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to help tackle (a) anti-social behaviour and (b) theft in market towns across Surrey.

Dame Diana Johnson:

Tackling anti-social behaviour, theft and other crimes affecting local communities are a top priorities for this Government, and represent a key part of our Safer Streets Mission.

The Government recently announced Respect Orders, which will be introduced in the forthcoming Crime and Policing Bill. Respect Orders can be applied for by police and local councils and are issued by the courts. They will enable courts to place wide-ranging restrictions on the behaviour of the most persistent and disruptive ASB offenders. They will include a power of arrest for any suspected breach, meaning officers can take action quickly to disrupt ongoing ASB. Breach will be a criminal offence, which is heard in the criminal courts with a wide range of sentencing options, including community orders, unlimited fines and, for the most severe cases, up to two years' imprisonment.

The Government also recognises that a key part of making theft less attractive to criminals is to tackle the market for stolen goods, making items such as mobile phones less attractive to steal in the first place. This is why we have announced that we will be working with tech companies and law enforcement to see what more can be done to break the business model of mobile phone thieves.

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

■ Criminal Proceedings: Inspections**Peter Fortune:****[16895]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the adequacy of the accessibility of the consultation on criminal justice joint inspection programme, published on 20 November 2024.

Dame Diana Johnson:

The Criminal Justice Joint inspectorates are consulting on their Criminal Justice Joint Inspection Programme. This consultation is published online and available in both HTML and PDF formats.

This is a public consultation intended to gather the views of those with experience of the criminal justice system to ensure the most pertinent issues are inspected.

Where accessibility issues arise, the secretariat for the programme is able to provide alternative formats for the consultation document.

Details of this are available on gov.uk:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-criminal-justice-joint-inspection-programme>

■ Fire and Rescue Services: Pensions**Peter Fortune:** [\[16898\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the adequacy of the accessibility of the consultation on Firefighters pensions: member contribution structure, published on 20 November 2024.

Dame Diana Johnson:

Accessible versions of both the consultation document and consultation questions document were published on 04/12/2024.

These can be accessed at: [Firefighters pensions: member contribution structure - GOV.UK](#)

■ Home Office: Aviation**Rupert Lowe:** [\[16884\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many international (a) air miles and (b) flights have been completed by (i) Ministers and (ii) officials in their Department since 5 July 2024.

Dame Diana Johnson:

Data on ministers' overseas travel and on senior civil servants' business expenses is published on a quarterly basis. The latest publications can be found here:

[Home Office: senior officials' business expenses, January 2024 to March 2024 - GOV.UK](#)

[Home Office's ministerial travel, April to June 2024 - GOV.UK](#)

■ Home Office: Policy**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[16818\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how their Department defines strategy.

Dame Diana Johnson:

The definition is detailed in the Functional Standards Common Glossary, which is published on the gov.uk website.

■ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Public Expenditure**Kevin Hollinrake:** [\[16736\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 5 September 2024 to Question 2635 on Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Public Expenditure, if she will state how her department has changed the previous Government's approach to extremism to facilitate the efficiency saving of £5 million that was included in the MHCLG savings listed in HM Treasury's document entitled, Fixing the foundations: Public spending audit 2024-25, published on 29 July 2024.

Dan Jarvis:

The Home Secretary commissioned the counter extremism sprint to identify gaps in current policy approaches and to recommend a new approach to tackling radicalisation that can draw people to hateful ideologies, both online and offline. The aim was to develop objectives and the foundations for a new strategy and recommend a coherent and sustainable approach to counter extremism across His Majesty's Government. The sprint was conducted over the summer and has now concluded.

Departmental budgets are currently under review and will be announced by His Majesty's Treasury in due course. The Home Office intends for all projects to deliver value for money and remain in line with budgetary capabilities.

Police: Pensions**Peter Fortune:**[\[16899\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the adequacy of the accessibility of the consultation on Police pensions: member contribution structure, published on 20 November 2024.

Dame Diana Johnson:

Accessible versions of both the consultation document and consultation questions document were published on 04/12/2024.

These can be accessed at: [Police pensions: member contribution structure - GOV.UK](#)

Respect Orders: Hemel Hempstead**David Taylor:**[\[17734\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the potential eligibility of Hemel Hempstead for the Respect Order pilot scheme.

Dame Diana Johnson:

Tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB) is a top priority for this Government, and a key part of our Safer Streets Mission.

The Government recently announced Respect Orders which will be introduced through the Crime and Policing Bill. Respect Orders can be applied for by the police and local councils and are issued by the courts. They will enable courts to place wide-ranging restrictions on the behaviour of the most persistent and disruptive ASB offenders.

Respect Orders will be piloted prior to national rollout to make sure they are as effective as possible. Consideration will be given to where the pilots will take place in due course.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**■ Chinese Embassy: Planning Permission****David Simmonds:****[17009]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the Prime Minister's Oral Statement of 21 November 2024 on G20 and COP29 Summits, Official Report, columns 371-373 and pursuant to the Answer of 27 November 2024, to Question 14996, on Chinese Embassy: Planning Permission, whether the Prime Minister has had discussions with her on the planning application for the proposed Chinese Embassy between 23 August and 18 October 2024.

Matthew Pennycook:

The decision to call in the planning application for the proposed Chinese Embassy was made by the Deputy Prime Minister, in line with current policy on call-in.

■ Community Relations**Chris Evans:****[16480]**

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

Alex Norris:

The Government has made £15 million available to the places most severely affected by the violent disorder of the summer through the Community Recovery Fund. 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.

This Government is determined to take a long-term, strategic approach to building social cohesion. This is a priority and I have stood up a cross-government Communities & Recovery Steering Group to oversee this work.

This Government is committed to ensuring that communities across Britain are safe, resilient, and united.

■ Council Tax: Greater London**Kevin Hollinrake:****[16765]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Written Statement of 28 November 2024 on Local Government Finance, HCWS265, and to the Answer of 28 November 2024 to Question 15204, if he will publish the council tax referendum principles for (a) the Greater London Authority and (b) Transport for London for the financial year 2025-26.

Jim McMahon:

The local government finance policy statement 2025 to 2026

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-government-finance-policy-statement-2025-to-2026/local-government-finance-policy-statement-2025-to-2026>),

set out a proposed referendum principle of 3% for the Greater London Authority's non

police precept and a £14 flexibility for the police element. There is no separate council tax precept charged by Transport for London.

■ **Devolution: East of England**

Kevin Hollinrake:

[\[16746\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answers of 8 October 2024 to Questions 5762 and 5607 on Devolution: Norfolk and Devolution: Suffolk, what the evidential basis is for the Government's policy that a single local authority model of devolution would risk the optimal delivery of services.

Jim McMahon:

This government strongly believes that the benefits of devolution are best achieved through the establishment of combined authorities or combined county authorities over sensible economic geographies and supported by a directly elected mayor. These institutions and mayors, with their regional economic competencies and status as members of the Council of Nations and Regions add the capacity and focus required to get the best from new devolved powers and funding. We have therefore decided that mayoral devolution will only be available to areas that come together to establish such institutions over a wider geography.

The Government is committed to bringing meaningful devolution to Norfolk and Suffolk and stands ready to work with partners across the region on progressing a more ambitious devolution settlement, in a way that delivers the best outcomes possible the people of Norfolk and Suffolk, and which sees the right powers in the right places. We are pleased that discussions remain positive and look forward to making progress on devolution.

■ **Freehold and Leasehold: Northern Ireland**

Robin Swann:

[\[17443\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether her Department has had discussions with the Northern Ireland Executive on legislation on (a) leasehold and (b) freehold affecting properties in Northern Ireland.

Matthew Pennycook:

The department regularly engages with the Northern Ireland Executive on a range of policy areas including housing. Recently this has included ministerial attendance of the British Irish Council's Planning and Places meeting in November, as well as through direct bilateral engagement.

Property law is a transferred matter in Northern Ireland. However, in early 2025, the Deputy Prime Minister will be chairing the first inter-ministerial meeting for Housing, Local Governments and Communities with the devolved governments.

■ Homelessness: Rural Areas**Edward Morello:** [\[17456\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps she is taking with Cabinet colleagues to help provide accommodation for homeless people in rural areas.

Edward Morello: [\[17457\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent steps she has taken with cabinet colleagues to tailor homelessness prevention strategies for (a) West Dorset constituency and (b) other rural communities.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[17588\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent steps she has taken to reduce homelessness in (a) Slough constituency and (b) Thames Valley region.

Mike Amesbury: [\[17599\]](#)

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

Mike Amesbury: [\[17600\]](#)

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

Victoria Collins: [\[17683\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps she plans to take to (a) end homelessness and (b) involve people who have lived experience of homelessness in that process.

Neil Duncan-Jordan: [\[17742\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps she is taking to help end child homelessness.

Rushanara Ali:

Homelessness levels are far too high. This Government recognises the devastating impact this can have on those affected. We are already taking the first steps to get back on track to ending homelessness. As announced at the Budget, funding for homelessness services is increasing next year by £233 million compared to this year (2024/25) and brings total spend to nearly £1 billion in 2025/26. Allocations for individual local authorities in England will be set out later in December, which will include Slough, West Dorset, the Thames Valley region and wider rural communities.

The Deputy Prime Minister is leading cross-government work to tackle the underlying causes of homelessness and deliver long-term solutions to end all forms of homelessness, including rural and child homelessness. This includes chairing a

dedicated Inter-Ministerial Group, bringing together ministers from across Government to develop a long-term homelessness strategy.

We have also established an Expert Group to bring together representatives from across the homelessness and rough sleeping sector, local and combined authorities and wider experts. The role of this expert group is to provide knowledge, analysis and challenge to help Government understand what is working well nationally and locally and where improvements are needed.

The department also has a lived experience forum to ensure the voices of those with lived experience of homelessness are reflected in the homelessness strategy.

More widely, we are taking action to tackle the root causes of homelessness by delivering the biggest increase in social and affordable housebuilding in a generation and building 1.5 million new homes over the next parliament.

The Government is also abolishing Section 21 'no fault' evictions, preventing private renters being exploited and discriminated against, and empowering people to challenge unreasonable rent increases.

■ **Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Aviation**

Rupert Lowe:

[16886]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many international (a) air miles and (b) flights have been completed by (i) Ministers and (ii) officials in their Department since 5 July 2024.

Alex Norris:

Data on minister's overseas travel and on senior civil servant's business expenses is published on a quarterly basis. This can be found here: [DLUHC: ministerial gifts, hospitality, travel and meetings, April to June 2024 - GOV.UK](#), [DLUHC: senior officials' business expenses and hospitality, April to June 2024 - GOV.UK](#).

■ **Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: HOPE not hate**

Nick Timothy:

[16793]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 15 November 2024 to Question 12772 on Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: HOPE not hate, if she will list the issues on which officials have engaged with Hope not Hate since 5 July 2024.

Alex Norris:

I refer the hon member to the answer to Question UIN [12772](#) on 15 November 2024.

■ **Playgrounds**

Steve Darling:

[16766]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether her Department plans to renew play equipment in (a) parks and (b) public spaces.

Alex Norris:

The provision of playgrounds in parks and public spaces is primarily a matter for local authorities. We support local government and recognise the challenges that local authorities are facing as demand increases for critical services. We have listened to voices across the sector and it was prioritised at the Budget, where we announced over £4 billion in additional funding for local government services, including £1.3 billion provided through the Local Government Finance Settlement. Overall, the provisional Settlement will mean local government receives an around 3.2% real-terms increase in Core Spending Power.

The National Planning Policy Framework, which local authorities are expected to consider when developing their Local Plans, is clear that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places.

Private Education: Business Rates**Kevin Hollinrake:**[\[16748\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the answer of 9 September 2024 to Question 2820 on Private Education: Business Rates, whether business rates will be levied on (a) nurseries and (b) pre-school premises affiliated with an independent school.

Jim McMahon:

The Non Domestic Rating (Multipliers and Private Schools) Bill will remove the eligibility for charitable rate relief from private schools that are charities in England. Standalone private nursery schools with their own rates bills are outside of the scope of the Bill and, where charities, will retain their relief. Private schools that provide education for pupils of compulsory school age but also have nursery classes within the school will lose their rate relief entirely unless the nursery classes are on separate premises with their own rates bill.

Regional Planning and Development: Finance**Peter Fortune:**[\[16892\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the accessibility of the consultation on ending Pan-Regional Partnership core funding.

Jim McMahon:

At the Autumn Statement, the government announced its intention to end core funding for Pan-Regional Partnerships and consult on the impacts of this decision, if it were taken forward. This public consultation is now live and accessible on Gov.uk and Government will consider all responses received by the deadline of Monday 16th December.

■ Storms: Finance

Dame Harriett Baldwin:

[\[16738\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what new financial support is available to local authorities affected by Storm Bert.

Alex Norris:

The impact of flooding, wherever it occurs, is traumatic for the communities impacted and I have great sympathy for all those affected. The government is ready to consider local authority requests for Bellwin Scheme support which can help with the reimbursement of immediate eligible costs for the local authorities affected by the recent storms, including storm Bert.

■ Temporary Accommodation: Children

Mike Amesbury:

[\[16807\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent estimate her Department has made of the number of children living in temporary accommodation.

Rushanara Ali:

Local authorities in England report the numbers of households in temporary accommodation and this data is published each quarter as part of the Homelessness Case Level Information Collection (H-CLIC). The most recent figures for April - June 2024 showed that on 30 June 2024, 78,420 households with children were in temporary accommodation, which includes 159,380 children. The figures for April – June 2024, including regional breakdowns, are available here (see tab TA1): [Statutory homelessness in England: April to June 2024 - GOV.UK](#).

■ UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Stuart Anderson:

[\[16772\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether she has made a recent assessment of the potential impact of extending the UK Shared Prosperity Fund on (a) small business, (b) farmers and (c) community infrastructure.

Alex Norris:

The Autumn Budget announced that the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), for which the previous government made no plans beyond March 2025, will be extended for 2025-26 at a reduced level of £900 million. This transitional arrangement will allow places to continue investing in local growth in advance of wider funding reform. It will ensure stability and flexibility for areas to deliver the most important local projects, which can include help for small businesses and community projects where relevant.

We are committed to evaluating the impacts of the UKSPF. The UKSPF evaluation strategy is published online and sets out the approach to evaluation at programme, intervention and place level. The department is committed to publishing evaluation findings on an ongoing basis as they are available.

The Rural England Prosperity Fund is delivered alongside UKSPF to help rural communities and businesses, including farm businesses. Its evaluation is also now underway.

JUSTICE

■ Birds: Pest Control

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[16828\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people were prosecuted for (a) killing and (b) taking certain species of wild birds (i) in (A) 2021, (B) 2022 and (C) 2023 and (ii) since general license 42 was updated on 1 January 2024.

Sarah Sackman:

The Ministry of Justice publishes data on prosecutions at criminal courts in England and Wales between January 2021 and June 2024 in the Outcomes by Offences data tool, that can be downloaded from the Criminal Justice Statistics landing page here: [Criminal Justice Statistics](#). The offence 'Prohibition of certain methods of killing or taking wild birds (Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981)' can be found using the following HO code; 19006. This can be accessed by navigating to the 'Prosecutions and convictions' tab and using the HO Offence Code filter to select the above offence in the Outcomes by Offence data tool.

Between January 2021 and June 2024 there have been 6 prosecutions for the offence 'Prohibition of certain methods of killing or taking wild birds (Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981)'. However, it is not possible to separately identify killing or taking wild birds from the offence within the court proceedings database held centrally by the Ministry of Justice.

■ Coroners and Forensic Science: Finance

Darren Paffey:

[\[17416\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps she is taking with Cabinet colleagues to ensure that there is adequate (a) funding and (b) support for (i) forensic investigation teams and (ii) coroner services to help minimise delays.

Alex Davies-Jones:

It is important that the death investigation process is as swift and efficient as possible to avoid additional distress for bereaved families at such a difficult time in their lives.

Whilst the Ministry of Justice is responsible for coroner law and policy, this Department does not have operational responsibility for coroner services as they are a local service, funded and administered by individual local authorities. Local authorities are responsible for ensuring these services are adequately resourced in line with local needs and priorities.

However, the Government recognises the impact of delays in coronial investigations on bereaved families. This was an issue explored and highlighted by the Justice

Select Committee following their recent follow-up inquiry into the coroner service. The Government is carefully considering the Committee's findings including on coronial pathology provision, which is a long-standing and cross cutting issue that can impact on the timeliness of coronial investigations and will respond on the steps it intends to take to further support the coroner service in due course.

Fair and efficient police investigations and outcomes depend on the timely delivery of high-quality forensic science. The Government is working with PCCs, Chief Constables, the Forensic Science Regulator and other leaders in forensic science to ensure forensic services are reliable and robust to increase confidence in the police and criminal justice system to their highest levels.

■ Courts: Fines

Rupert Lowe: [\[15900\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much is outstanding for court fines on foreign national offenders (a) in Great Yarmouth constituency and (b) nationally.

Sarah Sackman:

The information requested is not held centrally.

Rupert Lowe: [\[16092\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much in outstanding court fines for foreign national offenders was written off (a) in Great Yarmouth constituency and (b) nationally in the most recent year for which figures are available.

Sarah Sackman:

The information requested is not held centrally.

Rupert Lowe: [\[16093\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what proportion of payments of court fines on foreign national offenders were made by benefit payment deductions (a) in Great Yarmouth constituency and (b) nationally in the most recent year for figures are available.

Sarah Sackman:

The information requested is not held centrally.

■ Courts: Great Yarmouth

Rupert Lowe: [\[15892\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, in what proportion of Great Yarmouth Magistrates' Court cases has the defendant required a translator in each of the last 10 years.

Sarah Sackman:

The information requested could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ Courts: Translation Services**Rupert Lowe:** [\[15898\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will make an estimate of the number of court cases that collapsed due to the lack of an available interpreter in (a) Great Yarmouth Magistrates Court and (b) England and Wales in the last 12 months.

Sarah Sackman:

The Ministry of Justice does not collate information regarding “collapsed trials” due to the lack of interpreter availability, but the Department does routinely publish data concerning ineffective trials including where the reason is “no interpreter available” as part of the Accredited Official Statistics series Criminal Court Statistics Quarterly. An ineffective trial is a trial that does not go ahead on the scheduled trial date and a further listing is required.

In response to the questions (a) and (b), we confirm the following, based on the above description:

1. There were five ineffective trials where the reason was “no interpreter available” at Great Yarmouth magistrates’ courts in 2023.
1. There were 556 ineffective trials where the reason was “no interpreter available” at all magistrates’ courts in England and Wales in 2023, this accounted for less than 1% of all listed trials in that period.

■ Parole**Kim Johnson:** [\[17260\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 29 November 2024 to Question 15952 on Prisoners, how many and what proportion of Parole Board recommendations were rejected by the Government in each of the last 12 months.

Kim Johnson: [\[17261\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 29 November 2024 to Question 15952, on Prisoners, how many and what proportion of Parole Board recommendations on releasing (a) prisoners serving an Imprisonment for Public Protection sentence and (b) other prisoners were rejected by the Government in each of the last 12 months.

Kim Johnson: [\[17262\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of Parole Board recommendations on moving (a) prisoners serving an Imprisonment for Public Protection sentence and (b) other prisoners to open conditions were rejected by the Government in each of the last 12 months.

Sir Nicholas Dakin:

In the response to PQ 15952, it was explained that the transfer of an indeterminate sentence prisoner to open conditions is a decision for the Secretary of State. It was

also explained that there is no current power for the Government to overrule a Parole Board release decision.

In making a decision concerning the transfer of an indeterminate sentence prisoner to open conditions, the Secretary of State will take account of any recommendation made by the Parole Board. However, the Secretary of State may either reject or accept that recommendation. In the table below, the breakdown of data requested is provided.

MONTH	SENTENCE TYPE	ACCEPTED	NOT ACCEPTED	TOTAL	% NOT ACCEPTED
January	Not IPP	*	8	8	
	IPP	*	11	11	
February	Not IPP	3	19	22	86%
	IPP	*	10	10	
March	Not IPP	5	15	20	75%
	IPP	*	12	12	
April	Not IPP	*	7	7	
	IPP	*	9	9	
May	Not IPP	*	17	17	
	IPP	8	14	22	64%
June	Not IPP	12	17	29	59%
	IPP	7	18	25	72%
July	Not IPP	21	8	29	28%
	IPP	7	12	19	63%
August	Not IPP	32	17	49	35%
	IPP	10	19	29	66%
September	Not IPP	26	5	31	16%
	IPP	14	3	17	18%
October	Not IPP	30	5	35	14%
	IPP	13	5	18	28%
November	Not IPP	25	10	35	29%

MONTH	SENTENCE	ACCEPTED	NOT ACCEPTED	TOTAL	% NOT ACCEPTED
	TYPE				
December	IPP	12	9	21	43%
	Not IPP	16	3	19	16%
	IPP	8	6	14	43%

Note: The period used in this table is consistent with the period used in the answer provided to PQ 15952.

■ Prisoners' Release: Curfews

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[16973\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people released on home detention curfew were recalled to prison in (a) Wales and (b) England in each of the last 20 years.

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[16976\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people were released on home detention curfew in (a) Wales and (b) England in each of the last 20 years.

Sir Nicholas Dakin:

We have provided the requested information in the Tables 1 and 2 below.

Data on total HDC recalls from 2015 onwards can be found in Table 1. A further breakdown of HDC recalls prior to 2015 could only be supplied at disproportionate cost.

Table 1: Recalls from Home Detention Curfew to prisons in England and prisons in Wales, 2015 to 2023

YEAR	ENGLAND	WALES
2015	551	19
2016	523	13
2017	582	40
2018	1,575	93
2019	2,296	142
2020	2,040	154
2021	1,503	117
2022	1,284	92
2023	1,304	65

Data sources and quality The figures in this table have been drawn from administrative IT systems which, as with any large scale recording system, are subject to possible errors with data entry and processing. **Methodological note** Recall data presented here are calculated on the basis of those who were recalled (and subsequently returned to custody) in this period, how many were on HDC. This is different to the method used in Offender Management Statistics Quarterly which looks at the number released to HDC who were later recalled. Numbers will therefore not be comparable.

Source: Prison NOMIS

Table 2: HDC releases from prisons in England and prisons in Wales, 2004 to 2023

YEAR	ENGLAND	WALES
2004	18,514	781
2005	16,586	710
2006	13,157	509
2007	11,063	365
2008	11,403	318
2009	11,144	390
2010	11,915	335
2011	12,364	363
2012	12,330	473
2013	9,958	461
2014	8,228	386
2015	8,236	375
2016	8,613	429
2017	8,773	547
2018	13,699	1,070
2019	11,854	978
2020	9,884	905
2021	8,575	818

YEAR	ENGLAND	WALES
2022	7,950	781
2023	7,213	707

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

Source: Prison NOMIS

■ Prisoners' Release: Reoffenders

Mr James Frith: [\[16795\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the re-offending rate is for prisoners serving sentences of Imprisonment for Public Protection who are released.

Sir Nicholas Dakin:

The Ministry of Justice routinely publishes data in the proven reoffending quarterly statistics on the proportion of offenders serving Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) sentences who reoffend. Figures can be found in Table C2a: [proven-reoffending-oct22-dec22-3-monthly.ods](#).

I have provided figures from the latest publication on the last four quarters of available data:

	JAN - MAR 2022	APR - JUN 2022	JUL - SEP 2022	OCT - DEC 2022
Proportion of IPP offenders who reoffend (%)	4.8	9.5	6.5	2.3

■ Probation Service: Sherwood Forest

Michelle Welsh: [\[16865\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people have used probation services in Sherwood Forest constituency in each of the last 12 months.

Sir Nicholas Dakin:

The table below shows the number of people under supervision on the last day of each of the last 12 months.

CASELOAD PERIOD	NUMBER OF OFFENDERS
31 July 2023	325
31 August 2023	327

CASELOAD PERIOD	NUMBER OF OFFENDERS
30 September 2023	331
31 October 2023	339
30 November 2023	347
31 December 2023	343
31 January 2024	353
29 February 2024	344
31 March 2024	342
30 April 2024	340
31 May 2024	339
30 June 2024	341

Notes:

[1] Offenders may be subject to multiple sentences. Each person is counted once only in the total even if they are subject to several types of probation supervision on the date shown. For example, if a person is subject to both a community order and a Supervision Default Order on the date shown, then the person would be counted once only within the total of all Probation Service supervision.

[2] Includes offenders subject to a court order or pre- or post-release supervision.

[3] Excludes suspended sentence orders without requirements attached.

[4] These statistics are a further breakdown of the probation caseload in the Offender Management Statistics Quarterly publication. A published breakdown by Probation Service region is included in table 6.8.

[5] The figures presented in this table are based on offenders subject to probation supervision on the date shown who have a recorded main (home) address in the parliamentary constituency of Sherwood Forest. This table does not account for those with no fixed address or recorded postcode. Over the time periods covered in the table, the number of offenders with no fixed address or recorded postcode ranged from 12% to 14% of the total number of offenders subject to probation supervision in England and Wales.

[Note 6] The constituency was formerly known as Sherwood. It was renamed as a result of the 2023 Periodic Review of Westminster constituencies, with minor boundary changes. These changes came into effect for the 2024 general election. All periods in this table are based on the latest composition of the constituency.

DATA SOURCES AND QUALITY

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

Source: National Delius case management system.

PQ 16865 (Ministry of Justice; Analysis Directorate: PPR)

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ Northern Ireland Office: Aviation

Rupert Lowe: [16887]

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, how many international (a) air miles and (b) flights have been completed by (i) Ministers and (ii) officials in their Department since 5 July 2024.

Hilary Benn:

Data on ministers' overseas travel and on senior civil servants' business expenses is published on a quarterly basis. The latest publication can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nio-ministerial-gifts-hospitality-travel-and-meetings-april-to-june-2024>.

Information for the period July to October is due for publication shortly and will be available at: [https://www.gov.uk/search/transparency-and-freedom-of-information-releases?organisations\[\]=northern-ireland-office&parent=northern-ireland-office](https://www.gov.uk/search/transparency-and-freedom-of-information-releases?organisations[]=northern-ireland-office&parent=northern-ireland-office).

SCIENCE, INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY

■ Artificial Intelligence: Training

Charlie Dewhirst: [16592]

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what the cost to the public purse is of AI training programmes for civil servants.

Feryal Clark:

Learning in the civil service can be sourced either at a department level or centrally via a cross government learning framework. We are unable to share total consolidated spend but the spend associated with AI training purchased via the learning framework in 2024 is £107,000.

■ Copyright: Artificial Intelligence and Arts

Mr James Frith:

[\[16804\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, whether his Department has made an estimate of the potential value to the economy of licensing agreements between AI developers and the UK's creative industries for copyright protected works.

Feryal Clark:

The Government recognises that licensing is an important tool to ensure rights holders are remunerated appropriately. We have made no specific estimate at this stage of the potential economic value of licensing agreements between AI developers and rights holders.

The Government will launch a consultation soon to seek views and welcome evidence on a package of measures to address copyright and AI issues, including the value of licensing.

■ Copyright: Data Processing

Mr James Frith:

[\[16803\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, whether his Department has made a recent assessment of the potential impact of the copyright regime for text and data mining on the (a) AI sector, (b) creative industries and (c) wider economy.

Feryal Clark:

Greater certainty over copyright and AI would support growth in both the creative and AI sectors.

The Government will launch a consultation soon on a package of measures to address copyright and AI issues. This will seek views and evidence of potential impacts on the AI sector, the creative industries, and the wider economy.

Mr James Frith:

[\[16805\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, with reference to his Department's Green Paper entitled Invest 2035: The UK's Modern Industrial Strategy, published in October 2024, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential impact of changes to the UK's copyright regime for text and data mining on the (a) Industrial Strategy and (b) eight growth-driving sectors.

Feryal Clark:

The Government believes in both human-centred creativity and the potential of text and data mining and AI to open up new creative frontiers.

This requires a balanced solution – one that supports all the sectors listed in the Invest 2035 industrial strategy, including the creative industries and the digital and technologies sector.

The Government will launch a consultation soon on a package of measures to address copyright and AI issues and support growth.

Mr James Frith: [16806]

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, whether his Department has made a comparative assessment of the potential impact of international text and data exceptions on (a) development of AI products and (b) creative industries.

Feryal Clark:

We are engaging with international partners to better understand their approaches to copyright and AI issues.

The Government will launch a consultation soon on a package of measures to address copyright and AI issues, and welcomes views and evidence of impacts, including international approaches.

■ Department for Science, Innovation and Technology: Aviation

Rupert Lowe: [16874]

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, how many international (a) air miles and (b) flights have been completed by (i) Ministers and (ii) officials in their Department since 5 July 2024.

Feryal Clark:

Data on minister's overseas travel and on senior civil servant's business expenses is published on a quarterly basis. This can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dsit-ministerial-gifts-hospitality-travel-meetings-april-to-june-2024>

■ Department for Science, Innovation and Technology: Policy

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [16809]

To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, how their Department defines strategy.

Feryal Clark:

The definition is detailed in the Functional Standards Common Glossary, which is published on the gov.uk website.

TRANSPORT

■ A12: Essex

Priti Patel: [16758]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if she will make an estimate of the potential impact of the time taken to determine the application for the A12 Junction 19 to Junction 25 widening scheme on (a) the economy, (b) road safety and (c) the cost of the scheme.

Lilian Greenwood:

The Development Consent Order (DCO) application for the A12 Chelmsford to A120 widening scheme, was granted on 12 January 2024. I can confirm that the DCO was determined within the statutory timeframes.

■ Cross Country Trains: Standards

Alberto Costa: [\[17547\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment her Department has made of the performance trajectory of CrossCountry Trains following the implementation of its reduced timetable.

Simon Lightwood:

The Rail Minister met with CrossCountry in August. It is subject to a Remedial Plan that runs until March 2025. CrossCountry reinstated its full timetable from 10 November.

Officials meet CrossCountry regularly to discuss operational issues including progress with the Remedial Plan. CrossCountry will continue to be very closely monitored against the contractual benchmarks that are set out in its National Rail Contract.

■ Department for Transport: Aviation

Rupert Lowe: [\[16880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many international (a) air miles and (b) flights have been completed by (i) Ministers and (ii) officials in their Department since 5 July 2024.

Mike Kane:

Data on minister's overseas travel and on senior civil servant's business expenses is published on a quarterly basis. This can be found here:

- [DfT: ministerial gifts, hospitality, travel and meetings - GOV.UK](#)
- [DfT: senior officials' business expenses and meetings, April to June 2024 - GOV.UK](#)

Information for the period July to October is due for publication shortly.

■ Department for Transport: Policy

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[16810\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how their Department defines strategy.

Mike Kane:

The definition is detailed in the Functional Standards Common Glossary, which is published on the gov.uk website.

■ Driving Tests: Blackpool North and Fleetwood

Mrs Lorraine Beavers:

[\[17690\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps her Department is taking to increase the availability of practical driving tests in Blackpool North and Fleetwood constituency.

Lilian Greenwood:

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency's (DVSA) main priority is to reduce car practical driving test waiting times, whilst upholding road safety standards.

Measures in place to reduce waiting times for customers at all driving test centres (DTC), include the recruitment of new driving examiners (DE), conducting tests outside regular hours, including at weekends and on public holidays, and buying back annual leave from DEs. DVSA also continues to deploy DEs from areas with lower waiting times into those where waiting times are longer.

Blackpool's current DTC is a temporary base. DVSA has identified a new location for Blackpool DTC and has been working through the planning process. If successful in opening a new DTC at this site, this should allow an increase in capacity in the number of DEs, with an overall capacity of 10 DEs.

As part of recent recruitment at DTCs that serve the Blackpool North and Fleetwood constituency, DVSA has three potential new examiners currently in training.

■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[17512\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if she will make an estimate of the number of electric vehicle charging points there will be in each year from 2025 to 2030.

Lilian Greenwood:

The 2022 EV Charging Infrastructure Strategy ([UK electric vehicle infrastructure strategy - GOV.UK](#)) set out forecasts of consumer demand for public chargepoints.

These projections indicated that between 280,000 and 720,000 might be needed by 2030.

As of the 1 November there were over 71,000 public charging devices in the UK ([Developing faster indicators of transport activity - GOV.UK](#)). Between October 2023 and October 2024 the number of public charging devices grew by 42%.

■ Gatwick Airport

Mike Martin:

[\[17688\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 3 December 2024 to Question 15981 on Gatwick Airport, whether the previous Secretary of State for Transport met with representatives of Gatwick Airport to discuss the proposed expansion.

Mike Kane:

The previous Secretary of State did not meet with representatives of Gatwick Airport to discuss the proposed expansion.

■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Driving Tests

Alex Mayer:[\[17345\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the average waiting time was in weeks for a Driver Certificate of Professional Competence part 3b test in (a) England, (b) Central Bedfordshire and (c) each driving centre in November (i) 2024 and (ii) 2023.

Lilian Greenwood:

The average waiting time in weeks, in November 2024 and November 2023, for a Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) part 3b test, at test centres in England, and all other test centres, is contained within the attached document.

The table below shows the average waiting time in weeks for November 2024 and November 2023, at Leighton Buzzard (Stanbridge Road) test centre, which serves Central Bedfordshire.

	AVERAGE WAITING TIME NOVEMBER 2024	AVERAGE WAITING TIME NOVEMBER 2023
Leighton Buzzard (Stanbridge Road)	2.5	1.5

Attachments:

1. Driving tests - Waiting times - Test centres [Driving Tests waiting times - Test centres.xlsx]

■ London North Eastern Railway: WiFi

Chi Onwurah:[\[17532\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 14 November to Question 13473 and the Answer of 20 November 2024 to Question 14457 and 16158 on London North Eastern Railway: WiFi, what proportion of complaints about facilities on board were about wifi; and what the evidential basis is for the conclusion that wifi is not a significant cause of customer dissatisfaction.

Simon Lightwood:

For the period July to September 2024 London North Eastern Railway received 64 complaints relating to Wi-Fi reliability which equates to 0.75 per cent of all complaints received in that period.

■ Merchant Shipping: Insurance**Dr Andrew Murrison:** [\[17523\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many wet cargo ships have been boarded by UK authorities in territorial waters for lacking insurance this year.

Mike Kane:

No wet cargo ships have been boarded by UK authorities in territorial waters due to a lack of insurance this year.

■ Railways: Disability**Marsha De Cordova:** [\[16822\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether she plans to consult organisations led by disabled people on an accessibility road map for rail travel.

Simon Lightwood:

Ensuring accessibility for all passengers is at the heart of the Government's passenger-focussed approach. We know that the experience for disabled people when traveling on rail too often falls short of what is expected and what passengers deserve. We are committed to improving the experience for disabled passengers and have committed to publishing an accessibility roadmap to explain the actions we are taking to improve accessibility ahead of GBR.

We are working to define the approach to development of the roadmap, but I confirm we will engage with disabled people and key organisations, in line with our commitment in the House of Lords as part of the debate on the Passenger Railway Services (Public Ownership) Act, in order to ensure that it addresses the issues and needs of passengers who require assistance.

TREASURY**■ Employers' Contributions: Public Sector****Priti Patel:** [\[16761\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 11 November 2024 to Question 12263 on Employers' Contributions: Public Sector, what methodology her Department used to calculate the provisions identified in line 26 of Table 5.1 of the Autumn Budget 2024, HC 295, published on 30 October 2024, for compensating public sector organisations for the cost of increases in employer national insurance contributions.

James Murray:

The amount of public sector support was based on an estimate of the proportion of employer NICs receipts paid by public sector organisations, using the Office for National Statistics (ONS) classification of the public sector boundary. The Treasury routinely uses the Office for National Statistics (ONS) classification of the public

sector boundary, for example in relation to public sector spending, public sector borrowing and public sector debt.

■ **Financial Services: Disadvantaged**

Jess Asato: [\[16774\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if she will make an assessment of the impact of financial exclusion on (a) care experienced and (b) older people.

Tulip Siddiq:

Ensuring people have access to appropriate financial products and services is a key priority for the Government and is vital to supporting people's financial resilience and wellbeing. It is also an essential part of achieving inclusive growth and ensuring individuals are able to fully participate in the economy.

On 5 December, I convened a Financial Inclusion Committee which has been established to tackle the problems of financial exclusion. Through this committee, I will work with consumer groups and industry on the development of a Financial Inclusion Strategy. This will consider a range of barriers to inclusion for excluded groups, with a particular focus on access to banking, credit, and insurance.

■ **Fossil Fuels: Insurance**

Clive Lewis: [\[17571\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if she will take steps to prevent insurers underwriting fossil fuel projects.

Tulip Siddiq:

This Government is committed to delivering the UK's legal and international climate commitments. Clean power by 2030 and accelerating to net zero is a key mission of this Government and essential to credible, long-term economic growth.

Insurers make commercial decisions on their underwriting approach following their assessment of the relevant risks. However, it is imperative that the insurance sector aligns its operations with the United Kingdom's national and international climate commitments, and insurers must operate within the framework set by the regulatory authorities.

The Prudential Regulation Authority continues to work with Lloyd's of London and other sector representatives to ensure their practices support the transition to a low-carbon economy.

■ **Government Departments: Procurement**

Charlie Dewhirst: [\[16831\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much Government departments have spent on procurement relating to both goods and services in total in the most recent year for which figures are available.

Darren Jones:

The Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses (PESA) that were published in July 2024 shows budget aggregates and spending for 5 years of outturn and one plan year up to 2024-25. Chapter 2 of PESA includes several tables that show departmental budgets broken down by economic category. Table 2.2 for example shows totals for 'Gross current procurement in budgets' whilst table 2.3 shows totals for 'Gross capital procurement in budgets'. Here is a link to the PESA 2024 dataset:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/public-expenditure-statistical-analyses-2024>

The Public Spending Statistics (PSS) dataset was also published in July 2024 is similar to PESA but only covers the five years of outturn up to 2023-24. Included within the July 2024 PSS dataset is a database and associated pivot table in Excel format. From the pivot table it is possible to obtain the gross current and capital procurement totals as seen in tables 2.2 and 2.3 broken down by department group. Here is a link to the July 2024 PSS dataset:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/public-spending-statistics-release-july-2024>

■ Hospitality Industry: Taxation**Mr Gregory Campbell:****[17514]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to paragraph 2.40 of the Autumn Budget 2024, HC 295, published on 30 October 2024, if she will make an assessment of the potential impact of (a) the increase in the rate of employers' National Insurance Contributions and (b) the VAT rate on the viability of businesses in the hospitality sector.

James Murray:

The Government recognises that the significant contribution made by hospitality businesses to economic growth. At Autumn Budget 2024, the government took tough decisions on tax, spending and welfare to restore economic stability and invest in public services.

A Tax Information and Impact Note that covers the employer NICs changes was published by HMRC on 13 November, outlining the impact on business, that can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/changes-to-the-class-1-national-insurance-contributions-secondary-threshold-the-secondary-class-1-national-insurance-contributions-rate-and-the-empl/changes-to-the-class-1-national-insurance-contributions-secondary-threshold-the-secondary-class-1-national-insurance-contributions-rate-and-the-empl>.

VAT is a broad-based tax on consumption and the 20 per cent standard rate applies to most goods and services. The Government currently has no plans to introduce a different VAT rate for the hospitality sector.

However, the Government keeps all taxes under review, including consideration of impacts.

■ Royal Mint: Fraud

Mr Gregory Campbell: [\[17516\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what changes to procedures she has made following the investigation by law enforcement agencies into fraudulent transactions made on the Royal Mint website since 2022.

Tulip Siddiq:

As outlined in The Royal Mint Trading Fund's Annual Reports and Accounts for 2022-23, an external fraud incident occurred impacting The Royal Mint. A small number of fraudulent transactions were made on the Royal Mint's website. The incident did not impact Royal Mint customers details and there was no risk to customer data.

The Royal Mint continually make changes to their anti-fraud procedures, reflecting the dynamic nature of the external fraud landscape.

As shareholder of The Royal Mint, HM Treasury are regularly updated on risk controls and have been supporting the strengthening of these processes and procedures.

■ Treasury: Policy

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[16821\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how their Department defines strategy.

Tulip Siddiq:

The definition is detailed in the Functional Standards Common Glossary, which is published on the gov.uk website at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/functional-standards-common-glossary/functional-standards-common-glossary#s>

■ Trusts: Bank Services

Mr Richard Holden: [\[17258\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment she has made of the potential implications for her policies of changes in the number of firms offering bank accounts for trusts.

Tulip Siddiq:

Ensuring all individuals have access to the appropriate financial services and products they need is a key priority for Government and is vital to supporting people's financial resilience and wellbeing, and ensuring that individuals are able to fully participate in the economy.

In most circumstances, decisions on the provision of services such as trust accounts are commercial decisions for individual banks and building societies and the Government does not intervene.

WORK AND PENSIONS**■ Bereavement Support Payment**

Darren Paffey: [\[17417\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of extending the maximum number of months for which the Bereavement Support Payment can be paid beyond the existing cap of 18 monthly payments.

Andrew Western:

Bereavement Support Payment (BSP) helps people through the immediate period following a bereavement by way of an initial lump sum followed by up to 18 monthly instalments. Where longer-term financial support is needed, benefits such as Universal Credit have been specifically designed to provide assistance with ongoing living costs. The Government keeps the eligibility of all benefits under review.

■ Disability

Helen Whately: [\[16744\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department intends to implement the recommendations of the Disability Action Plan, published on 5 February 2024.

Sir Stephen Timms:

The Disability Action Plan was an initiative of the previous administration. This government is committed to championing the rights of disabled people. We will build on the insights shared by disabled people and their representative organisations, working closely with them so that their views and voices are at the heart of everything we do.

We will provide further updates on the Government's priorities for disability policy in due course

■ Living Wage: Social Security Benefits

Helen Whately: [\[16784\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of proposed changes to the National Living Wage on the (a) number of people claiming Universal Credit and (b) amount of working age benefits claimed.

Sir Stephen Timms:

The independent Low Pay Commission has published the labour market evidence underlying its recommendations for the April 2025 National Living Wage Rates available at: [Low Pay Commission summary of evidence 2024](#).

The Department for Business and Trade, will also publish a regulatory Impact Assessment of the change in due course. The Department for Work and Pensions has not undertaken separate analysis.

■ Social Security Benefits: Cancer

Lee Barron:

[\[17030\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make an assessment of the potential impact of the qualifying period for (a) Disability Living Allowance, (b) Personal Independence Payment and (c) Carers Allowance on applicants under 25 with a confirmed diagnosis of cancer; and if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of removing the qualifying period for such applicants.

Sir Stephen Timms:

Other than in cases of people nearing the end of life, all claims to either Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP) are subject to the qualifying period. The qualifying period, together with a prospective test, ensures that the health condition or disability is of a long-term nature. Where the qualifying period has been satisfied, in whole or in part, at the point of claim then entitlement to the benefit can begin from the date of claim or the date the remaining qualifying period is met.

Special considerations apply to claimants who are nearing the end of life, and our arrangements recognise the difficulties faced by people who only have a short time to live with claims being fast tracked. DLA and PIP claimants are regarded as nearing the end of life if they “suffer from a progressive disease, and the person’s death in consequence of that disease can reasonably be expected within 12 months.” These claimants are guaranteed the highest rate of the Care Component of DLA or the enhanced rate of the Daily Living Component of PIP, both currently paid at £108.55 a week.

For Carer’s Allowance (CA), there is no qualifying period, and it is not dependent on the specific illness or disability of the disabled person but instead on the disability benefit being in payment at the appropriate rate. If required, CA can be backdated to the point in which the qualifying benefit for the disability benefit goes into payment.

We have no plans to change these arrangements.

■ Standard of Living

Richard Burgon:

[\[17569\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what level her Department will raise the living standards of those struggling to meet their basic needs by 2030; and if she will bring forward legislative proposals to ensure a statutory commitment to a level of progress.

Alison McGovern:

We are committed to tackling poverty and raising living standards.

We know that good work can significantly reduce the chances of people falling into poverty so this will be the foundation of our approach. Backed by £240 million investment, the Get Britain Working White Paper launched on 26 November will target and tackle economic inactivity and unemployment and join up employment, health and skills support to meet the needs of local communities.

Alongside this, we are committed to reviewing Universal Credit to make sure it is doing the job we want it to do. We started this work with the announcement of the Fair Repayment Rate in the Budget and will continue to work with stakeholders as the review progresses.

We are taking further steps to tackle poverty through our commitments to triple investment in breakfast clubs to over £30 million and increase the National Living Wage to £12.21 an hour from April 2025 to boost the pay of 3 million workers.

The Child Poverty Taskforce also continues its urgent work to publish the Child Poverty Strategy and will explore all available levers to drive forward short and long-term actions across government to deliver an enduring reduction in child poverty in this parliament, as part of a 10-year Strategy for lasting change. The taskforce is exploring a range of metrics and will make decisions alongside the publication of the strategy in Spring 2025.

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

JUSTICE

■ Ministry of Justice: Languages

Chris Hinchliff:

[7164]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when she plans to publish the independent review of her Department's language services.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 14 October 2024. The correct answer should have been:

Heidi Alexander Sarah Sackman:

The information requested is not available for each individual Greater London Borough and could only be obtained with further data engineering work which would be disproportionate cost.

Information about Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) appeals is published on GOV.UK. www.gov.uk/government/collections/tribunals-statistics

However, it is not available in the specific format requested.

Success rates at appeal in the SEND Tribunal include if a parent or young person is successful at appeal for a part or in full. Hearing information is held on each individual appeal record. Each appeal would need to be accessed, the decision recording the outcome obtained for all records held within each of the 33 London Boroughs for the past 5 years.

We have been considering the findings of the independent review to help inform the development of new tender specifications. This is a complex process and covers a wide range of agencies within the Ministry of Justice. Once all internal governance has been completed the review will be released, we expect to publish the outcome by 31 December 2024.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

JUSTICE

■ Domestic Murder Sentencing Reforms

Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice (Shabana Mahmood): [\[HCWS286\]](#)

This Government has set out its ambition to halve violence against women and girls in a decade. Today, I am announcing that the Law Commission has accepted my request to undertake a review of the law of homicide and the sentencing framework for murder. In addition, I intend to bring forward legislation to implement two outstanding recommendations in the independent Domestic Homicide Sentencing Review undertaken by Clare Wade KC, which was published last year.

Law Commission review

The law of homicide was last subject to a thorough review by the Law Commission in the early 2000s. At that time the Government decided not to implement the majority of the recommended changes. In the almost 20 years since then, the problems identified in that review have remained largely unchanged, and as society and the law has moved on, new issues have emerged. These include the interactions between the law on homicide and joint enterprise and the extent to which the law reflects a modern understanding of the effects of domestic abuse. Following the Nottingham attacks last year, the families of the victims have also called for homicide law reform, particularly with regard to how diminished responsibility should be reflected in the classification of homicide offences.

Our current sentencing framework for murder was first introduced over 20 years ago, and multiple, piecemeal amendments have been made to it since then. Recent concerns particularly relate to gendered disparities for murders committed in a domestic context. These concerns include the inadequate reflection of prior abuse in minimum terms for abusive men who kill their female victims, and disproportionately long tariffs for women who kill their male abusers.

I have asked the Law Commission to undertake a project to consider these issues, revisiting and building upon their report in the early 2000s. The Law Commission will review the law relating to homicide offences, including full and partial defences to those offences, and this time also the sentencing framework for murder.

The Law Commission has already started work on a project reviewing the defences to homicide for victims of domestic abuse who kill their abuser. That project will continue under the umbrella of this full review of homicide law, allowing the Law Commission to consider the issue holistically, moving beyond defences to consider the homicide offences themselves and sentencing for this group of defendants.

The Law Commission expects to begin work on this review in early 2025, at which point they will publish a detailed timeline for the project. The Terms of Reference and more information on the review can be found on the Law Commission's website.

The separate, independent Sentencing Review, chaired by the Rt Hon David Gauke, is due to submit its findings to me by Spring 2025. The Law Commission review will take account of any relevant recommendations made in the Sentencing Review.

Domestic Homicide Sentencing Review recommendations

We anticipate that the Law Commission review will take several years to complete, and the Government will then need to consider the recommendations and bring forward any necessary legislation. This is the right course of action for such a complex area of law, but it is not a quick one.

I therefore intend to take more immediate action in the short-term by implementing two of the outstanding recommendations made in the Domestic Homicide Sentencing Review undertaken by Clare Wade KC. In opposition we welcomed this Review and its approach of updating the sentencing framework for murder to reflect the seriousness of domestic homicides, while recognising that care must be taken to ensure that any reforms do not unduly punish cases that involve abused women killing their abuser. We did however call for more to be done, including implementation of more of the recommendations as well as wholesale reform of the sentencing framework for murder.

Therefore, alongside the Law Commission review, I intend to bring forward legislation to implement two of the outstanding recommendations from the Domestic Homicide Sentencing Review. These measures are statutory aggravating factors for murders involving strangulation and those connected with the end of a relationship.

In recent years strangulation has been recognised as a method of exerting power and control, particularly in the context of domestic abuse where female victims are assaulted by physically stronger males. Nearly a third of the murder cases analysed by Clare Wade KC as part of her review involved strangulation, all of which involved a male perpetrator and female victim. In over a third of cases, the murder occurred at the end, or perceived end, of the relationship, and in the majority of cases this appeared to be the catalyst for the killing. In all of these cases the perpetrator was male. A murder involving resentment or jealousy by the perpetrator at the end of a relationship is a significant feature of cases involving controlling or coercive behaviour, the final controlling act of an abusive partner.

While it is for the judge to determine the appropriate weight to be given to the aggravating factors in each case, we expect that these measures, along with the recommendations implemented by the previous Government, will have a significant impact on the custodial terms given to the perpetrators in these cases. I intend to lay a Statutory Instrument to implement these measures, and subject to consultation with the Sentencing Council and parliamentary timings, I anticipate that the legislation will come into force next year. These changes will extend and apply to England and Wales.

I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the families and organisations who have campaigned for change in relation to the issues that the Law Commission review will consider. These include the Joanna Simpson Foundation, Killed Women, and the families of the victims of the Nottingham attacks.