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**HOUSE OF COMMONS
OFFICIAL REPORT**

**PARLIAMENTARY
DEBATES**

(HANSARD)

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House of Commons

Thursday 8 April 2010

The House met at half-past Ten o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Oral Answers to Questions

ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

The Secretary of State was asked—

Housing (Energy Efficiency)

1. **Mr. Andrew Pelling** (Croydon, Central) (Ind): What recent steps his Department has taken to improve the energy efficiency of housing; and if he will make a statement. [325604]

The Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change (Edward Miliband): Since 2002, the carbon emission reduction target has helped fund over 7 million insulation measures. We recently published a household energy management strategy for pay-as-you-save insulation, devolution of powers over energy efficiency to local authorities and new standards of regulation in the social and private rented sector that together will help reduce emissions from households by 29 per cent. by 2020.

Mr. Pelling: Such a Government initiative has been of great benefit to New Addington in Croydon, a significant social housing estate that was excellent for the 1950s in terms of space and good design. What can be done to support the initiative of local people who want the area to become an eco-town? What prospects are there?

Edward Miliband: The hon. Gentleman raises an important issue. My right hon. Friend the Minister for Housing recently announced the first wave of eco-towns and funding under that. We want to do more on this. There is great enthusiasm in local areas for this to happen, including in the hon. Gentleman's constituency. I hope that we can take this forward.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Greg Barker. [*Interruption.*] The hon. Gentleman had indicated that he wanted to come in on this question.

Gregory Barker (Bexhill and Battle) (Con): I had not expected to, Mr. Speaker. I apologise for my inattention, as I had been expecting to intervene on Question 2. However, at your direction, I shall intervene on Question 1 because what I want to say is still apposite.

After 13 years of Labour government, we still have the most energy-inefficient homes in Europe and many, many millions more homes require action. Will the Government now embrace our green deal, namely £6,500 of energy-efficiency improvements for every home? Or, given that B & Q, Marks and Spencer, Tesco and leading energy companies have all embraced our approach, is this another issue where Labour is at war with business?

Edward Miliband: I had expected a music hall atmosphere this morning and the hon. Gentleman did not disappoint. As we can see from the general election campaign, the difference between us and the Conservative party is that we published earlier this month clearly worked-out and costed plans on pay-as-you-save insulation, on regulating private sector landlords to improve energy efficiency and on local authorities. The Conservatives talk about the £6,500, but as with so many other things from them, they have no idea where the money is coming from.

Andrew Miller (Ellesmere Port and Neston) (Lab): Can I tell companies such as EA Technology and Energetix in the Capenhurst area that the work they are doing on energy-saving measures, load balancing and novel technology solutions will be supported by the next Labour Government? Will my right hon. Friend commit to working with the Science Minister to ensure that the good work of such companies is brought into production in the UK by UK companies by the next Labour Government?

Edward Miliband: Yes, I can give that assurance. I thank my hon. Friend for his championing of these issues. Over the past 18 months or two years, we have seen an increasing understanding of the reality of the connection between tackling climate change and green jobs in this country. We have seen that with announcements on the offshore wind industry, electric cars and a whole host of other matters. He is right that Government support for private sector business is essential in this area.

Fuel Poverty

2. **Michael Fabricant** (Lichfield) (Con): When he expects figures to be available on the level of fuel poverty in the UK in 2008; and if he will make a statement. [325605]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change (Mr. David Kidney): The 2008 fuel poverty statistics report will be published on 14 October 2010. This will contain the 2008 fuel poverty numbers for England and the UK. Final figures can be produced only after analysis of the detailed housing survey results. However, to address this lag, we published projected levels of fuel poverty for 2008 and 2009 in England in the most recent annual report on fuel poverty statistics.

Michael Fabricant: The Government's own prediction, which the Minister mentioned, said that one in four homes will now be in fuel poverty. Given that domestic fuel prices have risen 80 per cent. since 2004, is it not time for a public inquiry into the discrepancy between wholesale and retail fuel prices?

Mr. Kidney: The hon. Gentleman, who is my near neighbour in Staffordshire, is right that there were sustained price rises between 2004 and 2008 that have increased fuel poverty. That is a matter of concern to all hon. Members. We are adapting our policies to cope with that, not least, I hope, by obtaining the House's final approval tonight for the Energy Bill, which will allow us to introduce social price support for the poorest households. What is not necessary is what I think the hon. Gentleman is talking about: referral of the whole energy market to the Competition Commission. This is a time when we need sustained investment in the future of our infrastructure, and that would only delay it.

Mr. Jim Devine (Livingston) (Lab): As my hon. Friend knows, there are over 100 years of coal underground. Should we not look at a strategy for extracting that coal? That would make a major contribution to the eradication of fuel poverty.

Mr. Kidney: I am sure it is right that a diverse energy supply will help us to keep control of energy prices, and clean fossil fuels such as coal will assist in that. That is why we are world leaders with our levy for supporting four commercial demonstration models of carbon capture and storage.

Mr. John Baron (Billericay) (Con): Given the customer confusion caused by more than 4,000 different tariffs, will the Minister congratulate Scottish and Southern Energy on putting its cheapest tariff information on all its energy bills—going beyond the Government's wish of annual statements—and will he encourage other energy companies to follow suit?

Mr. Kidney: In recent months I have seen good examples of energy companies trying to improve the clarity of their bill—plain English, the way the bills are set out and the information that they give. I applaud the example that the hon. Member gives and encourage other energy companies to do the same. I would like to be returned to Government, in this Department, to do more on this subject after 6 May.

Mr. Mark Todd (South Derbyshire) (Lab): One of the best means of reducing fuel poverty is tough regulation of the energy marketplace. Has the Minister read with the same concern as I had the report by Consumer Focus into the performance of Ofgem in regulating npower's price-sculpting mechanism and assure me that a future Government will take a more robust approach to the rather flaccid efforts of this regulator?

Mr. Kidney: Again, I hope that later today the House will approve the Energy Bill, which contains measures to strengthen the powers of Ofgem and sharpen its act in terms of being more proactive in its support for consumers. I would love to be back in the next Parliament, taking action to ensure that Ofgem does its job properly.

Housing (Energy Efficiency)

3. **Sir Alan Beith** (Berwick-upon-Tweed) (LD): What mechanisms he has put in place to increase the level of energy efficiency in rural homes classified as hard-to-treat. [325606]

The Minister of State, Department of Energy and Climate Change (Joan Ruddock): The carbon emissions reduction target—CERT—obligates energy companies to install a variety of household energy efficiency measures, including those suitable for hard-to-treat homes. CERT is delivered throughout Great Britain including in rural areas.

Additionally, Warm Front fits energy-efficient measures in vulnerable households. Any rural household could be eligible for Warm Front assistance as long as the applicant is the home owner or tenant in the private sector, and is in receipt of a qualifying benefit.

Sir Alan Beith: Is the Minister aware that in areas such as Northumberland many of the poorest people live in stone-built properties with no cavity wall, no gas supply, no dual fuel tariff, dependence on bottled gas or solid fuel, and often difficulty in getting access to warm home schemes? Does she recognise that further targeted steps are needed and perhaps an easing of the rules to ensure that some of the people most in fuel poverty in rural areas are helped?

Joan Ruddock: I acknowledge every point that the right hon. Gentleman has made, and we have been working on every aspect of those problems. Ofgem is encouraging connection to the gas grid, where that is possible and economic—with support, of course. In January this year it announced that all four gas networks will be linked in partnerships to enable new connections to be made, and we expect that up to 20,000 new households will be connected to the gas grid under that scheme. In a year's time we shall have the renewable heat incentive, which will benefit particularly those who wish to switch from liquefied petroleum gas and other expensive fuels. We also have CERT, which is increasingly being incentivised to cope with hard-to-treat homes and solid wall insulation. Over 56,000 homes have already been insulated, so there is some progress.

Mr. Barry Sheerman (Huddersfield) (Lab/Co-op): I once lived in a 17th century stone cottage in a rural area, so I know how difficult it is to take those measures—[*Interruption.*] Hon. Members seem to be amused by the fact that I lived in a stone cottage. The Government have done such good things in terms of Warm Zone and Warm Front, and the Minister knows of the proud record of Kirklees and Huddersfield. Is it not about time that a useless organisation—the National House-Building Council—which, as every lawyer will tell you, issues certificates that are not worth the paper they are written on, stopped allowing any building that does not conform to a high level of sustainability?

Joan Ruddock: My hon. Friend knows that we have made huge progress in increasing building regulation demands, not only for new build, which will be carbon-neutral by 2016, but for retrofitting of existing homes. There is already a huge Government undertaking on this subject. I shall not comment on the organisation named by my hon. Friend, but I intend to look into it when I return to this job.

Electricity Demand/Capacity

4. **Peter Luff** (Mid-Worcestershire) (Con): What assessment he has made of the balance of generating capacity and likely demand for electricity in the UK in the next 10 years; and if he will make a statement. [325607]

The Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change (Edward Miliband): We are confident that we will meet demand for electricity over the next decade. About 18 GW of plant is due to close by 2020, but already 20 GW is either under construction or has planning consent. The most recent analysis in the "Energy Markets Outlook" in December 2009 suggested that the electricity capacity margin remains above 10 per cent. for the whole of the next decade.

Peter Luff: I hope that the Secretary of State's optimism is well founded. Does he understand that when the obituary of this Government is written in a few weeks' time, one of the most critical passages will relate to the 2003 energy White Paper and those seven fateful words—

“We do not...propose...new nuclear build”—

words that undermined our nation's nuclear skills base and which cost us vital years in the fight to avoid severe power shortages in the next decade. I genuinely fear that there will be such shortages.

Edward Miliband: The interesting thing is that three or four years later the Leader of the Opposition was saying that nuclear should remain a last resort. It is this Government who led the debate on nuclear power. I have great respect for the hon. Gentleman, but I have to tell him that we need all forms of low-carbon energy, including renewable power. He brought before the House an exclusion zone proposal on wind farms—a proposal with which I disagree. Let us have low-carbon energy; that is what we are driving towards with planning reform, nuclear power and renewables.

Mr. David Anderson (Blaydon) (Lab): In the past two weeks we have seen the true cost of trying to run the world on cheap coal, with 150 Chinese miners trapped underground in a country where 6,000 miners die every year, and 25 miners killed in West Virginia—employees of a serial violator of mine legislation. Will the Government take on the role of leading the international debate on the ethics of putting miners' safety before profits?

Edward Miliband: My hon. Friend raises an important issue, which I have discussed with him. It is right that we take up these issues through organisations such as the International Labour Organisation and other international bodies and I have said to him that we will do so.

Simon Hughes (North Southwark and Bermondsey) (LD): At the end of term, I pay tribute to the Secretary of State and his team for their energy and commitment. Do they realise that they would be wise as well as energetic if they gave up the new deception they now share with the Conservative party that nuclear power is what we need to have a safe, clean and secure energy future? Why is his party, like the Tories, willing to put the health, wealth and personal security of the people of Britain at such great risk in the future?

Edward Miliband: I thank the hon. Gentleman for the first part of his question, but I profoundly disagree with the second part of his question. When we look at the scale of the task in terms of low-carbon energy, we have very ambitious targets on renewables—approximately a sixfold increase in renewable energy by 2020—and nuclear must be part of the energy mix. We need to move on all fronts—nuclear, renewables and clean coal—because the scale of the challenge of cutting carbon emissions by 80 per cent. by 2050 is so enormous that we need every form of low-carbon energy.

Andrew Mackinlay (Thurrock) (Lab): Are we looking at the Thames estuary, eastwards of Thurrock, for tidal power generation comparable to the wonderful innovative scheme in operation at Strangford lough in Northern Ireland? Would the Minister care to join me in my retirement at Strangford lough, where I can show him this wonderful technology?

Edward Miliband: Let me take the opportunity to pay tribute to my hon. Friend. The House will sorely miss his character and the passionate way in which he took forward a whole range of issues.

We need tidal power in this country, and it can play an important role. I look forward to joining him after the election—I hope in my current post—with the newly elected Labour Member of Parliament for his constituency, to see what tidal power can do.

Greg Clark (Tunbridge Wells) (Con): Whatever the future holds for us all, we have much enjoyed our exchanges with the right hon. Gentleman and his hon. Friends across the Dispatch Box, but it is not over yet. Eight weeks ago, the energy regulator said:

“In 2017 we get to the really sweaty-palm moment in terms of possible shortages...It is the scale of collapse...that is profound and worrying.”

Is the energy regulator another of those who have been deceived?

Edward Miliband: Let me start by saying that I have also enjoyed our exchanges. The hon. Gentleman shadowed me when I was the Minister for the Third Sector and since then when I have been Secretary of State for Energy and Climate change. I look forward to him continuing to shadow me in his present post after the general election.

The energy regulator put forward a series of projections based on modelling in the project discovery document to which he referred. The difference is that what I read out are actual plans that are being taken forward for 20 GW of new power. I am confident about security of supply, but the big question for Britain is whether it should be low-carbon or high-carbon security of supply. That is why it is so important that we move forward on nuclear and indeed renewables, on which the Conservative party has a bad record locally.

Greg Clark: Of course, it is not just the regulator. The Government's own chief scientist told the BBC that there is a worry that in 2016 there might not be enough electricity. In 13 years, we have had 11 Energy Ministers, from the right hon. Member for Neath (Mr. Hain) to Lord Truscott, eight Secretaries of State in charge of energy from the right hon. Member for Newcastle upon Tyne, East and Wallsend (Mr. Brown) to Lord Mandelson, five energy White Papers, and more than 100 consultations. Is it despite all that or because of it that the Government officially expect blackouts during the decade ahead?

Edward Miliband: I feel like I am hearing the hon. Gentleman's greatest hits this morning, but they are not that great. We are not predicting what he said would happen in 2017, and he knows from the “Energy Markets Outlook” that that is not so. The truth is that we have moved forward in a whole range of areas to provide the power that the country will need in the coming decade, but I return to the point that the big question is whether we take the difficult decisions on, for example, planning. We finally have a planning system in this country that business supports, but the Conservative party says that if it got into government it would overturn it on day one. That will not help the low-carbon transition in this country.

Ministerial Meetings

5. **Mr. Henry Bellingham** (North-West Norfolk) (Con): When he next expects to meet local authorities in East Anglia to discuss renewable energy initiatives in that area. [325608]

The Minister of State, Department of Energy and Climate Change (Joan Ruddock): The hon. Gentleman will understand that I have no plans to meet local authorities in East Anglia at this time, but meetings continue at official level as appropriate.

Mr. Bellingham: Have the Government set renewable energy generation targets for counties? Is the Minister aware that Norfolk has many offshore wind turbines both in place and planned for the future? Will that offshore energy be part of the renewable target for coastal shire counties?

Joan Ruddock: What I can tell the hon. Gentleman is that the Department has developed and published a methodology to help regional authorities to assess potential renewable and low-carbon energy in their areas. He is on record as having many objections to onshore wind energy, and arguing that offshore wind is preferable. The Government believe that we need both onshore and offshore wind energy. There is no question but that onshore wind is the most proven and most reliable of our renewable technologies, and we cannot set it aside, although we are developing offshore wind energy for which, as he knows, we are the leading country in the world. Offshore wind energy is two or three times more expensive than onshore wind, depending on location, which is why there is no question about it—we must have a mix.

Charles Hendry (Wealden) (Con): Over a year ago, we called for the setting up of marine renewable energy parks to help make Britain the world leader in development of wave and tidal power. As the tide finally goes out on the Government and we wave them goodbye, does the Minister accept that she could and should have done more to bring together local authorities in East Anglia and other coastal areas to highlight the UK's huge potential in those crucial technologies, and to ensure that the investment in green jobs that they can bring comes to Britain instead of, again, going to other countries?

Joan Ruddock: The hon. Gentleman knows perfectly well that the Government have made great strides in developing marine technology. In the south-west, we already have a wave hub, to which we have made £60 million available. We have made it clear that, although it is not an immediate technology, which can be deployed at this moment, as wind can—the hon. Gentleman needs to get his party's position on wind straight—*[Interruption.]* Yes, objection? There is a 60 per cent. refusal rate. We are working on marine technology, we are giving money, and we are developing the strategy, which will follow on naturally from all the other investment in renewables that the Government are making.

Electricity Demand/Capacity

6. **Richard Ottaway** (Croydon, South) (Con): What estimate he has made of the change in demand for electricity by 2025. [325609]

The Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change (Edward Miliband): Peak demand for electricity is expected to be broadly the same in 2025 as now, but we need to replace high-carbon sources of energy generation with low-carbon sources, including renewables and nuclear. To make this happen, we have reformed the planning system and are proposing reform of the electricity market, as set out in the energy market assessment published at the Budget.

Richard Ottaway: Those may be the Secretary of State's figures, but will he accept that just about every independent expert predicts a growth in demand of approximately 2 per cent. per annum? If one takes the growth in green energy in the past 13 years and projects it forward, it will not even keep up with the growth in demand. Coupled with that, I strongly suspect that his figures do not take into account the increased use of electric cars. Will he not, even at this late hour, admit that he has not planned for enough generating capacity in this country for the years to come?

Edward Miliband: No, I will not admit that. I do not know whether I am maligning the hon. Gentleman unfairly by saying that he is one of the wind power refuseniks on the Opposition Benches—

Richard Ottaway: I am not.

Edward Miliband: If the hon. Gentleman is not, that is very good. He should persuade the other people in his party because we need onshore and offshore wind and all those things to move forward. He is right that we need to up the pace—that is why we are reforming planning, for example. The worst thing that could happen for low-carbon transition in this country is a Government who came in and reversed all those planning reforms and slowed things down again. We need to speed up, and we will under this Government.

Renewable Heat Incentive

7. **Dr. Alan Whitehead** (Southampton, Test) (Lab): What progress he has made on the introduction of the renewable heat incentive. [325611]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change (Mr. David Kidney): The renewable heat incentive is the first of its kind in the world and is on track to be introduced on 1 April 2011.

The Government launched their consultation on the proposed renewable heat incentive on 1 February. In the consultation document, we set out our proposals for the scheme and we are now seeking views from stakeholders. The consultation on the draft proposals closes on 26 April. We will continue to develop our proposals following the feedback and comments that we receive.

Dr. Whitehead: I thank my hon. Friend for that answer and look forward to the introduction of the renewable heat incentive from these Benches and to his announcing the day of implementation.

The consultation document states that an announcement on the funding of the renewable heat incentive will be made in the Budget. The announcement in the Budget was of a further review. Does my hon. Friend anticipate the results of that review arriving fairly shortly, and will

he give me an assurance that that will not impact in any way on the date of introducing the renewable heat incentive?

Mr. Kidney: My hon. Friend speaks with great authority on the subject, and I am grateful for his support for the policy. It is true that the Treasury statement at the time of the Budget was modest, but it confirmed that the scheme is still on track to begin on 1 April—I think that is the reassurance that my hon. Friend seeks.

Mr. Michael Jack (Fylde) (Con): Do the Government have any plans to assist the installation of renewable heat facilities in existing commercial buildings?

Mr. Kidney: The intention is that we will support and encourage the deployment of renewable heat technologies of every scale and in every sector, so, yes, that includes businesses.

Carbon Capture and Storage

8. **Jeff Ennis (Barnsley, East and Mexborough) (Lab):** What progress has been made in the establishment of a carbon capture and storage demonstration plant in South Yorkshire. [325612]

The Minister of State, Department of Energy and Climate Change (Joan Ruddock): The European Commission and Powerfuels Power Ltd have signed a contract awarding a grant of €180 million from the European energy programme for recovery for the first phase of the Hatfield integrated gasification combined cycle—IGCC—and carbon capture and storage project.

The Government have announced that the Yorkshire and Humber region will be the first low-carbon economic area for CCS with the aim of facilitating investment in CCS and promoting business opportunities in the region.

Jeff Ennis: I thank the Minister for that very positive reply. The development of coal power stations with equipment to provide CCS is essential to the future of this country. Does my hon. Friend agree that, with its rich heritage in heavy engineering and innovation, South Yorkshire is well placed to lead the world in the development of CCS?

Joan Ruddock: As I understand that my hon. Friend is standing down, may I first pay tribute to all the work he has done in the House, particularly on behalf of his communities and in the interests of miners? He is, of course, absolutely right that his area has historically been very dependent on mining industries, and it has a great future as there are so many skills and technology capabilities that can make it a world-leading centre for the very impressive carbon capture and storage technology, which is being pioneered in this country with Government support, and for which, if we pass the Energy Bill this afternoon, there will be a financial support system that will be the very best in the world.

Climate Change Conference (Cancun)

9. **Mr. William Bain (Glasgow, North-East) (Lab):** What discussions he has had with his EU counterparts on objectives for the UN climate change conference in Cancun. [325613]

The Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change (Edward Miliband): I have frequent discussions with my EU counterparts, including with the Spanish presidency this week, and we recently published our post-Copenhagen prospectus, which sets out our strategy for Cancun and beyond. The most important thing the world needs to do is to forge the comprehensive legal framework that eluded us at Copenhagen.

Mr. Bain: I thank my right hon. Friend for that reply. I encourage him in his continuing efforts to secure the binding agreements that will implement the Copenhagen accord. Does he agree that it would be an important show of good faith from the developed world if it was to indicate that it would be willing to extend its commitments under the Kyoto treaty beyond the initial 2012 deadline?

Edward Miliband: My hon. Friend makes an important point. That was a big point of contention at the Copenhagen talks, and we said in our post-Copenhagen document that we would enter into a second commitment period under Kyoto, provided that there was an acceptable legal framework alongside the Kyoto proposals. That is an important signal to developing countries who are reluctant to enter into a legal treaty and who are worried about the developed world's commitment to Kyoto.

Simon Hughes (North Southwark and Bermondsey) (LD): I presume that the Secretary of State or one of his Ministers will go to the meeting on climate issues in Bonn in the first week of May. If they do go, will they take the message that it is vital that we now have a 30 per cent. European emissions target and not a 20 per cent. target, and that we have a new structure at the United Nations—a climate security council or some such body that can ensure that there is momentum? Further, does he agree that in the election between now and then the British public would be very foolish to vote for any candidates who do not accept the overwhelming nature of the science showing that we have the worst climate crisis that anybody has ever known?

Edward Miliband: The hon. Gentleman raises an important point. We do want to move to the 30 per cent. target for Europe as part of an ambitious global deal. I also agree with his remarks about the UN, and there is an opportunity to upgrade the UN post in charge of the UN framework convention on climate change. As for the hon. Gentleman's other point, I was shocked to read in the *Financial Times* that only a handful of the 206 Conservative candidates who were contacted accepted the unequivocal reality of man-made climate change. That shows the stakes in respect of climate change at this election.

Sir Gerald Kaufman (Manchester, Gorton) (Lab): In congratulating my right hon. Friend and the Government on having led the world in combating climate change, may I ask what action he will be seeking in Bonn and Cancun and what action he will be taking in this country to ensure that at least 15 per cent. of all energy comes from renewable sources by 2020?

Edward Miliband: My right hon. Friend is completely right about these issues, and about the importance of showing that we here at home are moving forward as

part of getting the ambitious global deal that we need. That commitment to the 15 per cent. renewable energy target is very important. It is also important that we transmit the learning here to other countries so that they can move forward. This is therefore about UK and European commitment as part of an ambitious global deal.

Greg Clark (Tunbridge Wells) (Con): If we want to lead the world, we need policy, not just targets. Had it not been for Conservative leadership on the environment during this Parliament, Britain would have no feed-in tariffs, no renewable heat incentive, no ban on new unabated coal, no roll-out of smart meters and no Climate Change Act 2008. On every measure, Labour first opposed us and then adopted our policy. So will the Secretary of State say, "Thank you" to the Conservative party for achieving more in Opposition in five years than Labour's 19 Ministers did in 13 years of dithering in office?

Christopher Fraser (South-West Norfolk) (Con): Say it!

Edward Miliband: I will not say, "Thank you." The reality of the Conservative party's record in this Parliament on climate change is that it began with the stunt with the huskies, initiated by the hon. Member for Bexhill and Battle (Gregory Barker), and it ends with the Leader of the Opposition saying, "Here are 10 reasons to vote Conservative," and not one of them is about climate change. We find out that Conservative candidates have not changed; they do not believe in man-made climate change. So the truth is that we have a whole range of stunts but an unchanged Conservative party, on this issue and every other issue at this general election.

Greg Clark *rose*—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I fear that the shadow Secretary of State was seeking to divert the Secretary of State from the path of virtue, which involves focusing on the Government's policies, as the right hon. Gentleman knows.

Greg Clark: The trouble is that the Secretary of State is auditioning for the role of Leader of the Opposition, and we wish him very well in that effort.

The right hon. Gentleman's most significant achievement is a mastery of the cut-and-paste function on Conservative policy, so will his manifesto match ours in establishing a floor price for carbon, a green deal for every home in the country, an offshore electricity grid, a network of marine energy parks, a security guarantee in the electricity market, a smart meter in homes by 2016 and no third runway at Heathrow? The Energy Networks Association has called that package:

"the most comprehensive energy policy ever produced by an opposition."

Edward Miliband: The hon. Gentleman has clearly learned nothing during his time as shadow Secretary of State. A list of policies does not make a strategy, and image does not make substance. That is the truth about the Conservative party. Why would the Conservatives put the green transition in this country at risk? For example, they oppose renewables the length and breadth of this country. They oppose the progress that is being

made. The difference between the Labour party, and the Labour Government, and the Conservative party is that we have conviction about tackling climate change while it is all about image and detoxifying the brand.

Feeder Tariffs

10. **Mr. Peter Lilley** (Hitchin and Harpenden) (Con): What assessment he has made of the costs and benefits of proposed feeder tariff arrangements. [325615]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change (Mr. David Kidney): We are introducing feed-in tariffs to encourage small-scale, low-carbon electricity generation by individuals, communities, businesses and organisations that have not traditionally engaged in the electricity market. The costs and benefits of the feed-in tariff scheme are explained in detail in the impact assessment that was published alongside the Government response to the feed-in tariffs consultation and is available from the Department of Energy and Climate Change website.

Mr. Lilley: It is obviously desirable in principle to encourage people who generate their own electricity to feed the excess into the grid, as long as the costs do not exceed the benefits. Small wonder, then, that the Minister failed to answer the question and tell us that the costs of his new feeder tariffs are put by his experts at £8.6 billion, which is 20 times their assessment of the likely benefits. Given that even George Monbiot thinks that that is barking mad, will the Minister consider a more sensible and economically justifiable system of tariffs?

Mr. Kidney: The cumulative cost to consumers is estimated at £3.1 billion to 2020, and the impact is an average increase of £8.50 annually to domestic bills over the period 2011 to 2030. If the right hon. Gentleman were followed by more people in this country, it would be difficult for the country, its Government and its citizens to tackle climate change effectively, but perhaps some people are following his views, most particularly Conservative candidates.

Tom Levitt (High Peak) (Lab): The introduction of the feed-in tariff will be very welcome to people such as the operators of the Torrs hydropower system in New Mills in my constituency—a community-owned hydropower station, of which I happen to be a shareholder. Is my hon. Friend aware that the big barrier is still the start-up costs of community hydro schemes? The Methodist church in Glossop is considering the possibility of having one on its ground, but what hope can he give those who are looking for help with those start-up costs before they can benefit from the feed-in tariff?

Mr. Kidney: I have seen some of the community enthusiasm for small-scale hydro. For example, I visited a scheme at Tutbury in Staffordshire earlier this year. The feed-in tariff is intended to galvanise such communities by showing that they can make a commercial return on such schemes. I am afraid that I shall have to offer to meet my hon. Friend outside the Chamber to talk to him about possible sources of capital funding for such schemes, but there is interest, for example, from some commercial banks today.

Electricity Demand/Capacity

11. **Mr. Andrew Robathan** (Blaby) (Con): What recent estimate he has made of the level of additional electricity generating capacity that will be required by 2015. [325616]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change (Mr. David Kidney): It is estimated that around 16 GW of existing electricity generating capacity—coal, gas, oil and nuclear—will close by 2015. Some 2.3 GW of new generating capacity was commissioned last year, 10.1 GW is currently under construction, 11.3 GW has both planning permission and permission to connect to the grid, and a further 18.5 GW is in the planning process in England and Wales. This new capacity, as well as energy efficiency measures, means that there will be sufficient capacity in 2015.

Mr. Robathan: I am interested in what the Minister says, because it seems to be at variance with what Ofgem and others say. The Secretary of State talked about the greatest hits of my hon. Friend the Member for Tunbridge Wells (Greg Clark). I would rather go back to Gold radio station, which I listen to because it plays music from the 1960s and 1970s, and that reminds me of when I sat by candlelight through the power cuts. Does the Minister think that Ofgem and others are wrong when they say that they expect power cuts within the next decade?

Mr. Kidney: There is a difference between facts and projections for the future. I have just given the hon. Gentleman the facts as they are today. Project Discovery was all about stress-testing the system, using scenarios that would put it under stress. What the hon. Gentleman can see from the statistics that I have given him from the Dispatch Box is that there is more than sufficient capacity to 2015.

Mr. Ian Davidson (Glasgow, South-West) (Lab/Co-op): Can the Minister assure me that the production of aircraft carriers will not be threatened by a lack of generating capacity, given that the manufacture of the aircraft carriers is already threatened by the Opposition?

Mr. Kidney: My hon. Friend's chutzpah is remarkable, enabling him to get aircraft carriers into a question about capacity. I assure him that all reasonably foreseeable demands on the electricity system are catered for in the answer that I gave.

Renewables

12. **John Howell** (Henley) (Con): What his most recent estimate is of the proportion of electricity generated from renewable sources. [325619]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change (Mr. David Kidney): Provisional 2009 data on electricity generation were published in the March 2010 edition of *Energy Trends*. This showed that, after excluding an estimate for non-bio degradable waste use, 6.6 per cent. of electricity was generated from renewable sources in 2009. In 1997, the equivalent figure was 2 per cent.

John Howell: From the answers earlier on renewables, it seems that the Government do not share the pessimism of a number of independent commentators who have said that not enough has been done by way of technology, and particularly by way of developing skills, to achieve the 2020 target. Will the Minister say by how much he estimates we will miss the 2020 target?

Mr. Kidney: I certainly will not, because we will not miss the target for 2020. The hon. Gentleman should watch and learn as all the new renewable capacity, including the immense amounts of offshore wind generation that are already planned in this country, takes effect. On skills, I had the great pleasure last week of launching, on behalf of the Government, a consultation on the subject of skills for a low carbon economy, with the opportunity there to transform the economy of this country and create millions of new jobs in a clean, green and prosperous UK.

Wave Energy

14. **Alun Michael** (Cardiff, South and Penarth) (Lab/Co-op): What estimate he has made of the potential contribution of off-shore wave energy to meeting energy needs in the next 10 years. [325621]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change (Mr. David Kidney): The Carbon Trust has estimated that between 1 and 2 GW of wave and tidal energy could be deployed in UK waters by 2020. This will be followed by large scale deployment in the period beyond 2020.

Alun Michael: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his encouraging answer. Taking account of that larger scale deployment, what proportion of our energy needs does he estimate can eventually be produced in that way? Can the aim of reaching that target be accelerated, in order to increase our take from that form of renewable energy?

Mr. Kidney: In the future, as depicted in the low carbon transition plan last year, our energy will come from a diverse range of sources, including all kinds of renewables, new nuclear power, and clean fossil fuels such as coal and gas with carbon capture and storage. Within that, marine energy has a huge part to play, as was shown in the recent marine energy action plan, which was agreed between my Department and the industry, with the result that the Carbon Trust estimates that there should be about 16,000 jobs directly engaged in wave and tidal stream energy by 2040.

Climate Change

15. **Mr. Jim Cunningham** (Coventry, South) (Lab): What his most recent assessment is of the progress in tackling climate change made since the Copenhagen climate change conference. [325622]

The Minister of State, Department of Energy and Climate Change (Joan Ruddock): Since Copenhagen, we have seen support for the Copenhagen accord grow. Over 100 countries have now associated with the accord, and more than 70 have listed actions and targets to limit their greenhouse gas emissions. Those countries account for over 80 per cent. of global emissions. The willingness of many countries to take substantial domestic action

demonstrates that—with ambition—the international community has the opportunity to come together to tackle dangerous climate change effectively.

Mr. Jim Cunningham (Coventry, South) (Lab): What progress, if any, has been made by India and China to fully co-operate in climatic change measures?

Joan Ruddock: A lot of progress has been made. We have seen China submit to the United Nations its proposals on the way in which it aims to reduce its emissions below business as usual and on how it aims to participate in international discussions. Indeed, we have also seen the constructive way in which China is approaching the progress towards Mexico.

Of course, some issues at Copenhagen disappointed us, and some of the actions of China were a disappointment, but I must say that we are delighted with the way in which China has responded to the accord, and look forward very much to working with it in future.

Fuel Poverty

16. **Miss Anne McIntosh** (Vale of York) (Con): When he expects figures to be available on the level of fuel poverty in the UK in 2008; and if he will make a statement. [325624]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change (Mr. David Kidney): I refer the hon. Lady to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Lichfield (Michael Fabricant) some moments ago.

Miss McIntosh: I am most grateful, but the particular question to which I should like to draw the Minister's attention is this: in rural parts of the north of England, where the cost of housing is high, the wages are below average, and the cost of energy is high, what special measures are the current Government proposing in the short time available to them to reduce fuel poverty?

Mr. Kidney: The hon. Lady does better to ask me than Conservative Front Benchers, since their detailed policy document says nothing at all about fuel poverty or any policy to tackle it. In her constituency, more than 1,400 households have been helped with insulation measures by Warm Front. If the House passes the Energy Bill later today, that could help up to 2 million households with their energy bills.

Electricity Generating Capacity

17. **Mr. Desmond Swayne** (New Forest, West) (Con): How much additional electricity generating capacity is planned to be in place by 2020. [325627]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change (Mr. David Kidney): In addition to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Blaby (Mr. Robathan) some moments ago, taking into account planned closures of existing power plants and other factors such as the renewables targets, modelling suggests that we might need around 100 GW of total capacity in 2020. In a typical year now, peak consumption will be around 60 GW and total available supply around 80 GW.

Mr. Swayne: I am clearly at one with my hon. Friend the Member for Blaby in my recollections of "Life on Mars"—I remember doing my public exams in the dark. The Minister has expressed confidence in his models, but will he at least recognise that those on the Treasury Bench are almost alone in believing in those models and that there will be sufficient capacity?

Mr. Kidney: I am pleased that Opposition Members have such fond memories of a Conservative Government that brought the country to its knees as they tried to destroy the coal mining industry in this country. However, I have nothing to add to what I said earlier to the hon. Member for Blaby. Those are the facts, and the hon. Member for New Forest, West (Mr. Swayne) is talking about projections or perhaps his own wishes.

Topical Questions

T1. [325629] **Bob Russell** (Colchester) (LD): If he will make a statement on his departmental responsibilities.

The Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change (Edward Miliband): Over the past 18 months, my Department has set a new plan to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 80 per cent. by 2050; published low carbon transition plan sector by sector for our country; produced a comprehensive plan to help households go green; introduced feed-in tariffs; as well as passing through this House a levy for clean coal. We look forward to continuing our work into the next Parliament.

Bob Russell: I wonder whether the Secretary of State has realised that his Department feels that climate change does not originate—in any shape or form—in the United Kingdom. I ought to have had a question on the Order Paper, but the Department withdrew it, because it did not want to the Secretary of State to answer it. That question referred to the effect of climate change brought about by the continued urbanisation of our countryside—in particular, I draw attention to a new township of 2,200 in the Mile End area of Colchester. This is the question that the Secretary of State's officials did not want to answer: what recent discussions has he had with ministerial colleagues on the effect of climate change on the UK's wildlife and habitat?

Edward Miliband: I think that perhaps people were being over-protective; if I had known, I would have been happy to answer the question, and I am glad that the hon. Gentleman has had the opportunity to ask it now. He raises the important issue of the impact that climate change can have on our natural environment and biodiversity. Conservative Members complain about wind turbines, but the bigger threat to the countryside is climate change—that is what could have a real impact on our countryside. I am glad that the hon. Gentleman got to ask his question and I agree with the intention behind it.

Lynne Jones (Birmingham, Selly Oak) (Lab): Humankind is borrowing from the earth's capital at a rate that threatens the very viability of our planet. Although we do not yet have an agreed currency for the environmental deficit, does the Secretary of State agree that tackling that deficit is as vital as tackling the fiscal deficit? How are we doing in this country in meeting Lord Stern's

recommendation that we should have a carbon constraint on the economy equivalent to 2 per cent. of GDP if costs are not to be even higher in the long run?

Edward Miliband: Let me pay tribute to my hon. Friend, who is standing down. We did not always agree on every issue, but she pursued the issues that she cared about passionately and with great idealism. She asked about carbon constraint. We are living at the moment as if there were three planets on which to live, rather than one. That sums up our excessive use of carbon in this country. Carbon budgets are an important step forward in constraining what we do, Department by Department and sector by sector.

Several hon. Members *rose*—

Mr. Speaker: Order. If I am to accommodate everybody who wants to get in, there will need to be single, short questions and short answers.

T2. [325630] **Miss Anne McIntosh** (Vale of York) (Con): The Secretary of State is enthusiastic about wind power and other renewable energy sources. Will he address two concerns? The first is that wind energy can be connected to the grid only by non-environmentally friendly and wasteful overhead power lines. The second is that renewables can be achieved only by heavy subsidies from all energy users.

Mr. Speaker: There were two questions, but one answer will suffice.

Edward Miliband: My answer is that, yes, there are costs to the low-carbon transition, but the costs of not acting are much greater than the costs of acting. That is the central finding of Lord Stern's report, to which my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Lynne Jones) referred some moments ago.

Mr. John Grogan (Selby) (Lab): Will the Secretary of State say a few words about the impact of the proposed level of feed-in tariffs on the development of anaerobic digestion plants such as the proposed Selby renewable energy plant, which is set to power 10,000 homes in the town?

Edward Miliband: I pay tribute to my hon. Friend, who has campaigned tirelessly on a whole range of issues in the House. He will be sorely missed. He is right to say that the issue of anaerobic digestion and the feed-in tariff is important. After the consultation on the feed-in tariff, we made some changes to help anaerobic digestion projects. That will help the take-up of what my hon. Friend has talked about.

T4. [325632] **Sir Alan Beith** (Berwick-upon-Tweed) (LD): Does the Secretary of State share my party's concern that a number of active Conservatives, including parliamentary candidates, do not believe that climate change is happening or believe that if it is happening it cannot be changed by Government policy? What steps will he take over the next few weeks to assist us in challenging that?

Edward Miliband: The right hon. Gentleman makes an important point. As I recall, there were only five votes against the Climate Change Bill when it went

through the House. If those Conservative candidates are successful, there will be less of a consensus on the issue in the House than we had at that time. That is why we need to maintain the consensus and convince everyone around the country that climate change is real, happening and man made.

Dr. Brian Iddon (Bolton, South-East) (Lab): There are now more than 250 climate change agreements with the chemical industry. Has my right hon. Friend calculated the impact of next year's reduction in the subsidy on the climate change levy from 80 to 65 per cent. in respect of the energy-intensive industries?

Edward Miliband: I pay tribute to my hon. Friend, who is standing down. He raises an important issue about energy-intensive industries and protection for them. A number of changes were made and there has been some consultation since then with those industries. We are convinced that we can make that change in a way that gives them proper protection against the things they are concerned about.

T5. [325633] **Mr. Peter Lilley** (Hitchin and Harpenden) (Con): Is the Secretary of State aware of the consensus between me and George Monbiot? Mr. Monbiot says that the Government's introduction of feed-in tariffs will

"shift £8.6bn from the poor to the middle classes. It expects a loss on this scheme of £8.2bn, or 95%."

How does the Secretary of State justify that loss and waste?

Edward Miliband: I do not consider it to be waste. [*Laughter.*] I am not sure why that is so funny. There is a cost to making the transition to low carbon. Part of the way in which we need to make it is by individuals having solar panels and wind turbines on their roofs. That is a way of engaging people and local communities. The right hon. Gentleman's remarks would be better directed at his party's Front Benchers, who want to make the feed-in tariffs even more generous.

Mr. Stephen Hepburn (Jarrow) (Lab): Despite the Tories' attempts to destroy the coal mining industry, the north-east of England still sits on massive coal reserves. What future does the Minister see for that coal?

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change (Mr. David Kidney): My hon. Friend has a long-standing interest in supporting a UK domestic coal industry, and so do the Government. We see that a future for a strong domestic market will come from making a success of carbon capture and storage. That is why we have been prepared in the Energy Bill to make provision for funding to contribute towards four commercial-scale demonstration models of the full carbon capture and storage operation.

T6. [325634] **Mr. Andrew Robathan** (Blaby) (Con): May I ask the Secretary of State the question that the Under-Secretary failed to answer? Given the Government's dithering about nuclear energy and other matters, are we going back to my youth, when I sat working by candlelight under both Labour and Conservative Governments? Will he categorically

disagree with Ofgem and others who say that there will be power cuts in the next 10 years because of the Government's dithering?

Edward Miliband: I disagree with the hon. Gentleman; we are not going back to the 1970s, although the Conservative party may be going back to the 1980s. I am confident about security of supply in this country.

Mr. Michael Clapham (Barnsley, West and Penistone) (Lab): My right hon. Friend will be aware that, on 1 October 2008, we introduced a modified pneumoconiosis scheme. That allows a miner who was employed by British Coal to claim a compensation payment, either under the Pneumoconiosis etc. (Workers' Compensation) Act 1979 or the 1974 scheme. However, is he aware that a man who has been employed in the private sector since 1994 can claim only under the 1974 scheme? Those payments tend to be lower than those made under the 1979 Act. Will the Secretary of State look at that anomaly and set in place a remedy when he comes back after the election?

Edward Miliband: That is a very fitting question from my hon. Friend at the end of this Parliament. Hundreds of thousands of families up and down the country have reason to thank him for his extraordinary campaigning on compensation for miners and their families. As with so many other issues that he has raised, I am sure that an important point is involved. We will take up the issue.

T7. [325635] **Mr. Desmond Swayne** (New Forest, West) (Con): Germany has gas storage capacity equivalent to a quarter of its annual average consumption. By comparison, ours is tiny. Why does the Treasury Bench think that we have enough?

Edward Miliband: It is called the North sea. Germany does not have its own indigenous supplies of gas and oil, but the North sea continues to provide more than half our gas supplies each year.

Mr. Barry Sheerman (Huddersfield) (Lab/Co-op): Has the former Conservative Government's privatisation of many energy production facilities in this country made it easier for the Secretary of State to construct a sustainable energy policy?

Edward Miliband: The competitive market has brought benefits to Britain, but it needs to be properly managed and regulated. The document that we published at the time of the Budget sets out how the energy market needs to be reformed.

T8. [325636] **Mr. Andrew Pelling** (Croydon, Central) (Ind): When I walk home late at night following late sittings in the House, I often notice birds singing because of the light pollution. Does the Minister think that that is a potential issue, and could any action be taken to deal with that significant distortion to our climate and environment?

The Minister of State, Department of Energy and Climate Change (**Joan Ruddock**): The hon. Gentleman has obviously not had the pleasure that I have had from a nightingale that I find singing in my garden. There

can be joys in hearing birdsong in the early hours of the morning. Unfortunately, he is still awake at that time, like me and many other hon. Members. The demands of energy efficiency mean that the Government look increasingly at whether light levels could be reduced while being consistent with the safety of people, such as the hon. Gentleman and me, who are on their way home.

Andrew Miller (Ellesmere Port and Neston) (Lab): Can I say to the skilled work force at Urenco that, whatever happens to the future of Urenco, Britain will maintain its pre-eminent position in nuclear fuel enrichment?

Edward Miliband: My hon. Friend can say that. Urenco plays an important role in this country and is part of our nuclear asset, and we intend to keep it that way.

Christopher Fraser (South-West Norfolk) (Con): Will the Secretary of State finally accept that the Government have failed people in rural areas in terms of fuel poverty? In such areas, there is not a choice of suppliers and the use of a car is a necessity, not a luxury.

Joan Ruddock: I think that in my earlier replies on rural homes, I suggested that there was a need to give more attention to rural areas and to make sure that people living there are able to make real savings and reduce their bills. That is clearly going to happen as a result of the types of measures that we are introducing, from extended carbon emissions reduction targets to the increase in CERT and adjustments in the warm homes programme, as part of which air source heat pumps are being trialled.

Tom Levitt (High Peak) (Lab): My final contribution to this House is quite fundamental. The northern half of this planet grew rich from 200 years of exploitation of carbon. Can the Minister assure us that everything is being done to ensure that the southern half of the planet can develop riches of its own without that dependence on carbon?

Edward Miliband: We will miss my hon. Friend, who raises an important issue. Last week, my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister held the first meeting of the high-level panel set up under the Copenhagen accord and set out how we can find \$100 billion a year by 2020 to help people in the developing world not just with adaptation to climate change but with mitigation. That speaks to the issues of justice that my hon. Friend asked about and has fought for in the House.

Sir Patrick Cormack (South Staffordshire) (Con): As one who remembers questions by candlelight in this House in the year that the Secretary of State was born, may I ask him whether he believes that we are truly honouring our historic debt to our mining communities and giving sufficient emphasis to coal technology?

Edward Miliband: Let me pay tribute to the hon. Gentleman, who is also standing down from the House. He will be much missed, and is a respected figure on both sides of the House. He used to try to persuade me when I was Third Sector Minister not to call it the third sector, and he never quite succeeded, but we will miss him.

We should always think about the debts we owe to our mining communities. I represent a mining area. Work has been done on regeneration of our coal field areas and on reopening some pits, including in my constituency, but there is always more to be done on this issue.

Mr. Speaker: Last but not least, Sir Nicholas Winterton.

Sir Nicholas Winterton (Macclesfield) (Con): I am most grateful to you, Mr. Speaker and I support the comments of my hon. Friend the Member for South Staffordshire (Sir Patrick Cormack). As a Conservative who in this House has consistently supported the mining industry, may I ask the Secretary of State how much he believes that clean coal technology can contribute to the

security of energy supplies in this country? We have so much coal here that I believe that coal can continue to play a major role in energy generation.

Edward Miliband: The hon. Gentleman will be much missed from this House. He has been a fighter not just for coal but for manufacturing industry in general and he has distinguished himself and is known throughout the country for the work that he has done. He is right to say that clean coal technology is an important part of our future. We are shortly to pass the Energy Bill, which introduces a clean coal levy to fund carbon capture and storage demonstration. That could be a massive industry for the future for Britain and could benefit all our regions. I hope that the House will pass the Bill and that we can get on with the business of making that happen.

Points of Order

11.34 am

Andrew Mackinlay (Thurrock) (Lab): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I fully understand that when the Lords messages come back the competence of this House is to deal exclusively with those messages, but will you and your deputies allow one bit of licence and give Ministers the opportunity to explain why things have been omitted from legislation when they gave undertakings to the House that they would table amendments in the House of Lords?

If I may illustrate the point, the hon. Member for Foyle (Mark Durkan), seconded by the hon. Member for East Antrim (Sammy Wilson), tabled amendments in this House to extend the credit unions in Northern Ireland to come under the auspices of the Financial Services Authority. That would have allowed them to have a greater product range, guarantees and so on. We should bear it in mind that credit unions are very important in Northern Ireland; 26 per cent. of people in Northern Ireland use them as opposed to 1 per cent. in England.

The Minister at the Dispatch Box gave an undertaking that the Government would table amendments in the House of Lords. If they have been deleted—

Mr. Speaker *rose*—

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North) (Lab): It is his last intervention—

Mr. Speaker: Order. Well, I want to be helpful to the hon. Member for Thurrock (Andrew Mackinlay). First, as a general principle and a matter of practice, debate is restricted in these circumstances to the Lords amendments themselves. It is not an occasion for wider ruminations. Secondly, the hon. Gentleman's attempted point of order—I am not sure that it was a point of order—raised a hypothetical question, and I think that my best answer is that we will deal with these matters as they develop.

I conclude by saying to the hon. Gentleman that I think he was being argumentative, and he would not be the hon. Member for Thurrock if he was not being argumentative. I will miss him, and I am sure that the House will miss him.

Michael Fabricant (Lichfield) (Con): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. A parliamentary written answer has revealed that Charlie Whelan has been given a House of Commons pass by the Labour party, yet you will recall that the Prime Minister asserted in previous Prime Minister's questions that Mr. Whelan is in no way connected with the Labour party. Has any indication been given to you that the Prime Minister now wishes to correct his original assertion, which was untrue?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Gentleman is a very experienced Member. He has served in the House without interruption since 1992. He knows that I have absolutely no responsibility for the content of ministerial answers, including Prime Ministerial answers. The issue of passes is a matter that is handled in the normal way. The hon. Gentleman is a perspicacious fellow, and he knows perfectly well that what he has raised with me is an intriguing point of debate, but not a point of order.

Peter Bottomley (Worthing, West) (Con): Further to the points of order, Mr. Speaker. The issue that I think was raised was one about lobbying. A political director of an outside organisation with a parliamentary pass is a lobbyist. That is the issue that needs to be considered by the House authorities.

Further to the point raised by the hon. Member for Thurrock (Andrew Mackinlay), is it not clear that Ministers need to be reminded that they may rise on a point of order to say something that they cannot say as part of the debate? I hope that Ministers will have heard that.

Mr. Speaker: Again, that is a hypothetical point, and perhaps the hon. Member for Worthing, West (Peter Bottomley) excels at those. He has made his point. It is on the record, and Ministers who might not have been aware of the opportunities available to them have helpfully been made aware of them by the hon. Member.

Dr. Evan Harris (Oxford, West and Abingdon) (LD): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I have two points of order on the same subject. First, you will be aware that on 4 March the House voted to reform its procedures by an overwhelming majority, and essentially instructed the Government to bring forward the Standing Orders for that purpose in this Parliament. Those were the terms of the motion. The Government have not done that. Have you heard of a precedent for the Government defying the will of the House in that way? If they can do that, what is the point of our being here if we can pass a motion instructing the Government to do something and the Government just ignore it?

My second point of order is that it emerged yesterday that one of the excuses that the Government gave for not introducing the Standing Orders was that they had tabled them for approval without objection. They said that because objections had been made against their will, they could not bring forward those Standing Orders by that method. I am glad that the Deputy Chief Whip is in his place. It turned out yesterday that when one of the people—the right hon. Member for North-West Durham (Hilary Armstrong)—who had put down objections responded to an e-mail from the hon. Member for Cannock Chase (Dr. Wright) asking her to remove her amendments, which counted as objections, her office referred the matter to the Government Whip's Office. That means that the Government were objecting to their own motion, by proxy. Is it acceptable for the Government, first, to do that and, secondly, to attempt to mislead the House—apparently inadvertently—by saying that these were individuals acting freely?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Gentleman is indefatigable in his efforts. He said that he wanted to raise with me two points of order. In respect of the first, I think that he is seeking to inveigle me into debate. I think that I should resist any such temptation. The wider point that I would make in relation both to his first and second points of order is that all of these matters have been very thoroughly ventilated. The last observation that it is sensible for me to make to the hon. Gentleman is that a Committee was established under the chairmanship of the hon. Member for Cannock Chase (Dr. Wright). It produced its recommendations, which were, as the hon. Gentleman said, debated and voted upon on 4 March. I have absolutely no doubt whatever that the

House will return to these matters. If I were in any doubt, the hon. Gentleman could assure me that they will arise again. I cannot go further than that. These matters will not go away, but I cannot be drawn into debate upon them today.

Sir Patrick Cormack (South Staffordshire) (Con): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I would be grateful for your assistance. I understand that the House will dissolve by royal proclamation on Monday and that our last sitting will be Prorogation later today. For the sake of those of us who will be leaving and who will wish to attend that ceremony, could you ensure that adequate notice be given on the monitors of its timing?

Mr. Speaker: Certainly notice will be given on the screen and the hon. Gentleman is right to draw our attention to that. I am very glad that he and others will wish to attend the ceremony. Knowing that the hon. Gentleman has served in the House without interruption, I think, since 18 June 1970, I would like to echo the tributes that have been paid to him. I wish him a long, happy and healthy retirement. I say exactly the same to his hon. Friend sitting to his right, the hon. Member for Macclesfield (Sir Nicholas Winterton), who entered the House in 1971 and has served without interruption since. I am sure that both of them will be at the ceremony and I look forward to seeing them there. Of that ceremony they will get decent notice.

Peter Bottomley: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. On the issue of Charlie Whelan's pass, is it in order for a lobbyist to have a pass for this place?

Mr. Speaker: I have already ruled on that matter—[*Interruption.*] Order. The hon. Gentleman must calm himself. He has raised a point of order and I am answering it. I simply said that I have ruled on that matter. What I have said is all that I have to say at this stage and we should not pursue it. There is important business that the House has to consider. I am always very open to points of order and I try to deal with them in a way that is helpful and comprehensive, but I do not think that the patience of the Chair should be unduly stretched.

Orders of the Day

Sustainable Communities Act 2007 (Amendment) Bill

Consideration of Bill, as amended in the Public Bill Committee

Clause 1

AMENDMENT OF EXISTING PROCEDURE IN SUSTAINABLE
COMMUNITIES ACT 2007

11.44 am

Mr. Christopher Chope (Christchurch) (Con): I beg to move amendment 1, in page 1, line 1, leave out clause 1.

Mr. Speaker: With this it will be convenient to discuss the following: amendment 5, clause 2, page 2, line 15, at end insert

‘within six months of receiving such a proposal.’.

Amendment 6, page 2, leave out lines 28 to 32.

Amendment 7, page 2, leave out lines 33 and 34.

Amendment 8, page 2, leave out lines 35 and 36.

Amendment 9, in page 2, leave out lines 37 and 38.

Amendment 10, in page 2, leave out lines 46 to 49.

Amendment 11, in page 3, leave out lines 3 to 5.

Amendment 12, in page 3, leave out lines 13 to 16.

Amendment 13, in page 3, leave out lines 17 to 27.

Amendment 14, in page 3, line 29, leave out ‘or an order under section 5C’.

Amendment 15, in page 3, line 39, leave out ‘or an order under section 5C’.

Mr. Chope: I much regret that I never got a response from the Leader of the House to my offer yesterday to forgo this one-hour debate so that we could deal with the issue of the Business Committee. The Government said that the shortage of time meant that they were not prepared to bring the matter forward. It is incredibly impolite of the Government not even to respond to my offer to allow this debate to go short to allow time to discuss that all-important business issue.

In facing the reality that the Government do not listen and are not interested in Back-Bench opportunities, I suppose it is something to be given an hour to discuss this important Bill. It is a pity that it has to be discussed on the day we are expecting Prorogation because there were many earlier opportunities to discuss it had the Government been willing to put the matter on the Order Paper for those several days before Easter when the House rose far earlier than it needed to under the normal arrangements.

The amendment relates to measures that I and my hon. Friend the Member for Peterborough (Mr. Jackson) expressed concerns about on Second Reading. From the Front Bench, my hon. Friend expressed concern on behalf of the Local Government Association about the proposed measures to allow the Secretary of State to publish regulations on the procedure for making proposals. He said that such regulations were likely to lead to increased prescription governing consultation and

[Mr. Chope]

engagement with parish councils and petitioners, as well as confusion over the form, content and timing of the proposals. According to the LGA, the resource implications for local authorities of participating under the Act were considerable and should not be underestimated.

My hon. Friend cautioned against being too prescriptive on establishing a national template for what is best for everyone in terms of consultation and engagement with local community groups. He said that we should trust local authorities to be responsive and not to prescribe too much for them. Nothing was done to table an amendment along those lines to reflect my hon. Friend's concerns in the short time—

Peter Bottomley (Worthing, West) (Con): Further to my earlier point of order, Mr. Speaker. Am I right in thinking that it is for the Serjeant to look into the issue that I raised earlier?

Mr. Speaker: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his point of order. I said that passes were issued in the usual way. The ultimate responsibility for the issue of those passes lies with the Serjeant at Arms, as the hon. Gentleman rightly says. She will look into the circumstances of the issue of the pass. I hope that that is helpful both to the hon. Gentleman and to the House.

Mr. Chope: It is certainly helpful to me and I hope that the Serjeant at Arms will do so with great expedition. Obviously time is running short for a further ruling that might come as a result of those inquiries.

I have tried to articulate our concerns in the form of a group of amendments to which I shall refer shortly. I tabled amendment 1 because clause 1 is effectively a retrospective provision. It changes the rules of the game after the event. Local authorities, with community groups, were encouraged to participate in a bidding process under the Sustainable Communities Act 2007. That process was always being delayed by the Government. For example, the Act came into law in October 2007. Under its terms, the Government had to invite bids within one year. Instead of inviting bids over a short period, they invited them over a nine-month period, so that the bids had to be in by the end of July last year. Those bids—there were more than 300 from 100 different local authorities—had then to be considered extensively by a panel, which had as its chairman Councillor Keith Mitchell of the LGA. The panel worked extremely hard to go through all the bids and assess them by using the criteria set down in the original Bill. It then presented them to the Secretary of State, who I saw fleetingly for about a minute on the Front Bench just now, but he has obviously decided that this matter is beneath his dignity, which is a great pity. I know from experience how marginal the seat of Southampton, Itchen is, so I imagine he is heading off there to participate in a closely fought general election campaign.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (Barbara Follett): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Speaker: Order. Before the hon. Lady intervenes, I will helpfully say—I know the hon. Member for Christchurch (Mr. Chope) always likes to be helped—that

we are focusing on the narrow terms of the amendment. Consideration of election campaigns either in Southampton, Itchen or elsewhere is quite out of the scope of the amendments. Being the very fastidious and committed parliamentarian that he is, I know he would want to be in order.

Mr. Chope: I certainly would like to be in order, Mr. Speaker. I was expressing my disappointment that the Secretary of State, who is responsible for the Bill and the activities under it, was in his place momentarily but did not stay. Indeed, he was the person to whom the open letter to which I referred from Councillor Keith Mitchell was addressed. I admit that I went beyond the bounds by speculating about the reason why the Secretary of State may have left so soon.

Barbara Follett: I would just like to explain on behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State that he came in to check progress and, having already heard the hon. Gentleman's contribution several times, he decided to come back later.

Mr. Chope: I do not know whether the Minister is familiar with the long sparring game that I have had with the right hon. Member for Southampton, Itchen (Mr. Denham). It goes back to when he was selected for Southampton, Itchen for the Labour party, before I was even selected as a Conservative parliamentary candidate back in 1983. So I would not be surprised if he is fed up of listening to my voice. The hon. Lady is retiring at the general election and I have always regarded her as one of the more courteous Members of the House, but I am disappointed with the explanation she has given.

Mr. Edward Leigh (Gainsborough) (Con): May I just say to my hon. Friend that I was sitting in the Tea Room just now and as soon as his name appeared on the annunciator, people immediately started rushing back to the Chamber to hear him? He is one of our finest commentators and this is a gross slur on the part of the Minister.

Sir Nicholas Winterton (Macclesfield) (Con): Labours Members have not rushed back.

Mr. Leigh: Maybe not—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Member for Gainsborough (Mr. Leigh) was trying to make an orderly intervention, but unfortunately he failed in the attempt. I know that when the hon. Member for Christchurch (Mr. Chope) gets to his feet, he will not spend time dilating on those matters, but will focus his remarks very narrowly on the specific terms of the amendment, because time is being taken that might otherwise be taken by other hon. or right hon. Members.

Mr. Chope: I have never been one for dilating. On subject of time, it is important to recognise that it is only because some of us have insisted on having the matter debated, rather than letting it go through on the nod, that we are discussing it at all. I am conscious of the fact that it is important that we have a chance to explain the amendments and get a response about them from my hon. Friend the Member for North-East Bedfordshire (Alistair Burt), the promoter of the Bill. I am not sure that the way things are timed out means that we will have long for a discussion on Third Reading. We will have to rest the matter there.

Amendment 1 relates to the primary Act—the Sustainable Communities Act 2007—under which local authorities were invited to submit bids. I have gone through the process that the local authorities went through and I know that they are expecting to get a decision from the Government on those bids. Indeed, the open letter that Mr. Mitchell sent to the Secretary of State at the turn of the year, when the short list was put forward, states:

“We hope that the process”—

of discussing the proposals—

“will be completed before the Easter recess so that councils can get on with the job of delivering for their local residents.”

He asked the Secretary of State to set up a series of meetings in January and February to that end. On Second Reading on 26 February, the Minister expressed lots of hope and expectation that progress was going to be made on delivering a response to the bids by this time—the last day of this Session. However, nothing has happened. In a sense, my hon. Friend the Member for North-East Bedfordshire is giving an excuse to the Government for further delay because clause 1 changes the applicable rules. By doing so, officialdom is given an excuse to say, “Well, we’ve now got to go back and look at the bids again using different criteria.” The Secretary of State previously had to say whether a proposal should be implemented, but now if clause 1 remains unamended, he can decide whether it should be implemented in whole or in part. That is a completely different concept. It is one thing to say that future bids should be assessed on that basis—indeed, that is covered in clause 2—but it is wrong in principle to change the rules at this stage of the game because such an alteration is retrospective and will be counter-productive. That change will cause a lot of disappointment to local authorities and those who are engaged in the bidding process with good will, as they had hoped something would be achieved.

If my hon. Friend the Member for Ruislip-Northwood (Mr. Hurd), who drove through the original Bill—I am pleased to see him in his place—were being frank, I think he would have expected to see some results from his efforts by the end of this Parliament. However, there have been no results. As with all these things, I suppose there may be a silver lining, which is that an incoming Conservative Government will be able to assess the bids de novo and come up with more sensible conclusions that might otherwise have not been reached. That does not alter my concern about the retrospective nature of clause 1, which is why I have tabled my amendment.

Amendments 5 to 15 relate to regulations. Amendment 5 states that if we are going to be prescriptive, we should be prescriptive in respect of the Secretary of State’s timetable. That amendment, which applies to page 2, line 15 of the Bill, would require the Secretary of State to consider each proposal and to decide

“within six months of receiving such a proposal.”

That seems to be a sensible element of prescription, because it puts the pressure on the Secretary of State to respond in a timely fashion. At the moment, the proposals are sitting on desks in the Department and nothing much is happening to them. We should at least learn from the past and ensure that, when we have future rounds of bidding, the Secretary of State has to respond quicker to the proposals.

We should pay tribute to the LGA for working so hard to go through all the original proposals and come up with a short list that sets out in detail the merits and demerits of each proposal and links them together in convenient categories—in other words, for doing a lot of the Secretary of State’s work. It is a pity that the Secretary of State did not respond in a timely fashion to such a proposal, but amendment 5 would ensure that in future the Secretary of State would have to so respond.

12 noon

Amendment 6 would remove the provision—albeit a permissive provision—in subsection (3)(a) of proposed new section 5B that would require

“a local authority to take specified steps before making a proposal (which may, in particular, include a requirement to consult or otherwise involve the council of any parish which is wholly or partly within the local authority’s area, or to consult local persons”.

Surely we should trust local authorities to decide such matters. Obviously, if they do not consult and they do not demonstrate quite a lot of local support for their proposals, those proposals are less likely to succeed. Why do we need regulations to require them to consult? It just seems to be bureaucracy going too far.

Amendment 7 would remove from the regulations the requirement to specify

“the way in which consultation...is to be carried out.”

Surely we should allow local authorities to decide for themselves how to carry out a consultation. Why do we need regulations? This is bureaucracy and centralisation of the very worst sort.

Amendment 8 would remove the regulations that require

“a local authority to try to reach agreement with persons consulted under the regulations.”

It is far from clear to me what that means. As we know from dealings in this House, it is possible to get agreement between people with goodwill, but it is not always so. If local authorities want to put forward a proposal that has a lot of consensus, they should be able to do so. How can we require them to reach a particular type of agreement with people who have been consulted under the regulations?

Amendment 9 refers to the regulation that would require

“the local authority to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State”—

Mr. Leigh: Would my hon. Friend agree that the best regulator of local authorities is the people voting in local council elections?

Mr. Chope: Absolutely. The great thing about local authorities is that they are elected and, therefore, accountable. Later, we will come to my amendment that relates to the proposal by my hon. Friend the Member for North-East Bedfordshire to widen the definition of a local authority to beyond that of a local authority with elected members. If we wish to empower local authorities and democracy, we should ensure that we trust local authorities to get on and do the job for which they have a statutory duty. Subsection (3)(d) of proposed new section 5B, which would be removed by amendment 9, is, in any event, contradictory. Local authorities should either have regard to the guidance, or they should be

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required to comply with the guidance. I do not think that we can have it both ways. In any event, the provision is far too prescriptive.

Amendment 10 would delete paragraph (h), which, at the moment requires

“the Secretary of State to specify one or more persons who must be consulted, and with whom the Secretary of State must try to reach agreement, before making a decision in relation to a proposal”.

In other words, we are talking about the Secretary of State requiring himself to consult with somebody to try to reach an agreement, which is not at all clear. I know that this is, essentially, a Government handout Bill that my hon. Friend has been promoting with Government support.

Alistair Burt (North-East Bedfordshire) (Con): No.

Mr. Chope: If I am wrong about that, my hon. Friend should accept responsibility for the wording of paragraph (h) and explain it to us. I was trying to be generous to him. Given that this Bill has been given Government time today, I assumed that the Government were supporting it. Perhaps they are supporting it because they are embarrassed about their own failure to deliver on the original Act, and think that this will allow them to paper over the cracks.

Amendment 11 would remove paragraph (j), which currently requires

“the Secretary of State to publish and lay before Parliament a report describing the progress which has been made in relation to implementation of the proposals.”

That is redundant because it is open to any Member of this House to put down a question to the Secretary of State and obtain an answer. We know from the way in which the Secretary of State and his Ministers have been responding that they have not been exactly precise in setting out the progress, but that will not be remedied by putting into regulations a requirement that they must publish a report describing progress. It would be much better to set a deadline, which is what amendment 5 proposes, of six months to sort everything out.

Amendment 12 would leave out subsection (6) of proposed new section 5B, which extends the definition of a local authority. It says:

“A reference in this section to a local authority is to be treated, where an order has been made under section 5C specifying persons or classes of person who may make proposals under this Act, as including a reference to those persons or classes of person.”

In other words, we are extending the definition of a local authority to include people who are not elected. My time in local government began in an era in which there were people called aldermen. I won my first election on Wandsworth council in 1974, and the first thing that happened was that the person whom I defeated was appointed alderman, which was not very good for democracy. I congratulated him and said that it was because of me that he was an alderman rather than a mere councillor. What we are doing in this Bill is extending the definition of a local authority, thereby effectively undermining the elected local authority members because we are, by implication, giving an equal or similar status to people who are not elected or accountable through the ballot box. That is a most unfortunate part

of this Bill. It follows, therefore, that I am very much against proposed new section 5C, so my amendment 13 would leave it out. That brings me on to consequential amendments 14 and 15, which would follow as a result of removing proposed new section 5C. I know that you take a keen interest in such matters, Mr. Speaker, so I hope that you will appreciate that, in my submission, this Bill that falls far short of the ideal. It is a pity that it is now being pushed through at the last minute without the chance of proper considered debate. I suppose that we still have time to divide the House on one or more of these amendments.

Mr. Leigh: Why not?

Mr. Chope: I look forward to the contribution of my hon. Friend the Member for Gainsborough. It may be that such Divisions would be a sensible way to proceed. In any event, if this Bill goes through and gets its Third Reading today, are we expecting the other place to allow this Bill to have a Second Reading, a Committee stage, a Report stage and Third Reading all before the end of this Sitting?

If debating the amendments today achieves nothing else, I hope that it will draw their lordships' attention to the fact that the Bill is far from perfect. If it has the support of those on both Front Benches, there is no reason why its contents could not be brought forward in a fresh piece of legislation in the next Parliament, if indeed anything is needed. All it really needs is an expression of intent. The Bill is really asking the Government to express an intent of good will towards the original Act. In all such respects, actions speak louder than words. We have seen the delaying tactics that the Government adopted in the implementation of the original Act and the proposals put forward under it.

I do not think that the world will be a better place for having the Bill on the statute book, but I will not go so far as to say that the ceiling would fall in as a result, because in the context of what we have to do in the House this is all relatively trivial. However, underlying it all is the fact that we have raised the expectations of hundreds, if not thousands, of people and organisations up and down the country who have put in bids under the original Act. Those bids have been shortlisted and the people are waiting for them to be resolved. Why do not we wait for those bids to be resolved before deciding on further legislation?

Barbara Follett: I am pleased to be here today because I thought that after the events of a couple of weeks ago we would not get the Bill before the House again. It is thanks to the actions of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State that we have once again returned to this most welcome Bill.

Amendment 1 would remove the useful flexibility that the Bill introduces. In other words, instead of being able to make decisions on each of the 242 distinct requests contained in the 199 separate proposals that we have received under the Sustainable Communities Act, the Secretary of State would be obliged to decide on all requests contained in each proposal. Given that Oxford city council, for instance, submitted a proposal with 25 individual requests for action, amendment 1 would require us to take a blanket approach to all of them, which would mean that we could lose some good

proposals. Also, instead of being able to introduce some proposals immediately and some a little later, we would not have the flexibility that the Bill introduced by the hon. Member for North-East Bedfordshire (Alistair Burt) gives us. Clause 1 is a common-sense clause. It will speed up and enable decisions rather than slow them down.

Amendment 5 would get in the way of flexibility in the process for inviting, considering and deciding upon proposals. It would remove the flexibility that the Bill gives us and make the process for deciding upon proposals much less flexible. The amendment and a deadline fixed by primary legislation would give less opportunity for organisations such as the Local Government Association to influence the Secretary of State's decision, and it could result in him deciding not to implement a complex proposal because he did not have the time to consider it in detail.

The hon. Member for Christchurch (Mr. Chope) mentioned extending invitations to unelected bodies. Parish councils might be on the lowest rung of local democracy, but in the areas I know well they are by no means the least important. We wish to see them included.

12.15 pm

Mr. Chope: Parish councils are probably the perfect example of democracy in local government because they have to raise all the money they spend from local people and account for it. Would the Minister accept that the proposed new section 5C goes much wider than giving a power to include parish councils? It states that any

“other persons who represent the interests of local authorities as the Secretary of State thinks fit”

could be defined as local authorities, but it does not state that they have to be elected.

Barbara Follett: No, but it does exactly what we hope it will do: involve local people far more in local democratic processes.

Mr. William Cash (Stone) (Con): Will the Minister give way?

Barbara Follett: No, I must make some progress. Given the lack of knowledge of the number and complexity of proposals, it is not reasonable to set a deadline, because it would mean that the Secretary of State could go into default or would have to decide on proposals, which are extraordinary complex and affect many Departments, in a very short time.

We hope to issue the next invitation for proposals by the summer of 2011. Placing a date in primary legislation now would unduly restrict the Government and all those who want a say in how we move forward. The Secretary of State will inform the House by the end of the year of the latest date by which the invitation can be made.

The provisions within the proposed regulations, which would be affected by amendments 6 to 11, were the result of submissions of many of those who took part in the consultation on the first round. The provisions in the Bill are not prescriptive. They are a reminder to the Government of what local authorities and parishes feel are important in that process.

Amendments 12 to 15, and especially amendments 13 to 15, would deny the Government the opportunity to listen to the wishes of parish councils, which, as I have said, are an important part of local democracy. Denying the Government the power to invite anyone other than local authorities in any situation imaginable is neither an appropriate way forward, nor in the spirit of the Bill. With that in mind, I urge the hon. Member for Christchurch not to push his amendments.

Alistair Burt: I am grateful for the opportunity to speak today and, I hope, to see the Bill through to a conclusion. I hope that you will allow me, Mr. Speaker, to deal briefly with the amendments in detail and say one or two words of thanks.

I am grateful to the Minister and her colleagues for finding time to bring the Bill back at this late stage. However, I know, as she does, that that is no Government handout. The time and effort that my hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch (Mr. Chope) puts into scrutiny is much appreciated by the House. Although it is not always the easiest thing to listen to, the House would be much the poorer without colleagues like him, as what he tries to do is important. However, he rather unkindly suggested that the Bill was a handout and I am sure he is aware of the grass-roots movement that inspired the original Sustainable Communities Act. The Bill has been inspired by the same movement, rather than the Government. The Government were not happy with the original Act and had to be persuaded that it was the right thing to do by colleagues from across the House and in a series of public meetings. The Government then embraced the idea and took it on. The idea for an amendment to the Act has come from the same grass-roots movement, as it saw one or two deficiencies in the original Act, which is what this small, amending Bill is designed to put right. It is not a handout.

My hon. Friend might well be correct that an element of embarrassment, perhaps about the time it has taken for the proposals to come through, has enabled the Government to be more generous in their interactions with me and with those Members supporting the Bill so that the current amendments could be brought forward today, but there is a distinction between that and a handout.

Mr. Chope: I apologise to my hon. Friend for having inadvertently slurred him by suggesting that the Bill is a Government handout. However, I am concerned about clause 1. The Government are already charged with reaching a decision on the proposals before them, and clause 1 would introduce more flexibility, as the Minister said. Are the Government themselves asking for this flexibility, or is it something that has come from my hon. Friend and his friends?

Alistair Burt: I shall come back to clause 1 and deal with that point in a second, if I may.

The Bill and the amendments reflect interest outside the House in trying to do something different in terms of local activity. I briefly pay tribute to those who have put so much work into the Bill: Local Works, which is so often represented in the Palace establishment by Ron Bailey, who made considerable efforts to move this project forward; the LGA, which has worked so hard on it; the Minister and her officials; and, in particular,

[Alistair Burt]

colleagues in the House, not least my hon. Friend the Member for Ruislip-Northwood (Mr. Hurd) who introduced the original Bill, and friends such as the hon. Members for Stroud (Mr. Drew) and for Falmouth and Camborne (Julia Goldsworthy), who put so much into this Bill. Its success is shown in the 100 local authorities who submitted proposals. There were 301 proposals submitted to the Government for consideration, 199 ultimately by the LGA.

The Bill has a sweep of support both in the House and beyond. If we can believe that, in these times, this kind of grass-roots activity can make an impression on Government, we are acknowledging that times are indeed moving on and that the new politics has a place.

One thing I share firmly with my hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch is the wish that, in a few weeks' time, it will be our colleagues on the Front Bench who will be charged with the onerous responsibility of dealing with delivery of the proposals that are currently with the Department—a wish that he and I share most fervently. I believe that at that time I will be able to encourage my colleagues on the Front Bench to take forward some of the ideas contained in the amendments. I shall return to that in a moment.

Mr. Cash: I am not universally hostile to the proposals by any means, but I am concerned about the definition of “local authorities”. Could my hon. Friend explain, as I believe he more or less did just now, the reference to those who

“represent the interests of local authorities as the Secretary of State thinks fit”?

Does that refer exclusively to local government associations? If not, it raises all kinds of difficult problems.

Alistair Burt: I do not think that the reference is exclusively to local government representative associations. The definition can be taken quite widely, and there are several representative bodies, not least the LGA and others, which might be covered by it.

I shall run briefly through the amendments. On the amendments to clause 1, I take the Minister's view that the clause gives necessary flexibility in respect of decisions on proposals already submitted. I would like as many of those proposals as possible to be given the opportunity to come to pass. If that means that by being able to look at them in detail and decide that parts of some proposals are simply unworkable but other parts are workable, I do not think that it is a bad thing to have the flexibility that is in the Bill. That would have been wished for if the issue had been thought through when we considered the original Sustainable Communities Act. I am perfectly content that the clause gives that flexibility.

I am not completely hostile to the idea of a timetable. It is not in the Bill because, as my hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch knows, we have to take what we can get in the wash-up. I heard what the Minister said about including a timetable in the Bill possibly constraining the flexibility of the Department, but I am not so sure that it would not be helpful to have some final deadline. Otherwise, there is a risk that it could take a long time for proposals to come through, and there could be much frustration outside. I would have been quite amenable to a timetable clause being added

to the Bill to provide a final stop line to ensure that things come forward. In the meantime, I accept the assurances given by the Minister that there is a sensible timetable.

One thing I would like to urge on my hon. Friend the Member for Bromley and Chislehurst (Robert Neill) is that when he sits in a different office in a few weeks' time, one of the first things he should do is look at the proposals that are being submitted to the Department, and produce an early timetable so that the public may know when decisions will be made, and so that friends in Local Works and others will know that an answer has been arrived at.

It would have been nice to have seen a timetable in the Bill, but I am not prepared to press the amendment, bearing in mind the circumstances today. I am not hostile to the idea and I understand why my hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch is cautious about allowing the Government too much leeway: they have used the present leeway to allow things to pile up and have not yet produced any answers, despite their good intent.

The rest of my hon. Friend's amendments were, I fear, designed to unseat the Bill, and I agree and support the arguments made by the Minister. There are aspects of the guidelines on how local authorities might consult that are not too onerous on them, and one or two are very important.

A specific aim of those who brought the idea of the Bill to me, when I was drawn sufficiently high up in the Members' ballot, was to include a reference to parish councils in the Bill, and, through that definition of parish councils, a reference to town councils. I have five town councils in my constituency, and some 54 parish councils. They are of immense importance in rural or semi-rural constituencies such as mine, and, as my hon. Friend was generous enough to acknowledge, parish councils are a firm part of the bedrock of our democracy. They very much wanted to be included formally in the Bill because, although we would like to think that local authorities always work as we would want them to—another regulation deals with how consultation might be carried out—it is not always the case.

My hon. Friend made a fair point about over-regulation. It is a point that he makes often, and his concerns are shared by many colleagues on this side of the House. However, at one and the same time, he wants a regulation to ensure that the Minister and the Department deal with things by a particular time, yet seeks to deny a regulation that would encourage authorities to consult in a particular way. My argument is that, occasionally, one wants regulation to do a particular job. In this case, encouraging active involvement with parish and town councils is exceptionally important, and I am pleased to see it in the Bill. Another regulation that is very important is getting authorities to try to find agreement with those who make proposals.

My final point on the amendments as a whole and on the Bill, in case there is no time for Third Reading, is that we have learned much in the past few years about the sense of unease and dissatisfaction outside this House with how the process of governance occasionally works. I believe that we in this place have all learned that we need to be as flexible as possible in responding to an ever better informed public. The inspiration for the original Act was the sense of frustration that people

felt as they saw their immediate environment change around them. They felt that they had no say over what was happening. Their concerns included worries about a ghost-town Britain in which the high street would change and local and rural facilities would be lost. It seemed that no one in power would accept responsibility, and that nothing could be done.

The Sustainable Communities Act arose out of that sense of frustration. Now that it has been passed, that sense of frustration has eased. People see that the different ways in which to engage the Government, their local authority and the community around them are good things that will not go away. Those of us on both sides of the House will have to learn to engage with that kind of community involvement far more than we used to in the past.

Yes, the bottom line for local authorities is a good, well-run Conservative local authority that will deliver better for the people than anything else. However, under the auspices of such authorities, close working with communities and the inspiration that has been triggered by the Sustainable Communities Act and by this little amendment Bill will do the process no harm.

I hope that my hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch will withdraw the amendments. His concerns are legitimate, but perhaps they have been eased by what the Minister and I have said. I hope that the amendments are either withdrawn or rejected by the House, because I believe that the Bill as it stands will do its job and be effective for communities for many years to come.

12.30 pm

Robert Neill (Bromley and Chislehurst) (Con): I echo that concluding passage because it encapsulates why the official Opposition support the Bill and hope that it will pass today. I hope that my hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch (Mr. Chope), having given the matter his usual, diligent scrutiny, will withdraw the amendment. I endorse the support for the outside bodies that gave rise to the Bill and for Ron Bailey and his colleagues in particular.

My hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch raised legitimate points, but it is not necessary that the regulations under the Bill be interpreted by the Government in a prescriptive or onerous way. The Local Government Association's warning against that is legitimate. I assure him and my hon. Friend the Member for North-East Bedfordshire (Alistair Burt) that a Conservative Government would ensure that the regulations were interpreted in a proportionate and light-touch way and would put in place the timetable that he sought—whether it is in the Bill or not—because the principle behind it is important.

Mr. Cash: As an eminent lawyer, does my hon. Friend have doubts about the attempt to exclude the jurisdiction of the courts in judicial review with respect to the definition of who represents the interests of local authorities? It is very broad. Furthermore, apart from the exclusion point, proposed new section 5D provides extraordinarily wide powers for the Secretary of State or anybody else to add, subtract, alter and

“make different provision for different cases or for different purposes.”
The width of those provisions is rather over the top. Does he agree that we should be careful about that?

Robert Neill: Like my hon. Friend, I might have drafted those provisions slightly differently, and I will make two points about that. First, my hon. Friend the Member for North-East Bedfordshire is right that one must be pragmatic about what can be achieved in the wash-up. My principal objective on behalf of the official Opposition is to see the Bill on the statute book. Secondly, even if that risk stands in the Bill, sensible approaches by Ministers can alleviate it. Were I and my hon. Friends in the shadow Communities and Local Government team in Government, we would listen carefully to the legitimate warning of my hon. Friend the Member for Stone (Mr. Cash) about how the legislation should be interpreted. It may be that there will be further legislative opportunities in due course to tighten areas of ambiguity. In that spirit, I hope he accepts that I would prefer to have the Bill on the statute book as it stands so that we have something to work with and can think about those details.

Time is short so I will trespass no longer on the details of the amendments. They have raised issues that have been responded to sensibly and pragmatically by my hon. Friend the Member for North-East Bedfordshire. I share his view that it is regrettable that the Government did not seize as fully as they might have done the opportunities in the original Bill promoted by my hon. Friend the Member for Ruislip-Northwood (Mr. Hurd). None the less, this Bill is a step in the right direction and I am grateful that the Government have recognised that and supported it.

Lest we do not have time for a Third Reading debate, perhaps I can trespass upon your time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to wish the Minister, as I did in Committee, every good fortune for the future. I am delighted to have the opportunity to do so on the Floor of the House. I have enjoyed being her shadow and hope that I am able to enjoy being a substance in due course. Whatever happens, we wish her well for the future because she has dealt with this and other matters with unflinching courtesy.

Mr. Colin Breed (South-East Cornwall) (LD): The Liberal Democrats fully support this modest but important Bill, as we supported the original Act. Twenty-six years ago, I was elected to a district council. We would not have needed such proposals then, but times have changed. In the intervening 26 years, not only has the way in which the electorate engages changed, but there has been over-centralisation of this place under both Labour and Conservative Administrations. That must now be addressed and the Bill does so partially.

I am leaving the House today but hope that, whatever Administration are elected, they take local government issues seriously. The life of people's towns and parishes in urban and rural areas is one of the most important things to them. The way in which they can engage will be assisted considerably by the original Act and the Bill. We want them to engage in the process and should not put up barriers to that by passing these amendments. There is a great deal of licence and flexibility, but the more that people can engage in the process and shape their own communities, and the more they recognise that they have a part to play and that things will not be directed by Government and Parliament, the more sustainable will be the communities in which we all live. I fully support the Bill and hope that the hon. Member for Christchurch (Mr. Chope) will withdraw the amendment.

Mr. Leigh: I support at least one of the amendments tabled by my hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch (Mr. Chope), namely amendment 5, which would require the Secretary of State to take action on each proposal within six months.

I mean no criticism of my hon. Friend the Member for North-East Bedfordshire (Alistair Burt), the movement or the Bill because it is no doubt entirely worthy. However, there is a regrettable tendency with legislation, particularly Back-Bench legislation, for grandstanding to take place and for worthy causes to be trumpeted by the Government when they could take action by other means. We already have an Act that was passed in 2007. The Government could have taken action, had they wanted to. We are now told that another Bill is necessary to make things more flexible so that action may be taken.

The House owes my hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch a service. But for him, such Bills would go through on the nod and with no proper scrutiny in the wash-up. The House listened carefully to his remarks on a series of amendments relating to proposed new section 5B(3). We are told that we have to make things more flexible, but subsection (3) will introduce all sorts of regulations that put more onerous burdens on local government. In a powerful point, my hon. Friend referred to the extraordinary paragraph (h), which states:

“Regulations under this section may, in particular, include provision...enabling the Secretary of State to specify one or more persons who must be consulted, and with whom the Secretary of State must try to reach agreement, before making a decision in relation to a proposal”.

When I spoke on the Debt Relief (Developing Countries) Bill yesterday, I drew the House’s attention to a clause that was gobbledegook and paragraph (h) is another example of that. It means nothing. The Secretary of State, in one of the most centralised states in the western world, can do what he or she wishes.

We are, willy-nilly, on a quiet Thursday morning, passing meaningless legislation that gives the Secretary of State powers that he already has. Why are we doing that? We are supporting a Bill not to achieve something, but to make a point. We all believe in sustainable communities and want local councillors to be given the powers and individual responsibility that they had many years ago. If the Bill will achieve that, I wish it well. In the meantime, I hope that my hon. Friend will at least press amendment 5, as it will put the Government on the spot. It says to the Government, “If you really believe in this, when you receive this proposal you should take action within six months.” I hope that my hon. Friend will press the amendment to a Division so that we can make that powerful point.

Barbara Follett: In the few minutes that remain—

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Alan Haselhurst): Order. The Minister needs the leave of the House to speak again.

Mr. Chope: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Minister has already spoken once. These are my amendments. Do I not have the right to reply before the Minister speaks again?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I apologise to the House. I took the Chair during the debate and had not been able to appreciate the batting order that had been followed. I called the hon. Member for Gainsborough (Mr. Leigh)

without being aware that the Minister had spoken earlier or that, although there had been Front-Bench contributions, she had asked to make further comments. I hope that within the three minutes that are left the Minister will, with the leave of the House, make a brief comment so that the hon. Member for Christchurch can conclude. I am sorry about that, but if the Minister will co-operate, I would appreciate it.

Barbara Follett: I understand, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

With the leave of the House, I would like to reiterate the flexibility that the Bill gives us to carry out this important work, and the fact that the amendments will reduce that flexibility and make that work more difficult.

Mr. Chope: May I thank everyone who has participated in this debate? I thank my hon. Friends the Members for North-East Bedfordshire (Alistair Burt) and for Gainsborough (Mr. Leigh) for their generous comments. I am not sure that they are well deserved, but there is something to be said for looking at these Bills in some detail, which is what we have been trying to do today.

I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Gainsborough for what he said about amendment 5. Whether we trust the Government is a topical question at the moment. Yesterday we debated why we are not going to have the Back Bench Business Committee. We trusted the Government and were let down. I propose to divide the House on amendment 5 because it will put pressure on the Government to come forward within six months with answers to the bids made, often with tremendous effort and time, by members of local communities. I beg to ask leave to withdraw amendment 1.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause 2

NEW PROCEDURE FOR PROPOSALS UNDER SUSTAINABLE
COMMUNITIES ACT 2007

Amendment proposed: 5, in page 2, line 15, at end insert

‘within six months of receiving such a proposal.’—(*Mr. Chope.*)

Question put, that the amendment be made.

The House divided: Ayes 1, Noes 212.

Division No. 133]

[12.42 pm

AYES

Winterton, Ann

Tellers for the Ayes:

**Mr. Christopher Chope and
Mr. Edward Leigh**

NOES

Allen, Mr. Graham
Amess, Mr. David
Anderson, Mr. David
Atkinson, Mr. Peter
Austin, John
Bailey, Mr. Adrian
Bain, Mr. William
Baird, Vera
Baldry, Tony
Barker, Gregory
Barrett, John
Barron, rh Mr. Kevin

Beith, rh Sir Alan
Bellingham, Mr. Henry
Benn, rh Hilary
Benton, Mr. Joe
Betts, Mr. Clive
Blunkett, rh Mr. David
Bottomley, Peter
Bradshaw, rh Mr. Ben
Breed, Mr. Colin
Browne, rh Des
Bryant, Chris
Burns, Mr. Simon

Burt, Alistair
 Caborn, rh Mr. Richard
 Cairns, David
 Campbell, Mr. Alan
 Chapman, Ben
 Clapham, Mr. Michael
 Clwyd, rh Ann
 Coaker, Mr. Vernon
 Cohen, Harry
 Conway, Derek
 Cooper, Rosie
 Cooper, rh Yvette
 Corbyn, Jeremy
 Cormack, Sir Patrick
 Cousins, Jim
 Cryer, Mrs. Ann
 Cunningham, Mr. Jim
 Cunningham, Tony
 Curry, rh Mr. David
 Davidson, Mr. Ian
 Dean, Mrs. Janet
 Denham, rh Mr. John
 Dobbin, Jim
 Dobson, rh Frank
 Doran, Mr. Frank
 Duddridge, James
 Eagle, Angela
 Eagle, Maria
 Ellman, Mrs. Louise
 Etherington, Bill
 Fabricant, Michael
 Follett, Barbara
 Foster, Mr. Don
 Francis, Dr. Hywel
 Gardiner, Barry
 Garnier, Mr. Edward
 George, rh Mr. Bruce
 Gerrard, Mr. Neil
 Gibb, Mr. Nick
 Goggins, rh Paul
 Goodman, Helen
 Greening, Justine
 Grieve, Mr. Dominic
 Griffiths, Nigel
 Grogan, Mr. John
 Hall, Mr. Mike
 Hamilton, Mr. David
 Hammond, Stephen
 Hancock, Mr. Mike
 Hands, Mr. Greg
 Hanson, rh Mr. David
 Harper, Mr. Mark
 Harris, Dr. Evan
 Havard, Mr. Dai
 Healey, rh John
 Hendry, Charles
 Hepburn, Mr. Stephen

Herbert, Nick
 Hesford, Stephen
 Hoey, Kate
 Hoon, rh Mr. Geoffrey
 Hopkins, Kelvin
 Horam, Mr. John
 Howard, rh Mr. Michael
 Howarth, David
 Howarth, Mr. Gerald
 Howells, rh Dr. Kim
 Hughes, rh Beverley
 Hughes, Simon
 Humble, Mrs. Joan
 Hurd, Mr. Nick
 Iddon, Dr. Brian
 Illsley, Mr. Eric
 Irranca-Davies, Huw
 Jackson, Glenda
 Jenkin, Mr. Bernard
 Johnson, rh Alan
 Johnson, Ms Diana R.
 Jones, Helen
 Jones, Lynne
 Jones, Mr. Martyn
 Jowell, rh Tessa
 Kaufman, rh Sir Gerald
 Keeley, Barbara
 Keen, Alan
 Keetch, Mr. Paul
 Kelly, rh Ruth
 Kemp, Mr. Fraser
 Kidney, Mr. David
 Kilfoyle, Mr. Peter
 Laing, Mrs. Eleanor
 Lammy, rh Mr. David
 Laxton, Mr. Bob
 Lepper, David
 Levitt, Tom
 Lewis, Mr. Ivan
 Love, Mr. Andrew
 Lucas, Ian
 Luff, Peter
 Mackinlay, Andrew
 Marsden, Mr. Gordon
 McAvoy, rh Mr. Thomas
 McCabe, Steve
 McCafferty, Chris
 McCarthy, Kerry
 McCarthy-Fry, Sarah
 McCartney, rh Mr. Ian
 McDonnell, John
 McFadden, rh Mr. Pat
 McIntosh, Miss Anne
 McKechin, Ann
 McLoughlin, rh Mr. Patrick
 Merron, Gillian
 Michael, rh Alun

Milburn, rh Mr. Alan
 Miller, Andrew
 Mitchell, Mr. Austin
 Moffatt, Laura
 Mole, Chris
 Mountford, Kali
 Mudie, Mr. George
 Mullin, Mr. Chris
 Munn, Meg
 Naysmith, Dr. Doug
 Neill, Robert
 Newmark, Mr. Brooks
 Norris, Dan
 O'Brien, rh Mr. Mike
 O'Hara, Mr. Edward
 O'ner, Mr. Bill
 Ottaway, Richard
 Pearson, Ian
 Pelling, Mr. Andrew
 Pope, Mr. Greg
 Prentice, Bridget
 Primarolo, rh Dawn
 Purchase, Mr. Ken
 Purnell, rh James
 Randall, Mr. John
 Raynsford, rh Mr. Nick
 Robathan, Mr. Andrew
 Robertson, John
 Ruddock, Joan
 Russell, Bob
 Salter, Martin
 Seabeck, Alison
 Sharma, Mr. Virendra
 Sheerman, Mr. Barry
 Sheridan, Jim
 Simon, Mr. Siôn
 Simpson, Alan
 Skinner, Mr. Dennis
 Smith, Ms Angela C.
 (Sheffield, Hillsborough)

Southworth, Helen
 Spellar, rh Mr. John
 Stoate, Dr. Howard
 Straw, rh Mr. Jack
 Sutcliffe, Mr. Gerry
 Tami, Mark
 Taylor, Mr. Ian
 Taylor, Dr. Richard
 Thomas, Mr. Gareth
 Timms, rh Mr. Stephen
 Todd, Mr. Mark
 Touhig, rh Mr. Don
 Trickett, Jon
 Truswell, Mr. Paul
 Twigg, Derek
 Walker, Mr. Charles
 Waltho, Lynda
 Watkinson, Angela
 Watts, Mr. Dave
 Wicks, rh Malcolm
 Wiggan, Bill
 Williams, rh Mr. Alan
 Williams, Mrs. Betty
 Willis, Mr. Phil
 Wills, rh Mr. Michael
 Winnick, Mr. David
 Winterton, Sir Nicholas
 Woodward, rh Mr. Shaun
 Woolas, Mr. Phil
 Wright, David
 Wright, Mr. Iain
 Wright, Jeremy
 Wright, Dr. Tony
 Wyatt, Derek
 Young, rh Sir George

Tellers for the Noes:
Mrs. Sharon Hodgson and
Lyn Brown

Question accordingly negated.

12.52 pm

More than one hour having elapsed since the commencement of proceedings on consideration, the proceedings were interrupted (Order, 7 April).

The Deputy Speaker put forthwith the Question necessary for the disposal of the business to be concluded at that time (Standing Order No. 83E).

Question, That the Bill be read the Third time, put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read the Third time, and passed.

Constitutional Reform and Governance Bill

Consideration of Lords amendments

12.53 pm

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Alan Haselhurst): We come to Lords amendments to the Constitutional Reform and Governance Bill, which have been received and printed. A grouping is also available. Under the order of the House of yesterday they may be considered forthwith without any Question put. I draw the attention of the House to the fact that financial privileges are involved in Lords amendments 37, 41, 42, 44, 46, 48 and 67 to 69. If the House agrees to any of the amendments, I shall ensure that the appropriate entry is made in the *Journal*.

The Secretary of State has tabled a manuscript amendment that is consequential to Lords amendment 20, which leaves out clause 57. Copies are available in the Vote Office. The amendment has been selected and placed in the group led by Lords amendment 16.

Clause 3

MANAGEMENT OF THE CIVIL SERVICE

The Secretary of State for Justice and Lord Chancellor (Mr. Jack Straw): I beg to move, That this House agrees with Lords amendment 1.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this, it will be convenient to discuss Lords amendments 2 to 5, 34 to 38, 58, 67 to 70, 73 and 80.

Mr. Straw: It might be helpful if I begin by explaining to the House the conclusion that was reached in the other place last night. As colleagues of some antiquity will appreciate, the wash-up, by definition, inevitably involves a compression of the legislative process, and business can get through only by agreement. In their lordships' House, that agreement requires not only a majority vote but widespread consent across the Chamber. We were faced with a situation where a number of Back-Bench Members had tabled amendments to delete every single clause. As a consequence, we were faced with difficult but inevitable choices that involved discussions with those Members, party leaders and the leader of the Cross-Bench group to arrive at an accommodation.

Sir Alan Beith (Berwick-upon-Tweed) (LD): It would have been better if the Secretary of State had initiated discussions with all those parties, rather than launching into an agreement with one party alone, which then came unstuck yesterday in the Lords.

Mr. Straw: The right hon. Gentleman is of even greater antiquity than me and he will know that there is a great deal of inter-party discussion all the time. For as long as he and I have been in the House, formal negotiations during the wash-up have taken place between the official Opposition and the Government of the day, but there was no suggestion whatsoever that the Liberal Democrats should be excluded from that process, and I do not believe that the conclusion would have been any different. We will come in due course to the removal of clauses in part 3 relating to a referendum on the voting system, and of clause 53 relating to the ending of by-elections for hereditary peers. We were in exactly the same place

as the Liberal Democrats, but the official Opposition were not. The simple truth, which would have been the case had all three parties been formally in the room, is that during the wash-up, the Opposition have a veto. That is always the case—I was party to wash-ups when in opposition. It is straightforward. That is the reality and there is nothing one can do about it.

The choice we faced, which would have been the same for the hon. and learned Member for Beaconsfield (Mr. Grieve) had he been in my seat, was that we should not make the best the enemy of the good. We would not have got any part of the Bill through had we not been able to reach an accommodation, and, because of external realities, I do not believe that the result would have been any different had there been earlier discussions. As hon. Members will know, we offered the Conservatives what I thought was a good way of squaring the circle in their opposition to the alternative vote and to Liberal Democrat and Government support for it. We said that we would introduce measures and were ready to table amendments that would subject that part of the Bill to an automatic sunset clause. The clause would have stayed on the statute book and, if within six months the Government of the day had taken no action, it would have fallen. If the Government had introduced affirmative resolutions in each House, the legislation would have come into force. We offered that to the Conservative party, but it decided for its own reasons that that was unacceptable.

Mr. William Cash (Stone) (Con) rose—

Mr. Straw: I will give way in a moment. We therefore had no alternative but to withdraw the provision, and I am not giving anything away if I say that we will undertake to reintroduce it as soon as we are re-elected, as I hope we shall be.

Mr. Cash: On referendums on reform, does the Minister for Justice accept that, historically, the Liberal Democrats—Lloyd George, for example—or indeed any other party were in favour of proportional representation when it suited them and went into reverse when it did not. At its heart, that has little to do with the sense of fairness that they try to generate and much more to do with whether they can secure political advantage at any given time.

1 pm

Mr. Straw: May I bring to the House's attention an almost historic first for the hon. Gentleman, for whom I have great affection? This is the only occasion I can recall when he has not brought the European Union into an observation on any issue whatsoever.

David Howarth (Cambridge) (LD): But Europe has PR.

Mr. Straw: Indeed, Europe has PR too.

It is a matter of historical record that until late 1923 the Labour party was the third party, and was in favour of proportional representation. The Liberal party—as it then was—which was the first or second party, was in favour of first past the post. In 1924, Pauline conversions both ways took place. The Labour party suddenly decided that it saw every merit in first past the post, and the Liberals, who slipped into third position, where they have remained ever since, were suddenly in favour of proportional representation—interesting conversions! However, although the alternative vote is an improvement to the system we have, it is not proportional representation.

I greatly regret the fact that we have had to remove certain aspects of the Bill, particularly on the alternative vote and the removal of hereditary peers. To accommodate the Conservative party, we offered an arrangement by which all existing hereditaries would in addition be deemed life peers, and a provision whereby, on the death of a hereditary-cum-life peer, the leader of a party or group—this mainly applies to the Conservative party—would have a right to nominate a replacement. There was, therefore, no question of any gratuitous reduction in their numbers. That, however, was not considered acceptable.

Given the constraints on each party, I thank the hon. and learned Member for Beaconsfield (Mr. Grieve) and his colleagues for the constructive discussions that were held, and place on record my appreciation of the co-operation of the leaders of the three parties, the Cross-Bench groups and a number of individuals—Members and peers—with whom I met and talked all through last night.

The first group of Lords amendments is on the public service. We got the civil service changes through, which was very important. Lord Norton of Louth tabled a series of amendments. I accepted amendment 1, and did my best to accept the others where possible. The amendment sets out that in managing the civil service, “the Minister for the Civil Service shall have regard to the need to ensure that civil servants who advise Ministers are aware of the constitutional significance of Parliament and of the conventions governing the relationship between Parliament and Her Majesty’s Government.”

I told Lord Norton that I strongly support the amendment. He has found a wording that meets the need. A striking feature of my 35 years of contact with officials and of working in Government in the ‘70s is that the number of officials who understand and appreciate what happens here has gone down. We have to reverse that, and the amendment is an important way of doing so.

Other changes remove chapter 3, on Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland, and chapter 4 on Crown employment and nationality. I appreciate that there is some concern about that, but we could not achieve it.

Dr. Evan Harris (Oxford, West and Abingdon) (LD): Will the Minister explain whether “could not achieve it” means just that the Conservatives did not want it? As I understand it, the Minister said that a deal has to be done and they have a veto. Will he explain that in each case, because they probably would want to know what the issue was?

Mr. Straw: The hon. and learned Member for Beaconsfield can speak for himself, but I have no information whatsoever that the official Opposition opposed the clauses.

Mr. Grieve *indicated assent.*

Mr. Straw: And he confirms that.

The other place is very different. It might be attached to this building, but in other respects it is a different planet, as I have discovered, and I was further educated all of yesterday and in the small hours of this morning. The parties can do whatever they want, and we agreed, but as there are no rules of order in the other place, which is absolutely remarkable, a number of people on

both sides who were described to me as “mavericks”—I would not use such a pejorative word—could not be prevented from saying that they would dig in and would talk on the matter, and a whole series of other things, until 4 or 5 am. Unless we had a broad consensus on every single item by external negotiation, including with the outriders, we were not going to get anything through. That is the difficulty.

Lords amendments 67 to 70 are consequential on removing part 10. Amendment 73 is also consequential, and a further amendment removes the clauses relating to the national audit. I am very sorry, as I know everybody is, about having to remove the national audit provisions. I deeply regret that, but otherwise we would not have had any Bill at all. I pledge that we will bring the provisions back if we are re-elected.

Dr. Evan Harris: I think that the Minister glossed over a bit because he went straight from Crown employment to later provisions. As a member of the Joint Committee on Human Rights, I am particularly interested in what happened to part 7. We thought we had a deal on demonstrations in the vicinity of Parliament, because it was not acceptable to leave in that provision. Again, I am interested to know whether it was the Conservatives—or a maverick who may or may not have been a Conservative—who required that to come out.

Mr. Straw: No, it was not the Conservatives. If the hon. Gentleman reads the debates, he will see that Lord Trefgarne in an opening speech said that he was willing only for certain provisions of the Bill to go through, and that otherwise he would filibuster it. He is a Conservative, but I do not suggest for one second that he is under the control of the Conservative Whips. Lord Stoddart was once a member of the Labour party, but has not been for many years, and he is certainly not under the control of the Labour Whips. They said that the only provisions that they were willing to accept were those relating to the civil service—chapter 1 of part 1—part 4, part 6, and the Baroness Gardner clause, clause 87. In the event, we were able to persuade those lordships and some others that other aspects of the Bill should also be included. The negotiation was, therefore, a relative success, and we shall come on to those aspects in a moment.

Mr. Dominic Grieve (Beaconsfield) (Con): I thank the Secretary of State for his approach to the issue in the wash-up.

I start by providing some reassurance for the hon. Member for Oxford, West and Abingdon (Dr. Harris). The position is very clear. When the process started, the Secretary of State approached me and asked for my views and those of the official Opposition on what might remain in the Bill. We worked together very amicably to narrow the areas of difference. As I have no doubt that the Secretary of State will be willing to confirm, I pointed out to him at the outset that my own information coming down from the other place was that whatever we agreed would almost certainly not be sufficient to meet the objections of some of their lordships. I am, I hope, a parliamentarian as well as a politician and, as far as I am concerned, a perfectly valid case had been made. This is a constitutional Bill of sufficient importance that it had to be taken on the Floor of this House. In those circumstances, any hon. Member who criticises a

[*Mr. Dominic Grieve*]

Member of the House of Lords for obstructing a constitutional measure that their lordships were being asked to pass within a very small number of hours, without proper consideration, is on shaky ground. The fact is that their lordships were entitled to say that they did not want the Bill at all. I think that if a sufficient number of them had felt that that was the position, the Bill would have fallen in its entirety.

The Secretary of State and I—and, I suspect, everyone in this House—agree that some clauses are of such importance and so desirable that they should be put on the statute book before the election and that everything possible should be done to try to facilitate that. In fairness to Members of the other place, I should point out that it was clear that most of them accepted that some of the proposed reforms needed to be enacted. I am thinking particularly of those that deal with the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority, with the treatment of non-domiciled peers and Members of the House of Commons and with the civil service—the latter largely non-contentious reform was hugely desired. We have all done our best to put this measure in reasonable order.

I am sorry if the hon. Member for Oxford, West and Abingdon is disappointed. I am disappointed about one or two things that have come out of the Bill, but I will certainly not say a word of criticism about the way in which it was handled at the other end of this building, because their lordships were fully entitled to take the view that they did.

Mr. Cash: May I say how glad I and, I am sure, many of my hon. Friends are to note that the provisions relating to the referendum on voting systems and electoral law have been disposed of? I regard that as a triumph and I am extremely glad to be able to congratulate my hon. and learned Friend on that.

Mr. Grieve: I am most grateful to my hon. Friend. On that provision, I can probably take either the blame or the credit, but at any rate I think that I did have some part to play in ensuring its disappearance. If the hon. Member for Oxford, West and Abingdon is disappointed, that is just tough.

I do not want to take up too much of the House's time. These amendments are acceptable. I do not want to repeat all the arguments that the Secretary of State made. There is in effect only one new amendment, proposed by Lord Norton of Louth, which seems to us a substantial improvement and will helpfully clarify the role of the civil service and the need to respect Parliament in its work. We are happy to welcome that amendment. We obviously accept the amendments that delete certain aspects of the Bill, because we recognise that in view of the way in which the Bill has been handled and the fact that it has come to a premature end without full consideration, Members of the other place are fully entitled to adopt the view that they do not want the provisions to go on the statute book.

David Howarth: The way in which the Bill has been handled throughout has been catastrophic. The Government delayed the Committee stage in this House, randomly extended it and failed to secure the Bill in the

House of Lords, for which they are entirely to blame. Especially on items such as the referendum clauses, the question that occurs to Opposition Members is: did the Government ever intend this to be anything but a political manoeuvre that would inevitably end in an announcement by the Prime Minister of one of his famous dividing lines, rather than a serious attempt to change the electoral system through a referendum? I very much doubt whether the Government were ever serious about that. That throws into grave doubt their seriousness about this issue. They made the promise in 1997 and they are making it again this year, and it has the same validity this year as it did then.

There is also a serious point about the relationship between this House and the other place. As Lord Campbell-Savours pointed out, the House of Lords was quite content to leave in the IPSA aspects of the Bill, because they concerned this House. Surely the same applies to the referendum clauses, which relate to the voting system for this House. I do not think that the way in which Members of the House of Commons are elected has anything to do with the House of Lords.

The other things that have gone from the Bill are equally catastrophic. The House of Lords reform aspects of the Bill throw into doubt the commitment of the whole of Parliament to the reform of Parliament and the return to high standards in public life. That is surely the most serious part, for the reputation of politics, of the wash-up process.

1.15 pm

From the point of view of my party especially, the failure to reform the law about protests surrounding this place is catastrophic. The Prime Minister promised, virtually on his first day in office, to change the law, but he has failed to deliver.

Dr. Harris: I am glad that my hon. Friend makes that point, because other legislative vehicles that have received Royal Assent could have been used. The Government said, "Oh no. Don't worry. We have this Bill. That will do it. We have time." Then, because of the delay that my hon. Friend identified, they wilfully reneged on the promise to repeal the provision, which they could have done in another way, as we and the Joint Committee have argued.

David Howarth: That is a very good point. I noticed that yesterday the Crime and Security Bill went through the other place without having to be sent back to this place. That Bill could have been used for the same purpose, but was not. That is a catastrophe as well.

It seems to me that the process of wash-up is washed up. Front Benchers of the larger parties should reflect on the way in which they colluded, got it wrong and ended up with this disaster.

Mr. Grieve: I resent the hon. Gentleman's implication. There was no collusion. I was asked for my opinion on what we might reasonably accept and I expressed a view, which I was entitled to do. Some of the things that have come out had nothing to do with me. The hon. Gentleman is a good parliamentarian as well. He will have to recognise what happens when the Bill process runs into the sand; that is, I suppose, the fault of the Government. I can assure him that it is not my fault. I

do not know about blaming the Government. Far from our being taken by surprise by what happened in the other place, it was, as I said, entirely predictable. Indeed, I told the Secretary of State that I believed that it was exactly what would happen.

David Howarth *rose*—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. May I say to the hon. Member for Cambridge (David Howarth) that we do not want to enlarge the debate any further by going into such matters as he has just alluded to, because there are six groups of amendments yet to be reached and 37 minutes left?

David Howarth: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I was tempted along that route by the Secretary of State's opening remarks, which were more general. I shall end this part of my remarks by saying that we were excluded from the process and therefore have no loyalty to it.

I regret that the amendments include the removal of the Crown employment nationality provisions. The hon. Member for Hendon (Mr. Dismore) has worked for years to get those provisions this close to the statute book. He cannot be here today, but I am sure that he would express that regret himself were he present. He has support from hon. Members on both sides of the House, and I am sure that if Lords Trefgarne and Stoddart had understood anything about that aspect of the Bill, which they appear not to have done, they would have recognised its merit as well.

Dr. Harris: Again, the Government could have programmed the private Member's Bill concerned as a stand-alone Bill. The Government made a conscious decision not to provide time despite the fact that business has collapsed early day after day in the last few weeks—indeed, the last few months. Therefore, every one of these failures—the hon. and learned Member for Beaconsfield (Mr. Grieve) is being too generous—can be laid at the door of a Government who do not care enough about some of the measures that they claim to want, because they could have dealt with them in another way.

David Howarth: My hon. Friend is entirely right. Do we have just another political manoeuvre, whereby the Government appear to be in favour of something without actually doing it? I regret wasting the time of a large number of hon. Members, which need not have happened.

I approve of other amendments in the group that bring in new material. The amendment moved by Lord Norton of Louth seems to be sensible—the loyalty of the civil service to the House as well as to the Government is important constitutionally. I am sure that the measure will have important long-term consequences; as a constitutional change, it strikes me as just as important as all the things that have been excluded from the Bill. Interestingly, their lordships thought that that change should be allowed.

Dr. Tony Wright (Cannock Chase) (Lab): The wash-up process in general leaves much about which to be dissatisfied and, one day, no doubt we shall turn our minds to that. Insufficient scrutiny even of the parts of the Bill that remain leaves much about which to be dissatisfied—major amendments to the civil service provisions were tabled but were never reached here or in the other place, yet

one stray amendment has now found its way in. The amendment is sensible, but we never had a chance to look at all the other ones, which we could have discussed and might also have been sensible.

Mr. Grieve: I am interested in the hon. Gentleman's comments about the wash-up process being unsatisfactory. I am happy to talk to him informally at some point about how the process could be improved, but the stark reality is that we could argue for no wash-up at all: if legislation hits the buffers at the end of a Parliament, it should fall because it cannot be properly scrutinised. However, we would then lose the benefit of some important parts of the Bill that have been preserved.

Dr. Wright: The hon. and learned Gentleman anticipates my later remarks—the case for fresh thinking about what happens at the end of a Parliament. Should things endure at all, or should they simply fall and have to start again? The case for that is strong, and we have an obligation to review this period, because none of us feels happy about the outcome. I regret the loss of parts of the Bill that would have been valuable but, having said that, my main remarks are directed at the pleasure of having rescued the civil service provisions, for which some of us have been arguing for an awfully long time.

The Committee that I chair has reported endlessly on the civil service issue. In frustration, at one point we even drafted our own Bill—the first time that a Select Committee had done that, certainly in the modern period—but I had almost given up hope. The proposition was first advanced by Northcote and Trevelyan in the middle of the 19th century, so to be enacting it at the end of the first decade of the 21st century suggests that we have not been too premature in advancing the cause. However, we have got there, and we got there because we had what we did not have before. The change was previously held up by, first, the lack of political will and, secondly, a fear that it could not be done without provoking political disagreements. I speak with sincerity not only to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State but to the Opposition that agreement was required for the change to happen. It has happened unsatisfactorily in many respects, but it has happened.

When the current electoral excitements abate, putting the civil service on the statutory footing that it ought to have been on for a long time and enshrining its values in legislation will be seen as a not-insignificant constitutional moment, widely welcomed by the civil service. I congratulate those who have enabled it to happen.

Mr. Cash: I understand Liberal Democrat concerns about reform of the voting and electoral systems. I have already made my position clear, and I am sure that many other people throughout the country, as well as on our Benches, would concur with dispensing with those provisions—I congratulate my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Beaconsfield (Mr. Grieve) on his efforts.

A number of other matters occur to me as we look at the final stages of the Bill. I very much agree with the sentiments expressed by the hon. Member for Cannock Chase (Dr. Wright), because he and I and a number of others have worked extremely diligently on reform of the House. I agree that the wash-up process needs to be looked at properly for the future. Some of what was

[Mr. Cash]

done—for example, with the Finance Bill—struck me as not a good way to legislate: not one Member of the governing party attended debate on the Finance Bill, except perhaps one who came in for only a few minutes. As I said, the birds have flown but people who are about to vote in the general election are saddled with the consequences of the taxation and public expenditure implications of the Finance Bill. Therefore, the wash-up raises many issues.

The Wright Committee proposals—other than those on the chairmanship and membership of Select Committees—have effectively been ditched and betrayed. They could have been included in the Bill.

Sir Alan Beith: Does the hon. Gentleman foresee that when a distinguished Committee—chaired by someone perhaps not as talented as the hon. Member for Cannock Chase (Dr. Wright)—comes to a set of conclusions at an equivalent time in the next Parliament, we shall discover that the necessary motions to implement those conclusions were lost in the wash-up?

Mr. Cash *rose*—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I do not want to be seen as picking on the hon. Member for Stone (Mr. Cash) unduly, because the debate has been very wide ranging—it started with an expansive speech by the Secretary of State, so I understand the temptation to comment. However, I have a duty to the House to keep within the rules of order. Specific groups are down for debate, so it would be helpful in making some progress if hon. Members respected that fact.

Mr. Cash: I shall gladly follow that suggestion, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I refer in particular, therefore, to the civil service reforms. One or two things were not included—for example, it is a great pity that the rules relating to evidence before Select Committees have not been tackled. They might be more a matter of convention and of Standing Orders, but when we require civil servants to carry out their duties with integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality, the fact that special advisers are not required to carry out their duties with objectivity or impartiality is relevant. That might be a statement of the obvious, but sometimes special advisers and their political functions create difficulties. Similarly, in the House, although we engage in political activities, as part of our duties we must deal with some matters with a degree of objectivity and impartiality; that is no less the case for special advisers, because questions of integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality all rather tend to merge into one another. It is a pity that some matters have been differentiated in that way.

No one in the debate has dwelt on the question of the House of Lords. I simply say, “Here we go again.” I commented on the questions of proportional representation, the alternative vote and electoral reform. I accept what the Secretary of State said about alternative votes not being the same as proportional representation in a precise sense, but all such questions are to do with fiddling with the mechanism and the feeling of the choice of the person who goes into a polling booth—or does not do so—to exercise his freedom of choice.

Playing around with that is very dangerous and the reason for retaining the existing system is inviolate; it should be kept. It is about the essence of an individual’s choice and that should not be reallocated according to a system of shuffling.

1.30 pm

My party has been committed to the idea of an elected House of Lords, although I notice that those issues have now been put on the back burner. We have been talking about the matter since the mid-19th century; a certain relation of mine by the name of John Bright was calling for the abolition of the House of Lords even in those days. I am not sure that I would call for its abolition, because it does a fantastically good job, but I have serious doubts about whether it can continue without being elected. I am sorry that the relevant provisions have gone. I have no doubt that the mavericks who were referred to earlier were among those who were determined to maintain the House of Lords in its present state—much as I want to pay tribute to the incredibly hard work that it did. When I was in the shadow Cabinet I found that those people did amazing amounts of hard work. However, the question is about more than that: it is a matter of principle.

On the subject of treaties, I do not think that clause 24 should be exclusively devoted to the question of ratification. Consent is the issue and therefore the clause should be about treaties being laid before Parliament before consent. It is consent that really matters, and ratification is a much more complex question, which I do not intend to go into now, although I took up the issue when I took the Foreign Secretary to judicial review over ratification of the Lisbon treaty, so I feel strongly about it.

The general point on which I want to conclude is that there is far too much government, and the Bill retains far too much of the presidential nature of the direction in which our governmental system is going. The Bill deals with important matters, but there is a need for much deeper radical reform of the connection between the Government, Parliament and the voter than it contains. I would not want to dismiss it, but it does not grapple with the real question at the heart of what the hon. Member for Cannock Chase (Dr. Wright), as Chairman of the Select Committee on the Reform of the House of Commons, and the significant number of hon. Members on both sides of the House who are here first as parliamentarians, know is going wrong: the disconnection between Parliament and the people on the question not just of allowances, but of the manner in which the Government impose their will. I spoke about that in the debate on the effectiveness of Parliament in Westminster Hall yesterday. The Bill does not deal properly with those questions and we must amend the Standing Orders to restrain the extent to which the Government have control over what happens. The Back-Bench and House committees, and the reassertion of the rights of Back Benchers—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I am reluctant at heart to have to interrupt the hon. Gentleman again, but he is allowing himself to get away from my strictures.

Mr. Cash: I am glad to take note of that point, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I shall not transgress again, but I wanted to get that on the record.

I feel strongly that we are moving into a new phase of politics, with all the Facebooks, Twitters and the rest. The question of disconnection remains important, but I congratulate my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Beaconsfield (Mr. Grieve) on the extent to which we have made progress in removing some of the more objectionable things from the Bill. I just do not think that that has gone far enough.

Mr. Straw: With the leave of the House, I would like to thank all hon. Members for their observations and to speak briefly in tribute to my hon. Friend the Member for Cannock Chase (Dr. Wright). This will be his last day in this House. He has been a paradigm of the best of the Members of this House who have shown that it is possible, by assiduity and imagination, to be profoundly influential from the Back Benches, on either side. Much of his work, particularly in chairing the Public Administration Committee, is reflected in the Bill and in other legislation. He will recall, as I do, an extraordinary evening more than 10 years ago at the Report stage of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, when he and I and many others had an open discussion that resulted in a much improved Act.

My hon. Friend made an important observation, which I accept, about the unsatisfactory nature of the wash-up process. There is not much that he can do about the fact that the process will be compressed, but yesterday in the other place my noble Friend Lord Rooker said that

“there would be a case for institutionalising that this House—jointly preferably...—should systematically say that an ad hoc committee of the House should look and monitor the wash-up package after six months and 18 months.” —[*Official Report, House of Lords, 7 April 2010; Vol. 718, c. 1483.*]

He made other, further suggestions about that. My noble Friend Lord Bach endorsed that from the Front Bench, and I endorse it too. I hope that that has the approbation of the other parties and that we shall look carefully at how the wash-up has happened, and the improvements we can make.

Lords amendment 1 agreed to.

Lords amendments 2 to 5 agreed to.

Mr. Straw: I beg to move, That this House agrees with Lords amendment 6.

The amendment relates to the treaty provisions of the Bill. I am glad that we managed to persuade some of the outliers that they should be included. The amendment was moved in the other place by Lord Norton of Louth. It puts a commitment on the face of the Bill that where a treaty is laid before the House there is to be an explanatory memorandum. That would have happened anyway, but I am very happy to accept the amendment so that now it must happen.

Mr. Cash: Does the right hon. Gentleman agree, or have any sympathy with, my general proposition that in fact the question of consent is more important than ratification?

Mr. Straw: There are two stages to the coming into force of a treaty. One is the signature and the second is ratification. I do not quite know what the hon. Gentleman means by consent. The signing of the treaty must be undertaken by the state party at the time when the

treaty is agreed. I have been the signatory to a number of treaties and I cannot think of any process by which it would be possible to consult the hon. Gentleman and others before making the Executive decision to sign it.

Mr. Cash *rose*—

Mr. Straw: If I may just complete this point; that is always subject to ratification. I felt, as Foreign Secretary, that it was wrong that the Executive alone should ultimately decide on ratification; it should be a matter for this place. That is why I pursued the matter as Foreign Secretary and when I had an opportunity I wanted to get it on the statute book, in this place. The hon. Gentleman's consent to ratification on all treaties—not just EU ones—will now be required.

Mr. Cash: I am grateful for that suggestion. I am quite sure that it will not happen, particularly in relation to European treaties. However, the key point is that in relation to consent the question of signature, rather than just ratification, should come before Parliament.

Mr. Straw: That is for a longer and separate debate.

Mr. Grieve: I welcome amendment 6. I suppose that it shows what can be achieved when minds are concentrated wonderfully. Certainly, Lord Norton of Louth was able to secure some significant and interesting changes to the Bill in the course of an evening.

It is plainly desirable that there should be an explanatory memorandum. I take the Secretary of State's point that it might have been provided anyway. However, I recall that this issue has arisen on a number of occasions and that it has often been pointed out how desirable it would be, if the Government are laying legislation before the House, which can sometimes be quite technical in nature, that there should be an opportunity before the debate starts for a full explanation to be provided about how the legislation or treaty will impact.

For those reasons, I am very happy to support the amendment.

David Howarth: We on the Liberal Democrat Benches are content with the amendment.

Lords amendment 6 agreed to.

Clause 29

REFERENDUM ON VOTING SYSTEMS

Mr. Straw: I beg to move, That this House agrees with Lords amendment 7.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this, it will be convenient to consider Lords amendments 8 to 15, 50 to 52, 55, 57, 74 and 75.

Mr. Straw: These amendments relate to the removal from the Bill of the provisions in part 3 for a referendum on voting systems and to some consequential removals in clauses 88, 89 and so on.

As we have discussed at some length the reasons why the Government very reluctantly but inevitably had to agree to the removal of these provisions, I will not detain the House.

Dr. Harris: There is a feeling of *déjà vu*. Labour's earlier commitment to electoral reform—in the 1997 manifesto—has been mentioned. The Secretary of State will know that Lord Jenkins did a huge amount of work on that issue. I do not think that Lord Jenkins would have been happy with the way that the Government refused to live up to their manifesto commitment to hold a referendum on a choice between the status quo and what he had come up with. Has the Secretary of State had a chance in the intervening years to reflect on whether the Government can defend what they did in respect of that manifesto commitment, given that this amendment will probably be in another manifesto?

Mr. Straw: My reflection is as follows, since I was the Minister responsible for sponsoring the Jenkins review and for bringing it back to the House. The problem that we faced was that there was no consensus whatsoever—no consensus in my party and opposition from the Conservatives—for the proposals from Lord Jenkins and his colleagues. The judgment that we therefore made was that a referendum would be lost. I am not in any doubt that it would have been lost, because the whole of the Conservative party and most of the Labour party would have opposed those proposals.

Do I have a regret about that? Frankly, I am slightly fed up with being told that we broke a referendum commitment—we did not, if the terms of the manifesto are read properly. In some respects I do have a regret, because if we had had a referendum it would have been lost overwhelmingly—that was absolutely clear—and we could have moved on and that would have stopped those on the Liberal Democrat Benches from whingeing. But it would probably have been quite an expensive way of doing that.

Mr. Grieve: As I indicated earlier, I must claim some responsibility for the fact that the clause has been removed. I will briefly set out the reasons for that.

The clause was introduced at the very last minute in the passage of the Bill through this House and—picking up on the point made by the hon. Member for Oxford, West and Abingdon (Dr. Harris)—it was my view and that of my hon. Friends that the proposal for a referendum was in the nature of an electoral stunt by the Government. The hon. Gentleman said that this matter goes back to 1997; for all I know, it goes back even earlier. I fear that his party has been the victim on numerous occasions of electoral stunts on the alternative vote by the Government and that it has been given tantalising promises which I hazard to suggest will never materialise.

My party did not think very much of these proposals for a referendum, all the more so—I make this point strongly—because it was proposed that we enact a provision that would come into effect in a completely new Parliament without any opportunity for that new Parliament to consider whether it agreed. Even if the complexion of the Parliament changed completely but the Government remained in office, it would have been possible to hold the referendum, notwithstanding the fact that a majority of this House might well consider it unnecessary and undesirable. For those reasons, we think that it was an ill judged proposal.

1.45 pm

We have indicated, and will no doubt debate during the election campaign, ways of improving the electoral system in this country. My party has some very clear ideas about reducing the size of this House and evening out the size of constituencies so as to make the first-past-the-post system work more fairly and more effectively. We intend to proceed with that and we will have an opportunity to debate it with the electorate and, indeed, the other parties during the campaign. We objected to the proposals, and in the circumstances nobody should be surprised by the fact that, when we were asked during the wash-up negotiations whether we considered them acceptable, we said, as we had done throughout the passage of the Bill, that we considered them to be an electoral stunt and did not wish them to be in a constitutional Bill of this nature.

David Howarth: The timing of this discussion is quite extraordinary. The day after the Prime Minister announced a programme that appears to include a referendum on electoral reform, the Government will have to troop through the Lobby to oppose that very policy. It seems to be a pattern that the Labour party proposes something to get a few votes, and when it has those votes it suddenly forgets about its commitments. Now the Lord Chancellor says that we have to read the Labour manifesto very carefully. As I am going back to the university of Cambridge to teach private law, which involves the close reading of documents, I suppose that my skills will come in handy in the next few weeks.

The timing of this discussion is extraordinary for another reason. I think that out in the country people are slowly starting to realise how extraordinary our voting system is, given that there is a prospect of a party gaining more votes than other parties but losing the election in terms of seats. I think that the public mood about the electoral system is just starting to change, but at precisely that point this House is to remove provision for a commitment to a referendum on changing that electoral system.

Dr. Harris: Was my hon. Friend struck, as I was, by the assertion by the hon. and learned Member for Beaconsfield (Mr. Grieve) that the current first-past-the-post electoral system can be made fairer by changing constituency sizes and making them more equal? To cite the words of David Mitchell in a recent column in *The Observer*, is the process of trying to make this electoral system fairer like throwing a slice of ham into the Grand Canyon to make it more of a sandwich?

David Howarth: That is a very good metaphor. In fact, that proposal combined with the other Conservative proposal to reduce the number of Members of Parliament would make the existing system even less proportionate.

Mrs. Eleanor Laing (Epping Forest) (Con): Surely the hon. Gentleman agrees that a system in which every vote is of equal value, because there is the same number of potential voters in each constituency, would be much fairer than the present system.

David Howarth: I am all in favour of making the electoral system fairer. That is why I oppose the amendment, because the only way to make the first-past-the-post system fairer is by abolishing it and replacing it with a better system.

I concede that, as the Secretary of State said, the AV system is not necessarily proportionate. I prefer the single transferable vote system, which is proportionate, and we have debated that in this House. Nevertheless, the system proposed by the Secretary of State is preferential and therefore marginally better than first past the post and a step in the right direction.

The Minister of State, Ministry of Justice (Mr. Michael Wills): I am grateful for that. Does the hon. Gentleman agree, however, that when we talk about fairness it is essential to remember that there are 3.5 million people who cannot vote, even though they are eligible, because they are not registered? Whenever the Conservatives talk about redrawing boundaries, they always ignore the point that it is simply not possible to do that fairly until everyone who is eligible to vote is registered to vote. Without that, it is just gerrymandering.

David Howarth: I agree with the Minister. The idea that fiddling with boundaries based on out-of-date information can make the first-past-the-post system fairer is absurd. The only way to get a fair electoral system is to have a more proportionate system. The first virtue of a representative body, such as the House of Commons, is that it represents the political views of the people of the country. This body does not do that; in that respect, it is as bad as the pre-1832 Parliament.

Mr. Grieve: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. Gentleman, but from talking to some of his colleagues I had understood that they do not want the alternative vote and saw it merely as a device for breaking down the current first-past-the-post system so that we can move on to something else. Is that the case? One thing is certain: the alternative vote system is not a proportional representation system.

David Howarth: The hon. and learned Gentleman is right; it is a jemmy in the door, which we intend at some stage to use. I give way for the final time.

Mr. Cash: Did the hon. Gentleman hear the interesting piece on the “Today” programme during which John Curtice and a number of others were quoted about the fact that the Conservative party is at a grave disadvantage in the current system? It is loaded against us, and yet we are concerned to maintain first past the post precisely because it is about an individual in the polling booth exercising their freedom of choice, which will not be reshuffled by a lot of artificial mechanisms.

David Howarth: The Conservatives support the system for the obvious reason that occasionally, and in some decades for very long periods, it gives them absolute power. They prefer a system that gives them absolute power, which they exchange with the Labour party now and then, to a system that is fair to all electors.

Mr. Straw: Does the hon. Gentleman also accept that it is simply untrue that there is as large a bias in the current system as has been claimed? I refer him to an important article in the Royal Statistical Society magazine, *Significance*, by Mr. Nick Moon, a leading psephologist. He pointed out that at times the system has been “biased” in favour of the Conservative party, “biased” in favour of nobody or “biased” in favour of the Labour party. The size of constituencies always starts equal; under-registration in urban areas, differential turnout

and changes in population, such as depopulation, lie behind the apparent arithmetic from the Conservative party.

David Howarth: I accept that there is all sorts of interesting research on first past the post, but all this seems to be entirely missing the point that first past the post can never be fair or proportionate, is always biased in one direction or another and is capable of producing illegitimate results.

Mr. Graham Allen (Nottingham, North) (Lab) *rose*—

David Howarth: This really is the last intervention.

Mr. Allen: This intervention allows me to pass on my best wishes to the hon. Gentleman and to congratulate him on his strong contributions in this field over many years. We will miss him.

If the House were composed differently, could we have had a debate in the Chamber about the war-making powers of the House versus those of the Executive? That matter was covered in the Bill, but has been dropped from it. I would like him to comment on that and on the balance in the House. Perhaps the Secretary of State will pick up the same issue in his remarks.

David Howarth: The answer is yes, and that would also apply to the reforms of this place itself. Changing the electoral system is important for democracy throughout our system—

1.54 pm

One hour having elapsed since the commencement of proceedings on consideration of Lords amendments, the debate was interrupted (Order, 7 April).

The Deputy Speaker put forthwith the Question already proposed from the Chair (Standing Order No. 83F), That this House agrees with Lords amendment 7.

The House divided: Ayes 176, Noes 18.

Division No. 134]

[1.54 pm

AYES

Allen, Mr. Graham	Cash, Mr. William
Amess, Mr. David	Chapman, Ben
Anderson, Janet	Chope, Mr. Christopher
Austin, John	Clapham, Mr. Michael
Bailey, Mr. Adrian	Clwyd, rh Ann
Bain, Mr. William	Coaker, Mr. Vernon
Baird, Vera	Cohen, Harry
Barron, rh Mr. Kevin	Cooper, Rosie
Battle, rh John	Cooper, rh Yvette
Beckett, rh Margaret	Corbyn, Jeremy
Bellingham, Mr. Henry	Cunningham, Mr. Jim
Benton, Mr. Joe	Davidson, Mr. Ian
Betts, Mr. Clive	Dean, Mrs. Janet
Blackman, Liz	Dobbin, Jim
Blunkett, rh Mr. David	Dobson, rh Frank
Bottomley, Peter	Doran, Mr. Frank
Brady, Mr. Graham	Dowd, Jim
Brown, Lyn	Duddridge, James
Browne, rh Des	Eagle, Maria
Bryant, Chris	Ellman, Mrs. Louise
Burgon, Colin	Etherington, Bill
Caborn, rh Mr. Richard	Fabricant, Michael
Cairns, David	Fitzpatrick, Jim
Campbell, Mr. Alan	Follett, Barbara

Francis, Dr. Hywel
 Francois, Mr. Mark
 Gardiner, Barry
 Garnier, Mr. Edward
 Gerrard, Mr. Neil
 Gibb, Mr. Nick
 Goggins, rh Paul
 Goodman, Helen
 Grieve, Mr. Dominic
 Griffiths, Nigel
 Grogan, Mr. John
 Hall, Mr. Mike
 Hammond, Stephen
 Hands, Mr. Greg
 Hanson, rh Mr. David
 Harper, Mr. Mark
 Havard, Mr. Dai
 Healey, rh John
 Hendry, Charles
 Hepburn, Mr. Stephen
 Herbert, Nick
 Hesford, Stephen
 Hewitt, rh Ms Patricia
 Hoban, Mr. Mark
 Hopkins, Kelvin
 Horam, Mr. John
 Howard, rh Mr. Michael
 Howell, John
 Howells, rh Dr. Kim
 Hughes, rh Beverley
 Humble, Mrs. Joan
 Hurd, Mr. Nick
 Iddon, Dr. Brian
 Illsley, Mr. Eric
 Irranca-Davies, Huw
 Jenkin, Mr. Bernard
 Johnson, Ms Diana R.
 Jones, Helen
 Jones, Mr. Martyn
 Kaufman, rh Sir Gerald
 Keeley, Barbara
 Keen, Alan
 Kelly, rh Ruth
 Kemp, Mr. Fraser
 Laing, Mrs. Eleanor
 Lait, Mrs. Jacqui
 Lammy, rh Mr. David
 Laxton, Mr. Bob
 Leigh, Mr. Edward
 Lepper, David
 Levitt, Tom
 Lewis, Mr. Ivan
 Lilley, rh Mr. Peter
 Love, Mr. Andrew
 Lucas, Ian
 Luff, Peter
 Maclean, rh David
 McAvoy, rh Mr. Thomas
 McCabe, Steve
 McCafferty, Chris
 McDonnell, John
 McIntosh, Miss Anne
 McKechin, Ann
 Merron, Gillian
 Michael, rh Alun
 Milburn, rh Mr. Alan

Miller, Andrew
 Mole, Chris
 Morgan, Julie
 Mountford, Kali
 Mudie, Mr. George
 Mullin, Mr. Chris
 Munn, Meg
 Naysmith, Dr. Doug
 Neill, Robert
 Newmark, Mr. Brooks
 Norris, Dan
 O'Brien, rh Mr. Mike
 O'Hara, Mr. Edward
 O'ner, Mr. Bill
 Pearson, Ian
 Pope, Mr. Greg
 Prentice, Bridget
 Purchase, Mr. Ken
 Purnell, rh James
 Randall, Mr. John
 Raynsford, rh Mr. Nick
 Reid, rh John
 Robathan, Mr. Andrew
 Robertson, John
 Ruddock, Joan
 Salter, Martin
 Sarwar, Mr. Mohammad
 Seabeck, Alison
 Sharma, Mr. Virendra
 Sheerman, Mr. Barry
 Simon, Mr. Si n
 Smith, John
 Southworth, Helen
 Spellar, rh Mr. John
 Steen, Mr. Anthony
 Stoate, Dr. Howard
 Strang, rh Dr. Gavin
 Straw, rh Mr. Jack
 Sutcliffe, Mr. Gerry
 Tami, Mark
 Thomas, Mr. Gareth
 Timms, rh Mr. Stephen
 Todd, Mr. Mark
 Trickett, Jon
 Turner, Dr. Desmond
 Twigg, Derek
 Tyrrie, Mr. Andrew
 Walker, Mr. Charles
 Watkinson, Angela
 Watts, Mr. Dave
 Wicks, rh Malcolm
 Williams, rh Mr. Alan
 Williams, Mrs. Betty
 Wills, rh Mr. Michael
 Winnick, Mr. David
 Winterton, Ann
 Woolas, Mr. Phil
 Wright, David
 Wright, Mr. Iain
 Wright, Jeremy
 Wright, Dr. Tony
 Young, rh Sir George

Tellers for the Ayes:
 Mrs. Sharon Hodgson and
 Kerry McCarthy

NOES

Beith, rh Sir Alan
 Cable, Dr. Vincent
 Cousins, Jim
 Foster, Mr. Don
 Hancock, Mr. Mike
 Harris, Dr. Evan

Howarth, David
 Hughes, Simon
 Jackson, Glenda
 Jones, Lynne
 Keetch, Mr. Paul
 McDonnell, John
 Mitchell, Mr. Austin
 Pelling, Mr. Andrew

Russell, Bob
 Simpson, Alan
 Taylor, Matthew
 Willis, Mr. Phil

Tellers for the Noes:
 Mr. Colin Breed and
 John Barrett

Question accordingly agreed to.

Lords amendment 7 agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker put forthwith the Question necessary for the disposal of the business to be concluded at that time (Standing Order No. 83F).

Question put, That the remaining Lords amendments be agreed to.

The House divided: Ayes 170, Noes 12.

Division No. 135]**[2.6 pm****AYES**

Allen, Mr. Graham
 Amess, Mr. David
 Bailey, Mr. Adrian
 Bain, Mr. William
 Baird, Vera
 Barron, rh Mr. Kevin
 Battle, rh John
 Beckett, rh Margaret
 Bellingham, Mr. Henry
 Benton, Mr. Joe
 Betts, Mr. Clive
 Blackman, Liz
 Bottomley, Peter
 Brady, Mr. Graham
 Brennan, Kevin
 Browne, rh Des
 Bryant, Chris
 Burgon, Colin
 Caborn, rh Mr. Richard
 Cairns, David
 Campbell, Mr. Alan
 Cash, Mr. William
 Chapman, Ben
 Chope, Mr. Christopher
 Clapham, Mr. Michael
 Clifton-Brown, Mr. Geoffrey
 Clwyd, rh Ann
 Coaker, Mr. Vernon
 Cohen, Harry
 Cooper, Rosie
 Corbyn, Jeremy
 Cousins, Jim
 Cunningham, Mr. Jim
 Davidson, Mr. Ian
 Dean, Mrs. Janet
 Dobbin, Jim
 Dobson, rh Frank
 Doran, Mr. Frank
 Dorrell, rh Mr. Stephen
 Dowd, Jim
 Duddridge, James
 Eagle, Maria
 Ellman, Mrs. Louise
 Etherington, Bill
 Fabricant, Michael
 Fitzpatrick, Jim
 Follett, Barbara
 Francis, Dr. Hywel
 Francois, Mr. Mark
 Gardiner, Barry
 Garnier, Mr. Edward
 Gerrard, Mr. Neil
 Gibb, Mr. Nick
 Goggins, rh Paul
 Goodman, Helen
 Grieve, Mr. Dominic
 Griffiths, Nigel
 Grogan, Mr. John
 Hall, Mr. Mike
 Hammond, Stephen
 Hands, Mr. Greg
 Hanson, rh Mr. David
 Harper, Mr. Mark
 Havard, Mr. Dai
 Healey, rh John
 Henderson, Mr. Doug
 Hendry, Charles
 Hepburn, Mr. Stephen
 Herbert, Nick
 Hesford, Stephen
 Hewitt, rh Ms Patricia
 Hoban, Mr. Mark
 Hodgson, Mrs. Sharon
 Hopkins, Kelvin
 Howard, rh Mr. Michael
 Howarth, Mr. Gerald
 Howell, John
 Hughes, rh Beverley
 Humble, Mrs. Joan
 Hurd, Mr. Nick
 Iddon, Dr. Brian
 Illsley, Mr. Eric
 Irranca-Davies, Huw
 Jackson, Glenda
 Jenkin, Mr. Bernard
 Johnson, Ms Diana R.
 Jones, Helen
 Kaufman, rh Sir Gerald
 Keeley, Barbara
 Keen, Alan
 Kelly, rh Ruth
 Kemp, Mr. Fraser
 Laing, Mrs. Eleanor
 Lait, Mrs. Jacqui
 Lammy, rh Mr. David
 Laxton, Mr. Bob
 Lepper, David
 Levitt, Tom

Lewis, Mr. Ivan
Lilley, rh Mr. Peter
Love, Mr. Andrew
Lucas, Ian
Luff, Peter
Mackinlay, Andrew
McAvoy, rh Mr. Thomas
McCabe, Steve
McCafferty, Chris
McIntosh, Miss Anne
McKechin, Ann
Merron, Gillian
Michael, rh Alun
Milburn, rh Mr. Alan
Miller, Andrew
Moffatt, Laura
Mole, Chris
Morgan, Julie
Mountford, Kali
Mudie, Mr. George
Mullin, Mr. Chris
Munn, Meg
Naysmith, Dr. Doug
Neill, Robert
Newmark, Mr. Brooks
Norris, Dan
O'Brien, rh Mr. Mike
O'Hara, Mr. Edward
Olnor, Mr. Bill
Pearson, Ian
Pope, Mr. Greg
Prentice, Bridget
Purchase, Mr. Ken
Purnell, rh James
Randall, Mr. John
Raynsford, rh Mr. Nick
Robathan, Mr. Andrew
Robertson, John

Ruddock, Joan
Sarwar, Mr. Mohammad
Seabeck, Alison
Sharma, Mr. Virendra
Sheerman, Mr. Barry
Simon, Mr. Siôn
Southworth, Helen
Spellar, rh Mr. John
Stoate, Dr. Howard
Strang, rh Dr. Gavin
Straw, rh Mr. Jack
Sutcliffe, Mr. Gerry
Tami, Mark
Thomas, Mr. Gareth
Timms, rh Mr. Stephen
Todd, Mr. Mark
Trickett, Jon
Turner, Dr. Desmond
Twigg, Derek
Tyrie, Mr. Andrew
Walker, Mr. Charles
Watkinson, Angela
Watts, Mr. Dave
Wicks, rh Malcolm
Williams, rh Mr. Alan
Williams, Mrs. Betty
Wills, rh Mr. Michael
Winnick, Mr. David
Winterton, Ann
Woolas, Mr. Phil
Wright, David
Wright, Mr. Iain
Wright, Jeremy
Young, rh Sir George

Tellers for the Ayes:
Lyn Brown and
Kerry McCarthy

NOES

Beith, rh Sir Alan
Cable, Dr. Vincent

Foster, Mr. Don
Hancock, Mr. Mike

Harris, Dr. Evan
Howarth, David
Hughes, Simon
Keetch, Mr. Paul
Pelling, Mr. Andrew
Russell, Bob

Taylor, Matthew
Willis, Mr. Phil

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Colin Breed and
Mr. John Baron

Question accordingly agreed to.

Remaining Lords amendments agreed to, with Commons financial privilege waived in respect of Lords amendments 37, 41, 42, 44, 46, 48 and 67 to 69.

Consequential amendment (a) made.

Mr. Allen: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. After the Iraq war, many Members became very interested in the balance between the Executive and the legislature and in whether Parliament had a role to play, at least through being consulted or retrospectively endorsing a decision to go to war. In the pre-legislative stage of the Constitutional Reform and Governance Bill, there were draft provisions for how that might happen. Is it in order to ask you what happened to those provisions and why they were not debated when we considered the Bill or in the wash-up?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It is just about in order to ask me, but I haven't a clue. Nor would the Chair be expected to have a clue on such a matter. In ordinary circumstances, the Chair's advice would probably be that the hon. Gentleman would find other ways of pursuing the matter, but the Chair knows on this occasion that the chances of that are dwindling rapidly. I have no doubt that he will bear it in mind for a future occasion.

Mr. Allen: Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I really am sorry not to be able to be more helpful to the hon. Gentleman.

Children, Schools and Families Bill

Consideration of Lords amendments

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Alan Haselhurst): Lords amendments to the Children, Schools and Families Bill have been received and printed. Under the order of the House of yesterday, they may be considered forthwith, without Question put.

Clause 1

PUPIL AND PARENT GUARANTEES

2.16 pm

The Minister for Schools and Learners (Mr. Vernon Coaker): I beg to move, That this House agrees with Lords amendment 1.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this we may take Lords amendments 2 to 24.

Mr. Coaker: With a heavy heart, in order to secure provisions on special educational needs and alternative provision, we had to drop some clauses, which I think had broad support out there, particularly the guarantee that children falling behind in English and maths would get one-to-one tuition. Frankly, I think that parents and teachers will be astonished at the insistence of the Conservative party and others that the provision be dropped.

We have also had to postpone plans for changes to the primary curriculum, which had huge support among heads and teachers—moves to a curriculum based on the Rose review, with areas of learning that the vast majority of schools and teachers warmly welcomed.

Mr. William Cash (Stone) (Con): The Minister will recall that I asked the Secretary of State about a question that I put to him, and which the Minister answered, on education results in Staffordshire compared with those in the rest of England. I was told at the time in a written answer that finding out could be done only at disproportionate cost. When I raised that with the Secretary of State, he said I would get an answer before Dissolution. The clock has ticked almost to the point at which it is clear I will not get the answer. Does the Minister accept that I was asking a legitimate question, to which I should have an answer, as the Secretary of State said?

Mr. Coaker: The hon. Gentleman always asks legitimate questions. As Parliament has not yet dissolved, even at this late stage it would be courteous to look into that, and I shall do so after the debate and write to him. He may not get the answer he wants, but I will write with an explanation in any case, as it would be discourteous not to do so.

We have also had to withdraw provisions on personal, social and health education because Opposition Members insisted on retaining a parental right of withdrawal up to the age of 16 in respect of sex and relationships education.

Meg Munn (Sheffield, Heeley) (Lab/Co-op): I am sure that, like me, my hon. Friend does not believe that we live in a broken society, but does he agree that without education on alcohol, tobacco, drugs, finance

and individual safety, as well as on sex and relationships, we will again be heading for the kind of broken society we experienced back in the 1980s?

Mr. Coaker: My hon. Friend has a lot of experience in this matter, both politically in the work she does in Sheffield and beyond, and from her previous professional role in which she saw the importance of the type of education we were seeking to introduce through the Bill. Much of the education to which my hon. Friend refers does take place in primary and secondary schools, but we were trying to ensure that there was statutory provision for it. That would go some way towards tackling the variability in the quality of provision between different schools and different areas. I agree very much with my hon. Friend that a lot of things need to be done to tackle some of the challenges our society faces. Although neither of us would accept the term “broken society”, there are challenges in some areas, and a whole raft of different policies is needed in order to deal with them, one of which is the provision of proper education of this kind from an early age in our schools, working alongside parents, not instead of them. That would help to address some of these particularly difficult problems.

Mr. Graham Allen (Nottingham, North) (Lab): Will my hon. Friend put it on record that it was in fact the Conservative party that refused to allow the provisions on PSHE—or life skills as I prefer to call it—to be included in the Bill? Further, does he agree that the people who will suffer from basic emotional and social skills not being in the curriculum will not be those who go to expensive private schools, or even high attaining schools, but pupils in constituencies such as mine—poorer places where generally there is not high educational achievement? They are the people who most need this to be in the national curriculum, rather than merely being something that it is nice to have. Will my hon. Friend put on record who is responsible for this not being in the Bill?

Mr. Coaker: My hon. Friend, who represents Nottingham, North, is right: we were unable to come to an agreement through the usual channels about the age at which parents had a right to withdraw their children from sex and relationships education, and as a result the Conservative Front-Bench team felt unable to agree with us on these provisions. As I will make clear in a moment, we were therefore unable to proceed with them in the Bill.

Mr. Nick Gibb (Bognor Regis and Littlehampton) (Con): Is it not the case that clause 14 deals with the withdrawal of children from lessons, whereas the Minister's two party colleagues are talking about clause 11? Why did the Minister withdraw clause 11 when we were, in fact, disputing clause 14?

Mr. Coaker: As the hon. Gentleman will know because he reads very carefully on these matters, the issues are intertwined. It is not possible to separate them, as he seeks to do in order to try to defend his party's policy—about which it is receiving significant criticism—of blocking what most people think is a very important and significant reform.

Mr. Allen: I am sorry to persevere on this question, but this is a classic case of the baby being thrown out with the bath water—of the life skills baby being thrown out with the sex education bath water. If we could separate these issues, even at this very late stage, would it not lead to our ensuring that every child in this country who needs proper life skilling will be able to get it when they require it in the national curriculum? Even at this late stage, will my hon. Friend discuss the matter with the Opposition and seek a sensible way forward, instead of our having this criminal waste of parliamentary time, and the consequent damage that will be done to thousands upon thousands of children, such as those in my constituency?

Mr. Coaker: My hon. Friend has been a great campaigner for this type of early intervention and work in schools, whether we call it PSHE or, as he prefers, life skills. The legal advice I have received is that it is not possible to do what he wants, however. We have spent a long time talking to others to see if we can find a way forward, but it was not possible to do so. Therefore, with much regret, we find ourselves in the current situation. I hope that after the next election we will be in a position to return to this issue and ensure that we secure the statutory provision that both my hon. Friend and I want.

Dr. Evan Harris (Oxford, West and Abingdon) (LD): The hon. Gentleman should be aware of the 12th report of 2009-10 of the Joint Committee on Human Rights. It was written after the Government tabled an amendment on the measure in question, which the Committee viewed as follows:

“a provision which expressly subjects principles of accuracy, balance, pluralism, equality and diversity to the right of faith schools to teach sex and relationships education in a way that reflects the school’s religious character, in the context of a Bill which makes the teaching of sex and relationships education in schools mandatory, is incompatible on its face with the ECHR. It expressly denies children at faith schools their right to an accurate, balanced, pluralistic education under the first sentence of Article 2 Protocol 1.”

In fact, therefore, it seems that what has been lost was incompatible with the human rights of children not to be harassed and discriminated against, if, for instance, they come from same sex-parent households.

Mr. Coaker: It is not often that I say this, but I totally disagree with the hon. Gentleman’s point; indeed, his own Front-Bench team will not, I think, support him. The relevant clause talks about the principles that have to be pursued in respect of PSHE, including providing accurate and balanced information, endeavouring to promote equality and encouraging acceptance of diversity. As the hon. Gentleman knows, at present faith schools are under no obligation to ensure that PSHE is taught in that way. To support his own argument, he says we will have faith schools all over the country promoting all sorts of values and ideas that many would regard as inappropriate. Of course they will be able to teach in a way that is consistent with the values of their school, but for the first time they will also be required, by legislation, to ensure that alternative points of view are put as well. The balance and accuracy the hon. Gentleman seeks are therefore included in the legislation, and the Bill will ensure that that happens.

Dr. Harris: My Liberal Democrat colleagues strongly opposed clause 11’s proposed new section 85B(8) to the Education Act 2002, which says of all the stuff about equality and diversity:

“Subsections (4) to (7) are not to be read as preventing the governing body or head teacher of a school within subsection (9) from causing or allowing PSHE to be taught in a way that reflects the school’s religious character.”

The JCHR looked into, corresponded on and got legal advice about that, and it came to the unanimous view that it will mean that the assurances the Minister just read out are meaningless in the context of the schools in question, and that it will create the potential for homophobic teaching to be mandatory.

Mr. Coaker: Even at this late stage, it is quite strong to say that the legislation will make the teaching of homophobia mandatory. If the hon. Gentleman reflects on that statement, he may think that it is not the most appropriate thing to say about what will happen in faith schools, many of which teach PSHE.

Dr. Harris *rose*—

Mr. Coaker: We have an hour for this debate, and many other hon. Members want to contribute. I will take another intervention and that is it, because the issue has been debated long and hard in Committee. I do not agree with the statement that the Bill is incompatible with the European convention on human rights. The opposite is true: the principles in the Bill will mean—this is quite proper—that a faith school can teach PSHE in a way that is appropriate to its values and principles, but for the first time it must also teach that there are alternatives and to put that fact before a class. Quite frankly, that is what all good schools and all good teachers have always done, and I am sure that is what the hon. Member for Harrogate and Knaresborough (Mr. Willis) will have done when he was a head teacher and taught in a school.

2.30 pm

Dr. Harris: I am grateful to the Minister for allowing me to intervene again. I am putting the view of the JCHR, which was established by Parliament to give such advice. The Minister can say that he is not interested in it or that he disagrees with it. That is his right, but he must know that some, not all, faith schools wish to teach that homosexuality is sinful. I believe that the place for such teaching is in religious education classes, not in sex education classes. The Bill will allow some faith schools to teach that in sex education classes. That is where I and the Joint Committee disagree with him—indeed, the Liberal Democrats made it clear that we disagree. Such things should be put in religious education lessons.

Mr. Coaker: As I say, for the first time there will be a requirement to teach that there are alternative views.

The Conservatives have blocked the proposal and stopped it proceeding. English and European case law do not support a continuing opt-out to the age of 16. In introducing the Bill, Ministers must sign an undertaking that it is ECHR compliant. If the right of withdrawal had been set at 16, no such undertaking could have been signed. We were therefore advised that, legally, all clauses relating to PSHE had to be withdrawn.

[Mr. Coaker]

We hope that we can bring these matters back before Parliament in the near future, along with other measures that we have had to remove from the Bill, such as toughening home-school agreements, home education and the ability to collect data for the new school report card. However, as I said at the beginning, it is important to retain certain elements of the Bill, such as those on special needs and alternative provision. To that end, the Government support the Lords amendments.

There are now clear dividing lines between us on education. In the weeks to come, we will seek a fresh mandate to continue our work of investing in schools and providing opportunity for all pupils everywhere, irrespective of their ability, and we will expose the threat posed by the Conservative party, with its free schools, free market policy and immediate cuts to school funding. We will oppose that and ensure that the British public are aware of it as well.

Mr. Gibb: I thank the Minister for the concessions that he has made, which will remove clauses that posed a direct threat to the professional autonomy of teachers and that would have heaped mounds of bureaucracy on to teachers and head teachers and threatened the rights of parents to withdraw their children from sex education and to educate their children at home.

The first element of this bureaucratic Bill, which we are happy to oppose, is a series of excessively prescriptive pupil and parent guarantees. Scores of guarantees were set out in the appendix to the White Paper and in a consultation document, with 38 tick boxes for teachers and more time taken away from the classroom. For example, guarantee 2.2 states:

“the curriculum is tailored to every child’s needs so that every pupil receives the support they need to secure good literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, learn another language and about the humanities, science, technology and the arts.”

But given that 16 per cent. of 11-year-olds do not reach level 4 in English and 9 per cent. of boys leave primary school without even reaching any grade in the English key stage 2 standard assessment tests, that leaves scope for huge amounts of litigation.

The key to raising standards is not to pass a law guaranteeing things, but to understand the reasons for underperformance and to address them. If passing a law guaranteeing outcomes was the answer, we could cure world hunger and all known diseases this afternoon in the House. The key to raising standards in our schools is not through bureaucracy, but through greater freedom for professionals and by expanding the academy programme, with academy providers such as Absolute Return for Kids and the Harris Federation encouraged to establish more schools in some of the most deprived parts of the country.

These clauses would have piled additional bureaucracy on to teachers and head teachers and exposed them to the threat of expensive and time-consuming legal action. John Dunford from the Association of School and College Leaders said that those guarantees

“will take statute into realms it has never previously covered. Instead of the increasingly diverse system that the Government has often said that it wants to encourage, England will have one of the most centrally prescriptive systems in the world...School leaders are extremely concerned that these ‘guarantees’ will turn into a whingers’ charter”.

We wholeheartedly agree with ASCL’s concerns and are therefore pleased that the Government have abandoned those clauses.

On one-to-one tuition, which the Minister touched on, we also strongly believe that it is needed for children who are falling behind, and we support that approach—that is what good schools do—but best practice is not spread by passing a law prescribing a whole raft of centrally crafted guarantees that people would then seek to enforce. We need to get away from such micro-prescription and give professionals and schools the autonomy that they need to flourish as professionals. That is how to raise standards. The Secretary of State is keen on his dividing lines in politics—I do not blame the Minister—but we believe that education policy should not be designed to be used as a tool in party politics. Education policy is about ensuring that we have the right landscape to enable schools to provide the highest quality of education for our children.

On home-school agreements, it is right to abandon clauses 4 and 5, which would have created bespoke, individualised home-school agreements, negotiated for each child and each parent in a school and rewritten annually. We believe in strengthening home-school agreements, but not in turning them into a bureaucratic nightmare for head teachers. The Government’s proposals faced widespread opposition. For example, ASCL called the idea “unrealistic” and pointed out that

“such a proposal will be wholly impractical in secondary schools, which may have over 1,000 pupils, and will consume a great deal of school resource.”

Again, that is our view exactly, and we are pleased to see those clauses go.

On areas of learning, the proposed changes to the primary curriculum—with the introduction of six highly prescriptive areas of learning, each with voluminous programmes of study, each of which has a multitude of objectives—is anything but flexible. The English programme of study alone has 84 objectives. Maths has 76. Clause 10 would have been a major misstep, and we are happy to see it fall as well.

The proposed introduction of personal, social, health and economic education was one of the most controversial aspects of the Bill. We have always strongly supported parents’ rights to withdraw their children from sex and relationships lessons, and we have refused to compromise in upholding those rights. No one should ride roughshod over the rights of parents to bring up their children in the way they see fit. Ultimately, however small a minority wish to withdraw their children from such lessons, it should be up to the parent, rather than the Secretary of State and the Minister, to decide whether they want their children under 16 to attend lessons on sex and relationships.

Dr. Evan Harris: The opt-out already exists in religious education and collective worship, as the hon. Gentleman is aware, but case law now shows that when children become competent to make up their own minds, it is an infringement of their rights for parents to withdraw them, or not to withdraw them, from collective worship—for example, compulsory prayer. Under his logic, should parents who feel passionately about the origins of the universe and believed in young-earth creationism have the right to withdraw their children from biology lessons, for example, for the reasons that he gives?

Mr. Gibb: Parents have a right to withdraw their children from schools and to home-educate their children, which is another right that the Bill will infringe. I do not believe that creationism should be in the school science curriculum—the hon. Gentleman is right about that—but parents ultimately have the right to educate their children at home if they wish.

As a result of our continued opposition to clause 14, the Government have chosen to withdraw all four clauses that relate to PSHE. We would have been happy to discuss PSHE being part of the curriculum, and we are therefore extremely surprised that the Government have chosen to withdraw entirely all four clauses. If we are elected to form the next Government, the role of PSHE in the curriculum is an issue that we would address and consult on. As my noble Friend Baroness Perry said in another place last night,

“It would be almost impossible to find a secondary school, and very rare to find a primary school, that does not teach personal, social and health education.”—[*Official Report, House of Lords*, 7 April 2010; Vol. 718, c. 1587.]

Mr. Coaker: Can the hon. Gentleman confirm that if the Conservatives were to form the next Government, the consultation on PSHE to which he referred would include the extension of the mandatory aspects of PSHE to academies?

Mr. Gibb: No, it would not apply to academies because the essence of an academy is that it would have the same rights as an independent school but would not be able to charge fees. Given that even the Government have not proposed extending the duties to independent schools, we consider our policy entirely consistent with that. I know the Government have extended the duties to academies. They have infringed the freedom of academies in many respects since the Secretary of State took his position, but we believe that academies should have the same status as independent schools.

Mr. Allen: Before the hon. Gentleman moves away from PSHE, or life skills, does he accept that the absence of a mandatory aspect, which will be lost in this ludicrous wash-up process, will above all damage a particular group of children—not those who come from well-educated middle class homes, like those of many hon. Members present, but those who may come from a one-parent family or a deprived area and lack the social and emotional ability to make the best of themselves and the best, therefore, of their education at primary and secondary school? Does he accept that whoever is responsible and however it happened, that failure of all of us here to make life skills a mandatory part of the national curriculum will impact badly on constituencies such as the one that I represent, and no doubt on areas in his constituency too?

Mr. Gibb: As my noble Friend said in another place last night, every secondary school has such lessons in the curriculum. We must be careful about how prescriptive we are about aspects of the curriculum. We were happy to allow clause 11 to go through. It is only advice that the Minister is receiving that is forcing him and the Government to withdraw, in a slightly petulant manner, all four of the PSHE clauses simply because we are so opposed to just one of them, clause 14.

The proposed licence to practise for teachers would have done nothing to raise standards and would have been an expensive and bureaucratic burden for hundreds of thousands of teachers. The Secretary of State's view, as set out in his letter to my hon. Friend the Member for Surrey Heath (Michael Gove) yesterday, is that

“the proposed licence to practise would have firmly established the professional standing of the workforce and provided teachers with the status they deserve”.

That, though, is not the view of teachers. It is not the view of ASCL, it is not the view of the NASUWT. It is not the view of the NUT, which said that it

“can see no argument advanced by the Government which justifies the introduction of the licence to practise for teachers.”

The NUT pointed out that

“in little over a month 17,500 teachers have completed a postcard or signed a petition to the Secretary of State to express their concern about the proposed licence to practise.”

I suspect that that figure is significantly higher by now.

Christine Blower is quoted today as saying:

“We are delighted that the licence to practise has gone. It added nothing positive to teaching.”

The General Teaching Council, which the Government wanted to administer the licence to practise, stated that “it will be a challenge to develop a system which has sufficient rigour to make a positive impact on standards of practice, whilst remaining proportionate and not unduly burdensome for teachers, school leaders and schools”.

Even the body charged with running the scheme is against it. If all the teacher unions are against it and as the Opposition are against it, we are pleased that the Government have backed down and are withdrawing the associated clauses, too.

2.45 pm

Finally, I am delighted that our sustained opposition to the Bill's draconian and excessive proposals to regulate home education has resulted in the Government's decision to abandon those clauses as well. We have always stressed that the choice to educate a child at home should belong solely and entirely to parents. As my hon. Friend the Member for Surrey Heath said on Second Reading:

“It is a basic right of parents to be able to educate their children in accordance with their own wishes, and to educate them at home if they so wish.”—[*Official Report*, 11 January 2010; Vol. 503, c. 456.]

Home educators across the country will be extremely relieved to be spared compulsory registration and monitoring. As my hon. Friend the Member for Beverley and Holderness (Mr. Stuart) correctly pointed out, there is a need for support for home-educating families, but only if the Government can

“work co-operatively and voluntarily with parents”—[*Official Report*, 23 February 2010; Vol. 506, c. 262.]

For now, it is enough that home-educating parents will not be subjected to the dictatorial provisions of the Bill. We can only hope that the hostility between local authorities and home educators, which the Government created with the publication of the Badman report and exacerbated during the passage of the Bill, does not rule out the possibility of creating a practicable and mutually acceptable working arrangement between home educators and local authorities in the future.

However, the 50,000 home educators in this country need to take heed of the final paragraph of the Secretary of State's letter to my hon. Friend, in which he states:

"I will be campaigning to ensure that this Government is returned and that these measures do make it on to the statute book in the first session of the new Parliament."

Labour is clearly committed to reintroducing the clauses on home education if it is re-elected.

The Bill would have entangled teachers, head teachers, pupils, parents, local authorities and school governors in unnecessary red tape, while doing nothing tangible to raise standards. We are glad that the Government have dropped so many of the Bill's clauses, and we look forward to a new Conservative education Bill in a new Parliament which would make the reforms so urgently needed to improve our education system for teachers, pupils and parents alike.

Mr. Phil Willis (Harrogate and Knaresborough) (LD): It is rather fitting that the Minister, who is the hon. Member for Gedling, should be speaking across the Chamber for my last appearance in the House, and perhaps—who knows—it might even be his. I say that in a spirit of comradeship, because the hon. Gentleman has done his party and the education lobby a great deal of service over his time in the House and as a Minister. We have had many disagreements over that time, but the passion for education that we have both felt is important.

It saddened me that the hon. Member for Bognor Regis and Littlehampton (Mr. Gibb) said that if the Conservative party wins the next general election it will introduce an education Bill. My heart sank, because I dread to think what would be in such a Bill. I know that the hon. Gentleman was probably still at school when the Education Reform Act 1988 was brought in by his great forefathers. I remember the level of bureaucracy that surrounded the national curriculum. I am sure the hon. Gentleman knows that, because he is a colleague who devotes a great deal of time and thought to education—as well as having relatives who live in my constituency, so I have to say these things.

Mr. Ken Purchase (Wolverhampton, North-East) (Lab/Co-op): Does the hon. Gentleman agree that the 1988 Act was a seminal moment in the bureaucracy of education, and that in many ways things have gone downhill since, in terms of what teachers, head teachers and local authorities have had to do in producing league tables, SATs results and a raft of unnecessary changes to the working day in schools?

Mr. Willis: The hon. Gentleman is right. We have shared many such comments over the past 13 years. However, two wrongs do not make a right. From 1997 to 2005 I served on every education Bill, and there were at least two a year during that time. I have to be honest to the House and say that they made precious little difference to the life chances of our children. That is what saddens me.

This Bill was supposed to be a flagship Bill. The hon. Member for Nottingham, North (Mr. Allen), who has now left his place, has been a passionate defender of the poorest children living in his constituency—some of the poorest children in our society. The fact that, in the death throes of this Government, he has to say that these matters have not been dealt with, and that to lose

the Bill would be a tragedy is—if I may say so to the Minister—a condemnation of the fact that some of the essential elements of our dealing with some of our poorest communities and how we bring them up and give them the sorts of life chances that they deserve have been a failure, perhaps by all of us, but certainly a failure to live up to that pledge by Tony Blair to put "education, education, education" at the heart of the Government's programme.

That is enough of me remembering the past; we have a Bill in front of us. I am pleased that large sections of the Bill have been dropped—but not because I believe that some of the matters that it deals with do not need attention, particularly the sections dealing with the curriculum. The Rose committee made some quite remarkable suggestions on invigorating the primary curriculum, and I do not agree with the hon. Member for Bognor Regis and Littlehampton and his party that we do not need to look rigorously at that. There is no doubt that unless we have a far greater sense of purpose and attainment in the primary years, we will not do the job that we need to do for the children mentioned by the hon. Member for Nottingham, North and others like them throughout the country, including children like those I taught in east Leeds, some of whom were among the poorest in the nation.

That applies particularly to the work that Rose did in trying to ensure that mathematics was at the heart of the primary curriculum. Without good mathematics, many of those youngsters will have, frankly, no chance of accessing the modern post-recession economy, which will be vital in bringing them out of poverty and educational poverty. The link between education and the economy develops and drives everything—it is not magic—so I am sad that we have been unable to make progress.

Frankly, we did not need clauses 1 to 6 in the first place. They would have heaped yet more bureaucracy on to bureaucracy. We must liberate those brilliant head teachers, such as Phil Willis at John Smeaton community high school, who was a maverick—I have admitted that. As my last Ofsted report remarked, charging the inspectors for car parking was innovative on the part of our youngsters. They had an idea and a drive to investigate how the economy works.

As my noble Friend Baroness Walmsley remarked yesterday in the House of Lords, clauses 11 to 14 have rightly caused an awful lot of concern. Hon. Members on both sides of the House recognise the importance of PSHE and that introduction to economics. If I may say so, I find rather sad the excuse that the Minister has used—that the Bill draftsmen say that we cannot disentangle those measures—because there is clearly a problem with sex education. If we debated that for the next 100 years, there would still be a problem, because there are entrenched positions. My hon. Friend the Member for Oxford, West and Abingdon (Dr. Harris) has been absolutely courageous in defending sex education and the right of children to get a balanced view.

I strongly support the right of faiths to run schools in our society and to share with children in those schools the beliefs of those faiths—I cannot see anything wrong with that—but my hon. Friend is right to say that that should take place within a structure. Whether someone is running a Muslim, Roman Catholic or other faith school, they should be able to reflect their teaching according to those belief systems. However, it would be

wrong to give those people the legalised opportunity to tell the children in their schools that the lifestyle of the person living next door is somehow immoral. That is what we are talking about. I hope that whoever comes in after the next general election will revisit the matter, because it is too important to leave hanging in the air. In that way, there was a cop-out last night.

My last comment is on home education. There is a fundamental flaw in our thinking in this country—this was brought home in the debate with the home educators—that it is the state's job to educate our children. It is not; it is the parents' job. The Education Act 1944, and indeed Forster's great Act of 1870—an Act brought about by that great Bradford Member of Parliament—both state that it is the parents' duty to educate their children, and that the state acts as a convenient default mechanism when necessary, which most of us, myself included, have used.

We have heard examples of home-educated children being abused, but they are in a tiny minority. In such cases the idea of home education is often used as a cover for abuse—but in reality, the vast majority of people who educate their children at home do so because they believe that that is in the best interests of their children. The state should work with them, not create more barriers for them. I would never home-educate my children because I believe that home-educated children miss out on so much, but I will defend to the death the right of parents to work with their children in a home setting to deliver an education. I am therefore pleased that clauses 26 and 27 have been dropped.

All in all, as other hon. Members have said, this wash-up process is a rather sad and tawdry affair, and at the end of the day what is left of the Bill is probably not worth saving. However, if the Minister, being the man he is, assures me that it is, my party will not—

Mr. Coaker: I know it is not the hon. Gentleman's fault, but we amended one of the measures on alternative provision that has been retained in the Bill in the way that the hon. Member for Mid-Dorset and North Poole (Annette Brooke) wanted. She would want that to be retained, irrespective of anything else.

Mr. Willis: I was in fact about to conclude by saying that those parts of the Bill that do remain that have the support of my excellent colleagues, and the guidance of the Minister, make the Bill worth putting on the statute book at the last moment.

Mr. Christopher Chope (Christchurch) (Con): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Bognor Regis and Littlehampton (Mr. Gibb) on securing some really good changes to the Bill. It is rather late in the day, but he and the hon. Member for Surrey Heath (Michael Gove), the shadow Secretary of State, have spoken for so many people in this country who have written to Members of this House to express their concern about various aspects of the Bill, and most of those measures have been filleted out.

The way in which my hon. Friend the Member for Bognor Regis and Littlehampton set out succinctly and clearly the dividing lines on education policy between the Government and the Conservative party will be really useful in the forthcoming weeks of the campaign. He says that we stand for less prescription and interference,

and for giving more responsibility and freedom to parents and professionals. The decision to remove the ludicrous home education proposals exemplifies the difference between the Government's approach and our approach.

Fortunately, the Government dreamt up most of these ridiculous proposals in their 12th year in office. Had they introduced them earlier, they could have got them on to the statute book, but they are not going to do so now. People will know that there is a big issue before them in the general election: if they vote for the Labour party, there is a risk that the proposals will be introduced again in future.

All hon. Members have received much correspondence on the PSHE elements of the Bill, and I am very pleased that clauses 11, 12, 13 and 14 are now out of it. Voluntarism is working very well, and when things work well, why should the state interfere? My only quibble with what was said by my hon. Friend the Member for Bognor Regis and Littlehampton concerns his implication that an incoming Conservative Government would reintroduce PSHE in a centralised curriculum. I believe that there is enough centralisation in the curriculum already. Given that schools are able to deliver PSHE perfectly well on the basis of acceptance of their own responsibility through governing bodies and parents, I hope that on reflection, an incoming Conservative Government will not meddle with PSHE, and will instead concentrate on our core requirements for better educated pupils who understand the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic.

3 pm

I am delighted that the Bill has been filleted so expertly, but I regret the amount of parliamentary time that has been taken up by the Government's proposals when it was obvious that they would never get them through. Many of them were amendments to the Education Act 2002. If the Government had really wanted them, they could have been tabled at that stage. This has been simply a lot of gesture politics for the benefit of those who are not satisfied with the extent of the bureaucracy and regulation that already exist in education, and want more bureaucracy and more regulation. The Government were pandering to those interests. Today, however, we have a Bill that constitutes a snub to those who have campaigned for all that extra regulation, and I am delighted with the progress that my hon. Friend has secured.

Mr. Coaker: With the leave of the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I should like to make a couple of comments.

It would be remiss of me not to pay tribute to the hon. Member for Harrogate and Knaresborough (Mr. Willis). Both of us have worked long and hard on a number of different issues. I pay tribute to the work that he has done, not only in respect of education but in respect of science and the importance of evidence-based policy making. I appeared before his Select Committee when I had ministerial responsibility for drugs education policy, and we had a fairly frank exchange of views, but I hope that that led to better policy.

I am pleased that my hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton, North-East (Mr. Purchase) is present. He served on the Committee, and observed that it was the first time he had served on a Bill Committee for a number of years. Although those who served on the

[Mr. Coaker]

Committee did not always agree with me, I think that that was an important finish to this part of my hon. Friend's career. He has always worked tirelessly in supporting support state education and emphasising the importance of giving opportunities to all young people.

Let me deal with a couple of points that have been raised in the debate. We did not intend to oppose home education. We strongly support it, and the right of people to educate their children at home. The clauses that have now been withdrawn drew attention to the need to know more precisely where children were. That was the point of the compulsory registration scheme. If people were to ask whether the state or local authorities knew where all young people were, the answer would sometimes be no, and I think that that raises important questions. We did not wish to end people's right to educate their children at home; we were merely suggesting that there should be a better understanding of what was going on.

Clause 11 specifies the content of PSHE, which includes sex and relationships education. Clause 13 amends SRE provisions. Clause 11 also makes PSHE part of the national curriculum. Clause 14 currently allows withdrawal from a subject that is not part of the national curriculum. We must therefore change the right of withdrawal in the clause as part of the package. I do not want to withdraw the PSHE clauses, but I have been told that it is simply impossible to separate the provisions. If the hon. Member for Bognor Regis and Littlehampton (Mr. Gibb) were in my place, he would have to take the legal advice that he was given. I can only hope that whoever is responsible for these matters in the next Parliament will return to the issue. The hon. Gentleman indicated that if he were to be the next Minister and were in my position, he would bring the clauses back. I know that his hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch (Mr. Chope) does not agree, but I think this is an important provision that we should not lose.

Our short debate has made clear the choices that will be before the country, and our different views on education. It is clear from what has been said by the hon. Member for Bognor Regis and Littlehampton that the Conservatives believe in a free market education philosophy. We believe in state education and a comprehensive education system, and the election will no doubt be fought on that along with a number of other important public policy issues.

Lords amendment 1 agreed to.

Lords amendments 2 to 34 agreed to.

Energy Bill

Consideration of Lords amendments

Clause 10

SCHMES FOR REDUCING FUEL POVERTY:
SUPPLEMENTARY

3.6 pm

The Minister of State, Department of Energy and Climate Change (Joan Ruddock): I beg to move, That this House agrees with Lords amendment 1.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Michael Lord): With this it will be convenient to discuss Lords amendments 2 to 9.

Joan Ruddock: In its eighth report of the current Session, the Delegated Powers and Regulatory Reform Committee recommended several changes to the Bill in connection with the procedures whereby secondary legislation is made in part 2, which deals with social price support, and part 4, which sets out the general provisions of the Bill.

In respect of part 2, the Committee expressed concern about the breadth of the powers in clause 10(6), which enabled the regulations establishing a social price support scheme to include provision allowing the Secretary of State to disapply or modify the requirements of the scheme. It also recommended that the level of parliamentary scrutiny be increased in relation to changes in the definition of fuel poverty. In respect of part 4, the Committee recommended the removal of the discretion in clause 31(4) that the Secretary of State has, in certain cases, to choose the parliamentary procedure to which a statutory instrument is subject. We tabled amendments in the other place to address all the Committee's concerns.

Lords amendments 1 and 2 will constrain the circumstances in which the power in clause 10(6) may be used to disapply or modify any requirement of a social price support scheme. That will be done by requiring the circumstances in which the Secretary of State can use the power to be detailed in the scheme regulations made under clause 9. Regulations made under the clause are subject to the affirmative procedure. Lords amendment 3 requires the Secretary of State to inform Parliament of any changes made under clause 10(6) by laying a memorandum before Parliament detailing any such modifications.

We have also addressed the Committee's recommendation that any regulations seeking to change the definition of fuel poverty, or its extent, for the purposes of the Bill should be subject to the affirmative procedure. Lords amendments 5 and 6 replicate the definition in the Warm Homes and Energy Conservation Act 2000.

Lords amendments 7 and 8 make any regulations that seek to change the definition of fuel poverty or its extent in the Bill subject to the affirmative procedure, as recommended by the Committee. Lords amendment 4 ensures that any such regulations are subject to consultation in the same way as the schemes for reducing fuel poverty.

Lords amendment 9 removes the discretion in clause 31(4) for the Secretary of State, in certain circumstances, to choose the parliamentary procedure to which a statutory instrument is subject. We now consider that we no longer require that discretion, and are therefore content to accept the Committee's recommendation.

I hope that the House will feel able to agree to the Lords amendments.

Charles Hendry (Wealden) (Con): Let me begin by paying tribute to the Minister. There are many aspects of the Bill that we have not managed to get quite into the shape that we would have wished. However, she has constantly been courteous, thoughtful and constructive in all the exchanges and dealings that we have had with her, and she has genuinely tried to find common ground on some of the issues. That has not been possible in all areas, but I thank her for the approach that she has taken. With the hon. Member for Harrogate and Knaresborough (Mr. Willis) here too, I would like to pay tribute to the way in which he discussed the issues in Committee and to the thoughtful approach that he took to all our dealings.

The Lords amendments that we are discussing are relatively minor, although we must of course be cautious about any change in the definition of fuel poverty. There is an anxiety out there that what is being done might be an attempt to change the definition by stealth and to wriggle out of some of the commitments that have been made, with a recognition that the Government are way off track in trying to meet their legally binding commitments on tackling fuel poverty. There is an obligation on the Government to end fuel poverty for all vulnerable households by 2010 and to take all households out of fuel poverty by November 2016. We are clearly well off track for the 2010 target, which is a very challenging target indeed. I hope that the Government do not intend, through the measures that we are discussing, to try to find a way of changing the definition of fuel poverty so that they can meet those targets by stealth. I hope that the Minister will be able to give us some comfort on those concerns when she responds to this short debate.

I hope that the Minister can also clarify a little more what the techniques that we are debating can be used for, and therefore explain how broad their application might be. We want to understand the full implications of the changes that are being suggested. The first measure relates to fuel poverty, as we have said, but would other measures relating to fuel poverty similarly be covered? For example, we would like to see measures to require energy companies to say exactly how much a consumer would save if they were on a cheaper tariff. We would also like measures to say how we would make consumers aware of those cheaper tariffs and how they could switch. Could that be done through the orders that the Minister is putting forward today? We would also be keen to see measures to speed up the roll-out of smart meters and to say that this should be done not by 2020, which we think is a profoundly unambitious approach, but instead 2016. Could the measures that the Minister has outlined be used as a way to drive that work forward with greater speed and determination?

It is important that we should see the measures that we are discussing against the background of the Bill and the context in which they were discussed in the Lords. That relates in particular to what the Minister sees as the Government's strategic role under the Bill and, therefore, the amendments that we are discussing. On carbon capture and storage, there is a strategic case for the Government requiring oversize pipelines to be put in place, so that we can develop clusters of CCS development around the country. We would be grateful if she could clarify what the Government's views are on such a strategic overview.

It would also be interesting to hear the Minister's views on the Government's strategic approach to the development of an offshore grid and what they should be doing to secure it. We are well aware that there is a disagreement between the Government and ourselves about whether that should be mandated, with a requirement to put in place high-voltage DC cabling down the coast, in respect of which we see the Government as having a strategic role, and we are keen to ensure that they similarly have a strategic vision for what they would like to see done in this area.

The proposals that we are discussing are modest changes that are being made for clear legal reasons. It is a shame, as we on the Conservative Benches would all recognise, that the changes made in the Lords have gone nothing like as far as we would have wished. We are very disappointed indeed that the Government did not use the opportunity in the Lords to go further and make this a more fundamentally ambitious and important Bill. It should have included measures on energy efficiency and rolling out a green deal, so that people could have energy efficiency devices installed in their homes in a way that enabled them to enjoy the benefits of that work before they started paying for the costs. The Bill should also have included measures on an emissions performance standard that would require all newly built electricity generation to cut emissions. It should have included measures to reform the climate change levy, so that it became a genuine charge on carbon, rather than another tax on business—an issue that has been so relevant in the discussions more generally this week. The Bill should also have looked at ways of introducing real incentives, so that communities that host wind farms can benefit financially from those schemes.

3.15 pm

The Bill does important things, but it could have been improved and it could have done a great deal more. We welcome some of the concessions that the Minister has made, most importantly in being prepared to extend the roll-out of the carbon capture and storage schemes that can benefit from the new levy to include those developed using gas and biomass, which is an important achievement. However, as with so many other aspects of legislation, the Bill represents unfinished business. It is one of a number of Energy Bills that we have seen in the past 13 years, but it still does not measure up to the scale of the challenge that lies before us or the enormous energy security issues that we face. That means, I am afraid, that there will have to be another Energy Bill soon after the election, when we will have a Conservative Government with the drive, the resolve and the commitment to address those issues and take them forward.

Mr. Phil Willis (Harrogate and Knaresborough) (LD): May I echo the comments made by the hon. Member for Wealden (Charles Hendry) about the Minister and her colleagues? It is a while since I sat on a Standing Committee, but they were incredibly generous in their approach throughout, as was the Minister herself. I therefore agree with the hon. Gentleman, who was also incredibly courteous and well informed in presenting his points on behalf of the Conservative Opposition.

The sadness for me is that the Bill was introduced probably three or four years too late. What it needed was the new Department—I have to compliment the

[*Mr. Phil Willis*]

Prime Minister on one thing: setting the Department up—which has been effective in looking at some of the core issues facing our society. I compliment both the Secretary of State and the Minister on bringing those issues forward. Our party has had a number of major concerns during the passage of the Bill, some of which were, to be fair, addressed in part in the House of Lords—I am thinking particularly of the determination of what fuel poverty is. Let us remember that we had a discussion in Committee about that definition. The Minister was quite adamant that we could go no further, but since then there has been some movement on the issue in the House of Lords, for which we thank the Minister.

However, the difficulty is that an incoming Government, of whatever persuasion, will immediately have to return to the issue, because if they do not, we will not be able to move forward in what I see as three phases. The first issue is carbon capture and storage. Quite frankly, a huge amount of Government effort will be required to make it come to pass. We have had some movement on piping and some thought has gone into the issue of clusters, but that will need to be put into legislation, otherwise, frankly, it will not work.

One area that is missing—we genuinely hoped that the Minister would bring it back in the House of Lords—is this. When will the relationship appear between the installation of the carbon capture demonstrators and what will happen to the disposal of carbon dioxide in the North sea? That relationship—a relationship with those who currently have licences to operate in the North sea and who have an obligation to preserve the aquifers in a state in which they can be used—needs to be created, because once that goes and the whole thing collapses, then we will be in a totally different ballgame. We ought to be able to use this moment as a huge business opportunity and fill the aquifers in the North sea with carbon dioxide from a whole range of countries—particularly those in Europe, but also those further afield—using compression techniques.

The only other point that I wish to make is about this whole business of feed-in tariffs. What concerns me is this. Just this weekend I came back from my small farm on the west coast of Ireland. I was contemplating the discussions that we had with the Minister about those sources of energy other than gas that people use for their main heating. As I filled up my tank in Ireland, just as I fill it up in north Yorkshire, it struck me that the cost of delivering liquid gas at the moment is astronomical. When it comes to fuel poverty, the need to get people to think of ways in which they can generate their own heat and electricity and feed it back into the grid is crucial, but we also need to consider how to broaden the use of fuel poverty to include those areas that do not have access to natural gas.

The Bill is certainly worth putting on the statute book before this Parliament is dissolved, and I hope that when an incoming Government return to this matter, they will treat it with the same compassion and sense of importance that the Minister has shown, and that we can move on to the next stage as quickly as possible.

Joan Ruddock: I thank the hon. Members for Wealden (Charles Hendry) and for Harrogate and Knaresborough (Mr. Willis) for their very kind remarks. I appreciate

very much what they have said and may I return the compliment? All of us who have worked on the Bill and in our wider debates in this place have done so with a very proper concern for the environment, for the security of our energy supplies, and for the people who have to pay for the fuel that they use and the fuel poverty that some of them experience. I am pleased to have been the Minister in charge of this important Bill. It has been debated seriously by Members on both sides of the House, for which I am grateful.

The hon. Member for Wealden took his opportunity, as he was entitled to do, to indicate many other things that he wished could have been included in the Bill. However, except for the matters of which he spoke where the Government conceded and made some improvements, the Government resisted those. The Bill was focused on achieving two things: first, carbon capture and storage and how it might be financially supported and organised in this country, and, secondly, the introduction of social price support mechanisms.

These small amendments are procedural and relate to the social price support mechanisms, so they do not allow us to widen the Bill's scope and bring in any of the new kinds of provisions that the hon. Gentleman would like. He spoke about the green deal that the Conservative party has put forward, but he knows well that the Government have proposed something that is bigger, wider and more costly than that, and which is embodied in our home energy management policy under the warm homes, greener homes strategy.

With regard to the strategy for carbon capture and storage and clusters, we very much agree with all parts of the House that clusters are to be considered and possibly encouraged. We want the best strategic position to be adopted for carbon capture and storage, and we agree with the hon. Member for Harrogate and Knaresborough on the potential for CCS. We believe that the discussions between those in control of North sea aquifers, the Government and the private companies that are developing CCS with Government support, are vital. As we have said, and as the Bill provides, we need to demonstrate that we can not only capture the gas, but transport it safely and store it safely for as long as is necessary.

The hon. Gentleman spoke about the cost of fuel such as liquid gas for home heating. We are sensitive to this point and we are looking for ways to enable people to reduce their bills and have more secure supplies at lower cost through such means as air source heat pumps, which would enable people to obtain heat through a completely new technology. That is now well tested and we think that it can be a really good substitute for those who are off the gas grid. There are also ground source heat pumps. As the hon. Gentleman knows, the Government have incentivised through the feed-in tariffs the provision of systems such as solar PV, where substantial payments can be made to those who generate their own electricity. Next year, we will introduce the heat incentive scheme, which should be of particular benefit to the kind of homes that he describes off the gas grid, where the incentives would particularly benefit those who move from sources such as LPG. I hope that we can promise the hon. Gentleman that much good will come forward when we are returned to Government.

I can tell the hon. Member for Wealden that we have no plans for amending the definition of fuel poverty in

the Warm Homes and Energy Conservation Act 2000. Indeed, the Act allows for such an amendment to be made by negative resolution. This Bill does not cut across that. What we do in this Bill and the amendments that I have described is simply a matter for this Bill and the definition there. When providing for a social price support mechanism, we do not want it to be available only to those who by definition would come out of fuel poverty. Of course, some will, but some will be helped to do a little better and some may be prevented from going into fuel poverty. That is the intention of the price support mechanism and these small amendments make all of that possible.

It has been an immense pleasure to be a Minister in the new Department of Energy and Climate Change. I believe that the whole House feels that setting up that Department was a correct decision, as the hon. Member for Harrogate and Knaresborough reiterated today. For those of us who have worked in the Department, I can say that it has been a whirlwind of a Department, which has enabled the country to begin that absolute change in the way in which we generate and use our energy, and at the same time tackle the threat of dangerous climate change.

Lords amendment 1 agreed to.

Lords amendments 2 to 9 agreed to.

Financial Services Bill

Consideration of Lords amendments

3.28 pm

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Michael Lord): Lords amendments to the Financial Services Bill have been received and printed. A grouping is also available. Under the order of the House of yesterday, they may be considered forthwith without any question put.

I draw the attention of the House to the fact that financial privilege is involved in Lords amendments 45 to 48. If the House agrees to any of these amendments, I shall ensure that the appropriate entry is made in the *Journal*.

Clause 1

COUNCIL FOR FINANCIAL STABILITY

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (Ian Pearson): I beg to move, that the House agrees with Lords amendment 1.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to discuss Lords amendments 2 to 4 and 36.

Ian Pearson: The amendments remove from the Bill the clauses relating to the council for financial stability—that is, clauses 1 to 4—and the reference to those clauses in clause 38. As my noble Friend Lord Myners set out in another place yesterday and again this morning, given the limited amount of time remaining in this Parliament, the Government have agreed with the official Opposition through the usual channels and in the usual way which parts of the Bill should be enacted.

The council for financial stability was a casualty of that process, as were clauses 8 and 18 to 25, which respectively deal with the Financial Service Authority's international remit and with collective proceedings. The second group of amendments deal with those changes. We continue to believe that the council for financial stability provisions are necessary, sensible and desirable; however, in the interest of securing other important elements of the Bill on which there is greater consensus, the Government have agreed to withdraw them. I hope that the House will support the amendments.

3.30 pm

Mr. Mark Hoban (Fareham) (Con): Of course, the Opposition agree with the amendments. We argued from the start of proceedings on the Bill that the council for financial stability was a cosmetic reform, not the fundamental structural reforms that we felt were needed to reflect the lessons of the financial crisis. The fiction the Government sought to create was that we would know who was in charge and who took responsibility in crises; in the evidence sessions, however, that fiction was slowly unpicked. The banks said that responsibility rested with the Treasury, and the FSA suggested that it had only a secondary role to play in financial stability—rather than clarity, there was confusion among the tripartite authorities. We therefore welcome the amendments that remove those clauses, which creates the opportunity for a fresh start in the next Parliament.

Ian Pearson: I welcome the Opposition's support for the amendments. I am not surprised by it, given that the deal has been agreed. We still believe strongly that the council for financial stability is an important and necessary addition to financial regulation in this country, but given where we stand today, I appreciate the hon. Gentleman's support for the other clauses in the Bill, which I hope will become law very shortly.

Lords amendment 1 agreed to.

Lords amendments 2 to 4 agreed to.

Clause 6

DISCLOSURE OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO THE BANK OF ENGLAND

Ian Pearson: I beg to move, that this House agrees with Lords amendment 5.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take Lords amendments 6 to 35 and 37 to 49.

Ian Pearson: As I mentioned a minute ago, as a result of discussions with the official Opposition via the usual channels, the second group of amendments will remove clause 8, which would provide for a new statutory duty imposed on the FSA to promote international regulation and supervision, and clauses 18 to 25, which would allow for group representative action in the courts for people with similar claims. We believe that, like the council for financial stability, those are important and necessary measures but, again, we have agreed to withdraw them to safeguard the passage of the Bill's remaining provisions.

Alongside the amendments removing those clauses, the Government tabled in another place a large number of concessionary amendments, many in response to the scrutiny by this House and the points made by hon. Members who participated in debates on the Bill. I recognise that the length of the parliamentary Session has curtailed debate on the Bill in another place—indeed, my experience of watching some of that debate tells me that it could have continued for many more months—but I hope that Conservative Members welcome the Government's efforts to deal with some of the concerns that have been raised.

Mr. William Cash (Stone) (Con): Does the Minister accept that, in the financial risk outlook recently published by the Financial Services Authority, the FSA made it clear that, for the taxpayer, many tens of billions of pounds—a substantial proportion of what was provided—would be at risk, notwithstanding any proposed repayment of the loans by the banks? Does he agree that that is a serious hole in the public finances, which, according to the FSA, will be carried by the taxpayer?

Ian Pearson: I heard the hon. Gentleman mention that yesterday, but I have not had time to check it out, so I must pass on answering that question. On the general point, however, I do not believe that the Government's financial interventions to recapitalise the banks and the Bank of England's action to provide liquidity to the banking system have been anything

other than absolutely necessary to ensure the continued stability of the financial system in this country. I will check the detail of what he says about the FSA's financial risk outlook and, if it not too late in this Parliament, I will get my officials to write to him.

Let me describe briefly some of the concessionary amendments made in the Lords to which I hope this House will agree today. Amendments 9 and 10 ensure that the regulations provided for under clause 9 are subjected to the affirmative procedure. Amendment 12 ensures that the FSA, when making short-selling rules, has regard to international agreements in that area.

Amendments 16 to 23 further strengthen safeguards for individuals who performed a controlled function without the necessary FSA approval and reduce the proposed increase in the limitation period from four to three years. I well remember the hon. Member for Fareham (Mr. Hoban) expressing concern about those two points during Committee scrutiny of the FSA's enforcement clauses. The extra safeguards reflect the importance of casting the FSA's enforcement net widely enough to reach those who knew or could reasonably be expected to have known that they needed FSA approval and to deter individuals and firms from breaking the rules, but without catching those who reasonably should not be penalised. I believe that the amendment to the limitation period also strikes the right balance between allowing the FSA the time it needs to conduct proper investigations and answering the concerns expressed by Opposition Front Benchers, both in this House and in another place.

Amendment 24 will ensure greater transparency in disclosure of the FSA's enforcement actions. That, too, is a point raised by the hon. Gentleman and by my hon. Friend the Member for Edmonton (Mr. Love). In Committee, I promised to look into the matter; I did so, and amendment 24 is the product of that thinking. It improves the position by widening the circumstances in which the FSA must disclose details of its enforcement actions against authorised firms and individuals. It requires the FSA to disclose such information relating to decision notices as it considers appropriate. At present, the FSA can disclose only information relating to a final notice, which follows any appeal to the tribunal, rather than information relating to a decision notice, which is issued after a firm has had the opportunity to make representations to the FSA but before the firm has had the opportunity to appeal.

The new clause provides earlier transparency before any appeal has been heard but, importantly, after the FSA has heard the firm's views and concluded that there is a clear case to answer. It will empower consumers with additional information about which firms may have breached rules, and I think it strikes the right balance.

The Government have carefully considered points made in another place and by the industry on the ability to review rules made by the FSA establishing a consumer redress scheme. Although we feel that the approval of the court before a scheme can be established is not appropriate—indeed, we believe that that is a regulatory decision, which should be a matter for the FSA—the Government have accepted that the Bill should expressly set out a means of challenging such a decision, rather than requiring parties to rely solely on the judicial review process. Amendment 33 provides that any person

may apply to the upper tribunal for a review of rules made by the FSA under new section 404 of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000. We consider, again, that this strikes a reasonable balance between the ability of the FSA to implement a consumer redress scheme, where appropriate, and the rights of others to require a review of those rules. Furthermore, in the light of industry concerns about the use of the power, we have also agreed to change the commencement of the clause so that it must be commenced by an order rather than automatically on Royal Assent. I hope that that explains the amendments and I hope that the House will support them.

Mr. Hoban: I welcome the amendments and the way in which the Minister has responded to the concerns that have been expressed during the scrutiny in this place and the other place. He highlighted amendment 24, for which I am grateful. One of the concerns that we had was that consumers did not know about enforcement action being taken against a firm regulated by the FSA and that that might put them at a disadvantage in dealing with those firms. Indeed, there was an incident that we cited in Committee relating to a mortgage company that was being investigated by the FSA on some of its repossession proceedings. If that information had been in the public domain sooner, that might have helped some people who had mortgages with that company. We welcome the constructive approach that the Minister has taken.

Let me focus very briefly on three areas. We want to see consumers given adequate protection when the product that they have brought or the advice that they have received is defective. That is a concern that we have expressed in a number of different ways over the course of this Bill but also in other wider reforms that we have set out. It is important that when new safeguards are introduced there should be proper scrutiny and consultation, so that we know that the safeguards will work effectively and proportionately.

We welcome the decision to drop clauses 18 to 25 on collective action. This gives the next Government the chance to consult properly on these changes and on the generic court rules that need to be introduced on collective actions and again on the detailed regulations that would then be used to apply those generic court rules to individual claims under financial services legislation. It also gives the next Government an opportunity to see how these rules dovetail with the existing protection for consumers and the consumer redress schemes. It also gives a Government the opportunity to think how collective proceedings should be applied to the whole area of consumer protection and not just to the narrow subject of financial services. The Government's decision to drop these clauses creates the opportunity for further debate, which will benefit both consumers and industry.

On clause 26, we welcome some of the changes that the Government have made, particularly the change to the commencement date. Rather like collective proceedings, this is an area where there was insufficient consultation with the industry or consumer groups. There is an underlying concern about how the FSA would use these powers in practice. It might be the case that with a longer period of thought and deliberation the industry and consumer groups could become more comfortable with the way in which the FSA would seek to use these

powers in practice. The amendment creates a breathing space to enable that to happen.

Let me make one thing very clear. It is apparent that the powers that this provision replaces—section 404 of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000—are unsatisfactory, because those powers had never been used. It is also clear that defaulting back to the Financial Ombudsman Service to resolve large scale mis-selling claims is also unsatisfactory. A solution needs to be found to resolve these issues and I think we are confident that we can and should make progress on this. Fundamentally, the best way to resolve these issues is through having the right mechanisms in place to deal with the cure while having the right regulatory approach and structure in place to deal with prevention, too.

I am pleased to see that amendment 43 has been introduced. The Minister did not choose to mention it, but it reflects amendment 48, which I tabled in Committee. The Minister was rather sceptical at that stage about the amendment and he said that as an expert in evaluation and someone who has studied this topic over 20 years, it was not really necessary because organisations would do that automatically. As someone who has not studied evaluation for 20 years, I am pleased to see that I can have an impact as a layman—perhaps through the machinations at the other end of the Palace, but the effect is none the less welcome for that. Clearly, there is good evidence for the impact that I have made in the outcome of this Bill.

Let me end by wishing the Minister well, as he is leaving the House at the election. He and I have sparred on a number of Bills over the course of the last couple of years. I have always found him straightforward to deal with—that might not be what the deputy Chief Whip might like to hear—and prepared to engage in the debate in Committee in a serious and thoughtful way. I am sure that whatever he chooses to do after he leaves this place, he will be as successful there as he has been in this House.

3.45 pm

Andrew Mackinlay (Thurrock) (Lab): I shall not detain the House for more than a few moments. I listened carefully to the shadow Minister's speech and, although I am open to correction, I do not think that he made much reference to clause 8, which is struck out by the Lords amendments. I am extremely surprised, bearing in mind the traumatic experience that the UK has suffered during the financial crisis over the past year or more, and bearing in mind the utterances that one gets from the Conservative party—not just in the hustings, but in recent times. I find it amazing that, at the Conservatives' initiative, clause 8 has been struck out.

Clause 8 would have amended the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and would have allowed the Financial Services Authority—indeed, it would have empowered it—to take such steps to promote international financial regulation and supervision calculated to meet the financial stability objectives. It would also have charged the FSA with representing the interests of the UK when participating in discussions on international financial regulation and supervision. The agreed consensus was that some of the contributory factors to the global crisis and the background to the storm—which under the stewardship of this Government, we have largely

weathered and got through—were the absence of adequate international financial regulation. I find it quite amazing that this House, at this stage in this Parliament, should strike out what must be a demonstrably approved measure at the whim or insistence of Conservative Lords and those on the Conservative Front Bench. I am happy to give way to the hon. Member for Fareham (Mr. Hoban), because I think that we should be told how that abdication of responsibility has happened.

Mr. Hoban: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for giving way to probably the final intervention that he will take in this House. In the absence of this power, the FSA is still engaged in debate in the European Union and with the European Commission on technical issues to do with implementation of say, Solvency 2. Lord Turner sits on committees of the Financial Stability Board. This makes no difference to the FSA's ability to take part in international discussions. It has done so without this power being in the FSMA. It is an entirely cosmetic and pointless change.

Andrew Mackinlay: I am pleased that I gave way, because that demonstrates the laid-back attitude of the Conservatives to this issue. Of course, the FSA has been acting in the way that the hon. Gentleman describes, but clause 8 places a duty on it. It reinforces its power. It sends messages abroad. It means that the FSA can go thumping the table internationally with full confidence and mandate of a statute. That is the difference. Statutory regulation stiffens the sinews, either of the FSA or the people who serve it, and underlines the importance and gravity of what they are doing. To say that the provision is not necessary is irresponsible and wrong.

I do not want to labour the point, other than to put on the record that removing clause 8 was a mistake. The Minister should be blushing, because the Government would have retained the provision, but the Conservatives insisted that it came out before the legislation could receive Royal Assent. The Conservatives are to blame for taking out a prudent and sensible clause.

The Minister may be able to help us on my second point. In proceedings in this House on 25 January and in another place on 23 February there was discussion of the credit unions of Northern Ireland. The hon. Member for Foyle (Mark Durkan), supported by the hon. Members for East Antrim (Sammy Wilson) and for North Down (Lady Hermon), Lord Bew and most sensible people, were led to believe that the measure would be a vehicle to empower the credit unions of Northern Ireland and give them parity with those in the rest of Great Britain. We thought they would be put under the FSA and allowed to provide financial products comparable to those in London, including child trust funds, ATMs and so forth.

Lord Myners was certainly sympathetic and, judging from the *Official Report*, the Minister indicated some support. Given his background as a Northern Ireland Minister, my hon. Friend will be aware that although only 1 per cent. of people in England use credit unions, they are used by 26 per cent. of people in Northern Ireland, yet they are denied parity of treatment with the rest of Great Britain. Furthermore, they do not have the assurances and guarantees arising from the oversight of the FSA.

I am bewildered and dismayed. All the political parties in Northern Ireland are in agreement on the issue, as are political parties in this House, including the Labour party in Northern Ireland and the Democratic Unionist party, except for the Conservative and Unionist party. By instructing the Minister that there should be no progress on the provision, the Conservative and Unionist party, which is standing in the election, is denying the people of Northern Ireland facilities for their credit unions. The Conservative party is doing a grave disservice to the 26 per cent. of people in Northern Ireland, across the political spectrum, who want their credit unions enhanced. The hon. Member for Fareham is looking anxious. Does he want to respond?

Mr. Hoban: Only to say that I am not sure why the hon. Gentleman has reached that conclusion. I am not aware that we have sought in any way to block that amendment.

Andrew Mackinlay: My accusation stands, and I shall be interested to hear what the Minister says in reply.

Mr. Colin Breed (South-East Cornwall) (LD): I rise to support the remarks made by the hon. Member for Fareham (Mr. Hoban). At one stage, many of us thought that the Bill might never come back here at all. Considerable work has been done on it by a lot of people and it includes some important aspects for consumers, so it would have been a great shame if it had not proceeded.

The provisions are reasonable given that there has been relatively little consultation as a result of the speed that was being required to push the Bill through. In many respects, the Bill is part 1 of something that will continue to be looked at as we impose regulation and supervision of financial services. I am happy to support the amendments and to allow the Bill to go through.

I do not have the same concerns about clause 8 as the hon. Member for Thurrock (Andrew Mackinlay). It had some belt and braces aspects and would not have had quite the impact he expected. Co-operation will clearly have to take place in that area. We shall not be able to introduce things off our own bat; we shall have to seek international support and co-operation and, as the hon. Member for Fareham said, there are already provisions in current legislation. However, certain aspects will have to be tightened up by the next Administration as they begin to push the measure through.

When the Treasury Committee visited Ireland a little while ago, we were amazed at the amount of credit union activity, but the mechanisms by which credit unions were administered or supervised were not raised with us. I am somewhat puzzled about the matter, so if the Minister has any helpful suggestions that would be good. It was certainly not something that the Committee considered was part of this legislation.

I echo the words of the hon. Member for Fareham about the Minister. We have had a good working relationship on various Committees, not least because of the way the Minister presented information and was always prepared to get us the additional information we required. I, too, wish him well in the future.

Mr. Cash: I want to speak briefly on clause 6. Nothing is more important than that people understand exactly, as it says in the amendment, "the desirability of enhancing the understanding and knowledge of members of the public of financial matters (including the UK financial system)."

and for a very good reason. People have just been through the most cathartic experience; they have seen their savings and their jobs disintegrate as a result of mistakes, and sometimes of thoroughly misleading behaviour, by many people who ought to have known better. That goes for the Government as well as for the supervisory authorities and the companies and banks concerned.

People should have proper information and understand it and, if necessary, be given in school some overall idea of the extent to which they are dependent on the financial system. Something in the order of 20 per cent. of our entire economy turns on financial services, so it would not be amiss for people to have proper financial education and understanding. That provision is extremely important and useful.

Unlike the hon. Member for Thurrock (Andrew Mackinlay), I am delighted that clause 8 has been left out. I have taken a close interest in the Bill. I have written quite a lot about it in the *Financial Times* and other publications. From the beginning, I have made a constant assault on the idea that the City of London should be put under threat by European institutions—from the de Larosière report to the latest regulations, which I followed as a member of the European Scrutiny Committee from the beginning to the end. The Minister knows of my interest and of my condemnation of the extent to which the City of London has been put under threat as a result of European and/or global international regulation.

Even this morning, on the “Today” programme, the Prime Minister was still going on about the virtues of his great contribution to undermining—he would not put it like that, but it is a fact—our ability to run our own affairs. Given the number of jobs and the amount of gross domestic product dependent on the City, I am completely against the requirements under clause 8, and that is a very good reason why it should be left out. The hon. Member for Thurrock referred to its power, but he did not quite emphasise enough the fact that it would have provided for a legal duty, enforceable by judicial review. The hon. Gentleman is a good friend of mine, so I can tell from his expression how and to what extent he approves of clause 8.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Fareham knows perfectly well, irrespective of whether the clause is in or out, section 2 of the European Communities Act 1972 will require us to comply with the financial services regulations imposed by directives and decisions taken by the European jurisdiction. That is one reason why my United Kingdom Parliamentary Sovereignty Bill remains important. We have to have a proper adjustment, so that we co-operate with other countries. I have never been against that. As I have said many times before: European trade, yes; European Government, no. It is for this House to decide the extent to which we have proper regulation, and, whether we engage in agreements with other European countries or not, we in this House must have the last say.

Clause 8, as far as our courts are concerned, would have made an imposition upon the Financial Services Authority over and above the requirements of European regulations and directives. The clause would have gone to the Supreme Court at some point or other, when somebody challenged it, and it would have been an imposition—imposed by this Parliament as a mandatory requirement.

4 pm

Therefore, I am glad that the clause has gone, but I remain concerned about our underlying requirement under the European Communities Act 1972 to comply with the financial regulations that are streaming out of the European Union like a tsunami. Through majority voting, they will effectively hand over control of the City of London to the axis of France and Germany—Frankfurt and Paris. Nicolas Sarkozy has been quite clear from the beginning about their overriding objection to the Anglo-Saxon methods of dealing with financial services, and about their objective of taking over the City of London. That is one of their objectives, and the same goes for the Germans in Frankfurt. *[Interruption.]* I love to watch the deputy Chief Whip of the Government-for-the-time-being laughing about that.

The Treasurer of Her Majesty’s Household (Mr. Thomas McAvoy): I’m laughing at you.

Mr. Cash: I am glad to hear the right hon. Gentleman say that. I am delighted, because all it does is demonstrate the absurdity of his position. He cannot tell that the people of this country are seriously affected. It may be very late in the day, and we may be right at the end of our parliamentary proceedings, but I say, and I shall say again, that nothing will stop me from defending in this Parliament the rights and interests of the people in this country. This legislation, whether or not it goes through in a wash-up and is fast-tracked, involves a disgraceful procedure, but at least it gives people like myself the opportunity to stand up for the United Kingdom, which I will do irrespective of deputy Chief Whips-for-the-time-being.

In line with the many times that I have raised this point with our shadow Chancellor and my hon. Friend the Member for Fareham, I trust that when we win the next election we will resist any attempt whatever to allow our City of London to be regulated by European regulations. We must insist that our City of London, our financial services, are dealt with under our laws, not under European or international legal jurisdictions.

Ian Pearson: I shall briefly respond to the points that have been made during this debate.

I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Thurrock (Andrew Mackinlay) about clause 8 and disagree with the hon. Member for Stone (Mr. Cash) and his comments on it. I agree that dropping the clause will not prevent the Financial Services Authority from engaging in international forums, and the fact that it has not had its role formalised is disappointing. It is very strange that such an important activity has not been formally reflected on a statutory basis in the FSA’s objectives.

I heard what my hon. Friend said about Northern Ireland credit unions, and I share his strong desire to see them come under the auspices of the FSA. That is why, during Commons stages of the Bill, I said to Members that, if it were possible for the Northern Ireland Assembly to agree on an approach, we would see what could be done in the Bill. Lord Myners tabled a new clause in the other place, but there was no opportunity to debate it. Primary legislation is not actually needed to bring about those changes, but it is important to send the right signal, and I hope that the next Government will continue to look at the regulatory reform of credit unions.

The House will be aware that there is a joint Treasury-Northern Ireland Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment consultation on proposals for the regulatory reform of credit unions in Northern Ireland, and that was launched on 30 March. As responses are received, I am sure that it will be possible—early in the next Parliament, I hope—to bring in any necessary changes at an early opportunity.

The hon. Member for Fareham (Mr. Hoban) made three main points. On, collective proceedings, the House is now aware that the amendments would drop clauses 18 to 25 from the Bill. However, I stress that, in terms of collective proceedings and providing for the rights of individuals collectively to take action, there is an important principle that needs to be pursued. We explored the issue in some detail in Committee, but it is clear from some reactions outside the House, which were reflected in the other place, that more work is needed in that area. That is why I am happy not to pursue those clauses at the moment, and to see more work done. However, the House will need to return to the matter, because it involves some important points of principle about how we ensure that such collective rights can be exercised.

The hon. Gentleman also raised a highly relevant point about clause 26. He will be aware of the actions that we have taken through amendment 33, and the agreement that it would be enacted separately. We just gave up on his amendment 43. I still do not think that it is a necessary part of the Bill, but in the other place I think they just decided, “Oh, all right then. Let’s go on, let’s do it. It won’t do any harm.” It certainly will not do any harm. The other concessions that we made in the other place have helped to improve the Bill; his amendment does not do so substantially, but there we go.

I should like to say two final things. First, I thank the hon. Members for Fareham and for South-East Cornwall (Mr. Breed), with whom I have debated on many occasions over the past couple of years. If I may return their compliments, I must say that they have been unfailingly courteous and well reasoned in their arguments. Although I have not been able to agree with them on every occasion, I have always carefully considered what they have said; and, where I have thought it appropriate, I have asked officials to draft and bring forward amendments, as we have done during the passage of this Bill.

Secondly, and lastly, I should like to thank my Bill team. Bills such as this require an awful lot of work on the part of many civil servants. My committed, dedicated and able team have provided me with terrific advice. I hope that I have not mangled their sentences too much in what I have said during the debates on the Bill. It is to their immense credit that so much of the Bill will be enacted very shortly, and that will be of benefit to people in Britain. So I say thank you very much to my team, and thanks also to hon. Members.

Lords amendment 5 agreed to.

Lords amendments 6 to 49 agreed to, with Commons financial privileges waived in respect of Lords amendments 45 to 48.

Flood and Water Management Bill

Consideration of Lords amendments

Clause 4

“FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT FUNCTION”

4.10 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Huw Irranca-Davies): I beg to move, That this House agrees with Lords amendment 1.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Michael Lord): With this we may take Lords amendments 2 to 25.

Huw Irranca-Davies: It is a great privilege to bring forward what I hope will be, both figuratively and literally, the final Act of this Parliament. Bringing the Bill forward was a good choice; the business managers know my reputation for brevity.

The Bill benefited from further changes in the other place, and we are considering those this afternoon. In all, a further 25 amendments have been made in the other place, three of which are purely technical. Of the remaining 22, 18 resulted directly from the report of the Delegated Powers and Regulatory Reform Committee. We believe that all those changes are unobjectionable, and improve both this Bill and the Reservoirs Act 1975. We were more than happy to make the changes in the other place and we hope and expect that they will find favour in this House this evening.

I should mention briefly the issues outside the Bill on which I undertook to take further action. I undertook to address funding concerns for local authorities with the Local Government Association, and terms of reference for that work have been agreed. I also said that I would bring together the relevant interests to address concerns that had been expressed about the impact of flood risk on household insurance. I have had initial discussions with Members, including Opposition Front-Bench Members—I thank them for their courtesy in taking part—and with the Association of British Insurers with a view to having a wide-ranging discussion of this issue at a floods summit later in the year. That is indicative of the co-operative and open approach that we have taken to developing this legislation and I thank Members of this House and the other place and the bodies outside Parliament that also operated in that way. The result has been a Bill that was in very good order before it went to the other place; the scrutiny that it has received there, and the further amendments that have been made have, however, made it still stronger.

We should not lose sight of why the Bill is important. Floods can be massively disruptive to people’s lives and to businesses, sometimes for a prolonged period. The events in Cumbria in the autumn were a vivid reminder of that, and climate change is likely to make both floods and droughts more frequent. The measures in this Bill will make a real and tangible difference; that is why the Government made the Bill a priority. I commend the Bill, and the amendments made to it in the other place, to the House.

Miss Anne McIntosh (Vale of York) (Con): I welcome this opportunity to make my last contribution of this Parliament. I thank my small but perfectly formed Bill Committee team of two at my office—they know who they are. I also convey my thanks to the Minister for his

team, the Department's team and that of the Environment Agency in preparing the Bill and these most recent amendments.

On a note of sadness, I should say that this is my last contribution of this Parliament as the MP for Vale of York. The recommissioning and redistribution of the boundaries mean that I shall, I hope, be moving to higher ground after the election.

The Minister, gracious and charming as ever, has asked the House to support the amendments, which he calls "technical amendments"—as he knows, that gets our hearts beating a little faster. I take this opportunity to ask him whether the words "under an enactment", inserted by amendments 1 and 2, have any special meaning, in this Bill and more generally. As for amendment 3, what procedure will be followed in this regard?

I understand that amendment 4 to clause 8 will be consequential to the amendments that we discussed and supported in Committee and in the remaining stages in this place. Obviously we would be grateful if the Minister would clarify the points about the Lands Tribunal and the Upper Tribunal.

Like the Minister, I would like to pause for a moment to talk about some of the issues to which we did not do complete justice in considering the remaining stages of the Bill in this place. He will be aware of our concerns and those of interested parties about the provisions relating to reservoirs. We remain unconvinced and would have liked the time to look at the reservoir provisions more carefully. I am sure that the Minister and the House will recognise that the provisions have serious cost implications, especially for those who have small reservoirs on farms and golf courses, and other third-party users. The increased cost of the obligations imposed is causing serious concern and alarm.

The Minister referred to adapting to climate change—or as some call it, adverse weather conditions. Across the country we have all at various times faced such weather conditions. There is a dilemma between wanting to store water to enable us to adapt to these conditions and the cost of creating more reservoirs.

I hope that, whoever forms the next Government, the House will have an opportunity to discuss a White Paper on these issues. We as a party are committed to publishing such a White Paper. The omission of food policy and food security as a material consideration in the flood risk management decision-making process is one that the Government will have cause to regret. The national and local flood risk management strategy is flawed, with too much emphasis on the Environment Agency and too many powers being given to it. We have argued that there should be much more co-operation with local communities through their elected representatives on the local authorities.

I referred earlier to the possible impact of the reservoir safety clauses on small farm reservoirs and those belonging to third parties. The Minister is aware of our ongoing concerns. I have referred to the fact that the Bill gives too much power to the Environment Agency, and to the implications of clause 38.

I should like to place on record our disappointment that the natural hazards team has not reported as widely and done as full an audit of critical infrastructure as we would have wished. We had a good debate on SUDS—

either the sustainable urban drainage or the sustainable drainage systems. We still need to identify who owns them and who will be responsible for maintaining them.

We are still waiting for the publication date for the transfer of private drains—the lateral drains and sewers. This would be a good moment for the Minister to announce when the regulations and guidance will be issued. That is something on which we can perhaps campaign and have a proper debate, especially for those small privately owned drainage companies, which are largely family firms, who feel that they will lose out and that they have not been properly consulted. I hope that the Bill will put down a marker that we need regular maintenance work not just by the internal drainage boards but by the Environment Agency.

We wish the Bill well. We know that we will return to the content in some measure with a White Paper. I am delighted that the Minister has taken on board our concerns and is calling the forthcoming discussions not a floods insurance summit but a floods summit. I hope that we will have a dry period in which to campaign in the forthcoming general election. We thank all who have been involved in the Bill on both sides of the House. I know that the Minister is not planning to retire from the House so we wish him well in the campaign. I am sure that that will be reciprocated. I thank him for the gracious manner in which he has skilfully steered the Bill through.

Mr. Paul Keetch (Hereford) (LD): May I too congratulate the Minister on the successful passage of the Bill? He has done exceedingly well in steering this important Bill through the House. The other place has demonstrated its ability correctly to witness, scrutinise and improve what was already an important Bill. In my constituency—both in the city of Hereford and in Ross-on-Wye—we have seen tremendous floods that have affected people's day-to-day lives. I am grateful for the investment made in flood defence schemes in the city and in Ross-on-Wye. They are important. The Minister is right to say that these events will occur more frequently in the future as a result of climate change and global warming. The Act that we hope will be in place this evening will be a great asset and of great assistance to our nation for the future. I congratulate the Minister on his role in this.

Huw Irranca-Davies: I reciprocate the comments of the hon. Member for Vale of York (Miss McIntosh) and thank her for engagement with the issue. My officials will read the *Hansard* report of the debate and will read her thanks to them. They have been open and engaged and I thank them for that. I also ask the hon. Member for Hereford (Mr. Keetch) to take my thanks back to his colleagues for their engagement in terms of finding the best way through.

We had a great deal of debate about reservoirs. The issue has been aired in the other place, the Chamber and in Committee, but we have settled on this position as a result of consistent engineering advice based on a risk assessment approach. Partly because of our engagement with the hon. Lady and others, we have some flexibility to revisit the issue of over-capacity to take on some of her concerns.

On future legislation, we are in agreement. We see the need for additional engagement. Beyond Pitt's recommendations, we have the Cave report and Anna Walker's report and so much besides. We will have to have some consolidating legislation and I am pleased to

[*Huw Irranca-Davies*]

say that we are already working up some proposals internally to try to bring forward something at the earliest opportunity. As always, this will be subject to parliamentary time but we would share the hon. Lady's aspiration to have another water Bill before the House as soon as possible.

I can confirm what I have said previously about drains: the transfer will go ahead next year. As for the regulations, I heard a whispered aside from behind me that they are in the pipeline. I can confirm that they will be available by the end of May. They are being drafted and are in a good state.

We say "enactment" in the amendments because we do not want the power to create an entirely new function. The functions should be defined in statute before the order is used to define them as risk management functions. On the land tribunal and the change to the upper tribunal, other legislation has made the change, and the amendments merely reflect that.

I thank the hon. Member for Hereford for reminding us why this Bill is so important to his constituents and to others throughout the country. At the risk of making this sound like an Oscar speech, it would be remiss of me not to thank those external organisations that have engaged with us in this process, those in the other place who have added so much to the Bill, Front and Back-Bench Members, Committee members and members of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, who have carefully constructed the Bill. It is all a tribute to them, and to my Bill team who have unstintingly given their time and efforts to turn this into a good Bill. It will make a difference, and it will deliver Sir Michael's Pitts recommendations. There is more work to do of course, as there always is, but this is a singular step forward, and we should all be proud of the work that has gone into the Bill.

Lords amendment 1 agreed to.

Lords amendments 2 to 25 agreed to.

4.25 pm

Sitting suspended (Order, 7 April).

MESSAGE TO ATTEND THE LORDS COMMISSIONERS

5.22 pm

Message to attend the Lords Commissioners delivered by the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod.

The Speaker, with the House, went up to hear Her Majesty's Commission; on their return, the Speaker sat in the Clerk's place at the Table.

Mr. Speaker: I have to acquaint the House that the House has been to the House of Peers where a Commission under the Great Seal was read, authorising the Royal Assent to the following Acts:

Appropriation No. 2 Act 2010

Finance Act 2010

Anti-Slavery Day Act 2010

Equality Act 2010

Northern Ireland Assembly Members Act 2010

Crime and Security Act 2010

Personal Care at Home Act 2010

Mortgage Repossessions (Protection of Tenants Etc.) Act 2010

Sunbeds (Regulation) Act 2010

Sustainable Communities Act 2007 (Amendment) Act 2010

Debt Relief (Developing Countries) Act 2010

Bribery Act 2010

Digital Economy Act 2010

Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010

Children, Schools and Families Act 2010

Energy Act 2010

Financial Services Act 2010

Flood and Water Management Act 2010

Bournemouth Borough Council Act 2010

Manchester City Council Act 2010

Her Majesty's Most Gracious Speech

Mr. Speaker: I have further to acquaint the House that the Leader of the House of Lords, one of the Lords Commissioners, delivered Her Majesty's Most Gracious Speech to both Houses of Parliament, in pursuance of Her Majesty's Command. For greater accuracy I have obtained a copy, and also directed that the terms of the Speech be printed in the *Journal* of this House. Copies are being made available in the Vote Office.

The Speech was as follows:

My Lords and Members of the House of Commons

My Government's overriding priority has been to restore growth to deliver a fair and prosperous economy for families and businesses, as the British economy recovers from the global economic downturn. Through employment and training programmes, restructuring the financial sector, strengthening the national infrastructure and providing responsible investment, my Government has taken action to support growth and employment.

My Government has also strengthened key public services, ensuring that, increasingly, individual entitlements guarantee good services, and has worked to build trust in democratic institutions.

My Government has sought effective global and European collaboration, including through the European Union, to combat climate change, including at the Copenhagen summit in December last year, and to sustain economic recovery through the G20.

The Duke of Edinburgh and I were pleased to visit Bermuda, and Trinidad and Tobago for our State Visit and to attend the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in the Commonwealth's 60th anniversary year. We were glad to welcome the President of South Africa on his successful visit to this country earlier this year.

The Duke of Edinburgh and I were saddened to learn of the devastation brought on Haiti and Chile by recent earthquakes and hope that relief and reconstruction efforts, which my Government and the British people have supported, can build on the spirit and resilience displayed by their people.

My Government has continued to reform and strengthen regulation of the financial services industry to ensure a stable financial sector that supports the wider economy, with greater protection for savers and taxpayers.

As the economic recovery is established, my Government has taken steps to reduce the budget deficit and ensure that national debt is on a sustainable path. Legislation has been enacted to halve the deficit.

An Act has been passed to enable the wider provision of free personal care to those with the highest needs.

An Act has been passed to protect communities by ensuring that parents take responsibility for their children's antisocial behaviour and by tackling youth gang crime.

An Act has been passed to ensure the communications infrastructure is fit for the digital age, supports future economic growth, delivers competitive communications and enhances public service broadcasting.

Legislation has been enacted to support carbon capture and storage and to help more of the most vulnerable households with their energy bills.

My Government has set out proposals for high-speed rail services between London and Scotland.

Legislation has been enacted to protect communities from flooding and to improve the management of water supplies.

My Government has remained committed to ensuring everyone has a fair chance in life and an Act has been passed to promote equality, narrow the gap between rich and poor and tackle discrimination. The Act also introduces transparency in the workplace to help address the differences in pay between men and women.

An Act has been passed to enshrine in law the commitment by my Government to abolish child poverty by 2020.

Legislation has been enacted to provide agency workers with the right to be treated equally with permanent staff on pay, holidays and other basic conditions after twelve weeks on an assignment.

Legislation has been enacted to take forward constitutional reform.

An Act has been passed to strengthen the law against bribery.

My Government has continued to work closely with the devolved administrations in the interests of all the people of the United Kingdom. My Government has remained committed to the Northern Ireland political process and has continued to work with Northern Ireland's leaders to ensure the continued stability of the devolved institutions and to complete the process of devolution by transferring policing and justice functions in April this year.

In Scotland, my Government set out plans to further strengthen devolution in its response to Final Report of the Commission on Scottish Devolution. My Government has continued to devolve more powers to Wales and has remained committed to a referendum on further devolution.

Members of the House of Commons

I thank you for the provision you have made for the work and dignity of the Crown and for the public service.

My Lords and Members of the House of Commons

My Government has worked for security, stability and prosperity in Afghanistan and Pakistan and for peace in the Middle East.

Legislation has been enacted to ban cluster munitions.

My Government has continued to work towards creating the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons, including addressing the challenges from Iran and North Korea.

Draft legislation has been published to make binding my Government's commitment to spend nought point seven per cent of national income on international development from 2013.

My Lords and Members of the House of Commons

I pray that the blessing of Almighty God may rest upon your counsels.

PROROGATION

Mr. Speaker: The Commission was also for proroguing this present Parliament, and the Leader of the House of Lords said:

“My Lords and Members of the House of Commons:

By virtue of Her Majesty's Commission, which has now been read, we do, in Her Majesty's name, and in obedience to Her

Majesty's Commands, prorogue this Parliament to Tuesday the twentieth day of this instant April to be then here holden, and this Parliament is accordingly prorogued to Tuesday the twentieth day of this instant April.”

End of the Fifth Session (opened on 18 November 2009) of the Fifty-Fourth Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in the Fifty-Ninth Year of the Reign of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second.

Written Ministerial Statements

Thursday 8 April 2010

BUSINESS, INNOVATION AND SKILLS

Skills Funding Agency

The Minister for Further Education, Skills, Apprenticeships and Consumer Affairs (Kevin Brennan): I am announcing today that the new Skills Funding Agency, an agency of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, became operational from 1 April 2010. This follows the announcement in the White Paper “Raising Expectations: enabling the system to deliver”, which was published jointly with DCSF on 17 March 2008.

The Skills Funding Agency takes over responsibility for funding post-19 education and skills training from the Learning and Skills Council for England, which has been abolished under the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009. The budget and overarching priorities and targets for the agency have already been published in the Government’s “Skills Investment Strategy”, a copy of which can be found on the Department’s website at www.bis.gov.uk.

The chief executive of Skills Funding, as a statutory office holder, will report to the Secretary of State on the performance of the Skills Funding Agency, and will prepare an annual report and accounts for each financial year which will be laid before Parliament.

Ministers of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills are accountable to Parliament for the work of the Skills Funding Agency.

Further information on the accountability and governance framework for the Skills Funding Agency and the relationship with the Department is set out in the Skills Funding Agency framework document, copies of which will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Bloody Sunday Inquiry Report

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Shaun Woodward): In my written statement to this House on 22 March 2010, *Official Report*, column 17WS, I set out the steps that would need to be taken before publication of the Bloody Sunday inquiry report. These included a checking process which would enable me to meet the obligations on me in relation to article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights and national security. I can confirm that this checking process has now been completed and I have received advice from the checking team which confirms that there is nothing in the report which, if published, could breach article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights by putting the lives or safety of individuals at risk, or put national security at risk. I am therefore satisfied that the report can be published in full and I have advised Lord Saville of this.

However, given the time needed to print the report, it will not be practically possible to publish the report to Parliament before this Parliament is dissolved for the general election. As I informed the House in my statement of 22 March, Lord Saville has indicated that if such a situation were to arise his tribunal would agree to retain custody of the report until after the general election. I have now written to Lord Saville to ask the tribunal to retain custody of the report.

The report has not been shown to me or to any other Member of the Government, or to any officials except the five members of the team which carried out the checking process. Before the checking process began, I confirmed in writing to Lord Saville that it was not my intention that the checking team should brief me or any member of my Department on the content of the report; they have not done so and will not do so. The report will not be submitted to the Government until after the general election, and I hope that it can then be published as soon as practicable. I have placed copies of my letters to Lord Saville in the Libraries of both Houses.

Petitions

Thursday 8 April 2010

PRESENTED PETITIONS

Petition presented to the House on Wednesday 7 April 2010 but not read on the Floor

Extension of Franchise to 16-18 Year Olds

The Petition of the students of Coloma Convent High School and the people of Croydon,

Declares that the franchise should be extended to 16 and 17 year olds, so that 16-18 year olds who can currently pay tax, marry, start a family and join the armed forces can have influence in our democracy.

The Petitioners therefore request that the House of Commons urges the Government to bring in a bill to enfranchise 16 and 17 year olds.

And the Petitioners remain, etc.—[Presented by Mr. Andrew Pelling.]

[P000822]

Petitions presented to the House on Thursday 8 April 2010 but not read on the Floor

Badman Report (Sunderland North)

The Petition of persons resident in the Sunderland North parliamentary constituency,

Declares that they are concerned about the recommendations of the Badman Report, which suggests closer monitoring of home educators, including a compulsory annual registration scheme and right of access to people's homes for local authority officials; further declares that the Petitioners believe the recommendations are based on a review that was extremely rushed, failed to give due consideration to the evidence, failed to ensure that the data it collected were sufficiently robust, and failed to take proper account of the existing legislative framework.

The Petitioners therefore request that the House of Commons urges the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families either not to bring forward, or to withdraw, proposed legislative measures providing for tighter registration and monitoring of children educated at home in the absence of a thorough independent inquiry into the condition and future of elective home education in England; but instead to take the steps necessary to ensure that the existing Elective Home Education Guidelines for Local Authorities are properly implemented, learning from current best practice, in all local authorities in England.

And the Petitioners remain, etc.

[P000828]

Equitable Life (Henley)

The Petition of residents of the constituency of Henley in the Oxford region of the U.K regarding the Government's response to the Parliamentary Ombudsman's reports on Equitable Life,

Declares that the Petitioners either are or they represent or support members, former members or personal representatives of deceased members of the Equitable

Life Assurance Society who have suffered maladministration leading to injustice, as found by the Parliamentary Ombudsman in her report upon Equitable Life, ordered by the House of Commons to be printed on 16 July 2008 and bearing reference number HC 815; and further declares that the Petitioners or those whom they represent or support have suffered regulatory failure on the part of the public bodies responsible from the year 1992 onwards, but have not received compensation for the resulting losses and outrage.

The Petitioners therefore request that the House of Commons urges the Government to uphold the constitutional standing of the Parliamentary Ombudsman by complying with the findings and recommendations of her Report upon Equitable Life.

And the Petitioners remain, etc.

[P000829]

Student Visas

The Petition of residents of Cambridge (English UK & EFL Organisations),

Declares that the current review of the Tier 4 points based system for Student Visas may result in many fewer legitimate students travelling to the UK to learn English. Further declares that this will lead to the closure of many language schools and reduce the number of foreign students that go into higher education in the United Kingdom.

The Petitioners therefore request that the House of Commons urge the Government whilst recognising the importance of Immigration Control to proceed in a way that does not disadvantage English language schools

And the Petitioners remain, etc.

[P000827]

OBSERVATIONS

CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES

Badman Report (Teignbridge)

The Petition of persons resident in the Teignbridge parliamentary constituency,

Declares that they are concerned about the recommendations of the Badman Report, which suggests closer monitoring of home educators, including a compulsory annual registration scheme and right of access to people's homes for local authority officials; further declares that the Petitioners believe the recommendations are based on a review that was extremely rushed, failed to give due consideration to the evidence, failed to ensure that the data it collected were sufficiently robust, and failed to take proper account of the existing legislative framework.

The Petitioners therefore request that the House of Commons urges the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families either not to bring forward, or to withdraw, proposed legislative measures providing for tighter registration and monitoring of children educated at home in the absence of a thorough independent inquiry into the condition and future of elective home education in England; but instead to take the steps necessary to ensure that the existing Elective Home

Education Guidelines for Local Authorities are properly implemented, learning from current best practice, in all local authorities in England.

And the Petitioners remain, etc.—[Presented by Richard Younger-Ross, *Official Report*, 6 April 2010; Vol. 508, c. 29P.]

[P000819]

Observations from the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families:

DCSF commissioned the Badman review of home education in January 2009 and the report was published on 11 June 2009. As part of the review, Graham Badman took written and oral evidence from a range of individuals and organisations who responded to his public call for evidence, including home educators and local authorities. Alongside this he also considered published literature, the current legal position and guidance and the approaches taken in other countries. He was assisted by an expert reference group. I am confident that his report draws from a wide and heterogeneous evidence base.

The Children, Schools and Families Select Committee also considered the Badman report and was supportive of most of the recommendations. It agreed that a short statement of educational approach would be helpful in establishing dialogue between home educating families and local authorities; that an annual meeting between local authorities and home educators was needed; and that better support for home educators and better training for local authorities would together lead to an improvement on the current arrangements.

Our proposals to legislate for a light touch registration and monitoring scheme for home educating families have now been removed from the Children, Schools and Families Bill to enable some parts of the Bill to be passed into law before Parliament is dissolved. However, Government remain committed to introducing such a scheme and to the provision of additional support for home educating families.

High School Provision (Stoke-on-Trent South)

The Petition of residents of Stoke-on-Trent and others,

Declares that there is a desire among the people of the city of Stoke-on-Trent that there should be a High School serving the communities of Longton, Meir, Weston Coyney, Normacot, Dresden, and other areas in that vicinity.

The Petitioners therefore request that the House of Commons call upon the Government to take steps to instruct Stoke-on-Trent City Council that it may, as part of the BSF programme, have a “two-school solution” to the issue of the location of the new 20:20 Academy, thereby building a new school on the fields adjacent to Longton High School and continuing to use the Mitchell High School.

And the Petitioners remain, etc.—[Presented by Mr. Robert Ffello, *Official Report*, 30 March 2010; Vol. 508, c. 786.]

[P000801]

Observations from the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families:

It is the responsibility of the Local Authority (Stoke-on-Trent City Council) to determine the estates strategy that will be applied to the delivery of Building Schools for the Future (BSF) in Stoke-on-Trent. I understand

that the Local Authority’s vision is now well developed and ready for detailed planning to start. The Local Authority could however, choose to re-examine its estates strategy, and submit a revised Outline Business Case in the light of its re-examination. There is no barrier to the Local Authority bringing forward a revised proposal should it wish to do so; incorporating an altered number of schools or altered locations. There is a risk however that this may delay the delivery of BSF in the city, as a new Outline Business Case would need to be assessed and approved. The existing proposals would need to be placed on hold while any changes to the existing estates strategy were considered. If the delay was prolonged, the allocation of funding for this project may run beyond the deadline by which the current allocation of funding is required to be spent.

It is for the Local Authority to identify a suitable site for the Discovery Academy. I understand that the Local Authority is conducting a feasibility study on a number of sites, and is currently undertaking consultation on this matter, so the ultimate site has yet to be confirmed.

HEALTH

Diabetes Services (Croydon)

The Petition of the people of Croydon,

Declares that in Croydon there is good work being done to combat diabetes and that Croydon now needs more screening tests for diabetes; more albumin creative ratio checks and HbA1C tests for those already living with diabetes; and Government support for Croydon’s services that combat the diabetic arterial diseases that can lead to amputations; and that with the right support amputations could be cut by 30 per cent. through better total care and public health education to allow for earlier intervention to stop amputations.

The Petitioners therefore request that the House of Commons urges the Government to support Croydon’s services that combat the diabetic arterial diseases and to encourage health providers to make available more screening tests for diabetes and more albumin creative ratio checks and HbA1C tests for those already living with diabetes.

And the Petitioners remain, etc.—[Presented by Mr. Andrew Pelling, *Official Report*, 30 March 2010; Vol. 508, c. 790.]

[P000813]

Observations from the Secretary of State for Health:

The Diabetes National Service Framework highlights the importance of people with diabetes having regular checks. The annual review enables the person with diabetes and their healthcare professional to discuss the results of key tests and measurements, and for any complications to be identified as early as possible.

The Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF) rewards practices for the number of patients with diabetes who receive key care processes, including measuring blood pressure, HbA1c (blood glucose) and cholesterol.

Although the Department of Health provides strategic leadership to the NHS and social care organisations in England, it is for local NHS organisations to plan, develop and improve services for local people.

Croydon PCT considers the improvement of the overall performance on the HbA1c target to be a key priority. The PCT is also working to improve access to and consistency of specialist diabetes care during admission to hospital for other reasons.

GPs (Croydon)

The Petition of the people of Croydon,

Declares that having only three GPs on call from midnight to 8am covering 370,000 residents in Croydon is clearly inadequate and forces Croydon residents into more expensive care at A&E thus wasting public money.

The Petitioners therefore call upon the House of Commons to urge the Government to direct Croydon NHS to provide for more GP overnight coverage.

And the Petitioners remain, etc.—[Presented by Mr. Andrew Pelling, *Official Report*, 30 March 2010; Vol. 789, c. 508.]

[P000812]

Observations from the Secretary of State for Health:

PCTs have a responsibility to ensure they provide, or secure provision of, a sustainable out of hours GP service for their local population in line with National Quality Requirements.

The National Quality Requirements require providers to demonstrate their ability to meet predictable fluctuations in demand. PCTs and their providers should provide the level of resource needed to meet the National Quality Requirements.

Where a provider is failing to meet the Quality Requirements, PCTs as commissioners of the service and SHAs must act to support providers to improve their performance. NHS London will provide any support necessary to Croydon PCT if the organisation is not meeting the National Quality Requirements.

Although the Department of Health provides strategic leadership to the NHS and social care organisations in England, it is for local NHS organisations to plan, develop and improve services for local people.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Christian Values

The Petition of Premier Christian Radio and others,

Declares that 20,000 Christians have stated, in a campaign organised by Premier Christian Radio, that they intend to vote in the forthcoming election in line with Christian values; and that the Petitioners believe that business as usual has damaged the credibility of Parliament and is unacceptable.

The Petitioners therefore request that the House of Commons take all steps necessary to restore the credibility of Parliament.

And the Petitioners remain, etc.—[Presented by Sir Alan Beith, *Official Report*, 7 April 2010; Vol. 508, c. 1145.]

[P000821]

Observations from the Leader of the House of Commons:

The Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority was established in July 2009 by the Parliamentary Standards Act to ensure the allowances system is governed by independent external regulation. The Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority announced the new scheme for MPs' allowances on 29 March; the scheme can be viewed at: <http://www.parliamentarystandards.org.uk/>. The new scheme will be in place for the beginning of the next Parliament.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 8 April 2010

TRANSPORT

Bus Services

Sir John Butterfill: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Transport when he plans to regulate audio-visual information systems on local bus services, as set out in the Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations 2000. [325887]

Mr. Khan: Widespread implementation of audio visual systems presents some significant technological challenges. The Department for Transport is conducting research to assess whether these challenges can be overcome before it considers whether to make amendments to the Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations 2000 to include a requirement for such systems to be fitted to buses. The research has brought together a cross-section of stakeholders, including Guide Dogs, Royal National Institute of Blind People and Royal National Institute for Deaf People. The project is scheduled to report in summer 2010.

Bus Services: Concessions

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Transport what recent discussions his Department has had with (a) Transport for London, (b) local authorities in England and (c) other transport authorities on the time taken to process (i) applications for and (ii) renewals of concessionary travel passes to those aged over 60 years; and if he will make a statement. [325872]

Mr. Khan: The Department for Transport is not responsible for issuing passes and so does not hold information on the time taken for Travel Concession Authorities (TCAs) to process applications and renewals of concessionary travel passes. The Department has not had any recent discussions with Transport for London, local authorities in England or other TCAs on this issue.

TCAs are responsible for issuing concessionary travel passes to their residents. The maximum life of a pass is five years from the date of issue but there is no recommended minimum life. TCAs are therefore free to set the expiry dates, and renewal arrangements.

All English concessionary travel passes must now conform to a standard design and be ITSO smartcards. London was given until 1 April 2010 to meet these requirements which is why they have recently renewed all of the Freedom Passes in the capital.

The Department would expect TCAs to process routine applications for concessionary travel passes within a reasonable time frame although it is understandable that a bulk reissue of all passes may take slightly longer.

Railways: Construction

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Transport through which parliamentary constituencies (a) in the present Parliament and (b) in the next Parliament the Government's preferred route for High Speed Two will pass. [325255]

Chris Mole [holding answer 30 March 2010]: HS2 Ltd.'s preferred route option passes through the following parliamentary constituencies in force in the present Parliament:

Aylesbury
Banbury
Beaconsfield
Birmingham Erdington
Birmingham Hodge Hill
Birmingham Ladywood
Brent East
Brent South
Buckingham
Chesham and Amersham
Daventry
Ealing, Acton and Shepherds Bush
Ealing North
Holborn and St. Pancras
Hampstead and Highgate
Lichfield
Meriden
North Warwickshire
Regents Park and Kensington North
Rugby and Kenilworth
Ruislip Northwood
South West Hertfordshire
Stratford-upon-Avon
Sutton Coldfield
Tamworth
Warwick and Leamington.

HS2 Ltd.'s preferred route option passes through the following parliamentary constituencies that will come into force in the next Parliament:

Aylesbury
Banbury
Beaconsfield
Birmingham, Erdington
Birmingham, Hodge Hill
Birmingham, Ladywood
Brent North
Buckingham
Chesham and Amersham
Ealing Central and Acton
Ealing North
Hammersmith
Hampstead and Kilburn
Holborn and St. Pancras
Kenilworth and Southam
Kensington
Lichfield
Meriden
North Warwickshire

Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner
 South Northamptonshire
 South West Hertfordshire
 Sutton Coldfield
 Tamworth
 Uxbridge and South Ruislip
 Westminster North.

Roads

Mr. Amess: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Transport if he will bring forward proposals to establish (a) standards and (b) targets to encourage the adoption of unadopted alleyways; and if he will make a statement. [325874]

Mr. Khan: Under the Highways Act 1980, local highway authorities may adopt public rights of way that they are not currently responsible for maintaining. Such rights of way may include some types of alleyway or other local access routes. It is for individual authorities to decide whether they wish to adopt an alleyway or not, taking account of local priorities and standards.

The Government have no plans to set national standards or targets for the adoption of unadopted alleyways or other rights of way, as we believe this remains a matter for local consideration and decision.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Transport under what legislation a local authority can adopt an alleyway; and if he will make a statement. [325876]

Mr. Khan: Under the Highways Act 1980, local highway authorities may adopt public rights of way that they are not currently responsible for maintaining. Such rights of way may include some types of alleyway or other local access routes. It is for individual authorities to decide whether they wish to adopt an alleyway or not, taking account of local priorities and standards.

WOMEN AND EQUALITY

Equality and Human Rights Commission

Robert Neill: To ask the Minister for Women and Equality if she will place in the Library a copy of the handbook for staff of the Equality and Human Rights Commission. [323182]

Maria Eagle: The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is independent and manages its own affairs; the following is based on information it has provided.

The Commission is in the later stages of developing a full range of human resource policies. The policy is undergoing final consultation with the trade unions and is expected to be completed at the end of April 2010. Copies will be placed in the Library once finalised.

JUSTICE

Departmental Pay

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Justice how much has been paid in reimbursable expenses to special advisers in his Department since April 2008. [325101]

Mr. Straw: Since 1 April 2008 a total of £1,102.65 has been claimed in reimbursable expenses by the Department's special advisers.

Magistrates: Age

Jacqui Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Justice for what reasons upper age limits for magistrates are in place. [325672]

Mr. Wills: Magistrates retire on reaching the age of 70, as this is the statutory retirement age for judicial office holders.

It is vital the magistrates reflect the diverse communities they serve. Over 80 per cent. of magistrates are over 50 and the average age is 57. The contribution of magistrates of all ages is invaluable. However, increasing the retirement age for magistrates would take them out of line with other judicial offices and hinder work to redress the age imbalance by reducing the number of available vacancies.

Jacqui Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Justice whether he has made a recent assessment of the merits of (a) appointing magistrates over the age of 65 and (b) employing magistrates over the age of 70 years. [325673]

Mr. Wills: No recent assessment has been made on the merits of appointing magistrates over the age of 65 or employing magistrates over the age of 70 and there are no plans to undertake one for the reasons set out below. Magistrates retire on reaching the age of 70 as this is the statutory retirement age for judicial office holders.

Magistrates sit in a part-time capacity and generally have little previous experience of the court system, so will require training, mentoring and the opportunity to gain experience. The Lord Chancellor expects that part-time magistrates will be able to sit for at least five years before retirement. He will, therefore, not normally appoint anyone over the age of 65.

It is vital the magistrates reflect the diverse communities they serve. Over 80 per cent. of magistrates are over 50 and the average age is 57. The contribution of magistrates of all ages is invaluable. However, increasing the retirement age of magistrates, as set out in statute under Section 13 of the Courts Act 2003, would take them out of line with other judicial offices and hinder work to redress the age imbalance by reducing the number of available vacancies.

Prisoners: Ethnic Groups

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for Justice how many prisoners there were of each ethnicity in each (a) prison and (b) young offender institution in England and Wales as at 1 March 2010. [325842]

Maria Eagle: The following table shows the numbers of prisoners by each ethnicity in all prison establishments including young offender institutions, which are indicated, in England and Wales as at 30 June 2009 (latest published figures).

These figures 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.

Prison population of England and Wales by ethnic group as at 30 June 2009

	<i>White</i>	<i>Mixed</i>	<i>Asian or Asian British</i>	<i>Black or Black British</i>	<i>Chinese or Other</i>	<i>Not stated</i>	<i>Unrecorded</i>	<i>1991 census codes</i>	<i>Total</i>
All	60,770	2,852	6,011	12,017	1,412	159	14	219	83,454
Altcourse	1,160	21	58	49	18	2	0	6	1,314
Askham Grange	101	4	9	6	2	0	0	0	122
Acklington	890	9	27	10	4	0	0	0	940
Albany	461	6	16	68	0	1	1	1	554
Ashfield ¹	239	30	16	50	0	1	0	2	338
Ashwell	141	4	26	24	4	0	0	0	200
Aylesbury ¹	209	34	29	154	4	1	0	1	433
Belmarsh	508	36	73	252	25	0	0	3	897
Buckley Hall	304	7	34	30	1	1	0	0	377
Blundeston	303	22	42	139	6	1	0	1	514
Bedford	309	29	48	70	5	0	0	0	461
Blantyre House	86	1	2	25	2	1	0	1	118
Bristol	502	19	16	56	11	1	0	2	607
Birmingham	908	68	181	263	21	2	0	1	1,444
Bullingdon	769	47	90	147	21	3	0	4	1,081
Brinsford ¹	340	32	67	77	5	0	0	0	521
Bullwood Hall	51	4	49	73	52	0	0	0	229
Brixton	346	30	71	331	13	0	0	1	792
Bronze field	308	20	13	80	16	2	0	0	439
Chelmsford	497	22	48	113	11	0	0	1	692
Cardiff	705	24	33	31	17	5	0	5	819
Camp Hill	371	22	32	133	7	1	0	0	566
Cookham Wood ¹	63	4	0	18	1	0	0	0	86
Coldingley	317	17	27	138	4	3	0	0	506
Castington ¹	343	5	6	8	6	0	0	3	371
Channings Wood	643	11	15	51	2	0	0	0	722
Canterbury	84	6	55	96	53	0	0	0	295
Dartmoor	526	15	18	56	2	3	0	0	620
Dovegate	590	29	67	153	6	3	0	0	848
Drake Hall	181	12	5	57	6	0	0	0	261
Durham	863	8	17	19	47	0	0	4	958
Doncaster	900	21	68	74	16	2	0	22	1,103
Dorchester	196	3	6	15	3	0	0	3	226
Deerbolt ¹	395	11	14	11	0	0	0	1	431
Dover	22	0	78	130	80	0	0	0	310
Downview	176	20	16	115	10	3	0	0	340
Erlestoke	364	13	17	70	2	1	0	1	468
Sheppey Cluster (Standford Hill)	304	14	33	86	8	2	0	4	450
East Sutton Park	43	7	3	31	4	0	0	0	88
Everthorpe	582	14	48	28	1	0	0	1	674
Eastwood Park	250	17	14	27	10	0	0	0	317
Exeter	502	6	5	15	0	1	0	3	531
Sheppey Cluster (Elmley)	788	21	38	97	8	1	0	1	954
Forest Bank	911	25	110	87	10	0	0	1	1,144
Ford	355	15	51	102	4	1	0	1	529
Foston Hall	190	8	6	11	2	0	0	0	217
Frankland	627	19	23	54	7	4	0	0	734
Feltham ¹	188	75	61	322	22	7	0	5	680
Full Sutton	421	26	41	75	3	11	0	0	577
Featherstone	470	28	77	103	4	0	0	0	682
Garth	679	19	58	52	9	0	0	0	817
Gloucester	238	7	12	24	2	0	0	4	287
Guys Marsh	435	22	17	95	4	0	0	1	575

Prison population of England and Wales by ethnic group as at 30 June 2009

	White	Mixed	Asian or Asian British	Black or Black British	Chinese or Other	Not stated	Unrecorded	1991 census codes	Total
Grendon/Spring Hill	368	27	50	68	0	2	0	0	516
Glen Parva ¹	576	69	39	95	10	1	0	4	793
Gartree	513	16	54	80	11	3	0	1	678
Hollesley Bay	238	9	17	67	4	0	0	0	334
Huntercombe ¹	111	26	26	93	3	0	0	1	260
Moorland Open	185	9	31	13	3	0	0	0	241
Hewell	998	39	121	165	20	1	0	0	1,344
Holme House	884	7	29	19	7	0	0	2	948
Hindley ¹	250	12	12	10	0	0	0	5	289
Hull	934	14	33	18	13	0	0	6	1,018
High Down	659	36	75	278	17	1	0	6	1,073
Highpoint	514	38	79	276	18	3	0	1	930
Haslar	31	4	49	49	18	1	0	0	151
Haverigg	558	10	41	18	2	1	0	0	629
Holloway	259	24	14	106	23	0	0	2	428
Kirkham	489	14	43	19	1	1	0	1	568
Kennet	321	3	1	10	1	0	0	0	336
Kirklevington Grange	216	4	40	9	1	0	0	0	270
Lancaster	208	2	14	5	0	0	0	0	228
Leicester	240	12	62	33	7	0	0	2	357
Leeds	897	38	131	58	22	1	9	1	1,157
Lancaster Farms ¹	408	29	20	29	1	0	0	6	493
Lowdham Grange	445	32	69	122	15	2	0	0	685
Lindholme	736	38	144	159	35	2	0	0	1,114
Lincoln	609	8	8	24	18	0	0	2	670
Long Lartin	327	23	69	108	6	3	0	1	537
Latchmere House	87	12	23	68	3	0	0	0	193
Low Newton	294	3	1	9	4	0	0	0	311
Liverpool	1,101	25	82	92	35	0	0	2	1,337
Littlehey	526	27	52	97	6	3	0	0	711
Lewes	567	11	17	63	5	0	0	1	664
Leyhill	387	12	37	44	7	0	0	5	492
Moorland Closed	599	37	53	73	5	3	0	0	771
Morton Hall	132	18	8	154	16	1	0	0	328
Manchester	916	38	120	123	18	1	0	10	1,226
Maidstone	409	8	35	125	9	2	0	1	590
Mount (The)	343	46	87	257	24	6	0	0	763
Edmunds Hill	215	14	42	87	11	0	0	0	369
New Hall	326	9	8	14	13	0	0	0	370
Nottingham	393	20	48	69	9	1	0	6	545
Northallerton ¹	207	8	11	5	1	0	0	0	232
North Sea Camp	250	10	24	18	2	0	0	0	303
Norwich	410	8	17	56	8	0	1	2	502
Onley	491	39	61	96	2	3	0	0	692
Peterborough	740	33	50	101	25	1	0	1	950
Portland ¹	316	35	29	161	7	1	0	3	553
Parkhurst	346	16	31	86	5	6	0	2	491
Preston	659	9	57	11	7	0	0	3	746
Parc	1,040	27	29	56	9	1	0	13	1,175
Kingston (Portsmouth)	139	7	12	16	1	0	0	0	175
Pentonville	507	47	146	365	34	0	1	7	1,105
Rochester ¹	340	40	49	210	9	0	0	0	647
Reading ¹	188	17	14	15	6	0	0	2	242
Rye Hill	406	24	59	153	8	2	0	1	654
Ranby	749	37	108	149	10	0	0	1	1,054
Risley	875	24	90	78	11	1	0	1	1,080
Send	209	8	12	42	7	0	0	0	278
Stafford	572	23	73	58	6	3	0	0	735

Prison population of England and Wales by ethnic group as at 30 June 2009

	White	Mixed	Asian or Asian British	Black or Black British	Chinese or Other	Not stated	Unrecorded	1991 census codes	Total
Stoke Heath ¹	460	28	40	50	1	1	0	0	580
Stocken	617	33	63	85	8	1	0	0	807
Sheppey Cluster (Swaleside)	463	29	74	246	9	3	0	2	826
Shepton Mallet	167	1	1	17	1	1	0	0	188
Swinfen Hall ¹	406	56	43	105	3	1	0	1	616
Styal	381	8	12	28	19	1	0	1	450
Sudbury	379	21	81	85	2	3	0	0	570
Swansea	368	5	11	10	3	0	0	1	398
Shrewsbury	250	2	14	19	5	0	0	0	290
Thorn Cross ¹	243	13	29	12	1	0	0	3	301
Usk/Prescoed	392	3	9	20	2	1	0	0	426
Verne (The)	235	11	39	287	17	0	0	0	589
Wellingborough	369	28	47	172	8	3	0	0	628
Winchester	588	21	24	40	14	0	1	1	689
Wakefield	588	23	40	70	6	9	0	0	735
Wealstun	394	20	64	37	2	1	0	0	517
Woodhill	581	46	55	104	14	1	1	8	809
Warren Hill ¹	125	13	9	40	2	0	0	0	188
Wayland	703	39	50	189	18	0	0	1	1,000
Wymott	979	18	70	53	6	1	0	0	1,127
Werrington ¹	93	14	10	12	1	0	0	0	130
Wolds	338	11	18	20	0	0	0	0	388
Whitemoor	231	26	46	129	8	3	0	1	444
Wormwood Scrubs	606	62	191	399	30	1	1	3	1,293
Whatton	730	6	54	45	3	2	0	0	840
Wandsworth	947	58	158	435	64	6	0	7	1,675
Wetherby ¹	299	24	15	14	5	0	0	3	360

¹ Establishments which serve as Young Offender Institutions

CABINET OFFICE

10 Downing Street

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many times (a) Mr Derek Draper and (b) Mr Charlie Whelan has visited the Cabinet Office/Downing Street complex since October 2009. [322911]

Tessa Jowell: I have nothing further to add to the answer I gave to my right hon. Friend on 4 February 2010, *Official Report*, column 508W.

10 Downing Street: Security

Mr. Maude: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what criteria are used to determine the granting of a Downing Street pass; and how many such passes there are. [318249]

Angela E. Smith: Passes for access to 10, 11 and 12 Downing Street are issued to staff who work in the building and to individuals who require access for business purposes.

Admiralty House

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what the cost to the public purse of (a) rent, (b) utility bills, (c) council tax payments and (d) other running costs for each Ministerial residence in Admiralty House was in each of the last three years. [324725]

Angela E. Smith: Admiralty House is held freehold and no rent is payable. Along with other shared costs, utility costs are calculated on the basis of a share of those for Admiralty House as a whole and are not held separately for individual flats. One flat has been vacant since 27 July 2009; another vacant since 27 June 2007; and another vacant since 30 June 2006. All the flats are in council tax band H.

Business: Essex

Bob Spink: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many businesses were registered for value added tax in (a) Essex and (b) Castle Point in each year since 1997. [325846]

Angela E. Smith: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the UK Statistics Authority. I have asked the Authority to reply.

Letter from Stephen Penneck, dated April 2010:

As Director General for the Office for National Statistics, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning how many businesses were registered for value added tax in (a) Essex and (b) Castle Point in each year since 1997. [325846]

Annual statistics on counts of VAT and/or PAYE based enterprises are available for 2009 from the ONS release UK Business: Activity, Size and Location at

www.statistics.gov.uk.

The table below is a subset of this, containing just VAT based enterprise statistics and shows the count of VAT based Enterprises in Essex County and Castle Point for each year from 1997.

*Count of VAT based Enterprises in Essex county and Castle Point
from 1997-2009*

	<i>Essex county</i>	<i>Castle Point</i>
1997	42,065	n/a
1998	43,625	2,105
1999	37,705	2,130
2000	38,655	2,160
2001	39,100	2,165
2002	39,395	2,190
2003	39,705	2,205
2004	39,435	2,160
2005	40,090	2,160
2006	40,505	2,215
2007	41,065	2,245
2008	42,475	2,295
2009	42,390	2,235

Central Office of Information: Advertising

Mr. Maude: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how much the Central Office of Information's marketing, advertising and public relations expenditure (*a*) was in 2008-09 and (*b*) is planned to be in 2009-10; and how much has been spent in 2009-10 to date. [320730]

Tessa Jowell: I have asked the chief executive of the Central Office of Information to write to the right hon. Member.

Letter from Mark Lund, dated 7 April 2010:

As Chief Executive of the Central Office of Information (COI), I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question [320730] asking for COI expenditure on marketing, advertising and public relations from 2008-2010.

The Central Office of Information's marketing, advertising and public relations expenditure in 2008-09 was £380.8m.

The COI cannot provide planned expenditure for 2009-10 as it is determined by the requirements of our Client Departments.

Expenditure to date for 2009-10 can only be provided once the annual accounts have been fully audited.

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how much was spent by the Central Office of Information on advertising in the first three quarters of financial year 2009-10. [321715]

Tessa Jowell: I have asked the chief executive of the Central Office of Information to write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Mark Lund, dated 7 April 2010:

As Chief Executive of the Central Office of Information (COI), I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question [321715] asking how much was spent by the Central Office of Information on advertising in the first three quarters of financial year 2009-10.

Expenditure to date for 2009-10 can only be provided once the annual accounts have been fully audited.

Jenny Willott: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how much the Central Office of Information has spent on contracts with advertising agencies with registered offices outside the UK in each of the last three years; with which agencies the contracts were with; in which centres the registered offices were located; and if she will make a statement. [325760]

Tessa Jowell: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Central Office of Information: Marketing

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office for what reason promotional stress items are included in the Central Office of Information contract referred to in Contract Notice 2009/S 79-113888; what bodies have purchased promotional stress items through the Central Office of Information in the last three years; and at what cost such items were purchased. [322873]

Tessa Jowell: I have asked the Chief Executive of the Central Office of Information to write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Mark Lund, dated 7 April 2010:

As Chief Executive of the Central Office of Information (COI), I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question [322873] regarding the Merchandising and Promotional Framework.

No supplier was appointed against Lot1: Label 23: Promotional Stress items print and production of stress items on the merchandising and promotional items framework and therefore no expenditure has been made.

Departmental Internet

Mr. Maude: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office whether the Downing Street Twitter service will be terminated during the general election period. [320732]

Tessa Jowell: Yes.

Departmental Lost Property

John Mason: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what property has been recorded as (*a*) lost and (*b*) stolen from her Department in the last 12 months; and what estimate has been made of the cost of the replacement of that property. [322085]

Angela E. Smith: In the last 12 months the Cabinet Office has recorded six departmental assets as being reported as missing or stolen.

The six items are:

- two mobile phones;
- one Blackberry charger;
- one keyboard;
- an electric heater; and
- an assortment of laptop accessories.

The total cost of replacement is £772.81.

Departmental Official Hospitality

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what the five most expensive hospitality events hosted by her Department and its agency were in the last three years; and what the (*a*) cost and (*b*) purpose was of each. [324655]

Angela E. Smith: Events hosted by the Cabinet Office include official dinners and events for foreign leaders and other dignitaries, receptions for business leaders, community and charity representatives and sportsmen and women.

Information on official and charity receptions held at 10 Downing Street is published by means of an annual list as soon as it is ready at the end of the financial year.

Departmental Responsibilities

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what plans she has to establish a single management team and united press office for 10 Downing Street and the Cabinet Office. [323547]

Tessa Jowell: Management of the three core communications functions in the Prime Minister's Office and the Cabinet Office—press office, strategic communications and digital communications—is being merged into one senior team. This will improve co-ordination and efficiency.

The new management team was agreed in March 2010 and a revised staff structure across the core communications functions will be in place by 1 July.

Government Departments: Internet

Mr. Maude: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office pursuant to the answer of 27 January 2010, *Official Report*, column 969W, on the Government departments: internet, (1) if she will list the website address of each of the 479 websites that were committed to be closed but have not yet been closed; [318307]

(2) if she will place in the Library a copy of the full Website Review report summary, listing the (a) operational and to be continued, (b) closed and (c) operational but due for closure websites in the case of each public authority for which records are held. [318308]

Tessa Jowell: I have asked the Chief Executive of the Central Office of Information to write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Mark Lund, dated 7 April 2010:

As Chief Executive of the Central Office of Information (COI), I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question [318307/8] on Government Websites.

A Website Review report summary itemising what is requested will be placed in the Library in April 2010 updating the previous version placed in February 2010.

Government Departments: Private Detectives

Mr. Maude: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office pursuant to the answer of 5 February 2010, *Official Report*, column 602W, on Government departments: private detectives, which departments have commissioned individuals from the panel of independent investigators in the last 24 months. [320906]

Tessa Jowell: It has been the policy of successive Governments not to reveal details of specific security matters.

Mr. Maude: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office pursuant to the answer of 5 February 2010, *Official Report*, column 602W, on Government departments: private detectives, how much expenditure has been incurred on commissioning individuals from the panel of independent investigators in the last 24 months. [320907]

Tessa Jowell: Costs for panel members are incurred by individual Departments. This information is not held centrally.

Mr. Maude: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office pursuant to the answer of 5 February 2010, *Official Report*, column 602W, on Government departments: private detectives, on how many occasions individuals from the panel of independent investigators have been commissioned to undertake investigations in the last 24 months. [320908]

Tessa Jowell: It has been the policy of successive Governments not to reveal details of specific security matters.

Ministerial Policy Advisers

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office with reference to the written ministerial statement of 16 July 2009, *Official Report*, column 73W, on special advisers, what criteria are used to determine the pay band of a special adviser. [322882]

Tessa Jowell: The criteria used to determine the pay band of a special adviser are underpinned by a tailored job evaluation scheme.

Music: Licensing Laws

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office pursuant to the answer to the right hon. Member for Horsham of 10 March 2010, *Official Report*, column 280, on music licensing levies, what the statutory basis is which requires the arrangements for music licensing levies to apply to church halls. [323541]

Mr. Lammy: I have been asked to reply.

In the UK, the statutory basis for the licensing of music, sound recordings and performances, including in church halls, is set out in the Copyright Designs and Patents Act (CDPA) 1988 (as amended).

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office pursuant to the answer to the right hon. Member for Horsham of 10 March 2010, *Official Report*, column 280, on music licensing levies, what the timetable is for discussions with the voluntary sector and the subsequent laying and ratification of secondary legislation. [323543]

Mr. Lammy: I have been asked to reply.

Discussions between PPL and the third sector to find the best possible music licensing system are ongoing, initiated by my ministerial colleagues at the Office for the Third Sector. A number of issues remain to be resolved, and in the circumstances it has not been possible to introduce the planned legislative changes before the dissolution of Parliament prior to the forthcoming general election.

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office pursuant to the answer to the right hon. Member for Horsham of 10 March 2010, *Official Report*, column 280, on music licensing levies, if she will publish the evidential basis for changes to the original estimate of £20 million cost to the voluntary sector. [323544]

Mr. Lammy: I have been asked to reply.

The impact assessment estimated the average annual cost to the third sector of the repeal of the current exemptions contained in s. 67 and 72(1B)(a) of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 to be £18.7 million per year for the purchasing of Phonographic Performance Limited (PPL) licences. This has not been changed. Full details of the impact assessment were published and are available here:

<http://www.ipo.gov.uk/govresponse-musiclicensing.pdf>

The impact assessment figure of £18.7 million was based on a flat fee of £81 per annum for each music user. PPL have now indicated that they charge most commercial organisations like hairdressers, pubs and offices between £50 and £120 per year and it is likely that most third sector organisations would be charged at the lower end of this range. This would reduce the original estimate of £18.7 million. But the actual cost of repeal would be dependent on the tariffs agreed through negotiation between PPL and the third sector organisations.

National Identity Register

Grant Shapps: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office whether the proposed citizen's unique identifier will be linked to the National Identity Register. [324815]

Tessa Jowell: The Prime Minister gave a speech on 22 March 2010 on Building Britain's Digital Future, in which he outlined the need to make it easy and convenient for the citizen to prove identity when using online services. The Digital Delivery Programme is working with others across Government, including the National Identity Service, on how this can be achieved.

The purpose of the National Identity Service is to ensure that citizens can prove their identity in a secure and convenient way when they need to in a range of different situations. It can play an important part in achieving better access to services online. However, no final decisions on how a unique citizen identifier might be reflected on the National Identity Register have yet been taken.

Official Residences

Mr. Maude: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Brentwood and Ongar of 13 January 2010, *Official Report*, column 1002W, on official residences: repairs and maintenance, and with reference to the Cabinet Office's Annual Report and Accounts 2008-09, what the monetary value was of the fixed asset expenditure in relation to Crown Proposal 08/00696/1884; and which suppliers were commissioned to undertake the work. [318311]

Angela E. Smith: I have nothing further to add to the answer given on 13 January 2010, *Official Report*, column 1003W.

Social Investment Wholesale Bank

Mark Lazarowicz: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what timetable has been set for the launch of the Social Investment Wholesale Bank announced in Budget 2010. [325809]

Angela E. Smith: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Statistics

Mr. Maude: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what research has been undertaken into the levels of public confidence in Government statistics in the last 10 years. [318124]

Angela E. Smith: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the UK Statistics Authority. I have asked the Authority to reply.

Letter from Sir Michael Scholar KCB, dated April 2010:

As Chair of the UK Statistics Authority, I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking what research has been undertaken into the levels of public confidence in Government statistics in the last 10 years [318124].

There have been three surveys of public confidence in official statistics undertaken in the last ten years, in 2004, 2005 and 2007. Detailed analyses of the results of these surveys are available at the following links:

2004 survey:

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/data/public_confidence/downloads/BritishOfficialStat.pdf

2005 survey:

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/data/public_confidence/downloads/OmnibusMarch05.pdf

2007 survey:

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/data/public_confidence/downloads/pcos_2007.pdf

Additional information about public confidence in official statistics and the surveys is available at the following link:

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=13967>

The UK Statistics Authority expects to publish the results of an updated survey of public confidence in official statistics, and related analysis, later this year.

BUSINESS, INNOVATION AND SKILLS

Business: Credit

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills what steps his Department has taken to increase the level of access to credit for small businesses in (a) Coventry and (b) the West Midlands in the last two years. [325767]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Government have introduced a range of measures to help businesses through the global recession and to promote growth during the recovery. These include:

The Enterprise Finance Guarantee (EFG)

This encourages additional bank lending to creditworthy SMEs with viable business cases who do not have sufficient security available to support their borrowing request on a normal commercial basis. Over £1.28 billion of eligible EFG applications from over 11,400 firms have been granted, are being processed or assessed, and over 8,940 businesses have been offered loans totalling nearly £910 million.

Set out in the following table is the information for the Enterprise Finance Guarantee for Coventry and the west midlands.

	<i>Number of loans offered</i>	<i>Number of loans drawn</i>	<i>Value of loans offered (£ million)</i>	<i>Value of loans drawn</i>
Coventry	26	19	4.07	2.43
West midlands	812	687	83.07	67.08

The Capital for Enterprise Fund

The fund supports viable businesses with equity or mezzanine investment aimed at releasing and sustaining growth, investing between £200,000 and £2 million where the business has exhausted its borrowing capacity with lenders.

To date the appointed fund managers have made offers totalling £98.7 million to 66 businesses, including three in the west midlands worth £4.8 million. 26 businesses have received investment, including one in the west midlands with a value of £2 million. I am not providing this breakdown by parliamentary constituency as this could make it possible to identify the individual companies that have received, or are under consideration for, support.

The fund is now closed to new applications, although businesses are still receiving investments from existing applications.

HM Revenue and Customs' Business Support Service

This reviews payment of businesses tax liabilities and tries to come to an arrangement that allows companies to spread payments to help them over temporary difficulties. So far, there have been agreements made with over 200,000 businesses to spread more than £2.5 billion in business taxes. Changes to tax rules allow loss-making businesses to temporarily extend trading loss carry-back from one to three years for losses up to £50,000. In the west midlands, 27,800 arrangements have been made to defer payments of £480 million.

Business Link Health Checks

These provide a free review of businesses with a professional business adviser for hands-on advice and help accessing the full range of Government help. To the end of February 2009, over 128,000 businesses benefitted from a health check, including 15,487 businesses in the west midlands.

Prompt Payment

In the financial year 2009-10, central Government expects to pay an additional £40 billion to suppliers within 10 days (a target set in October 2008) compared to 2008-09, and 19 out of 20 central Government invoices are now paid in 10 days.

The Working Capital Scheme (WCS)

WCS has provided guarantees to two banks on portfolios of short-term loans with good credit risk in order to release regulatory capital to enable those banks to increase lending to businesses. The two banks with WCS guarantees, Lloyds Banking Group and Royal Bank of Scotland, have made lending commitments of £39 billion.

Public Borrowing Review 2009 announced that as the broader Asset Protection Scheme now provides banks with considerably greater capital release, so new portfolios will not be guaranteed under the WCS although existing

portfolio guarantees will remain until March 2011. Companies' access to the WCS was through the banks; they did not apply for it directly.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills what recent discussions he has had with representatives of small and medium-sized enterprises located in Coventry on their access to credit. [325768]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Access to credit is a key issue as UK economy moves to recovery. Ministers are in regular contact with small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and access to credit continues to be a major topic for discussion. In particular, the Minister for Trade, Investment and Small Business visited Coventry, Birmingham and Worcester in 2009, where he participated in Q and A sessions with businesses of all sizes on a variety of topics. He also attended the 2010 annual FSB conference where access to credit featured in the discussion with the audience.

The Minister for the West Midlands has regularly discussed the issue in his meetings with local business organisations and local business people and it was featured in his speech to the West Midlands Economic Forum which took place in February in Coventry.

Access to finance for SMEs was recognised in Budget 2010 where the Government, building on their support to business through the downturn such as the Enterprise Finance Guarantee scheme, announced measures such as the launch of the UK Finance for Growth, a body responsible for overseeing the Government stock of over £4 billion of SM finance products, including the Growth Capital Fund (announced in PBR 2009), for which £200 million of cornerstone investment has been raised so far from private sector and Government.

In addition, the UK is continuing to work with the EU's financial institutions (the European Investment Bank and the European Investment Fund) to stimulate more venture capital and loan support for SMEs. Furthermore, the Budget announced the Small Business Credit Adjudicator (SBCA). Once established the SBCA will hear cases, referred by Business Link's Financial Intermediary Service (FIS), where a business may have been unfairly denied credit.

To advise on the role and responsibilities of the SBCA the Government have launched a new task force. Enterprise Champion Lord Sugar, outgoing Federation of Small Businesses chairman John Wright and former Lloyd's TSB deputy chief executive Mike Fairey will comprise the task force. They will build on the work Lord Sugar has been doing with small businesses, FIS and the banks.

Business: Denton

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills how many businesses in Denton and Reddish constituency have received support from his Department since 2008. [325853]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Since April 2008, 1,847 businesses in Denton and Reddish have received business advice through Business Link North West. Five businesses have received grants or loans totalling £336,669.

Business: Government Assistance

Willie Rennie: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the small firms loan guarantee scheme. [325138]

Ms Rosie Winterton [*holding answer 30 March 2010*]: In January 2010, the Department published the Economic Evaluation of the Small Firms Loan Guarantee undertaken by the Institute of Employment Studies.

This study rigorously tested the effectiveness and value for money of SFLG and concludes that the basic rationale for SFLG is supported and that it appears to be a cost-effective way of supporting additional economic activity in the small business sector.

More specifically, the majority (81 per cent.) of SFLG recipients receive SFLG on their first loan application. For a majority (76 per cent.) of SFLG recipients, there were no alternative sources of finance available to them.

This is confirmed by 79 per cent. of SFLG recipients reporting the bank would probably, or definitely not, have given them a loan without SFLG. Just under half (49 per cent.) of businesses would definitely, or probably not, have proceeded with their project without SFLG.

A growth in sales, jobs and exports is attributable to SFLG supported lending within the first two years of the loan. The 3,100 SFLG supported businesses in 2006 have created between 3,550 to 6,340 additional jobs in the two years following receipt of the loan, created between £75 million and £150 million additional sales over two years; and were responsible for £33 million exports per annum.

Just within two years of receiving the loan the benefits of the scheme are outweighing the costs.

SFLG appears to be a particularly cost effective way of creating additional employment.

The full report is available via the BIS website:

<http://www.bis.gov.uk/files/file54112.doc>

The Small Firms Loan Guarantee was replaced by the Enterprise Finance Guarantee in January 2009.

Willie Rennie: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills what discussions his Department has had with Royal Bank of Scotland on its administration of the small firms loan guarantee scheme. [325139]

Ian Lucas [*holding answer 30 March 2010*]: The Small Firms Loan Guarantee (SFLG) was replaced by the Enterprise Finance Guarantee (EFG) in January 2009.

Ministers have regular discussions with representatives of each of the main UK lenders regarding a range of SME finance issues including via the Small Business Finance Forum.

Capital for Enterprise Ltd. (CfEL), which is responsible for operational delivery of SFLG and EFG on behalf of the Department, maintains a regular dialogue with each of the accredited lenders specifically regarding their administration of these schemes.

Richard Burden: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills how many (a) small, (b) medium-sized and (c) large businesses in Birmingham have received assistance under (i) the Working Capital Scheme, (ii) the Enterprise Finance Guarantee scheme,

(iii) the Capital Enterprise Scheme, (iv) the Regional Loan Transition Fund and (v) the Phoenix Fund since each scheme's inception. [325338]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information is as follows:

(i) The Working Capital Scheme (WCS) has provided guarantees to two banks on portfolios of short-term loans with good credit risk in order to release regulatory capital to enable those banks to increase lending to businesses. The two banks with WCS guarantees, Lloyds Banking Group and Royal Bank of Scotland, have made lending commitments of £39 billion.

Public Borrowing Review 2009 announced that as the broader Asset Protection Scheme now provides banks with considerably greater capital release, so new portfolios will not be guaranteed under the WCS although existing portfolio guarantees will remain until March 2011. Companies' access to the WCS was through the banks; they did not apply for it directly.

(ii) The Enterprise Finance Guarantee is open to SMEs with a turnover of up to £25 million, rather than large businesses. A total of 142 loans worth £16.16 million have been offered to Birmingham businesses under the Enterprise Finance Guarantee, of which 118 loans worth £11.40 million have been drawn down. Loans under the scheme are available to firms with a turnover of up to £25 million and are not therefore available to large businesses.

(iii) The Capital for Enterprise fund provides support to SMEs rather than large businesses. To date the appointed fund managers have made offers totalling £98.7 million to 66 businesses, including three in the West Midlands worth £4.8 million. 26 businesses have received investment, including one in the West Midlands with a value of £2 million. I am not providing this breakdown by parliamentary constituency as this could make it possible to identify the individual companies that have received, or are under consideration, for support.

(iv) The Advantage Transition Bridge Fund (ATBF) provided loans worth £2,677,000 to 18 companies in Birmingham. Information breaking these loans down by the size of the businesses is not available. The fund closed for new loans from 1 December 2009.

(v) During the Phoenix fund (which ran from 2002-06) Government provided £1.886 million to Community Development Finance Institutes (CDFIs) operating mainly in the Birmingham area. This capital was onward lent to 130 start up and existing businesses (the vast majority of these will have been in the Birmingham area).

Since the end of the Phoenix fund Advantage West Midlands has provided support to CDFIs and other lenders under the Advantage Small Loan scheme and more recently the Small Business Loan programme. Both have drawn on ERDF funding as well as funds from AWM and local authorities. Between 1 April 2007 and 31 December 2009 Aston Reinvestment Trust (ART) and the Arrow Fund (two of the alternative lenders which have received funding under these programmes) made 235 loans totalling £3.574 million to businesses in Birmingham and Solihull.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills what additional assistance his Department provided to small and medium-sized enterprises located in (a) Coventry and (b) the West Midlands during the recent recession. [325769]

Ms Rosie Winterton: It has not been possible to respond to my hon. Friend in the time available before Prorogation.

Copyright: Music

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills whether the new regime of PPL music licensing will remove exemptions from (a) student unions and (b) educational institutions. [323976]

Mr. Lammy: Discussions between PPL and the third sector to find the best possible music licensing system are ongoing, initiated by my ministerial colleagues at the Office for the Third Sector. A number of issues remain to be resolved, and in the circumstances it has not been possible to introduce the planned legislative changes before the dissolution of Parliament prior to the forthcoming general election.

Departmental Internet

Jenny Willott: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills how many complaints his Department received regarding difficulties using its website in each of the last three years; and if he will make a statement. [325204]

Ian Lucas: According to departmental records, no formal complaints have been received in the past year by the Department or its Ministers about difficulties operating the Department's corporate websites (including the websites of the former Departments for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) and Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS)). No formal complaints on this topic were recorded in the lifetime of the DIUS website. Records of formal complaints to BERR are not available prior to March 2009 when procedures were overhauled.

The Department receives informal feedback from website users on an ongoing basis by email and via contact forms on its websites, including occasional comments on website usability.

Jenny Willott: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills how much his Department spent on external website design consultants in each of the last three years; and if he will make a statement. [325222]

Ian Lucas: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Minister of State for Business, Innovation and Skills to the hon. Member for North-East Hertfordshire (Mr. Heald) on 29 March 2010, *Official Report*, columns 810-811W.

Departmental Location

Bob Spink: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills how much his Department spent on the relocation of staff from posts in (a) Essex and (b) Castle Point constituency in each of the last five years. [321436]

Ian Lucas: The Department did not relocate any staff from posts in (a) Essex and (b) Castle Point constituency in each of the last five years.

Exports: Essex

Bob Spink: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills how many companies in (a) Essex and (b) Castle Point made exports in each year since 1997. [325787]

Ian Lucas [holding answer 7 April 2010]: HM Revenue and Customs publishes the UK Regional Trade in Goods Statistics, the most recent issue was published on 11 March 2010. A copy can be found at:

<https://www.uktradeinfo.com/pagecontent/downloads/RtsPRDataTablesQ409.pdf>

These statistics provide data at regional level only so we are unable to confirm the number of exporting companies in the county of Essex or the district of Castle Point.

Foreign Investment: Essex

Bob Spink: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills what estimate he has made of (a) the monetary value of foreign client investment in (i) Essex and (ii) Castle Point in each year since 2003 and (b) the number of jobs created as a consequence in each such year. [325788]

Ian Lucas [holding answer 7 April 2010]: It has not been possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Further Education: Finance

Justine Greening: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills what estimate he has of the number of colleges in (a) England and (b) London which incurred costs in preparing capital bids to the Learning and Skills Council which were not proceeded with; and what estimate has been made of the total financial effect on those colleges in (i) England and (ii) London of the capital bids not proceeding. [325569]

Kevin Brennan: 171 colleges in England, 25 of which are in London, incurred property costs on projects not currently proceeding. All colleges were eligible for normal grant support towards these costs as set out in the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) Capital Handbook and additional capital support was also made available to 42 of the colleges experiencing the most serious financial difficulties as a result of their aborted capital programmes. In total, the net cost to colleges was £126 million, with colleges in London incurring costs of £27 million.

Since 2001 LSC grant support to projects has amounted to £3.4 billion.

Imports

Mr. Laws: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills whether measures to limit imports into the UK from countries which have not enacted legislation equivalent to the Climate Change Act 2008 are permissible under Article XX of GATT. [325862]

Ian Lucas: In accordance with World Trade Organisation (WTO) case law, to comply with Article XX of GATT any such import restriction would need inter alia to:

be primarily aimed at the conservation of exhaustible natural resources;

be the least trade-restrictive method of achieving the desired level of protection of the environment;

take proper account of the different ways in which countries may seek to pursue the same environmental goals and the needs of developing countries;

not constitute a means of unfair discrimination.

Industry: Denton

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills what steps he is taking to encourage private sector investment in industry in Denton and Reddish constituency; and if he will make a statement. [325851]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Support from the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA) has helped to turn Broadstone Mill in Reddish into a state-of-the-art workspace with business incubation facilities, aimed specifically at innovative new businesses in the knowledge economy. Further grants have been awarded to businesses operating within the incubator. Businesses in Denton and Reddish are also eligible for support under the Government's North West Intensive Startup Support Programme (ISUS) launched in January.

Learning and Skills Council: Sweet Concepts

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills pursuant to the answer of 22 February 2010, *Official Report*, column 156W, on the Central Office of Information: marketing, what promotional products were purchased from Sweet Concepts Ltd on behalf of the (a) Learning and Skills Council and (b) University for Industry; and at what cost in each case. [324301]

Kevin Brennan: The Central Office of Information purchased promotional food items from Sweet Concepts Ltd. on behalf of:

(a) Learning and Skills Council at a total cost of £6,655

(b) University for Industry (Ufi) at a total cost of £1,498.

Local Press: Competition

Mr. Grogan: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills if he will refer the transfer of Guardian Media Group to Trinity Mirror to the Competition Commission to investigate potential monopolies in media ownership in Cheshire and Surrey. [325147]

Kevin Brennan [holding answer 6 April 2010]: The responsibility for investigating and making decisions on mergers falls to the UK's independent competition authorities. In this case, the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) is investigating the acquisition under the Enterprise Act 2002 which will include whether it creates potential monopolies in markets.

The OFT will announce its conclusions in due course including whether or not to refer the merger to the Competition Commission.

Optics: Technology

Chris Ruane: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills how much research funding his Department has provided to the (a) Optic Research and Incubation Centre at St Asaph Business Park and (b) members of the Welsh Opto-Electronic Forum in each of the last 10 years; and how much such funding it plans to provide to each of those organisations in each of the next three years. [325392]

Mr. Lammy: It has not been possible to respond to my hon. Friend in the time available before Prorogation.

Overseas Students: Entry Clearances

Bob Spink: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills how many places on higher education courses in (a) England and (b) Essex have been awarded to Tier 4 (General) student visa holders; and how many such students did not attend their course. [325839]

Mr. Lammy [holding answer 7 April 2010]: It has not been possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Students: Loans

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills how long on average the Student Loans Company has taken to process an application for a student loan in each year since 2005; and if he will make a statement. [325150]

Mr. Lammy: Academic year 2009-10 was the first year of operation for the new centralised Student Finance England service when all new students studying in England applied for support to the Student Loans Company (SLC), rather than to their local authority, and therefore we can only provide data for this year. The National Audit Office¹ found that the SLC took an average of 12.4 weeks to process new applications.

¹ The Customer First Programme: Delivery of Student Finance - Report by National Audit Office, page 5 - point 6, 19 March 2010.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Attendance Allowance: Na-h-Eileanan an Iar

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in Na-h-Eileanan an Iar constituency received attendance allowance in (a) 2009-10, (b) 2008-09 and (c) 2007-08. [325847]

Jonathan Shaw: The available information is in the table:

<i>Attendance allowance—cases in payment in Na-h-Eileanan an Iar parliamentary constituency</i>	
<i>Quarter ending</i>	<i>Number</i>
February 2007	880
May 2007	900
August 2007	930

Attendance allowance—cases in payment in Na-h-Eileanan an Iar parliamentary constituency

<i>Quarter ending</i>	<i>Number</i>
November 2007	940
February 2008	960
May 2008	980
August 2008	1,030
November 2008	1,090
February 2009	1,090
May 2009	1,110
August 2009	1,150

Notes:

1. Caseload figures are rounded to the nearest 10.
2. Cases in payment show the number of people in receipt of an allowance, and exclude people with entitlement where the payment has been suspended.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study

Carer's Allowance: Na-h-Eileanan an Iar

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in Na-h-Eileanan an Iar constituency received carer's allowance in (a) 2009-10, (b) 2008-09 and (c) 2007-08. [325848]

Jonathan Shaw: The information is in the table:

Carer's allowance—cases in payment in Na-h-Eileanan an Iar parliamentary constituency

<i>Quarter ending</i>	<i>Number</i>
February 2007	200
May 2007	200
August 2007	200
November 2007	200
February 2008	200
May 2008	200
August 2008	200
November 2008	200
February 2009	200
May 2009	190
August 2009	190

Notes:

1. Caseload figures are rounded to the nearest 10.
2. Cases in payment show the number of people in receipt of an allowance, and exclude people with entitlement where the payment has been suspended and exclude people with entitlement where the payment has been suspended.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study

Housing Benefit

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions with reference to the consultation document entitled Supporting people into work: the next stage of housing benefit reform, (1) what assessment she has made of the effects of the implementation of local housing allowance on the expenditure on housing benefit; and what estimate she made of the cost to the public purse of local housing allowance at the time of its implementation; [322155]

(2) what her Department's (a) original estimate was and (b) most recent estimate is of the effect on the overall level of expenditure on housing benefit of the introduction of local housing allowance. [322559]

Helen Goodman: On 15 December the housing benefit consultation, 'Supporting people into work: the next stage of housing benefit reform', was launched. The consultation concluded on 22 February 2010. We are now considering the responses and we will set out how we will take forward our proposals in due course.

In 2004-05 nine Pathfinder local authorities piloted the local housing allowance. In 2005 the pilot was extended to cover a further nine local authorities, so as to cover a total of 18 local authorities.

In the pre-Budget report 2006 it was confirmed that, 'subject to the successful passage of the Welfare Reform Bill, the Government will introduce the local housing allowance across the private rented sector for all new housing benefit claimants and those who move house from April 2008'.

At this time the estimated impact of the national roll-out of local housing allowance alone, all other external and market factors equal, on the Annual Managed Expenditure (AME) was an additional £20 million in the first year, against a total expenditure in the private rented sector of £4.3 billion for 2006-07.

This estimate is now likely to be out-of-date due to a number of factors, including the impact of the recession on the caseload size and composition, and changes in the boundaries of the areas from which local housing allowance rates are calculated. Due to the complexities involved in adjusting for such factors, and the lack of administrative data covering part of this period, a current estimate of the effect of the introduction of local housing allowance on the overall level of housing benefit expenditure is not available.

Low Incomes

Lindsay Roy: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps her Department is taking to address the matter of low pay. [322678]

Mr. Timms [*holding answer 16 March 2010*]: I have been asked to reply.

The Government introduced the national minimum wage (NMW) in April 1999 to ensure a decent minimum rate of pay for all employees. In October 2010, the adult NMW rate will rise to £5.93 per hour. Table 5.1 in Budget 2010 shows the minimum income guaranteed by the combination of working and child tax credits and the NMW once the new rate comes into effect. A family with one child and one person working 35 hours a week will receive a minimum income of £310 per week, a 27 per cent. increase in real terms since April 1999.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

Angola: Foreign Relations

John Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of the UK-Angolan bilateral relationship. [325463]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Our strategic partnership with Angola is developing well. Given Angola's geo-political importance, it is important that our two governments should consult closely and we are strengthening collaboration on a range of regional and international issues. In line with

the Angolan Government's wish to diversify the economy, UK investment is broadening in this, the third-largest economy in sub-Saharan Africa. The new constitution in February and President Jose Eduardo dos Santos' zero-tolerance policy on corruption make it particularly timely to be deepening the relationship. The UK has an important role in supporting Angola's development, building on traditional links but also uncovering new opportunities. Beyond inter-governmental cooperation, UK-based non-governmental organisations and the private sector are key parts of this process. We hope also to develop ideas for working with key constitutional bodies, including the National Assembly, in which support from Members of the House would be valuable.

China: Abortion

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what reports he has received on the discovering of 21 fetuses and baby bodies in the Guangfu river, Jining City, China; whether he has made representations to the government of China on this matter; and if he will make a statement. [325867]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

China: Family Planning

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent reports he has received on the operation of a one child policy by the government of China; and if he will make a statement. [325868]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Government of China on its population planning policies; and if he will make a statement. [325879]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions officials in the British Embassy in China have had with Chinese officials on (a) forced abortion and sterilisation and (b) birth control quotas in China; and if he will make a statement. [325880]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to the Government of China to relax its population planning policy; and if he will make a statement. [325881]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

China: Political Prisoners

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions (a) he, (b) Ministers in his Department and (c) officials in the British Embassy in China have had with the government of China on the case of Chen Guangcheng; and if he will make a statement. [325878]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Crimes of Violence: Females

Jo Swinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what role the Minister with lead responsibility for the Government's work to tackle violence against women overseas will have in the Government's cross-departmental strategy to tackle violence against women. [325866]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Departmental Information Officers

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the cost to his Department was of employing press and media officers in the last 12 month period for which figures are available; and what the cost to his Department was of employing such staff in the financial year 1996-97, expressed in real terms. [324807]

Chris Bryant: This information is not held centrally and could not be provided without incurring disproportionate cost.

Middle East: Armed Conflict

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has made to (a) the government of Iran and (b) the Palestinian Authority on the fate of the missing Israeli service personnel; and if he will make a statement. [325696]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: We consistently call for the immediate release of Gilad Shalit. The EU reiterated this call in the December Foreign Affairs Council conclusions and made our collective position very clear in international meetings, most recently during the Quartet meeting in Moscow on 19 March.

Nigeria: Violence

John Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with his Nigerian counterpart on the recent violence in Jos. [325462]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary condemned the recent violence in Jos in a joint statement with US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner and EU High Representative Baroness Ashton on 29 January. I raised UK concerns with former Foreign

Minister Maduekwe on 15 March, and my noble Friend the Minister of State for Africa discussed earlier disturbances in Jos with the former Foreign Minister, when she met him on 20 January. Our high commission in Abuja remains in frequent contact with state and federal authorities on this issue, and has continued to urge the Nigerian Government to bring those responsible for crimes to justice, and to address the underlying causes of conflict.

Passports: Fraud

Mr. Dai Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the Oral Statement of 23 March 2010, *Official Report*, columns 133-4, on UK passports (use in Dubai murder), what the other reasons are for not releasing the report by the Serious Organised Crime Agency. [325103]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The report was compiled as the result of a criminal investigation by the Serious Organised Crime Agency into the use of counterfeit British passports. Such reports which may lead to, or be relevant to, criminal proceedings in the UK or elsewhere are not released.

Southern Africa: HIV Infection

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps his Department is taking to fulfil its commitments under the Achieving Universal Access, AIDS Strategy, in (a) Lesotho, (b) Botswana and (c) Swaziland. [325456]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)'s role under the Government's Achieving Universal Access HIV strategy is primarily focused on advocacy and lobbying to support the aims of the strategy. In doing this, we work closely with a broad range of partners in relevant countries, including the host government, non-government and multilateral organisations and other major donors.

Given the continued high level of infection rates in Southern Africa, there are several large bilateral and multilateral donors working with the governments in Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland. The FCO's efforts in these countries are therefore focused on providing political support to the major donors and international organisations, as well as providing support to non-government organisations.

For example, in Botswana, our high commission follows the HIV situation and policies closely, maintains links with the National AIDS Co-ordination Agency and the Botswana Network on Ethics, Law and HIV/AIDS. It also looks for opportunities to support the major bilateral HIV/AIDS donors in addressing sensitive issues.

Our non-resident diplomatic representation to Lesotho or Swaziland is based at our high commission in Pretoria, where our staff monitor and report on developments in country and have a dialogue with a range of relevant partners on HIV/AIDS issues. In Swaziland, for example, we have held discussions with the National Director of the National Emergency Response Council on HIV/AIDS as well as a number of non-governmental organisations.

Our high commissions in Pretoria and Gaborone work closely with the Department for International Development (DFID) Southern Africa (based in Pretoria, South Africa), responsible for DFID's work in Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland. Tackling HIV in the region is a priority for DFID Southern Africa. For example, DFID Southern Africa is funding a £23 million Behaviour Change Communication Programme across 10 countries (including Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland), reaching 60 per cent. of the youth population. They are also contributing £18 million to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Children and AIDS Regional Initiative across six countries (including Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland), helping orphans and vulnerable children affected by HIV and AIDS. At the national level in Lesotho, DFID Southern Africa is providing £2.5 million to the Apparel Lesotho Alliance to Fight AIDS (ALAFA) programme, providing HIV prevention, treatment and care services to 48,000 factory workers, 80 per cent. of whom are women.

Mr. Borrow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps his Department is taking to fulfil its commitments under the AIDS Strategy, Achieving Universal Access in (a) Lesotho, (b) Botswana and (c) Swaziland. [325692]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)'s role under the Government's Achieving Universal Access HIV strategy is primarily focussed on advocacy and lobbying to support the aims of the strategy. In doing this, we work closely with a broad range of partners in relevant countries, including the host government, non-government and multilateral organisations and other major donors.

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ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Air Pollution: Shropshire

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Transport on air quality in Shropshire. [325438]

Jim Fitzpatrick: There have been no recent discussions between the Secretary of State for Environment Food and Rural Affairs and the Secretary of State for Transport on air quality in Shropshire. Ministers from both Departments met recently to discuss transport measures to improve air quality in the UK, and DEFRA and Department for Transport officials meet regularly to discuss national and local transport measures to improve air quality.

Climate Change

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent discussions he has had with ministerial colleagues on the effects of climate change on the UK's wildlife and habitat. [325614]

Huw Irranca-Davies: Recent discussions with ministerial colleagues include Government's publication "Climate Change: Taking Action". This brings together the key themes from central Government Departments and is available from the Libraries of the House. The effects of climate change on biodiversity are considered in further detail in DEFRA's Adaptation Plan and the specific supplement on adaptation and the natural environment, available on the DEFRA website.

Coastal Erosion

Mr. Whittingdale: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much the Environment Agency spent on sea defences in (a) total, (b) East Anglia and (c) Essex in each of the last 10 years. [325454]

Huw Irranca-Davies: The following figures show the Environment Agency's spend on coastal and tidal schemes in England, East Anglia and Essex.

Sea and tidal schemes in England

	£ million
2008-09	84
2009-10 (forecast outturn)	95

Sea and tidal defences capital expenditure figures

	East Anglia	Essex
2000-01	7.9	0.7
2001-02	6.5	1.2
2002-03	10.9	1.5
2003-04	12.6	0.9
2004-05	10.8	0.6
2005-06	11.5	1.6
2006-07	15.2	1.9
2007-08	9.8	0.6
2008-09	38	9.7
2009-10 (forecast outturn)	24	3.5

Departmental Information Officers

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the cost to his Department was of employing press and media officers in the last 12 month period for which figures are available; and what the cost to his Department was of employing such staff in the financial year 1996-97, expressed in real terms. [324808]

Dan Norris: The total cost of employing staff in the DEFRA press office for the period of 1 April 2009 to 28 February 2010 was £906,316.80. Figures for March 2010 are not yet available.

DEFRA was established in 2001. There are therefore no figures available for press office costs in 1996-97.

Departmental Internet

Jenny Willott: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many complaints his Department received regarding difficulties using its website in each of the last three years; and if he will make a statement. [325198]

Dan Norris: There have been no complaints about the DEFRA website in the last three years through DEFRA's formal complaints process or via ministerial correspondence.

We do not keep statistics of the ad hoc website feedback received by e-mail through the "Contact Us" option on the site. Where negative comments are received they are generally about the content rather than the operation of the website.

In the month following the September 2009 redesign of the DEFRA website we received about 120 e-mails—many more than usual. This generally arose from unfamiliarity with the new design, and the in-house DEFRA web team followed up and helped overcome any temporary difficulties among users.

In March 2010 DEFRA carried out a random website user survey which invited visitors to the DEFRA website to give a general comment on the website, as well as answer a series of structured questions about what they were using it for. Approximately two thirds of these general comments were negative. Many were not specifically about the website but they are all being followed up by the in-house team.

Jenny Willott: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much his Department spent on external website design consultants in each of the last three years; and if he will make a statement. [325216]

Dan Norris: Expenditure on external website design consultants in the last three years is shown in the following table.

	<i>Design consultancy costs (£)</i>
2007-08	0
2008-09	59,447
2009-10	56,979

Full external costs for the DEFRA website for this period were provided in the answer given on 27 January 2010, *Official Report*, column 871W to the hon. Member for Welwyn Hatfield (Grant Shapps).

Departmental Languages

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many (a) Ministers and (b) civil servants in his Department received coaching in a foreign language in the last 12 months; what expenditure his Department incurred in providing such coaching; and in what languages such coaching was provided. [320417]

Dan Norris: In the last 12 months 13 staff members have received foreign language coaching at a cost of £11,643.90. The coaching is provided in French, Spanish and German.

DEFRA has significant involvement in the EU policy agenda and the provision of language training for appropriate staff helps ensure that the Department can engage effectively with its European contacts.

Ministers did not receive foreign language coaching.

Departmental Legal Costs

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much his Department and its predecessors have spent in (a) legal fees and (b) compensation on legal cases concerning remuneration of its employees in each of the last 10 years. [322059]

Dan Norris: There have been no legal cases wholly concerning remuneration of employees brought against the Department for Environment and Rural Affairs or its executive agencies for the past four years. DEFRA is not able to provide data for any period prior to this. There are a number of cases concerning remuneration currently in progress but figures for these are not yet available as proceedings are still active.

Departmental Official Hospitality

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the five most expensive hospitality events hosted by his Department and its agencies were in the last three years; and what (a) the cost and (b) purpose of each such event was. [324656]

Dan Norris: DEFRA and its agencies conduct many public events throughout the year and the costs of each are carefully managed to ensure best value for money is achieved consistent with the objectives and purpose of the event. No central record is maintained of these events.

DEFRA does not conduct hospitality events, these being precluded by the civil service code. But some hospitality, e.g. refreshments and buffets may be provided at events.

Core financial systems do not always record the specific nature of the events and as all event costs are not directly allocated to a single account, the answer could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

No central records are kept by DEFRA of the events conducted by its eight agencies so to collect and collate answers would also incur disproportionate cost.

Departmental Publications

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 15 December 2009, *Official Report*, column 974W, on departmental publications, if he will place in the Library a copy of each of the last 10 editions of his Department's Landscape staff magazine. [324306]

Dan Norris: We have arranged for a copy of each of the last 10 editions of Landscape to be placed in the Library.

Departmental Telephone Services

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs with reference to the answer of 3 November 2009, *Official Report*, column 801W, on departmental telephone services, whether contracts were awarded for the provision of services relating to helplines. [324112]

Dan Norris: With reference to the answer of 3 November 2009, *Official Report*, column 801W, and from information held centrally a contract was awarded to Vertex Data Science Ltd. on 18 October 2008 for a period of five years, to expire 17 October 2013. The helpline contract provides a single point of contact for all DEFRA general inquiries.

Farming Link

Nick Herbert: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the (a) production, printing and distribution costs and (b) circulation figures are of his Department's publication Farming Link. [325315]

Dan Norris [*holding answer 6 April 2010*]: Farming Link is a 16-page full-colour A4 magazine and is DEFRA's main way of communicating with farmers and growers. It is produced and distributed to 136,462 addresses four times a year. As well as a printed version, an online version is produced which includes a searchable PDF as well as individual articles.

Costs for 2009-10 were as follows:

<i>Edition</i>	<i>Contractor</i>	<i>Cost (£)</i>
<i>July 2009</i>		
Postage	Royal Mail	29,874.36
Printing and distribution	Communis	32,476
Editorial	Specialist	16,354.15
Design	Specialist	5,299.20
Photography	Specialist	3,197
Proofing	Specialist	382.95
Travel	Specialist	253
Bi-monthly online content	Specialist	2,990
Total		90,826
<i>October 2009</i>		
Postage	Royal Mail	29,178.91
Printing and distribution	Communis	32,956
Editorial	Specialist	14,221
Design	Specialist	4,608
Photography	Specialist	2,400
Proofing	Specialist	280
Travel	Specialist	150
Bi-monthly online content	Specialist	2,600
Total		86,394
<i>January 2010</i>		
Postage	Communis/DSA	28,948
Printing and distribution	Communis	32,219
Editorial	Specialist	14,221
Design	Specialist	4,608
Photography	Specialist	2,400
Proofing	Specialist	333
Travel	Specialist	297
Bi-monthly online content	Specialist	2,600
Total		85,626
<i>March 2010</i>		
Postage	Communis/DSA	28,948
Printing and distribution	Communis	32,219
Editorial	Specialist	14,221
Design	Specialist	4,608
Photography	Specialist	2,400
Proofing	Specialist	333
Travel	Specialist	297
Bi-monthly online content	Specialist	2,600
Total		85,626

Flood Control

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many (a) homes and (b) businesses are registered to receive warning messages from the Environment Agency's Floodline Warnings Direct; and how many properties have received such warnings since the Floodline was established. [325838]

Huw Irranca-Davies: There are 950,000 properties registered to receive warnings from the Environment Agency's Floodline Warnings Direct (FWD) service. Around 840,000 of these are homes and about 110,000 are businesses.

As of 31 March 2010, almost 150,000 properties have received warnings since FWD was established on 25 January 2006.

Horses: Passports

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) how many horses have been issued with passports; [324877]

(2) how many horses have (a) thoroughbred, (b) individual pony and (c) Horse Society passports; [324878]

(3) how many horses are recorded on the National Equine Database. [324879]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The National Equine Database shows that as of 25 March 2010, 1,204,833 passports have been issued by UK Passport Issuing Organisations (PIOs). Of these, 342,242 were Weatherby's Thoroughbred passports. It is not possible to provide the number of "individual pony" and "horse society" passports as a number of organisations issue passports for both horses and ponies.

As of 25 March 2010 the National Equine Database contains 1,606,680 horse records. These include data taken from passports, old breeding papers issued before the introduction of passports and horse performance records which cannot yet be matched to a passport. Therefore some horses will be dead or duplicated within the system.

Nature Conservation: Expenditure

David T. C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much his Department spent on protecting (a) bats and (b) other protected species in the most recent year for which figures are available. [325829]

Huw Irranca-Davies: More than 300 species are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, including all species of bats. These will benefit from a diverse range of funding streams and conservation effort involving the DEFRA network of organisations and with the exception of any species-specific projects, figures are not accounted for in this way. I refer to my previous answer of 22 Mar 2010, *Official Report*, column 138W, on overall biodiversity expenditure, which would include conservation of protected species.

With specific regard to bats, the UK is a party to the Agreement on the Conservation of European Bats (the Eurobats Agreement) which promotes their protection internationally and for which the UK subscription in 2010 was £59,890.68. In addition the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) contributed £87,000 to the National Bat Monitoring Programme in 2009-10. Natural England estimates that it has spent approximately £370,000 on work intended to protect bats in 2009-10.

Oils: Waste Disposal

Mr. David Anderson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what volume of waste oils has been exported to (a) Germany, (b) Italy and (c) other EU member states (i) in total and (ii) for re-refining in the last three years. [325730]

Dan Norris: The following tables show the data requested.

<i>Total exported</i>			
	<i>Italy</i>	<i>Germany</i>	<i>Tonnes Other EU member states</i>
2007	0	257.75	6370.41
2008	0	280.24	13104.52
2009	0	5090.89	8588.16
2010	0	324.72	3250.14

<i>Total exported for re-refining</i>			
	<i>Italy</i>	<i>Germany</i>	<i>Tonnes Other EU member states</i>
2007	0	257.75	4261.17
2008	0	0	5287.83
2009	0	5090.89	5884.79
2010	0	184.28	0

This data was obtained from the Environment Agency's National Transfrontier Shipments (NaTS) Database on 1 April 2010. NaTS records the details of all shipments of waste notified under the Waste Shipment Regulation (EC1013/2006/EC).

The data for 2009-10 are currently an incomplete data set so these will be subject to change as data are received.

Mr. David Anderson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent discussions his Department has had with representatives of the waste oil regeneration industry on promotion of investment in regeneration of waste oils. [325770]

Dan Norris: DEFRA continues to maintain regular contact with the waste oil industry on a variety of issues affecting the management of waste oil.

Representatives of the waste oil processing industry are members of the Stakeholder Group relating to the transposition of the revised Waste Framework Directive (2008/98/EC), including the provisions in article 4 on the waste hierarchy and article 21 on waste oils. They were also involved in the Hazardous Waste Steering Group, which helped advise on the recently published Strategy for Hazardous Waste Management in England.

Informal discussions with the sector indicate that proposed investors in regeneration continue to watch the market situation in the UK and greater re-refining remains a possibility.

Mr. David Anderson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether his Department has undertaken a life cycle assessment of the environmental impact arising from the export of waste oils for re-refining. [325771]

Dan Norris: DEFRA has not commissioned specific studies on the life cycle assessment of the environmental impact arising from the export of waste oils for re-refining. However, we are aware of the following life cycle studies:

GEIR (Groupement Europeen de l'Industrie de la Regeneration, part of the Independent Union of the European Lubricants industry) report: Ecological and energetic assessment of re-refining used oils to base oils: Substitution of primarily produced base oils including semi-synthetic and synthetic compounds:

http://www.geir-rerefining.org/documents/LCA_en_short_version.pdf

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Working Group on Waste Prevention and Recycling report: Improving Recycling Markets:

<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/24/14/35582045.pdf>

The European Commission report: Critical Review Of Existing Studies And Life Cycle Analysis On The Regeneration And Incineration Of Waste Oils:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/studies/oil/waste_oil_xsum.pdf

Poultry: Animal Welfare

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps his Department plans to take to reduce the incidence of keel bone fractures in laying hens; and if he will make a statement. [325831]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Government recognise that this is a key welfare concern in laying hens, which is why DEFRA's animal welfare research programme is currently funding a three-year project by the university of Bristol on the impact of keel bone fractures on the welfare of laying hens. The aim of this study is to understand and identify risk factors associated with keel bone fractures in order to consider how to adapt production systems to improve the welfare of laying hens.

Waste Management: Business

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment he has made of the effects of (a) private finance initiative contracts relating to and (b) Government funding of residual waste plants on the ability of small businesses and community groups to set up residual waste projects. [325115]

Dan Norris: DEFRA constantly assesses the financial markets to ensure that waste private finance initiative (PFI) projects are financially viable. This includes meetings with banks, contractors and waste companies as well as individual waste local authorities. In November 2009, Officials from DEFRA's Waste Infrastructure Delivery Programme (WIDP) hosted a meeting attended by representatives from some 20 banking institutions.

PFI credits are given to local waste authorities and not to individual businesses and community groups. The local waste authority will then tender for companies within the PFI's criteria.

DEFENCE

Afghanistan: Peacekeeping Operations

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many improvised explosive devices have (a) been defused and (b) exploded in Afghanistan in each month since 2007. [322516]

Mr. Kevan Jones: Records of incidents for the whole of Afghanistan are not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

However, data is available for activity up to February 2010 concerning Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) in the area of Helmand Province for which Task Force Helmand has responsibility. This area of responsibility has not stayed constant during the period in question.

Number of IED explosions recorded by Task Force Helmand

	2007	2008	2009	2010
January	2	24	29	89
February	6	24	30	164
March	1	30	42	—
April	9	27	27	—
May	23	35	57	—
June	23	52	102	—
July	32	51	159	—
August	16	48	114	—
September	31	43	77	—
October	24	35	67	—
November	13	38	69	—
December	20	39	70	—

The figures above refer to an explosion that has subsequently been reported by units operating within the Task Force Helmand area of responsibility. The figures include both 'laid' IEDs and suicide (both vehicle and person-borne) devices.

Number of IEDs neutralised recorded by Task Force Helmand

	2007	2008	2009	2010
January	0	16	44	61
February	0	20	54	107
March	0	14	49	—
April	1	18	67	—
May	0	33	36	—
June	3	12	142	—
July	2	22	94	—
August	6	21	113	—
September	9	32	125	—
October	3	23	88	—
November	8	48	90	—
December	14	31	132	—

The figures above refer to the recording of a device that has been located and subsequently confirmed as an IED. Action has then been taken to neutralise the device.

Armed Forces: Housing

Mr. Vaizey: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether full-time reserve service personnel are accommodated in married quarters at RAF Benson; and what the cost to the public purse has been of accommodating members of the regular Royal Air Force in premises away from RAF Benson in the last 12 months. [325732]

Mr. Kevan Jones: Service family accommodation (SFA) is provided to entitled regular service personnel and full-time reserve service (FTRS) full commitment (FC) reservists. However, there are no FTRS FC personnel occupying SFA at RAF Benson.

FTRS limited commitment (LC) personnel do not have an entitlement to SFA, but are eligible to apply for surplus SFA and pay full market rent for occupancy. There is one FTRS LC occupying surplus SFA at RAF Benson, which was surplus when the officer moved in and attracts a full market rent. Exceptionally, given this officer's key role as a family liaison officer, he has not been required to move.

Substitute service family accommodation (SSFA) is only ever used as a last resort in cases where service accommodation either does not exist, or is not available to entitlement. Families allocated SSFA may be invited to move to SFA should it subsequently become available. Given the associated disruption to families and the potential impact on schooling, personnel and their families are not obliged to move.

There are currently 33 families occupying SSFA in the Benson area. The rental cost to the Ministry of Defence for these families over the last 12 months was around £460,000. A more accurate figure cannot be given as properties are vacated at various times.

Cluster Munitions

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a public announcement when the last US cluster munitions have been removed from the UK. [325695]

Bill Rammell: The United States has identified the cluster munitions that it holds on United Kingdom territory as exceeding its worldwide operational planning requirements. We expect that all US cluster munitions will be removed from sites in the UK this year and from all UK territories by 2013 (as declared by Baroness Kinnock during the Cluster Munitions (Prohibitions) Bill Second Reading in the House of Lords on the 8 December 2009, *Official Report*, column 1020). A statement will be made to confirm the removal of US cluster munitions at that time.

Departmental Data Protection

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many incidents of the loss of confidential data held by his Department have been reported (a) in each of the last five years and (b) in each of the last 12 months. [321731]

Bill Rammell: The Ministry of Defence (MOD) takes any attacks on, or misuse of, its information, networks and associated media storage devices very seriously and has robust procedures in place to mitigate against and investigate such occurrences. Furthermore, new processes, instructions and technological aids are continually being implemented to mitigate human errors and raise the awareness of every individual in the Department with regards to cyber security.

The following tables provide details of the number of reported losses of confidential and personal data centrally reported within the Department from 2005 to 2010.

Figures will continue to be adjusted to incorporate subsequent recoveries of items, the reporting of additional losses and subsequent clarification of historic incidents. The following figures reflect the latest data held as of 10 March 2010.

In a number of these cases the documents were historical and so the original protective marking would have been eligible to be considered for downgrading. This would certainly reduce any risk of compromise. A number of these incidents came to light as a consequence of thorough housekeeping activities and revised MOD data management practices. It is likely that a large number of instances relate to records of the destruction of documents not being accurately maintained, rather than documents actually having gone missing.

	Total
2005	77
2006	130
2007	52
2008	1099
2009	347

The surge in reported incidents from 2008 is largely attributable to two factors. Firstly, there is an increased awareness of the need to report data loss across the Department. Secondly, since the publication of the Data Handling Review and Burton Report, the MOD is now auditing its holdings of both personal data and removable media. This has identified a number of instances where the location of data could not be verified and has therefore been reported as a possible loss—even though in many cases they may have merely been unaccounted for or incorrectly disposed of.

Month	Total
2009	
March	10
April	34
May	24
June	19
July	20

	Restoring Efficiency		Disciplinary procedures		Number of civil servants
	Initiated	Dismissals	Initiated	Dismissals	
2004-05	n/k	12	n/k	59	79,900
2005-06	n/k	12	n/k	47	79,700
2006-07	n/k	12	n/k	58	75,800
2007-08	89	4	87	50	71,400
2008-09	92	2	108	60	66,700

n/k = Not known

These figures include staff in MOD agencies but exclude trading funds and the Royal Fleet Auxiliary.

There is also a range of disciplinary penalties less than dismissal: Reprimand; Restitution; Loss of one, five or 10 day's pay; Downgrading with a ban on promotion for up to three years.

Reported incidents of the loss of confidential data in each of the last 12 months

Month	Total
August	32
September	94
October	25
November	21
December	65
2010	
January	23
February	48

Departmental Disciplinary Proceedings

Barry Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many (a) disciplinary and (b) capability procedures have been (i) initiated and (ii) completed in his Department in each of the last five years; how much time on average was taken to complete each type of procedure in each such year; how many and what proportion of his Department's staff were subject to each type of procedure in each such year; and how many and what proportion of each type of procedure resulted in the dismissal of the member of staff.

[320637]

Mr. Kevan Jones: This information is not held in the format requested. Prior to April 2007 all cases were managed locally and data on the number of cases initiated are not available. Information on average time taken to complete each type of procedure is not recorded, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

In the Ministry of Defence, if an individual's performance is identified as unsatisfactory they may be subject to the Restoring Efficiency process, which involves warning the individual, encouraging improvement, and allowing a reasonable opportunity to improve. If a satisfactory performance is not achieved the individual may be dismissed or downgraded.

The number of Restoring Efficiency and disciplinary procedures initiated in each financial year and the number of dismissals in the same period—but which might include cases initiated in the previous financial year—was as follows:

Departmental Lost Property

John Mason: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what property has been recorded as (a) lost and (b) stolen from his Department in the last 12 months; and what estimate has been made of the cost of the replacement of that property.

[322073]

Bill Rammell: The requested information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Manpower

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many staff of his Department presently employed in Kentigern House in Glasgow are engaged (a) solely on duties relating to military staff based in Scotland and (b) on duties relating to (i) military and (ii) civilian staff based (A) elsewhere in the UK and (B) overseas. [325857]

Mr. Kevan Jones: It has not proved possible to respond to my hon. Friend in the time available before Prorogation.

Departmental Publications

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he plans to place in the Library a copy of the most recent report of the Chief of the General Staff's briefing team. [325551]

Bill Rammell: In accordance with the conventions which govern the conduct of government during the pre-election period, the report will be placed in the Library of the House as soon as possible in the next parliamentary term.

Gurkhas

Nick Harvey: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how often the cross-departmental Gurkha working group has met; and what Government departments are represented on the group; [325684]

(2) what (a) written and (b) other information is provided to Gurkha veterans seeking advice at his Department's resettlement office in Kathmandu, Nepal; [325685]

(3) what steps his Department is taking to inform the Gurkha veteran population in Nepal of their rights of settlement in the United Kingdom; [325686]

(4) how much funding is available for his Department's resettlement office in Kathmandu, Nepal in 2010-11. [325687]

Mr. Kevan Jones: The Cross-Departmental Working Group was set up in June 2009 and has met formally on three occasions, twice in 2009 and once so far this year. As well as the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and the UK Border Agency (UKBA), the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), the Department for Communities and Local Government, (DCLG), the Department of Health, the Department for Children, Schools and Families, the Cabinet Office, the Foreign Office and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs are members of the Working Group.

The Working Group has also consulted with a wide range of welfare organisations in the course of its work, including the main Service charities: the Gurkha Welfare Trust; the Royal British Legion; ABF The Soldiers' Charity; the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association; and Veterans Aid.

The Gurkha Settlement Office in Kathmandu opened in October 2009 and to date has had nearly 5,000 visits from ex-Gurkhas and their families. The Government of Nepal and all ex-service organisations were briefed by MOD about the role of the office which is to provide

free help and assistance with the settlement process. This includes information and education about life in the UK in order for the ex-Gurkhas to make an informed choice about settlement, and if they decide to apply for a visa help and advice filling out the visa form, help with finding and completing supporting documentation and a fast tracking system for issuing National Insurance numbers which facilitates claiming benefits in the UK. DCLG are setting up a housing advice centre in the UK to help find appropriate housing and will offer a bond to landlords in lieu of the required rental deposit. The UKBA have also introduced a new stamp on the visa which allows DWP to identify ex-Gurkhas who do not need to satisfy the Habitual Residence Test before benefits can be paid.

In November 2009 and January this year several hundred ex-Gurkha representatives in Nepal were briefed by a joint MOD/UKBA team about the benefits of using the Kathmandu settlement office. A further communications exercise and additional consultation and briefings are planned in April. It is also intended to forward base some of the settlement office staff from Kathmandu to the east and west of Nepal to try and reach those who might not be able to travel to Kathmandu.

A booklet in English and Nepali that explains the cost of living in the UK has been produced at the request of the ex-service organisations, and an updated and more comprehensive book about life in the UK will be issued in Nepal in April. The book, developed in association with ex-servicemen, the service charities and local authorities contains a wealth of information about living in the UK.

To date, the cost of setting up and staffing the Settlement Office is some £20,000 and a similar budget has been earmarked for 2010-11.

Illegal Immigrants

Mr. Syms: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many staff his Department and its agencies have appointed who were later discovered to be illegal immigrants since 2005. [320442]

Mr. Kevan Jones: People employed to work in Government Departments and their agencies, either directly or through a contractor, are required to satisfy requirements on identity, nationality and immigration status prior to the offer of employment. Only two employees of the MOD have been convicted of being illegal immigrants over the last five years.

Military Aircraft: Operating Costs

Nick Harvey: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the average total operating cost per flight hour for the (a) Hawk 128 Advanced Jet Trainer, (b) E-3D Sentry AEW1, (c) Hercules C-130J, (d) C-17 Globemaster III and (e) MQ-9 Reaper was in the latest period for which figures are available. [325233]

Bill Rammell: The average operating cost per hour for E-3D Sentry, Hercules C-130J, and C-17 Globemaster, for financial year 2009-10, is provided in the following table. The cost includes forward and depth servicing, fuel, crew and training costs and the cost of capital charge, depreciation and other overheads.

Aircraft	Approx cost (£ per hour)
E-3D Sentry AEW1	33,000
Hercules C-130J	12,000
C-17 Globemaster III	42,000

The Hawk 128 Advanced Jet Trainer is in the process of being introduced into service and has only flown 450 hours in FY 2009-10. A mature estimate of flying hour costs will only be available once it is fully in-service which is not expected until 2012-13.

The average operating cost per hour for the Reaper Urgent Operational Requirement is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Nimrod Aircraft

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will set out details of the transitional arrangements to provide (a) a long range maritime search and rescue capability and (b) a long range anti-submarine warfare capability between the time the Nimrod MR2 was withdrawn from service and the entering into full operational capability of the Nimrod MRA4; and how long he expects that transitional period to last. [325791]

Bill Rammell [*holding answer 7 April 2010*]: The Nimrod MR2 provided a state-of-the-art Long Range Search and Rescue (LR SAR) capability. The Nimrod MRA4 will bring a substantially more capable aircraft into the RAF's fleet.

In the period of transition until the MRA4 achieves its initial operating capability, we intend to make every effort to ensure that we are able to provide a response to the most serious SAR incidents, using other assets, as available, in the long-range search and rescue role. No specific aircraft has been allocated to the LR SAR task; our response to any particular SAR incident will be dependent on aircraft and crew availability, taking account of other high priority operational tasks.

Nimrod MRA4 deliveries began in March this year and initial operating capability, including for LR SAR operations, is planned to be achieved by October 2012, with some ad hoc capability available before that date.

I cannot comment on long range anti-submarine warfare capability for reasons of national security.

Opposition

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether his Department has undertaken costings of the policies of the (a) Conservative Party and (b) Liberal Democrat Party at the request of Ministers or special advisers in the last 36 months. [324239]

Bill Rammell: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him by the Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury on 30 March 2010, *Official Report*, column 1044W.

RFA Darkdale

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will take steps to remove the fuel, oil and ammunition from RFA Darkdale after its sinking in James Bay, St Helena; and if he will make a statement; [325669]

(2) if he will ensure that RFA Black Rover during its visit to St Helena in May (a) provides oil spill equipment to deal with oil leaks from the sunken RFA Darkdale and (b) assists with clean-up operations; and if he will make a statement. [325671]

Mr. Quentin Davies: The Ministry of Defence is working with other Government Departments to assess the options following the recent oil leak from the former Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessel Darkdale which sank during World War II. A full survey of the wreck will be required to determine whether the removal of fuel, oil and ammunition is the most appropriate course of action. Before the survey work can begin, a risk assessment is being carried out based on current knowledge of Darkdale and the recent oil leak. This will determine the nature and degree of risk involved in carrying out the full survey.

The Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessel Black Rover is neither suitably equipped nor has suitably qualified crew members to assist with any operation to clean up the recent oil leak, which is specialised work. However, depending on the outcome of the aforementioned risk assessment, Black Rover may be used to transport a survey team and specialist equipment to St. Helena.

Territorial Army: Northern Ireland

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Territorial Army recruits in Northern Ireland have been waiting to commence phase one recruit training since September 2009; and when it is expected they will all have received such training. [325864]

Bill Rammell: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence for what reasons Territorial Army potential officer training was transferred from the Regional Training Centre in Ballykinler to Queen's University. [325870]

Bill Rammell: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

OLYMPICS

Departmental Written Questions

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Minister for the Olympics what methodology her Office used to determine whether answers to Questions in the formulation if she will set out with statistical information related as directly as possible to the tabling hon. Members' constituency the effects on that constituency of her Department's policies since 1997 could be provided without incurring disproportionate cost; and if she will make a statement. [323871]

Tessa Jowell: The Government Olympic Executive seeks to answer all parliamentary questions that do not incur disproportionate cost. Disproportionate cost is determined via a disproportionate cost threshold (DCT).

The current DCT is £800, announced in Parliament by HM Treasury on the 20 January 2010.

Olympic Games 2012: Construction

Charlotte Atkins: To ask the Minister for the Olympics what the cost was of building the freight facility at the main Olympic site. [323339]

Tessa Jowell: The Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) has constructed a temporary wharf on the Waterworks River for the construction phase of the programme to provide contractors with the opportunity to move material into and out of the Park by water. The construction cost of this is £1.86 million (excluding VAT). This figure includes the costs of the pontoons, moorings, pilings, hard-standing, vehicle access and river wall protection.

Olympic Games 2012: Voluntary Work

Tom Levitt: To ask the Minister for the Olympics if she will take steps to reduce the minimum age for Olympic volunteers from 18 to 16 years. [325657]

Tessa Jowell: The London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games Limited (LOCOG) is responsible for the London 2012 Volunteer Programme, to provide up to 70,000 volunteers for the Games. LOCOG has set the lower age limit for the programme at 18 after considering extensive legal advice and practical operational constraints at games-time, which include: the number of hours under 18s can legally work; the associated management to comply with the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006; and, the commitment of volunteers to undertake a set number of shifts that can finish late at night.

LOCOG's Get Set education programme provides an excellent route for those under 18 to get involved in 2012-inspired activity, as do Inspire Mark projects and London 2012 Open Weekend events held in communities across the UK.

HEALTH

Abortion

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many repeat abortions women aged (a) under 20, (b) 20 to 24, (c) 25 to 29, (d) 30 to 34 and (e) 35 years old and over had in each area contained in current strategic health authority region boundaries in each of the last 10 years. [325824]

Gillian Merron: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave her on 8 March 2010, *Official Report*, column 51W. The information requested was placed in the Library on 18 March 2010.

Burnley Hospital

Kitty Usher: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much his Department has spent on providing building and services at Burnley General Hospital in (a) capital and (b) revenue terms in each of the last 10 years; and how much is projected to be spent in each such category in each of the next five years. [325827]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The information is not available in the format requested. However, capital expenditure on buildings and dwellings for the East Lancashire Hospitals Trust (which includes Burnley General Hospital) for the years 2002-03 to 2008-09 is shown in the following table:

	Tangible fixed assets—Purchased additions	
	Buildings excluding dwellings	Dwellings
2008-09	5,472	141
2007-08	8,305	0
2006-07	7,081	0
2005-06	5,195	0
2004-05	3,922	0
2003-04	4,350	0
2002-03	2,246	0

The forecast total capital expenditure outturn for the whole trust for 2009-10 is £22.3 million, of which £12.5 million is expected to be spent on buildings (excluding dwellings).

Information on revenue expenditure in respect of premises costs for the East Lancashire Hospitals Trust from 2002-03 to 2008-09 for the trust is shown in the following table:

	Operating expenses—premises (£000)
2008-09	26,191
2007-08	23,989
2006-07	21,995
2005-06	12,443
2004-05	6,667
2003-04	7,568
2002-03	7,891

Notes:

1. The Department only holds accounting data at organisation level for seven years, therefore 2002-03 is the earliest information available.
2. The operating expenses represent the amounts included in the operating expenses of East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust for "premises" between 2002-03 and 2008-09.
3. East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust was operational from 1 April 2003, therefore the 2002-03 figures are the aggregate of its two predecessor bodies—Blackburn, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley Health Care NHS Trust and Burnley Health Care NHS Trust.
4. In the audited summarisation schedules, "premises" includes expenditure on utilities (such as electricity and gas), other fuels, water and sewerage, external general services and contracts, furniture, office and computer equipment, computer hardware and maintenance contracts, business rates, rent, building and engineering equipment and contracts.

Source:

2002-03 to 2008-09 figures—NHS Trusts Audited Summarisation Schedules 2002-03 to 2008-09.

Cervical Cancer

Margaret Moran: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what guidance he has issued to primary care trusts on the use of full pelvic examinations in cases of suspected cervical cancer; [325888]

(2) what research his Department has (a) commissioned and (b) undertaken on the detection and diagnosis of cervical cancer (i) in general and (ii) among those aged between 20 and 24 years in the last 12 months. [325889]

Ann Keen: “Clinical Practice Guidance for the Assessment of Young Women aged 20-24 with Abnormal Vaginal Bleeding” was issued through the Department of Health’s GP and Practice Team Bulletin and Chief Nursing Officer’s Bulletin in March 2010. The guidance, developed by the independent Advisory Committee on Cervical Screening (ACCS), re-emphasises the importance of pelvic examinations in young women with abnormal vaginal bleeding and provides primary care practitioners with an easy to follow algorithm to help in their management of these young women. A copy of the guidance has been placed in the Library.

Regarding research on the detection and diagnosis of cervical cancer in general and among those aged between 20 and 24 years in the last 12 months, NHS Cancer Screening Programmes provided funding of £52,000 in 2009-10 to Cancer Research UK on the ongoing audit of invasive cervical cancers. This included funding for specially commissioned work on younger women to inform the ACCS review of cervical screening in May 2009.

In addition, in autumn 2009 the Department commissioned the “What Women Know” survey to assess the current levels of knowledge about cervical cancer among women in England. The survey was carried out as part of an initiative in collaboration with the Eve Appeal and University College London’s Health Behaviour Research Centre. It covered awareness of the symptoms and risk factors for cervical cancer, knowledge of the cervical screening and human papillomavirus vaccination programmes, anticipated barriers to seeking medical help with a possible cervical cancer symptom, and beliefs about screening and other protective behaviours.

The Department has also provided £4,000 to Jo’s Trust, a charity that raises awareness of cervical cancer, to undertake a pilot to assess the potential for using television advertisements in general practitioner surgeries to improve uptake of cervical screening invitations.

Depressive Illnesses: Health Services

Margaret Moran: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which primary care trusts provide services for clinical depression; and if he will make a statement. [325890]

Phil Hope: We do not collect this data centrally. The provision of local health services is a decision to for

primary care trusts and their strategic health authorities. Clinicians are best placed to decide what services their local communities need and how they are provided.

E Coli

David T. C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much his Department has spent on reducing the chances of an E. coli outbreak in the last three years. [325828]

Gillian Merron: As humans may be infected by *E. coli* O157 through a variety of routes there are several different Government Departments that contribute to reducing the chances of an outbreak. Humans may become infected when they consume contaminated food or water, by direct or indirect contact with animals that carry *E. coli* O157 or from exposure to an environment contaminated with animals’ faeces, such as farms and similar premises with animals which are open to the public.

The costs of reducing the chances of both foodborne and non-foodborne *E. coli* O157 outbreaks are contained within the core budgets of the Department of Health, Food Standards Agency (FSA) and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and are not separately identifiable. For example, the FSA does not collect data on the amount of spend that can be assigned to *E. coli* official controls in isolation from other official controls on the microbiological safety of food. In addition to core funding, both DEFRA and the FSA fund research to enhance our understanding of human infection caused by *E. coli* O157.

General Practitioners: Denton

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many GPs were practising in Denton and Reddish constituency in (i) 1997 and (ii) the most recent year for which figures are available. [325850]

Mr. Mike O’Brien: The data requested are not available in the format required. However, information on the number of general practitioners (GPs) (excluding retainers and registrars) between 2002-09 at Stockport Primary Care Trust (PCT) and Tameside and Glossop PCT is shown in the following table:

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Stockport PCT	170	177	182	186	190	195	195
Tameside and Glossop PCT	120	117	124	131	134	128	145
Total specified organisations	290	294	306	317	324	323	340

Notes:

1. GP data are not available at constituency level. Denton and Reddish constituency is contained within and serviced by Stockport PCT and Tameside and Glossop PCT.
2. Prior to 2002, PCTs did not exist. It is not possible to map these organisations back prior to 2002 with any degree of accuracy.
3. Data as at 30 September for each year.
4. The Information Centre for health and social care seeks to minimise inaccuracies and the effect of missing and invalid data but responsibility for data accuracy lies with the organisations providing the data. Methods are continually being updated to improve data quality where changes impact on figures already published. This is assessed but unless it is significant at national level figures are not changed. Impact at detailed or local level is footnoted in relevant analyses.

Source:

Information Centre for health and social care - General and Personal Medical Services Statistics.

Health Services: Prisoners

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the oral answer to the hon. Member for Isle of Wight on 4 November 2009, what steps have been taken to ensure that local health authorities are reimbursed for the additional costs of guarding prisoners who require health care outside prison. [325894]

Phil Hope: There have been no recent changes to the funding responsibilities of national health service primary care trusts (PCTs) for their prison health care escorts and bedwatches activity.

Responsibility for commissioning health services in publicly run prisons in England has been fully devolved to NHS PCTs since 2006, with significantly increased funding. Subsequently, the responsibility and funding for escorts and bedwatch costs transferred from HM Prison Service to PCTs in April 2008.

This decision followed the outcome of a 12-month audit of prison health care escorts and bedwatches activity in all prisons in England and Wales, and a pilot in 10 prisons of options for future funding and management of escorts and bedwatches.

Escorts and bedwatches costs are determined by a fixed tariff previously agreed by HM Prison Service and the NHS. Baseline funding is provided for within the

NHS bundle, which is the Department's mechanism for the distribution of core funding to strategic health authorities.

Hospitals: Infectious Diseases

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients have contracted (a) MRSA and (b) other hospital-acquired infections in NHS hospitals in Shropshire in the last five years. [325402]

Ann Keen: Information on all healthcare associated infections (HCAIs) is not collected centrally. The mandatory surveillance system collects data on the following from acute trusts only: methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) bacteraemias; *Clostridium difficile* infections (CDIs); glycopeptide-resistant enterococci bacteraemias (GREs); and selected orthopaedic surgical site infections (SSIs).

Surveillance data, including monthly MRSA and CDI information, are available on the Health Protection Agency's (HPA) website at:

www.hpa.org.uk/web/HPAweb&HPAwebStandard/HPAweb_C/1244763936373

Information on MRSA, for the time period requested, is shown in the following table. All cases of MRSA bacteraemia are reported, meaning that the reports include infections both acquired in hospital and elsewhere.

Trust	Financial year					Five-year total
	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	
Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Trust	2	0	2	0	0	4
Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust	47	39	49	35	16	186
Total	49	39	51	35	16	190

Note:

Data include infections, which may have been acquired in the community.

Source:

HPA

Up to 2007, cases of CDI in people aged 65 or over were reported. This information for the time period requested, is shown in the following table.

Trust	Financial year					Five-year total
	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	
Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Trust	8	11	10	4 (4)	6 (6)	39
Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust	246	203	336	314 (174)	189 (76)	1,288
Total	254	214	346	318 (178)	195 (82)	1,327

Note:

Total number of reports given; figures in parentheses are 'Trust apportioned' cases (presumed to be hospital acquired).

Source:

HPA.

From 2007-08, CDI cases in those aged two or over were reported, plus those presumed to be hospital acquired (trust apportioned) were identified. This information for the time period requested, is shown in the following table

Trust	Financial year		Two-year total
	2007-08	2008-09	
Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Trust	8	6	14
Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust	208	94	302

Trust	Financial year		
	2007-08	2008-09	Two-year total
Total	216	100	316

Note:

The figures presented are 'Trust apportioned', referring to infections that are presumed to be hospital acquired.

Source:

HPA.

Information on GRE bacteraemias, for the time period requested, is shown in the following table.

Trust	Year ¹		
	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Trust	0	0	0
Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust	7	6	3
Total	7	6	3

¹ Data from 1 October to 30 September. The trusts did not submit data for 2007-08, and 2008-09 data are not yet published.

Source:

HPA.

Information on SSIs, from 2004-09, is available on the HPA's website at: www.hpa.org.uk/webc/HPAwebFile/HPAweb_C/1259151994683

Hospitals: Patients

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients of each ethnicity there were in (a) Arnold Lodge, (b) Ashworth Hospital, (c) Auckland Park Hospital, (d) Barnsley Hall Hospital, (e) Barnwood House Hospital, (f) Bedford Lunatic Asylum, (g) Bethlem Royal Hospital, (h) Bootham Park Hospital, (i) Broadmoor Hospital, (j) Brookwood Hospital, (k) Bushey Fields Hospital, (l) Central Hospital, Hatton, (m) Cheadle Royal Hospital, (n) Colney Hatch Lunatic Asylum, (o) Earls House Hospital, (p) Epsom Cluster, (q) Fairfield Hospital (Arlesey), (r) Fulbourn Hospital, (s) Haleacre Unit, (t) Hampshire County Lunatic Asylum, (u) Hanwell Asylum, (v) Hellingly Hospital, (w) Holloway Sanatorium, (x) Leavesden Mental Hospital, (y) Long Grove Hospital, (z) Longview Psychiatric Unit, (aa) Loring Hall, (bb) Manchester Royal Lunatic Asylum, (cc) Mary Dendy Hospital, (dd) Maudsley Hospital, (ee) Michael Rutter Centre for Children and Adolescents, (ff) Napsbury, (gg) Northfield Hospital, (hh) Northgate Hospital, (ii) Oakwood Hospital, (jj) Park Prewett, (kk) Powick Hospital, (ll) Rampton Secure Hospital, (mm) The Retreat, (nn) Royal Earlswood Hospital, (oo) St. Andrew's Hospital, (pp) St. Ann's Hospital, (qq) St. Ann's Hospital (Dorset), (rr) St. Crispins Hospital, (ss) St. Luke's Hospital (Middlesbrough), (tt) St. Michael's Hospital (Warwick), (uu) Severalls Hospital, (vv) Springfield Hospital, (ww) Stone House Hospital, (xx) Tindal Centre, (yy) Warlingham Park Hospital, (zz) Warneford Hospital, (aaa) West London Mental Health NHS Trust, (bbb) West Park Asylum and (ccc) Winterton Hospital as at 1 March 2010. [325843]

Phil Hope: This information is not held centrally. National Information about the ethnicity of mental health in-patients is collected and published by the Care Quality Commission through its Count Me In census programme.

Tuberculosis: Screening

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what steps his Department has taken to ensure the effectiveness of tuberculosis screening

programmes of incoming visitors at (a) Heathrow and (b) Gatwick airports; [325752]

(2) how many qualified medical staff are employed at each UK airport for the purpose of screening incoming visitors for tuberculosis; [325753]

(3) how much his Department has spent on the provision of (a) x-ray equipment for tuberculosis screening at UK airports and (b) salaries of staff conducting such screening in each year since 2004. [325754]

Gillian Merron: The Department has provided capital funding of £8 million for the Health Protection Agency (HPA) to install new digital x-ray machines at Gatwick and Heathrow to replace the old ones in a phased programme across 2008-09. These have been installed and are fully functioning.

In addition, an electronic notification system for results of screening is being piloted across the country to replace the paper notification system.

Medical inspectors are employed at two airports (Gatwick and Heathrow) for the purposes of tuberculosis (TB) screening. At Heathrow there are currently 4.8 permanent whole-time equivalent (WTE) plus locum staff (approximately 1.5 further WTE). At Gatwick, there are two WTE plus one WTE locum staff. At other airports, the medical inspection function is fulfilled on a part-time contract basis.

Funding for medical inspection function since 2004 has been provided by primary care trusts and the HPA under various local arrangements, some in partnership with local authorities. Details of such funding, and staff deployment, are not collected centrally.

ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Fuel Poverty

18. **Mr. Baron:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change when he expects figures to be available on the level of fuel poverty in the UK in 2008. [325628]

Mr. Kidney: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Lichfield (Michael Fabricant) earlier today.

Carbon Emissions: Advertising

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change what procedures his Department has put in place to evaluate the effectiveness of the Act on Carbon Dioxide advertising campaign; and if he will make a statement. [323816]

Joan Ruddock [*holding answer 23 March 2010*]: The Act On CO₂ advertising campaign is designed to encourage individuals to make the changes in behaviour necessary to reduce carbon emissions, and mitigate the effects of climate change. The Department evaluates the campaign using a range of measures: Pre and post campaign omnibus surveys to assess shifts in awareness, attitudes and claimed behaviour; number of website visits, indicating the degree to which the campaign has generated a desire among the public to find out more; click-through rates from online display advertisements; where applicable, number of telephone calls generated; number of visits to the Act On CO₂ carbon calculator and assessment from third party partners of the success of the campaign.

Climate Change: International Cooperation

Richard Younger-Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of the UK's participation in the Copenhagen climate change summit. [316866]

Joan Ruddock: I refer the hon. Member to the answers I gave to the hon. Member for East Antrim (Sammy Wilson) on 7 January 2010, *Official Report*, columns 630-31W, and the hon. Member for Angus (Mr. Weir) on 21 January 2010, *Official Report*, column 468W.

Since 1999 the Government have published on an annual basis a list of all overseas visits by Cabinet Ministers costing in excess of £500, as well as the total cost of all ministerial travel overseas. From 2007-08 the list was extended to include all Ministers. The list also provides information on the number of officials who accompany Ministers. Copies are available in the Libraries of the House. Information for 2009-10 will be published as soon as the information is available.

Electricity Generation

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change what estimate he has made of the additional electricity generating capacity required by 2020. [325617]

Mr. Kidney: Under central modelling assumptions, it is estimated we will need about 43 gigawatts (GW) net of new electricity generation capacity by 2020.

Angela Watkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change what estimate he has made of the additional electricity generating capacity required by 2020. [325618]

Mr. Kidney: In addition to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Blaby (Mr. Robathan) earlier today, taking into account planned closures of existing power plants and other factors such as the renewables targets, modelling suggests we might need around 100 GW of total capacity in 2020. In a typical year now peak consumption will be around 60 GW and total available supply around 80 GW.

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change what estimate he has made of the additional electricity generating capacity required by 2020. [325626]

Mr. Kidney: Under central modelling assumptions, it is estimated we will need about 43 gigawatts (GW) net of new electricity generation capacity by 2020.

Environment Protection: West Midlands

Richard Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change what assistance the EU has provided to the West Midlands for the development of green (a) technologies and (b) jobs in the last two years. [325240]

Ian Lucas: I have been asked to reply.

The following projects have been approved to date under Priority Axis 1 of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) 2007-13 programme which supports Innovation and Research and Development. The programme is administered in the West Midlands by Advantage West Midlands.

Energy Efficiency—£4.94 million

Low Carbon Vehicle Technology—£9.50 million (This project is expected to safeguard 2,150 jobs)

A number of general innovation/R and D support projects (including Knowledge Transfer Partnerships) have also been supported some of which include a focus on green technologies and jobs. Funding of over £15 million has been approved to date.

Under Priority Axis 2 of the 2007-13 ERDF programme which focuses on stimulating enterprise development the following projects have been approved to date:

Competitiveness through Collaboration—£184,315 for an Environmental Technologies Supply Chain Network for the rural west of the region.

West Midlands Industrial Symbiosis Network—£1,054,302 to develop links between companies so that under-used resources such as energy, water and/or materials from one are recovered, reprocessed and then re-used by others. The project is expected to create 40 jobs and safeguard 82.

Rethink Energy—£1,005,335 funding to support Small to Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) to undertake feasibility studies and install renewable energy technologies. The project is expected to create an additional 12 jobs.

Enviro Supply chain network—£283,306 to encourage manufacturing SMEs to work together to improve environmental processes. The project is expected to create 15 jobs.

Further funding has also been provided for other projects which support business development or innovation which will include support to those involved in green technologies.

Under the EU-funded Rural Development Programme for England (RPDE) programme the following projects which support green technologies and jobs have been approved so far in the 2007-13 programming period:

Certainly Wood—£403,000 approved for capital equipment support to a wood fuel business.

Freshfields Fruit LLP—£265,000 approved for capital equipment support to a strawberry growing business for water harvesting and recycling.

West Midlands Woodfuel Project—£827,000 approved for revenue support to West Midlands forestry wood fuel businesses.

It is not possible to report on jobs created or safeguarded by these projects at this stage.

There are also a number of RDPE initiatives supporting farm diversification and rural enterprises which may support green technologies and jobs.

Further support will be provided during the later stages of the programmes.

No specific indicators were set for green jobs or technologies in the West Midlands 2000-06 Objective 2 Programme. A total of 2,769 businesses were, however, assisted with environmental management as part of the Programme's Environmental Sustainability theme.

Opposition

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change whether his Department has undertaken costings of the policies of the (a) Conservative Party and (b) Liberal Democrat Party at the request of Ministers or special advisers since its inception. [324244]

Mr. Kidney: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him by my right hon. Friend the Exchequer Secretary on 30 March 2010, *Official Report*, column 1913W.

Public Buildings: Energy

Mr. Dai Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change whether there are mechanisms in place to assist the provision of energy efficiency measures and equipment in (a) community centres, (b) public halls, (c) social clubs and (d) other community facilities; and what recent representations he has received from community representatives on those matters. [323344]

Joan Ruddock: The Low Carbon Communities Challenge (LCCC) is a two-year research programme funded by DECC providing financial and practical support to 22 "test-bed" communities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The purpose of the challenge is to test delivery options for achieving ambitious cuts in carbon emissions at community level.

Communities selected will be providing energy efficiency improvements to public buildings, including community centres and schools. The LCCC will provide replicable models of what works at a community level, which can inform future Government policy and inspire action in other communities across the country.

The Department receives a variety of correspondence relating to energy efficiency matters.

Warm Front Scheme

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change pursuant to the Answer to the hon. Member for Peterborough of 3 March 2010, *Official Report*, column 1205W, on energy: housing,

what the cost of the Warm Front pilots cited in the Answer has been to date. [324843]

Mr. Kidney: The following table shows the total spend to date on Warm Front pilots including Solar Thermal and Air Source Heat Pumps¹.

<i>Pilot</i>	<i>Cost excluding VAT (£)</i>
Solar thermal	285,171.54
Air source heat pumps	140,396.00
Total	425,567.54

At the present time, there has been no money spent on the pilot for the external wall insulation of park homes as work is being planned with customers but has yet to be installed.

¹ To 21 March 2010

HOME DEPARTMENT

Crimes of Violence

Chris Huhne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many (a) most, (b) less and (c) summary violent offences were recorded in each police force area in each year since 2002-03; and how many people were convicted of violent offences of each type in each of those years. [319820]

Alan Johnson [*holding answer 1 March 2010*]: Information is not available in the requested format. The available information relates to offences of violence against the person with and without injury and is given in Tables 1 and 2. Summary offences of assault without injury are included within the violence against the person without injury grouping. Summary offences without injury are "assault without injury on a constable", "assault without injury", and "racially or religiously aggravated assault without injury". Separate figures for these offences are given in Table 3.

These police recorded crime data relate to the number of offences recorded in each financial year.

In April 2002, the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) was introduced. This brought in a more victim-focused reporting system, where victim accounts had to be accepted unless there was credible evidence to the contrary. It took some forces several years to adjust to the new recording practice, meaning that comparisons from 2002-03 to 2008-09 should be treated with caution.

Home Office statisticians advise that the British Crime Survey (BCS) is the best guide to long-term trends for the crime types it covers because it has a consistent methodology and is unaffected by levels of reporting or police recording. However, the BCS is not designed to provide robust estimates of different crimes at police force area.

Annual BCS figures are estimates based on data from the interviews carried out in the previous 12 months. Estimates for the violent crimes covered by the survey show a 22 per cent. fall in England and Wales from 2002-03 to 2008-09. Over the same period, police recorded crime figures show a 7 per cent. increase in violence against the person offences.

Conviction data have been provided by the Ministry of Justice and relate to the number of offenders. These data are published on a calendar year basis and are counts of persons classified by their principal offence.

As the data come from different sources and are reported on different periods, the two datasets are not comparable.

Information on the offenders dealt with by the Criminal Justice System does not necessarily reflect wider trends

for characteristics of perpetrators of crimes, where often an offender will not be apprehended.

The number of persons found guilty at all courts in England and Wales for offences of violence against the person, by type and police force area, from 2002 to 2008 (latest available), can be viewed in the Tables 4, 5, and 6.

Court proceedings data for 2009 are planned for publication in autumn 2010.

Table 1: Recorded offences of violence against the person with injury, 2002-03 to 2008-09

Police force	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Avon and Somerset	8,586	12,371	14,097	13,699	13,294	13,061	11,492
Bedfordshire	4,431	5,026	5,618	5,614	5,113	4,446	4,085
British Transport Police	2,231	2,850	3,242	3,517	2,841	2,562	2,529
Cambridgeshire	4,038	6,144	6,195	5,201	4,848	4,523	4,692
Cheshire	4,127	4,516	5,455	11,169	9,125	7,676	6,925
Cleveland	2,702	3,879	6,711	7,354	6,115	5,468	4,922
Cumbria	3,046	3,728	4,994	4,670	4,167	3,836	3,270
Derbyshire	10,160	11,434	12,014	11,441	11,009	10,933	8,734
Devon and Cornwall	13,471	14,577	15,568	14,075	13,211	12,246	11,088
Dorset	2,713	4,304	5,194	5,872	5,146	4,692	5,010
Durham	2,344	2,343	2,675	5,557	5,191	4,775	3,679
Dyfed-Powys	3,178	4,209	4,143	3,842	3,592	2,880	2,672
Essex	12,539	13,977	13,569	13,254	11,953	10,861	9,628
Gloucestershire	2,841	4,288	5,359	5,251	4,575	3,734	3,471
Greater Manchester	30,712	33,196	29,710	27,988	27,580	23,858	22,424
Gwent	6,972	6,621	7,087	7,101	6,655	6,013	5,823
Hampshire	7,339	11,607	14,369	13,427	14,728	15,393	15,152
Hertfordshire	3,312	4,882	8,494	7,706	7,064	5,496	4,963
Humberside	9,257	12,704	12,975	13,230	12,870	9,089	8,727
Kent	8,048	9,899	12,870	14,801	14,360	12,721	11,961
Lancashire	8,499	14,950	15,666	15,026	13,953	13,228	12,105
Leicestershire	5,682	7,106	9,597	9,390	9,135	8,617	7,837
Lincolnshire	4,889	5,709	5,804	5,295	4,566	3,958	3,856
London, City of	298	286	298	263	273	351	343
Merseyside	12,719	16,783	18,573	17,028	13,098	9,798	8,214
Metropolitan Police	44,387	45,151	71,958	86,020	79,698	73,302	71,462
Norfolk	4,309	5,565	5,838	5,871	5,229	4,577	3,773
Northamptonshire	5,127	7,010	6,571	6,694	5,752	5,418	4,857
Northumbria	7,910	15,169	14,067	12,773	13,358	11,033	10,488
North Wales	6,377	6,498	6,948	6,505	5,630	4,204	4,315
North Yorkshire	2,012	3,245	6,546	6,352	5,512	4,448	4,324
Nottinghamshire	10,659	12,076	12,755	14,538	13,049	10,985	11,814
South Wales	10,657	11,123	10,568	11,835	10,387	10,442	10,104
South Yorkshire	5,024	5,605	7,180	16,212	16,730	14,699	12,643
Staffordshire	9,805	12,449	13,290	12,597	12,224	9,731	9,733
Suffolk	3,677	4,596	5,075	5,102	4,631	3,902	4,008
Surrey	4,636	4,985	5,288	5,913	5,317	5,128	4,586
Sussex	6,097	12,008	14,439	13,371	12,140	9,862	8,355
Thames Valley	10,771	12,699	15,561	15,619	14,765	14,180	14,547
Warwickshire	2,232	4,111	3,753	3,936	3,809	3,746	3,044
West Mercia	10,142	11,079	10,483	9,601	9,165	8,538	7,722
West Midlands	32,443	35,760	34,842	36,465	36,579	33,216	29,575
West Yorkshire	18,366	27,432	25,997	27,813	22,991	20,214	18,216
Wiltshire	3,359	3,872	3,830	4,617	5,166	4,478	3,797
England and Wales	372,124	457,822	515,266	543,605	506,594	452,318	420,965

Table 2: Recorded offences of violence against the person without injury, 2002-03 to 2008-09

Police force	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Avon and Somerset	12,153	14,159	17,365	16,797	17,587	14,086	15,101
Bedfordshire	3,667	3,781	4,519	4,192	4,026	3,153	3,166

Table 2: Recorded offences of violence against the person without injury, 2002-03 to 2008-09

Police force	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
British Transport Police	7,945	8,632	9,872	10,864	13,291	12,963	12,971
Cambridgeshire	8,536	7,519	7,163	4,957	5,573	5,773	5,224
Cheshire	6,575	9,558	10,153	7,348	8,144	7,428	7,244
Cleveland	3,580	5,320	4,941	6,958	7,813	7,447	5,740
Cumbria	2,679	3,146	4,201	4,536	4,020	4,219	3,843
Derbyshire	5,253	4,963	4,570	4,519	5,056	5,796	5,625
Devon and Cornwall	10,249	11,392	12,767	11,230	11,551	10,893	9,936
Dorset	5,436	4,843	5,556	6,058	6,659	6,425	5,430
Durham	5,367	4,222	4,352	4,342	4,826	3,850	3,756
Dyfed-Powys	3,039	3,700	4,172	3,869	4,102	3,076	2,998
Essex	9,551	12,033	11,792	10,626	10,870	12,284	12,246
Gloucestershire	4,893	4,015	4,190	5,245	6,256	5,572	5,083
Greater Manchester	17,892	20,776	23,498	24,960	29,471	26,430	23,605
Gwent	8,047	6,310	5,805	4,402	5,062	4,185	3,583
Hampshire	14,832	23,541	23,804	25,259	25,841	23,635	20,460
Hertfordshire	4,356	7,474	8,351	8,500	9,826	7,852	7,140
Humberside	7,201	12,613	11,215	9,285	10,999	10,269	9,334
Kent	10,310	10,613	9,987	12,011	13,194	12,470	12,141
Lancashire	7,285	11,725	15,918	13,815	12,838	11,784	11,097
Leicestershire	9,822	10,487	11,973	11,610	11,270	10,162	10,682
Lincolnshire	4,349	4,439	5,052	5,431	5,691	5,444	5,058
London, City of	630	563	693	679	694	583	510
Merseyside	9,975	9,663	15,605	17,769	12,896	10,930	10,801
Metropolitan Police	134,395	141,036	129,965	111,242	102,656	99,428	102,949
Norfolk	6,298	6,021	7,082	6,633	6,353	5,349	4,901
Northamptonshire	4,681	4,060	4,590	3,798	4,361	5,194	4,618
Northumbria	17,261	9,628	8,791	9,222	10,891	8,512	8,659
North Wales	5,095	4,481	5,073	5,825	8,793	6,904	6,840
North Yorkshire	6,096	6,365	5,499	5,121	4,575	5,024	3,812
Nottinghamshire	5,300	6,555	7,002	6,778	8,889	8,851	7,796
South Wales	9,769	10,072	9,539	9,213	9,446	11,671	11,074
South Yorkshire	7,264	7,894	14,033	12,963	11,225	9,754	7,985
Staffordshire	10,385	10,325	10,291	11,630	12,504	10,069	10,046
Suffolk	4,272	4,933	5,272	4,915	5,559	5,511	5,422
Surrey	3,879	4,668	5,378	5,325	8,206	8,957	8,262
Sussex	12,026	7,492	12,654	14,496	16,484	15,220	11,911
Thames Valley	14,555	15,889	18,662	20,368	26,657	28,101	26,269
Warwickshire	3,455	2,755	2,738	2,633	3,577	3,780	2,931
West Mercia	9,706	10,788	7,696	6,098	6,845	7,161	7,077
West Midlands	19,351	20,095	20,264	20,521	21,211	20,119	18,647
West Yorkshire	12,484	18,432	18,612	21,064	20,275	18,803	16,370
Wiltshire	3,060	2,430	2,174	2,871	3,510	3,664	4,134
England and Wales	472,954	509,406	532,829	515,978	539,573	508,781	482,477

Table 3: Recorded summary offences of assault without injury, 2002-03 to 2008-09^{1,2}

Police force	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Avon and Somerset	6,258	6,458	8,269	7,812	8,536	7,169	7,407
Bedfordshire	2,021	1,781	1,845	1,787	1,866	1,321	1,512
British Transport Police	3,668	3,934	4,315	4,316	4,631	3,996	3,936
Cambridgeshire	4,847	3,607	3,590	2,252	2,828	3,224	2,907
Cheshire	4,776	7,374	7,147	3,381	4,195	4,463	4,058
Cleveland	2,440	3,969	2,558	3,282	3,416	3,784	3,283
Cumbria	1,448	1,528	1,900	1,946	1,830	2,114	1,646
Derbyshire	2,515	1,962	1,403	1,398	1,721	2,043	2,753
Devon and Cornwall	6,130	7,213	7,880	5,788	5,586	5,325	5,291
Dorset	3,977	3,050	2,491	2,566	2,892	3,193	2,864
Durham	3,560	2,490	2,471	1,750	1,733	1,304	1,533
Dyfed-Powys	942	1,557	1,896	1,439	1,660	1,337	1,189
Essex	4,057	4,628	3,765	3,393	3,779	5,281	5,720
Gloucestershire	3,333	2,512	2,197	2,236	2,927	2,804	2,933
Greater Manchester	7,952	8,261	7,237	7,075	9,071	9,352	9,668

Table 3: Recorded summary offences of assault without injury, 2002-03 to 2008-09^{1,2}

Police force	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Gwent	2,308	1,774	1,395	892	837	780	508
Hampshire	9,768	13,016	10,883	11,589	11,759	11,334	10,891
Hertfordshire	2,538	4,477	4,140	3,972	4,204	3,995	3,640
Humberside	3,436	4,161	4,909	3,989	4,580	3,577	3,643
Kent	6,998	6,984	5,928	6,849	7,805	7,738	7,251
Lancashire	3,748	6,512	7,794	6,467	6,110	6,241	6,348
Leicestershire	6,092	5,745	5,104	4,475	4,670	4,272	4,308
Lincolnshire	2,387	2,308	2,104	1,913	2,631	2,362	2,364
London, City of	259	201	199	199	191	222	192
Merseyside	6,115	4,186	5,814	5,567	4,948	4,179	3,671
Metropolitan Police	88,636	90,884	69,855	52,096	47,727	43,976	43,975
Norfolk	3,976	3,546	3,908	3,582	3,242	3,024	2,734
Northamptonshire	2,842	2,049	2,448	1,892	2,301	2,981	2,956
Northumbria	10,800	3,319	2,882	2,548	3,137	2,754	3,238
North Wales	3,186	2,495	2,461	2,592	4,102	3,145	2,790
North Yorkshire	3,989	3,832	2,117	2,185	1,942	1,878	1,906
Nottinghamshire	2,209	2,941	3,063	2,181	3,795	3,963	3,025
South Wales	3,223	3,183	2,841	2,992	3,069	4,016	4,239
South Yorkshire	4,511	5,073	9,466	4,872	3,763	3,083	2,452
Staffordshire	5,853	5,396	4,829	5,402	5,543	4,847	5,245
Suffolk	2,234	2,324	2,285	2,275	2,277	2,091	2,021
Surrey	2,077	2,586	2,627	2,249	3,112	3,612	3,842
Sussex	9,085	3,703	5,962	6,491	8,406	7,941	7,211
Thames Valley	8,728	8,516	7,529	7,128	11,354	12,022	11,496
Warwickshire	2,626	1,869	1,598	1,098	1,735	2,140	1,473
West Mercia	4,899	5,146	3,219	2,133	2,592	3,298	3,245
West Midlands	5,952	3,992	3,486	3,452	4,391	4,753	5,393
West Yorkshire	7,908	5,980	5,671	7,465	10,651	10,695	9,358
Wiltshire	1,792	1,057	701	751	1,256	1,851	2,503
England and Wales	276,099	267,579	244,182	209,717	228,801	223,480	218,618

¹ The numbers given in this table are also included in Table 2.

² Offence Classifications 104, 105A and 105B were used to produce the table.

Table 4: Number of defendants found guilty at all courts for violence against the person (more serious offences)¹, by police force area—England and Wales 2002 to 2008^{2, 3, 4}

Police force	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Avon and Somerset	77	87	86	88	87	75	68
Bedfordshire	39	32	42	33	31	47	42
Cambridgeshire	42	31	46	29	41	43	38
Cheshire	50	53	54	84	58	70	44
City of London	5	1	2	—	1	—	3
Cleveland	46	54	52	61	53	52	46
Cumbria	23	26	30	35	19	24	23
Derbyshire	40	37	58	55	32	37	32
Devon and Cornwall	67	58	69	92	63	64	59
Dorset	22	20	26	33	34	29	21
Durham	44	44	53	42	38	37	27
Essex	57	73	55	65	53	71	71
Gloucestershire	19	24	24	20	17	23	18
Greater Manchester	257	222	226	238	223	245	229
Hampshire	109	99	130	121	104	101	80
Hertfordshire	53	40	43	61	33	34	39
Humberside	47	74	77	69	71	86	67
Kent	60	67	74	79	72	78	100
Lancashire	109	116	130	123	91	122	124
Leicestershire	59	66	78	64	36	60	66
Lincolnshire	18	28	32	15	33	30	47
Merseyside	103	115	107	120	126	108	82
Metropolitan Police	515	529	612	589	578	604	652
Norfolk	35	31	30	39	40	29	40
North Yorkshire	29	26	32	50	32	54	34
Northamptonshire	43	26	39	35	40	49	37

Table 4: Number of defendants found guilty at all courts for violence against the person (more serious offences)¹, by police force area—England and Wales 2002 to 2008^{2, 3, 4}

Police force	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Northumbria	113	121	109	117	115	136	129
Nottinghamshire	52	58	56	76	71	63	71
South Yorkshire	96	68	117	92	93	86	89
Staffordshire	55	46	65	56	64	46	58
Suffolk	39	29	34	30	26	13	35
Surrey	17	25	31	20	24	35	21
Sussex	72	65	73	67	70	70	93
Thames Valley	83	93	88	107	110	111	112
Warwickshire	23	18	21	29	23	29	24
West Mercia	49	58	53	59	49	63	43
West Midlands	230	222	247	228	238	221	206
West Yorkshire	131	163	192	180	131	171	214
Wiltshire	25	19	30	28	21	20	33
Dyfed-Powys	21	30	28	27	21	31	30
Gwent	64	45	59	52	28	36	28
North Wales	30	27	32	54	36	40	43
South Wales	133	129	112	127	116	110	106
England and Wales	3,201	3,195	3,554	3,589	3,242	3,453	3,424

¹ Includes: Murder, Attempted murder, Threat or conspiracy to murder, Manslaughter, Infanticide, Child destruction, Causing death by dangerous driving, Manslaughter due to diminished responsibility, Causing death by careless driving under the influence of drink or drugs, Causing or allowing the death of a child or vulnerable person, Causing death by careless or inconsiderate driving, Causing death by driving,—unlicensed, disqualified or uninsured drivers, Causing death by aggravated vehicle taking, Wounding or other act endangering life, Endangering railway passenger.

² The statistics relate to persons for whom these offences were the principal offences for which they were dealt with. When a defendant has been found guilty of two or more offences the principal offence is the offence for which the heaviest penalty is imposed. Where the same disposal is imposed for two or more offences, the offence selected is the offence for which the statutory maximum penalty is the most severe.

³ Every effort is made to ensure that the figures presented are accurate and complete. However, it is important to note that these data have been extracted from large administrative data systems generated by the courts and police forces. As a consequence, care should be taken to ensure data collection processes and their inevitable limitations are taken into account when those data are used.

⁴ Excludes convictions for Cardiff magistrates court for April, July and August 2008.

Source:

Justice Statistics Analytical Services—Ministry of Justice

Table 5: Number of defendants found guilty at all courts for violence against the person (less serious offences)¹, by police force area—England and Wales 2002 to 2008^{2, 3, 4}

Police force	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Avon and Somerset	737	848	747	829	830	856	888
Bedfordshire	227	265	284	336	335	315	354
Cambridgeshire	360	344	362	484	417	430	471
Cheshire	631	562	487	704	825	849	713
City of London	60	54	43	43	33	23	37
Cleveland	400	416	464	508	667	641	649
Cumbria	437	443	428	508	473	434	461
Derbyshire	585	638	643	847	639	730	620
Devon and Cornwall	766	908	807	820	751	699	732
Dorset	289	295	307	415	372	349	313
Durham	567	522	498	616	660	675	612
Essex	561	629	772	767	755	842	799
Gloucestershire	299	314	287	347	329	241	341
Greater Manchester	2,345	2,522	2,751	2,608	2,838	2,821	2,520
Hampshire	1,124	1,167	1,202	1,192	1,240	1,214	1,286
Hertfordshire	486	467	517	622	546	485	443
Humberside	608	703	719	732	783	867	792
Kent	617	659	542	644	695	702	812
Lancashire	1,175	1,176	1,171	1,228	1,507	1,594	1,497
Leicestershire	739	715	724	825	730	714	641
Lincolnshire	292	335	388	351	369	380	378
Merseyside	1,211	1,237	1,331	1,301	1,409	1,396	1,313
Metropolitan Police	5,879	5,342	5,468	5,471	5,590	5,406	6,132
Norfolk	361	372	336	384	430	386	380
North Yorkshire	336	365	426	463	467	545	510
Northamptonshire	262	269	295	334	285	267	386
Northumbria	1,361	1,270	1,201	1,263	1,227	1,391	1,317

Table 5: Number of defendants found guilty at all courts for violence against the person (less serious offences)¹, by police force area—England and Wales 2002 to 2008^{2, 3, 4}

Police force	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Nottinghamshire	687	688	694	761	784	791	712
South Yorkshire	927	951	946	1,060	1,090	1,131	1,224
Staffordshire	601	642	667	681	727	714	704
Suffolk	329	367	410	455	545	469	379
Surrey	206	229	263	253	302	311	316
Sussex	629	674	603	713	778	847	802
Thames Valley	682	698	713	938	1,038	998	977
Warwickshire	195	190	232	260	303	273	276
West Mercia	650	654	642	779	860	846	779
West Midlands	2,860	2,764	2,731	2,299	2,610	2,389	2,342
West Yorkshire	1,216	1,290	1,607	1,557	1,331	1,477	1,542
Wiltshire	271	335	296	371	439	376	392
Dyfed-Powys	332	386	320	335	329	335	228
Gwent	553	482	512	433	538	530	403
North Wales	406	440	477	550	641	612	574
South Wales	1,248	1,214	1,282	1,253	1,105	1,147	1,048
England and Wales	34,507	34,841	35,595	37,340	38,622	38,498	38,095

¹ Includes: Endangering life at sea, Other wounding etc., Cruelty to or neglect of children, Abandoning child aged under two years, Child abduction, procuring illegal abortion, Concealment of birth.

² The statistics relate to persons for whom these offences were the principal offences for which they were dealt with. When a defendant has been found guilty of two or more offences the principal offence is the offence for which the heaviest penalty is imposed. Where the same disposal is imposed for two or more offences, the offence selected is the offence for which the statutory maximum penalty is the most severe.

³ Every effort is made to ensure that the figures presented are accurate and complete. However, it is important to note that these data have been extracted from large administrative data systems generated by the courts and police forces. As a consequence, care should be taken to ensure data collection processes and their inevitable limitations are taken into account when those data are used.

⁴ Excludes convictions for Cardiff magistrates court for April, July and August 2008.

Source:

Justice Statistics Analytical Services—Ministry of Justice

Table 6: Number of defendants found guilty at all courts for common assault, by police force area—England and Wales 2002 to 2008^{1, 2, 3}

Police force	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Avon and Somerset	754	789	934	1,279	1,246	1,413	1,484
Bedfordshire	246	307	364	452	528	442	491
Cambridgeshire	334	347	396	563	699	736	762
Cheshire	508	544	575	831	1,182	1,396	1,244
City of London	28	18	21	23	44	47	60
Cleveland	234	350	426	444	515	634	657
Cumbria	359	407	474	573	593	687	775
Derbyshire	561	684	883	1,130	1,158	1,328	1,463
Devon and Cornwall	1,044	1,041	1,204	1,333	1,171	1,168	1,365
Dorset	363	340	406	518	605	756	670
Durham	341	318	337	434	457	665	551
Essex	840	894	1,068	1,419	1,624	1,724	1,656
Gloucestershire	287	307	349	498	520	462	614
Greater Manchester	998	1,183	1,825	2,135	2,637	2,830	2,653
Hampshire	1,322	1,480	1,982	1,863	1,966	2,248	2,216
Hertfordshire	376	461	621	856	901	861	860
Humberside	444	587	755	842	888	1,029	1,017
Kent	810	930	1,075	1,153	1,351	1,454	1,421
Lancashire	844	993	1,034	1,512	1,957	2,131	2,145
Leicestershire	527	630	734	1,098	1,156	1,407	1,275
Lincolnshire	480	570	567	585	619	570	571
Merseyside	671	946	1,153	1,287	1,464	1,520	1,456
Metropolitan Police	2,829	2,941	3,416	4,063	5,096	5,304	5,888
Norfolk	612	617	678	662	728	792	881
North Yorkshire	420	438	582	765	800	753	726
Northamptonshire	283	331	361	419	423	427	426
Northumbria	776	947	1,106	1,128	1,226	1,586	1,468
Nottinghamshire	910	906	917	1,098	1,143	1,043	1,033
South Yorkshire	580	724	929	1,049	1,184	1,343	1,286
Staffordshire	780	802	938	1,080	1,107	1,116	943
Suffolk	467	536	704	770	836	822	807

Table 6: Number of defendants found guilty at all courts for common assault, by police force area—England and Wales 2002 to 2008^{1, 2, 3}

Police force	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Surrey	293	415	492	601	559	603	591
Sussex	768	809	1,075	1,099	1,124	1,382	1,439
Thames Valley	796	841	984	1,524	1,696	1,664	1,639
Warwickshire	192	176	194	273	303	426	351
West Mercia	676	733	948	1,131	1,208	1,225	1,102
West Midlands	2,467	2,529	2,793	2,848	2,937	2,978	2,742
West Yorkshire	1,577	2,010	2,445	2,579	2,362	2,428	2,345
Wiltshire	519	623	616	620	615	531	547
Dyfed-Powys	258	317	350	358	459	443	393
Gwent	374	343	371	387	512	543	571
North Wales	476	501	566	643	736	791	842
South Wales	525	617	682	820	925	985	893
England and Wales	28,949	32,282	38,330	44,745	49,260	52,693	52,319

¹ The statistics relate to persons for whom these offences were the principal offences for which they were dealt with. When a defendant has been found guilty of two or more offences the principal offence is the offence for which the heaviest penalty is imposed. Where the same disposal is imposed for two or more offences, the offence selected is the offence for which the statutory maximum penalty is the most severe.

² Every effort is made to ensure that the figures presented are accurate and complete. However, it is important to note that these data have been extracted from large administrative data systems generated by the courts and police forces. As a consequence, care should be taken to ensure data collection processes and their inevitable limitations are taken into account when those data are used.

³ Excludes convictions for Cardiff magistrates court for April, July and August 2008.

Source:

Justice Statistics Analytical Services—Ministry of Justice

Departmental ICT

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the monetary value was of payments made by his Department to external IT contractors in each of the last five years. [320882]

Mr. Woolas: The total monetary value of payments made by the Home Department to external IT contractors for each of the financial years 2005-06 to 2008-09 was as follows:

Financial year	£ million
2005-06	150
2006-07	223
2007-08	336
2008-09	265

Note:

Following their incorporation into the Ministry of Justice in May 2007, the National Offenders Management Service (NOMS) and Office of Criminal Justice Reform (OCJR) continued to share the Home Office accounting system until October 2008. Figures to October 2008 include payments by NOMS and OCJR as they could be excluded only at disproportionate cost.

The payment figures to October 2008 include expenditure by the National Offenders Management Service and the Office of Criminal Justice Reform, both of which are now incorporated into the Ministry of Justice.

Because of in-year changes to the Department's accounting systems, payment information for the financial year 2004-05 could be made available only at disproportionate cost.

The 2008-09 figure represents just under 20 per cent. of spend on goods and services by the Home Office and UKBA and reflects the significant technology enabling initiatives undertaken to protect our borders and counter terrorism.

The Department awards contracts in competition according to the EU procurement directives based on value for money.

Domestic Violence: Immigrants

Jo Swinson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the pilot project for women with no recourse to public funds will be extended beyond August 2010; and whether he plans to make that initiative permanent. [325865]

Mr. Woolas: It has not proved possible to respond in the time available before Prorogation.

Drugs: Misuse

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) which substances commonly considered to be legal highs are under review by his Department; [325702]

(2) when officials in his Department were first made aware of the risks arising from the use of mephedrone as a drug; [325703]

(3) if he will consider bringing forward proposals to include (a) methylone and (b) butylone within the provisions of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. [325704]

Mr. Alan Campbell: Pursuant to the previous Home Secretary's commission of the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) to provide advice on so called "legal highs" in March 2009 and following its advice on synthetic cannabinoids, and cathinone derivatives, the ACMD are now considering its next priority area from a range that includes but is not limited to plants such as Kava kava and Salvia divinorum, solvents and gases, miscellaneous stimulants and hallucinogens, and fungi.

Home Office officials first became aware of the use of mephedrone as a drug following unconfirmed presentations to Accident and Emergency units during the Isle of Wight music festival in late July 2009.

The draft order to control mephedrone and other cathinone derivatives currently before Parliament will enshrine in law a generic definition encompassing a wide range of cathinone derivatives, including methylone and butylone.

Human Trafficking

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many judicial reviews of decisions made by the competent authority in relation to human trafficking cases were (a) initiated and (b) completed between 1 April 2009 and 28 February 2010. [325892]

Mr. Alan Campbell: It has not proved possible to respond in the time available before Prorogation.

Identity Cards: Cheshire

Mr. Timpson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applications for identity cards his Department has received from residents of postcode area (a) CW1 3, (b) CW1 4, (c) CW3 0, (d) CW3 9, (e) CW5 6, (f) CW5 8, (g) CW11 4, (h) ST7 2, (i) CW1 2, (j) CW2 6, (k) CW2 7, (l) CW5 7, (m) CW5 5, (n) CW2 8, (o) CW1 5, (p) CW2 5 and (q) CW1 6 since 1 January 2010. [325179]

Mr. Woolas [*holding answer 30 March 2010*]: The Identity and Passport Service is not able to provide a breakdown of applications received to this level of postcode detail without contravening data protection principles.

Illegal Immigrants: Employment

Sandra Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on what dates his Department monitored each UK fishing port to assess whether employees were working illegally in the last 12 months; and what the results of such monitoring were. [325893]

Mr. Woolas: It has not proved possible to respond in the time available before Prorogation.

Immigrants: Detainees

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people held in immigration removal centres (IRCs) pending removal from the country were transferred to another IRC before being removed in the last 12 months. [325854]

Mr. Woolas: The information requested could be obtained by undertaking a detailed examination of individual records which would be only at disproportionate cost.

Detainees are not routinely moved between centres without an operational reason. This is normally to ensure occupancy levels of the bed space is maximised, to re-position detainees close to airports in preparation for their removal from the UK, to attend court hearings, medical appointments or for an interview.

Independent Safeguarding Authority: Manpower

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many and what proportion of caseworkers employed by the Independent Safeguarding Authority to make barring decisions under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 do not have (a) a university degree, (b) any A-levels and (c) more than four GCSEs at A* to C grade. [307862]

Mr. Alan Campbell [*holding answer 6 January 2010*]: The Independent Safeguarding Authority recruits caseworkers based on competency based assessment which links to the skills and experience they can bring to the post rather than academic qualifications. However, the breakdown of the percentages of Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) caseworker qualifications (Levels 3-6) is as follows:

(a) Staff with degrees = 28 per cent.

(b) Staff with A levels = 49 per cent.

(c) Staff with four GCE/GCSE's grade A* to C or above = 70 per cent.

Casework Officers, Decision Makers, Team Managers and Unit Heads undertake the UCAPD—Professional Decision Making in the ISA. This programme is accredited by Teesside University and awards individuals 60 credits/units of an academic qualification.

Mephedrone

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what representations he has received on the banning of mephedrone in the UK; [320113]

(2) if he will introduce proposals to ban the sale of mephedrone in the UK. [320114]

Mr. Alan Campbell: Following receipt of the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs advice on 29 March 2010, a draft order to amend the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 to control mephedrone and other cathinone derivatives as class B drugs is currently before Parliament for its approval. With Parliament's agreement, these drugs will be controlled on 16 April 2010.

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent representations he has received on the classification of mephedrone under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971; and if he will make a statement. [324848]

Mr. Alan Campbell [*holding answer 29 March 2010*]: The most recent representation received on the classification of mephedrone is the advice of the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD), the Government's independent expert body, on 29 March 2010. The ACMD's advice can be accessed at:

<http://drugs.homeoffice.gov.uk/drugs-laws/acmd/index.html>

On the recommendation of the ACMD that mephedrone and other cathinone derivatives should be brought under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 as Class B drugs, a draft Order to amend the 1971 Act is currently before Parliament for its approval. With Parliament's agreement, these drugs will be controlled on 16 April 2010.

Misuse of Drugs Act 1971

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he plans to bring forward proposals to amend the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 to provide for (a) nurse independent prescribers and (b) pharmacist independent prescribers to prescribe more controlled drugs; and if he will make a statement. [321939]

Mr. Alan Campbell: The Government plan to amend the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001 (as amended) when Parliament returns in order to expand the range of controlled drugs that can be prescribed independently by Nurse Independent Prescribers and to enable Pharmacist Independent Prescribers to independently prescribe controlled drugs.

Operation Greenfly

James Duddridge: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of (a) Operation Greenfly and (b) Operation Calais. [325585]

Mr. Alan Campbell: These operations, like other operational matters in the force area, are the responsibility of the chief constable of Essex police, with whom questions about their effectiveness should be taken up.

Police: Greater Manchester

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the implementation of the policing pledge in Greater Manchester. [325852]

Mr. Hanson [holding answer 7 April 2010]: It is for individual police forces and authorities to ensure delivery of the Policing Pledge in their area. The Government will hold forces to account for progress through the single top-down target we have set them to improve public confidence that the antisocial behaviour and crime issues that matter locally are being tackled, and in the light of inspection work by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC). In September 2009, 50 per cent. of the public were confident that antisocial behaviour and crime issues that matter in their area were being dealt with—an increase of 4 per cent. points in the last year.

In October 2009, HMIC published a report on the progress of all forces in delivering the Pledge and the report graded Greater Manchester police as 'fair'. Police authorities are now working with forces to ensure that the learning identified by HMIC is taken onboard and that the Policing Pledge is delivered consistently across their force area.

UK Border Agency: Correspondence

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department for what reasons the Assistant Director of the UK Border Agency did not reply to the hon. Member for Thurrock's letter of 23 September 2009 (re CTS Ref B34288/9 and Z1048050) until 26 March 2010; why her letter was not despatched until 29 March 2010; and if he will make a statement. [325844]

Mr. Woolas: The delay in responding to my hon. Friend's letter was due to an internal organisational re-structuring which impacted temporarily on work allocation and, as a result, certain items of work were not actioned within the appropriate time scales.

War Crimes

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 24 March 2010, *Official Report*, columns 351-2W, on the UK Border Agency's War Crimes Unit, what the country of origin is of those recommended for refusal/exclusion. [325859]

Mr. Woolas: It has not proved possible to respond in the time available before Prorogation.

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 24 March 2010, *Official Report*, columns 351-52W, on the UK Border Agency's War Crimes Unit, how many people whose cases the Border Agency referred to the Metropolitan Police are still in the UK. [325860]

Mr. Woolas: It has not proved possible to respond in the time available before Prorogation.

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 24 March 2010, *Official Report*, columns 351-52W, on the UK Border Agency's War Crimes Unit, how many people the Border Agency recommended for refusal/exclusion are still in the UK. [325861]

Mr. Woolas: It has not proved possible to respond in the time available before Prorogation.

Written Questions: Government Responses

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to reply to question 324858, tabled on 23 March 2010, on Group 4 Securicor (G4S). [325871]

Mr. Woolas: I refer my hon. Friend to my answer of 6 April 2010, *Official Report*, column 1268W.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department for what reasons he has not provided a substantive response to Question (a) 325183 on human trafficking and (b) 325031 on the European Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse. [325891]

Mr. Alan Campbell: I refer the hon. Gentleman to my answers of 7 April 2010, *Official Report*, column 1382W, and 6 April 2010, *Official Report*, column 1271W respectively.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Bloody Sunday Tribunal of Inquiry

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much the Saville Inquiry has spent on IT consultants since its inception. [325508]

Mr. Woodward: I am advised by the Bloody Sunday Inquiry that it has spent approximately £2.2 million on information technology consultants to the end of February 2010.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the budget is of the press office for the Saville Inquiry in the (a) current and (b) next financial year. [325509]

Mr. Woodward: I am advised by the Bloody Sunday Inquiry that the Inquiry does not currently employ a press officer and there is no dedicated budget for press office facilities. Since November 2004, all press inquiries have been handled by the Secretary and Deputy Secretary to the Inquiry. An average total on-call allowance of £400 per month is paid to cover out-of-hours press inquiries.

Departmental Advertising

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what advertising campaigns were (a) launched and (b) maintained by his Department in 2008-09; and how much each such campaign cost in that year. [325537]

Paul Goggins: Expenditure and a list of the advertising campaigns (a) launched and (b) maintained by the Northern Ireland Office, including its arm's length bodies and the Public Prosecution Service Northern Ireland but excluding its agencies and Executive NDPBs, in 2008-09 is shown in the following table.

<i>Campaign</i>	<i>Maintained/launched</i>	<i>Cost (£)</i>
PPSNI Recruitment	Launched	7,365
Fireworks Campaign	Maintained	49,315
Recruitment of member of the Boundary Commission	Launched	12,929
Public appointments competition for recruitment of Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland	Launched	14,678
Unknown Callers—Community Safety television advertisement	Maintained	102,030
Theft from Vehicles—television advertisement	Maintained	78,682
Close it, Lock it, Check it Campaign	Launched	169,425
Publicising section 75 Equality Legislation	Launched	2,858

Departmental Buildings

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much his Department and its agencies have spent on rooms for staff leisure in each of the last five years. [324425]

Paul Goggins: The Northern Ireland Office (NIO) and its Agencies have spent the following amounts on rooms for staff leisure, including fitness facilities and equipment, in each of the last five years;

The NIO in 2009-10 spent £1,582.26, and in 2008-9 spent £7,614.24. There was no expenditure in the previous three years.

The NI Prison Service in 2008-9 spent £2,015.13, and in 2007-8 £9,621.83. There was no expenditure in the other years.

Expenditure on fitness facilities and equipment, including shower facilities, is seen as contributing to the promotion of good health amongst staff.

Departmental Dismissal

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many members of staff in his Department were dismissed in each of the last five years; and how many were dismissed as a result of under-performance in each year. [325493]

Paul Goggins: The details requested are shown in the following table.

	<i>Total dismissed</i>	<i>Dismissed as a result of under performance</i>
2005	*1	0
2006	5 (*2)	0
2007	8	0
2008	4	0
2009	2	0

* Reason for dismissal not recorded.

Departmental Freedom of Information

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland from how many documents released by his Department under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 in the last five years information has been withheld under the exemptions relating to (a) parliamentary privilege, (b) disclosure of personal data, (c) disclosure of commercial data, (d) duty of confidence and the public interest, (e) operation of a ministerial private office, (f) advice from the Law Officers, (g) ministerial correspondence, (h) formulation or development of Government policy, (i) information supplied by or relating to security bodies, (j) international relations and (k) relations between bodies within the UK. [325435]

Paul Goggins: In order to provide the information requested it would be necessary to review all documents that have been released by the Department since 2005. As this would incur disproportionate costs I regret that I am unable to provide the information.

Departmental ICT

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which of his Department's ICT projects were over budget at the latest date for which information is available; and by how much each was over budget at that time. [325536]

Paul Goggins: The Causeway Programme is a key element in the continuing modernisation and reform of the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland. At its inception, total costs were estimated at £42.7 million. The most recent estimate is that total costs through to the end of the contract in 2013 will be £61.6 million. The increased costs have arisen in three main areas:

Adaptation of criminal justice line of business systems to link in with Causeway - £7 million

PPP contract changes - £8 million

Programme development and office costs - £4 million

The rate of return on the investment is, however, expected to be broadly similar to the original estimate.

Departmental Impact Assessments

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many equalities impact assessments his Department has undertaken in the last 12 months for which figures are available; and what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of such assessments.

[325406]

Paul Goggins: The Northern Ireland Office (NIO) has not undertaken any equality impact assessments in the 12 months ending 28 February 2010.

Departmental Legal Costs

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much his Department has spent on (a) legal fees and (b) compensation in relation to legal cases concerning remuneration of its employees in each of the last five years.

[325500]

Mr. Woodward: Due to Prorogation it has not been possible to answer this question.

Departmental Manpower

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many (a) nationals of other EU member states and (b) non-EU foreign nationals his Department employs.

[325433]

Paul Goggins: The Northern Ireland Office (NIO) has no central record of nationals of other EU member states and non-EU foreign nationals in our employment. Since November 2007, the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS), which also carries out recruitment on behalf of the NIO, has collected the nationality details of applicants for vacancies. This information is retained for those who are successful and are appointed to posts in the NICS and NIO.

Departmental Marketing

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much his Department spent on promotional items carrying the Department's branding and logo in the last five years; and what such items were.

[324708]

Paul Goggins: The following table details expenditure by the Northern Ireland Office (NIO), including its arms length bodies and the Public Prosecution Service Northern Ireland but excluding its agencies and NDPBs on promotional items carrying the Department's branding and logo in the last five years.

	Item	Total (£)
2004-05	—	Nil
2005-06	—	Nil
2006-07	Leadership programme folders	2,389.63
2007-08	Leaflets and posters advertising e-learning programme	6,361.45

	Item	Total (£)
2008-09	Leadership programme folders	2,239.63
	Consultant business cards	129.13
	Sentencing framework leaflets and posters	819.50

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much of his Department's marketing budget was spent on (a) media advertising, (b) promotion and (c) education packs and initiatives for schools in 2008-09.

[325538]

Paul Goggins: Expenditure on (a) media advertising (b) promotion and (c) education packs and initiatives for schools by the Northern Ireland Office, including its arms length bodies and the Public Prosecution Service Northern Ireland but excluding its agencies and executive NDPBs, in 2008-09 is shown in the following table.

	£
Media Advertising	422,785
Promotion	5,562
Education Packs and Initiatives for Schools	109,903

Departmental Meetings

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many official meetings he has had in (a) London, (b) Belfast, (c) Londonderry, (d) Newry, (e) Armagh and (f) the United States of America in the last 12 months.

[325427]

Mr. Woodward: To identify each and every separate official meeting the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has had in the last 12 months on official business in London, Northern Ireland and the United States can be done only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Opinion Polls

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much was spent by his Department on (a) opinion polling, (b) focus groups and (c) other forms of market research in each of the last five years; what surveys were commissioned; and what the purpose was of each such survey.

[325491]

Paul Goggins: The requested information is as follows:

2005-06

Opinion polling—£340,317

Focus groups—£27,480

Other market research—£0

Surveys commissioned and the purpose of each:

Northern Ireland Information Service Poll—to gauge public view on the political process;

Commissioned questions for NI Omnibus survey—to obtain public perception of Public Prosecution Service which in turn assists in the development of policy;

NI Crime Survey—to ascertain people's experience and perceptions of crime in N.I;

NI Omnibus Survey—Recovery of Assets Module—to ascertain people's awareness of Assets Recovery Agency and perceptions of its effectiveness;

NI Omnibus Survey—Confidence in the Criminal Justice System Module—to assess people's confidence of the Criminal Justice System;

NI Omnibus Survey—Confidence in Police Module—to assess people's confidence of the police; and

NI Omnibus Survey—Sexual Violence Module—perceptions and assessment of sexual violence in NI.

2006-07

Opinion polling—£399,328

Focus groups—£0

Other market research—£0

Surveys commissioned and the purpose of each:

Northern Ireland Information Service Poll—to gauge public view on the political process;

Commissioned questions for NI Omnibus survey—to obtain public perception of Public Prosecution Service which in turn assists in the development of policy;

NI Crime Survey—to ascertain people's experience and perceptions of crime in NI;

NI Omnibus Survey—Organised Crime Module—to ascertain people's experience and perceptions of Organised Crime;

NI Omnibus Survey—Recovery of Assets Module—to ascertain people's awareness of Assets Recovery Agency and perceptions of its effectiveness;

Compensation Agency Applicants' Attitudes Survey; and

Public Attitudes towards Sex Offenders.

2007-08

Opinion polling—£397,145

Focus groups—£1,828

Other market research—£7,370

Surveys commissioned and the purpose of each:

Northern Ireland Information Service Poll—to gauge public view on the political process;

Commissioned questions for NI Omnibus survey—to obtain public perception of Public Prosecution Service which in turn assists in the development of policy;

NI Crime Survey—to ascertain people's experience and perceptions of crime in NI;

NI Omnibus Survey—Organised Crime Module—to ascertain people's experience and perceptions of Organised Crime;

NI Omnibus Survey—Recovery of Assets Module—to ascertain people's awareness of Assets Recovery Agency and perceptions of its effectiveness;

NI Omnibus Survey—Youth Justice Agency module—to ascertain people's awareness of the Youth Justice Agency and perceptions of its effectiveness; and

Evaluation of OCTF Christmas Counterfeit goods campaign.

2008-09

Opinion polling—£46,069

Focus groups—£0

Other market research—£9,897

Surveys Commissioned and the purpose of each:

Northern Ireland Information Service Poll—to gauge public view on the political process;

Commissioned questions for NI Omnibus survey—to obtain public perception of Public Prosecution Service which in turn assists in the development of policy;

Customer Satisfaction Survey—to analyse the performance of the compensation Agency;

Access NI—Customer Attitudes Survey; and

Evaluation of OCTF Christmas Counterfeit goods campaign.

2009-10

Opinion polling—£37,145

Focus groups—£0

Other market research—£6,539

Surveys commissioned and the purpose of each:

Access NI—Customer Attitudes Survey;

Evaluation of OCTF Christmas Counterfeit goods campaign;

To gauge public opinion on the political process (May 2009); and

To gauge public opinion on the political process (March 2010).

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what direction his Department gives to its contractors on the framing of questions in surveys it commissions. [325436]

Paul Goggins: Polling questions are agreed in consultation between the Department and contractor.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in respect of how many surveys commissioned by his Department in 2010 the (a) results and (b) supporting data have been published in full. [325437]

Paul Goggins: The Northern Ireland Office (NIO) has not commissioned any surveys in 2010 where the (a) results and (b) supporting data have been published in full.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what opinion surveys were commissioned by his Department in (a) 2008, (b) 2009 and (c) 2010 to date; and what company was commissioned to undertake each. [325447]

Mr. Woodward: The requested information is as follows:

<i>Survey</i>	<i>Commissioned Company</i>
<i>2008-09</i>	
Northern Ireland Information Service	Millward and Brown Ulster
Poll - to gauge public view on the political process;	
Commissioned questions for NI Omnibus survey - to obtain public perception of Public Prosecution Service which in turn assists in the development of policy;	Millward and Brown Ulster
Customer Satisfaction Survey - to analyse the performance of the Compensation Agency;	Millward and Brown Ulster
Access NI - Customer Attitudes Survey; and	NI Statistics and Research Agency
Evaluation of OCTF Christmas counterfeit goods campaign.	Genesis Advertising
<i>2009-10</i>	
Access NI - Customer Attitudes Survey;	NI Statistics and Research Agency
Evaluation of OCTF Christmas counterfeit goods campaign;	Genesis Advertising
To gauge public opinion on the political process (May 2009); and	Millward and Brown Ulster

<i>Survey</i>	<i>Commissioned Company</i>
To gauge public opinion on the political process (March 2010).	Millward and Brown Ulster

Departmental Pay

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many and what proportion of senior civil servants in his Department were awarded a bonus in 2009; and what the (a) highest, (b) lowest, (c) mean, (d) median and (e) mode bonus awarded was. [325497]

Paul Goggins: Non-consolidated performance payments are made to staff in the senior civil service in line with Cabinet Office Guidance. In 2009 performance payments were made to 37 senior civil servants which is 58.7 per cent. of the senior civil servants in the Department. The highest payment (a) was £11,000, the lowest (b) was £1,800, the mean payment (c) was £7,762, the median payment (d) was £7,570 and the mode payment (e) was £6,450.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many and what proportion of his Department's Board members who were civil servants working in his Department were awarded a bonus in (a) 2008 and (b) 2009; and what the highest bonus paid was in each year. [325498]

Paul Goggins: In 2008 there were 12 board members of which 11 received a bonus which constitutes 91.7 per cent. of the Board. The highest bonus paid was £18,000.

In 2009 there were nine board members of which six received a bonus which constitutes 66.7 per cent. of the Board. The highest bonus paid was £11,000.

Departmental Press: Subscriptions

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to which (a) magazines and (b) journals his Department has subscribed in each of the last five years; and what the cost was of those subscriptions. [325473]

Paul Goggins: The information requested is as follows.

Community Safety Unit

Pavilion Community Safety Journal (2010 cost £619.00)
Older People Journal (2010 cost £125.00)

	<i>Total (£)</i>
2005-06	619.00
2006-07	619.00
2007-08	619.00
2008-09	744.00
2009-10	744.00

Personnel Services Division

Central Government Supplies Estimates 2007-08 (2008-09 cost £61.92)

Employers Pay Benefits Manual Issues 26-29 (2008-09 cost £359.00)

Employment Law Issues 74-79 (2008-09 cost £827.00)

Industrial Relations Law Reports Journal 2008-10 (2008-09 cost £2,566.00)

Payroll Factfile Issues 85-90 (2008-09 cost £474.00)

Termination Employment Issues 26-29 (2008-09 cost £430.25)

	<i>Total (£)</i>
2008-09	3,891.17

Information and Corporate Services Division Millbank

Economist (2009-10 cost £960.00)

New Statesman (2009-10 cost £672.00)

Spectator (2009-10 cost £614.40)

Private Eye (2009-10 cost £36.00)

Tribune (2009-10 cost £288.00)

	<i>Total (£)</i>
2005-06	No figures available
2006-07	2,392.80
2007-08	2,392.80
2008-09	2,392.80
2009-10	2,570.40

Criminal Justice Library

British Journal of Criminology (2009 cost £357.85)

British Journal of Social Work (2009 cost £472.63)

Bulletin of NI Law (2009 cost £210.00)

Child Care in Practice (2009 cost 179.07)

Community Safety (2009 cost £195.00)

Criminal Justice (2009 cost £380.14)

Criminal Justice Matters (2009 cost £112.87)

Criminal Law Review (2009 cost £320.00)

Drugscope (2008 cost £55.00)

Economist (2008-09 cost £103.00)

European Human Rights Law Review (2009 cost £388.00)

Fortnight (2009 cost £28.00)

House of Commons Weekly Information Bulletin (2009 cost £48.15)

Howard Journal of Criminal Justice (2009 cost £70.00)

Human Rights Alerter (2009 cost £197.00)

Human Rights Updater (2009 cost £179.00)

International Review of Victimology (2009 cost £179.00)

Journal of Adolescence (2009 cost £48.00)

Justice of the Peace Journal and Justice of the Peace reports (2009 cost £499.00)

Magistrate (2009 cost £30.00)

Modern Law Review (2009 cost £230.35)

New Law Journal (2009-10 cost £285.00)

Northern Ireland Legal Quarterly (2008 cost £85.00)

Northern Ireland Legal Quarterly (2009-10 cost £100.00)

Police Journal (2009 cost £131.00)

	<i>Total (£)</i>
2008-09	4,883.06

Crown Solicitor's Office

Coredry on Solicitors (2009-10 cost £1,304.00)

Costs (2009-10 cost £590.00)

Criminal Appeal Reports (2009-10 cost £1,071.00)

Current Law (2009-10 cost £1,454.00)

Discrimination In Employment (2009-10 cost £216.00)

European Human Rights Reports (2009-10 cost £748.00)
 European Human Rights Law Review (2009-10 cost £601.00)
 Human Rights Practice (2009-10 cost £214.00)
 IDS Employment Law Brief (2009-10 cost £681.00)
 Industrial Cases Reports (2009-10 cost £440.00)
 Judicial Review (2009-10 cost £195.00)
 Kemp and Kemp on Personal Injury (2009-10 cost £234.00)
 Mitchell on Confiscation (2009-10 cost £204.00)
 New Law Journal (2009-10 cost £285.00)
 Northern Ireland Legal Quarterly (2009-10 cost £100.00)
 Northern Ireland Law Bulletin (2009-10 cost £120.00)

	<i>Total (£)</i>
2005-06	5,057.50
2006-07	5,984.01
2007-08	6,050.23
2008-09	7,096.00
2009-10	8,457.00

Policing Policy and Strategy Branch

Jane's Police Review (2010 cost £103.48)

	<i>Total £</i>
2005-06	103.48
2006-07	103.48
2007-08	103.48
2008-09	103.48
2009-10	103.48

Departmental Temporary Employment

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which companies were contracted by his Department for the provision of temporary staff in each of the last five years; how many temporary staff were employed by his Department in each such year; and what the monetary value was of contracts with each such company in each such year. [325495]

Paul Goggins: The Northern Ireland Office (NIO) did not contract any companies for the provision of temporary workers. Temporary workers employed by the NIO are drawn from contracts set up by the Department of Finance and Personnel (NI).

Prior to 1 February 2010 the recruitment of temporary staff was delegated to business areas in NIO and no information on numbers is available.

Since 1 February 2010, the recruitment of temporary workers for the Department is managed centrally. There are currently 26 such staff in post.

Departmental Theft

Mr. Watson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps his Department is taking to deter theft from within the Department. [322653]

Paul Goggins: The Northern Ireland Office (NIO) takes a range of measures across its Estate which reflect the standards set out in HMG Security Policy Framework (SPF) issued by the Cabinet Office and available online at:

www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/spf.aspx

These measures to deter theft from within the Department, include: controlling access to the department's buildings; informing staff both at induction and on an ongoing basis of their responsibility to comply with the policies and procedures laid down for safe guarding departmental assets, including property and information; maintaining property asset registers; and having appropriate financial procedures in place to mitigate against the theft of money. It would not be appropriate to provide details of specific controls as this could undermine their effectiveness.

Departmental Travel

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much his Department's agencies spent on staff travel (a) within the UK and (b) abroad in each year since 1997. [325448]

Paul Goggins: As each of the Northern Ireland Office's agencies maintain their own finance system, there are differences in the information that can be provided.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

			<i>£</i>
	<i>Within UK</i>	<i>Outside UK</i>	<i>Total</i>
1997-98	n/a	n/a	948,884
1998-99	n/a	n/a	1,780,058
1999-2000	n/a	n/a	1,578,014
2000-01	n/a	n/a	1,453,299
2001-02	n/a	n/a	2,002,319
2002-03	n/a	n/a	1,383,910
2003-04	1,382,452	735	1,383,187
2004-05	1,791,044	645	1,791,689
2005-06	1,860,508	4,330	1,864,838
2006-07	1,634,440	3,805	1,638,245
2007-08	1,415,943	2,051	1,417,994
2008-09	1,444,519	1,166	1,445,685

n/a = Not available

The Northern Ireland Prison Service is able to provide a breakdown of UK and international travel expenditure from 2003-04. To split the expenditure in the same way prior to this would involve a manual investigation of all claims which would incur disproportionate costs.

Compensation Agency

			<i>£</i>
	<i>Within UK</i>	<i>Outside UK</i>	<i>Total</i>
1997-98	n/a	n/a	12,474
1998-99	n/a	n/a	14,066
1999-2000	n/a	n/a	12,807
2000-01	n/a	n/a	16,533
2001-02	n/a	n/a	10,211
2002-03	n/a	n/a	24,413
2003-04	n/a	n/a	21,151
2004-05	n/a	n/a	17,281
2005-06	n/a	n/a	17,174
2006-07	n/a	n/a	13,342
2007-08	n/a	n/a	6,618
2008-09	n/a	n/a	5,201

n/a = Not available

Compensation Agency expenditure on travel is grouped under the same heading as subsistence. The above figures therefore include both travel and subsistence. To provide separate costs and give details of whether the staff travel was within or outside the UK can be done only at disproportionate cost.

Youth Justice Agency

			£
	<i>Within UK</i>	<i>Outside UK</i>	<i>Total</i>
1997-98	1__	1__	1__
1998-99	1__	1__	1__
1999-2000	1__	1__	1__
2000-01	1__	1__	1__
2001-02	1__	1__	1__
2002-03	1__	1__	1__
2003-04	184,499	0	184,499
2004-05	173,318	0	173,318
2005-06	192,926	0	192,926
2006-07	244,107	535	244,642
2007-08	225,663	0	225,663
2008-09	248,915	0	248,915

¹ Not applicable

The Youth Justice Agency was launched on 1 April 2003.

Forensic Science Agency of Northern Ireland (FSND)

			£
	<i>Within UK</i>	<i>Outside UK</i>	<i>Total</i>
1997-98	n/a	n/a	n/a
1998-99	n/a	n/a	n/a
1999-2000	n/a	n/a	n/a
2000-01	n/a	n/a	n/a
2001-02	n/a	n/a	n/a
2002-03	n/a	n/a	n/a
2003-04	n/a	n/a	n/a
2004-05	n/a	n/a	n/a
2005-06	n/a	n/a	n/a
2006-07	n/a	n/a	107,127
2007-08	n/a	n/a	111,182
2008-09	n/a	n/a	104,122

n/a = Not available

FSNI's current finance system has only been in operation since 2006-07 and groups expenditure on travel under the same heading as subsistence so the above figures include both travel and subsistence. Figures before 2006-07 could be provided only at disproportionate cost as this would involve a manual investigation of claim forms.

Festivals and Special Occasions

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much his Department spent on (a) Christmas and (b) other religious celebrations in each of the last five years. [325471]

Mr. Woodward: Due to Prorogation it has not been possible to answer this question.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much was spent on security and policing at the 12 July celebrations in each of the last five years. [325540]

Paul Goggins: This is an operational matter for the Chief Constable. I have asked him to reply directly to the hon. Gentleman, and a copy of his letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

Hotels

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many nights he has stayed in hotels on official business in (a) Northern Ireland, (b) the Republic of Ireland, (c) Great Britain and (d) the United States of America in the last 12 months. [325429]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is shown in the following table.

	<i>Number of nights stayed</i>
Northern Ireland	None
Republic of Ireland	None
Great Britain	None

Note:

Details of overseas visits, including the United States, are published annually by the Cabinet Office.

Inquiries

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the budget is of the Historical Enquiries Team in the next two years. [325476]

Paul Goggins: The total budget for the Historical Inquiry Team project for 2010-11 is £7.2 million. The budget is split between HET PSNI, Office of the Police Ombudsman NI, Public Prosecution Service and Forensic Science NI. Future budgets will form part of the next spending review.

Irish Language

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the answer of 10 December 2009, *Official Report*, column 532W, on Irish language, what steps his Department takes to assist Irish language users in using Irish when dealing with his Department. [325691]

Paul Goggins: In line with the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages the Northern Ireland Office has adopted a Code of Courtesy for the Irish language which is available to staff as guidance when dealing with Irish language users.

Mass Media

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much his Department has spent on press monitoring in each of the last five years. [325492]

Mr. Woodward: The Northern Ireland Office has an in-house media monitoring service to meet the needs of Ministers and senior officials within the Department. It also provides its media monitoring services to Ministers and officials in the devolved Administration and a number of external public sector stakeholders.

	<i>Equipment costs</i>	<i>Media monitoring unit</i>	<i>Typing pool</i>
2004-05	14,052.15	70,000	69,000
2005-06	2,397.76	70,200	72,000

	<i>Equipment costs</i>	<i>Media monitoring unit</i>	<i>Typing pool</i>
2006-07	1,682.14	79,000	79,000
2007-08	6,080.04	69,000	79,000
2008-09	2,957.14	62,000	82,000

Equipment costs are all the costs associated with press monitoring for example televisions, DVD recorders, DVD discs, tapes, radios and trans-scribers.

The Department recoups a percentage of its running costs by passing on a small charge to its clients.

Currently there are four members of staff employed in the Media Monitoring Unit and a further five typists to transcribe media monitoring requests. Staffing numbers have fluctuated over this period. I have provided the average salary costs for each team.

Police Service of Northern Ireland

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland for what reasons officers from the Police Service of Northern Ireland crossed the border into the Irish Republic in March 2010 and stopped cars there; and if he will make a statement. [325845]

Paul Goggins: This is an operational matter for the Chief Constable. I have asked him to reply directly to the hon. Gentleman, and a copy of his letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

Presbyterian Mutual Society

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what recent assistance he has given to the Northern Ireland Executive in relation to the Presbyterian Mutual Society; [325423]

(2) what support his Department is giving to those with money deposited with the Presbyterian Mutual Society. [325424]

Mr. Woodward: I have huge sympathy for investors in the Presbyterian Mutual Society whose investments are at risk following the entry of the Society into administration. The Prime Minister set up the Presbyterian Mutual Society Working Group in July 2009. That group, on which I sit alongside Treasury Ministers and Ministers from the Northern Ireland Executive, continues to try and find a solution to mitigate members' losses, and to consider all proposals which could responsibly help those affected by the failure of the PMS.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what meetings he has had with (a) HM Treasury, (b) the Northern Ireland Executive and (c) the Presbyterian Church in Ireland on the Presbyterian Mutual Society in the last 12 months; [325425]

(2) what meetings he has had relating to the Presbyterian Mutual Society in the last 12 months; [325431]

(3) how many meetings he has had with savers from the Presbyterian Mutual Society in the last 12 months; and how many such savers he has met. [325432]

Mr. Woodward: The Prime Minister and I have held a number of meetings in recent months with the First and Deputy First Minister to discuss the Presbyterian Mutual Society. Additionally, as well as the meetings of the PMS Working Group created by the Prime Minister, I have had a number of separate discussions with Treasury Ministers and with Ministers representing the Northern Ireland Executive to discuss the matter over the last 12 months. Colleagues on the Ministerial Working Group have met with groups of PMS investors, and I have met separately with a delegation from the Presbyterian Church, as have Treasury Ministers.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many letters and e-mails relating to the Presbyterian Mutual Society his Department has received in the last 12 months. [325430]

Mr. Woodward: Since 1 April 2009, my Department has received 235 items of correspondence relating to the Presbyterian Mutual Society.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he has met the General Secretary of the Presbyterian Mutual Society in the last 12 months. [325446]

Mr. Woodward: No.

Trade Unions

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many days staff of his Department spent on trade union activity in the latest year for which figures are available; and what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of such activity in that year. [325499]

Paul Goggins: The Northern Ireland Office (NIO) has one full-time member of staff seconded as a full-time trade union official for the Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance (NIPSA). This official is provided with full time administrative support. The cost of running this office in 2008-09 including staff costs, was £65,669.09.

Other members of staff throughout the Department are allowed facility time on an ad-hoc basis representing, NIPSA, First Division Association and the Public and Commercial Service Union. Facility time for trade union representatives is delegated to local Line Management. We do not hold central records of facility time for 2009. Central recording of facility time was introduced on 1 January 2010.

Village Halls

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps are being taken to ensure the security and safety of community halls in Northern Ireland. [325494]

Paul Goggins: This is an operational matter for the Chief Constable. I have asked him to reply directly to the hon. Gentleman, and a copy of his letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

International Planned Parenthood Federation

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) how much funding his Department has allocated to the (a) International Planned Parenthood Federation and (b) United Nations Population Fund in each year since 1997; [325882]

(2) whether his Department places restrictions on the use of funds allocated by it to the (a) International Planned Parenthood Federation and (b) United Nations Population Fund; what guidance his Department has issued to each such organisation in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [325883]

Mr. Michael Foster: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

United Nations Population Fund

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the United Nations Population Fund in promoting non-coercive approaches to family planning in China since October 2009; and if he will make a statement; [325884]

(2) what recent discussions (a) Ministers and (b) officials in his Department have had with the United States Administration on its decision to (i) reinstate the US contribution to the United Nations Population Fund and (ii) rescind the Mexico City policy; and if he will make a statement. [325885]

Mr. Michael Foster: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

WALES

Optics: Technology

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of the Optic Research and Incubation Centre at St. Asaph Business Park in the last seven years. [325391]

Ian Lucas: I have been asked to reply.

The Department for Innovation and Skills, has made no assessment of the effectiveness of the Optic Technium at St. Asaph, which we believe is owned by the Welsh Assembly Government and funded by European Objective 1.

CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES

Becta: Finance

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families what Becta's budget was in the latest year for which figures are available. [321201]

Ms Diana R. Johnson: Becta's resource funding for the current financial year (2010-11) is £65,751,000. This amount is for Becta's resource and revenue costs only and takes into account any expected efficiency savings. It does not cover capital costs such as capital spending on the national Home Access programme.

Child Minding

Justine Greening: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families what estimate he made of the number of childminders in (a) England and (b) each London borough in each quarter of each year from 2005 to 2009. [325564]

Dawn Primarolo [*holding answer 6 April 2010*]: Ofsted have collected information on the number of registered child care providers and registered child care places available to children under eight years of age on a quarterly basis from March 2003.

All information, including numbers of childminders, by local authority, is published on Ofsted's website and can be found using the following links:

Information from 2008 onwards:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Documents-by-type/Statistics/Childcare-and-early-years/Childcare-providers-and-places/Registered-childcare-providers-and-places-in-England-December-2008-onwards>

Information between September 2006 and August 2008:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Documents-by-type/Statistics/Childcare-and-early-years/Childcare-providers-and-places/Registered-childcare-providers-and-places-in-England-September-2006-to-August-2008>

Information between March 2003 and June 2006:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Documents-by-type/Statistics/Childcare-and-early-years/Childcare-providers-and-places/Registered-childcare-providers-and-places-in-England-March-2003-June-2006>

Children in Care

Hilary Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families what progress has been made on the pilots in two areas of the country on introducing pedagogy in working with children in care. [325693]

Dawn Primarolo: The social pedagogy pilots are progressing well. All the children's homes have been recruited, including those homes which will not recruit pedagogues and will therefore provide a comparison. The final recruitment round for social pedagogues has also just finished. The pilots are providing some good examples of creative work with children and young people and learning is emerging about the importance of a shared daily life within the home and the opportunities which that offers for relationship building through group activities. The evaluation contract has been awarded to the Universities of Bristol and York and will report in 2012.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families what formula is used to decide the amount of funding provided to local authorities for children taken into care by social services; and if he will make a statement. [325840]

Dawn Primarolo: Children in care are funded by local authorities who are funded via the local government funding system. There is no formula that sets a national amount that should be spent on children's social care. The level of spending on children in care is decided by each local authority based on local circumstances and priorities.

Children: Day Care

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families what information his Department holds on the number of childcare providers in (a) Chorley constituency and (b) Lancashire who take part in the childcare voucher scheme. [302383]

Mr. Timms: I have been asked to reply.

The information requested is not available, as employers and employees are not required to report the provision of tax exempt child care vouchers.

However, research commissioned by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) in 2005, by the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) and available at:

<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/research/research-report23.htm>

estimates the proportion of employers that offer Employer Supported Childcare (ESC) split by Government office region (Table A.7, Appendix A, page 19).

These numbers should be treated with caution as the employee take up rate and use of vouchers as opposed to other forms of ESC would likely vary from region to region and these figures do not account for employees working in one region and living in another. No estimates are made for Chorley constituency or Lancashire.

Mrs. Maria Miller: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families how many (a) maintained and (b) private, voluntary and independent nurseries have closed in each quarter of the last five years. [317742]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Laws) on 13 January 2010, *Official Report*, column 1062W.

Mrs. Maria Miller: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families what estimate he has made of the number of childminders to have entered the profession in each year since 1997. [317747]

Dawn Primarolo: Information is not available specifically on the number of child minders who enter the profession. However, Ofsted have collected information on the number of registered child care providers and registered child care places available to children under eight years of age on a quarterly basis from March 2003.

All information, including numbers of childminders, by local authority, is published on Ofsted's website and can be found using the following links:

Information from 2008 onwards:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Documents-by-type/Statistics/Childcare-and-early-years/Childcare-providers-and-places/Registered-childcare-providers-and-places-in-England-December-2008-onwards>

Information between September 2006 and August 2008:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Documents-by-type/Statistics/Childcare-and-early-years/Childcare-providers-and-places/Registered-childcare-providers-and-places-in-England-September-2006-to-August-2008>

Information between March 2003 and June 2006:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Documents-by-type/Statistics/Childcare-and-early-years/Childcare-providers-and-places/Registered-childcare-providers-and-places-in-England-March-2003-June-2006>

In addition, Ofsted has published figures on child minders joining and leaving the register since November 2006, which showed figures for child minders joining and leaving the register between April 2005 and September 2006. These data are shown in each local authority's Early Years Statistical Profile, available via each local authority's page on the Ofsted website:

http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxcare_providers/list_by_la

With the introduction of the Early Years Foundation Stage in September 2008 Ofsted reviewed its publications and decided to incorporate data on providers joining and leaving registers in its regular quarterly publication on child care providers and places. Ofsted published these datasets together for the first time in January 2010, showing figures of providers joining and leaving the registers between 1 October 2009 and 31 December 2009:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Documents-by-type/Statistics/Childcare-and-early-years/Childcare-providers-and-places/Registered-childcare-providers-and-places-in-England-December-2008-onwards>

Justine Greening: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families how many childcare places there are in (a) each London borough and (b) nationally; and how many such places are required in each of those areas to meet the Government's 2010 target. [323777]

Dawn Primarolo: Information on the number of child care places registered with Ofsted available nationally and in each London borough is shown in the following table.

In 'Choice for parents: the best start for Children' the Government set out a range of targets and ambitions, to achieve its 10-year child care strategy, including some to be achieved by 2010. However many of these were not expressed in terms of delivering a specific number of places.

The ambition to ensure parents can access suitable childcare places has been met by placing duties on all English local authorities to assess and secure sufficient child care places in their area for children aged 0-14 (18 for disabled children).

Table: Number¹ of child care places² for children under eight years of age in England and in each London borough—position at 31 December 2009

Region	Places
England	1,321,100
<i>Inner London</i>	
City of London	300
Camden	5,500
Hackney	6,000

Table: Number¹ of child care places² for children under eight years of age in England and in each London borough—position at 31 December 2009

Region	Places
Hammersmith and Fulham	4,300
Haringey	4,900
Islington	4,600
Kensington and Chelsea	3,700
Lambeth	7,300
Lewisham	7,600
Newham	4,800
Southwark	9,000
Tower Hamlets	4,200
Wandsworth	8,300
Westminster	3,800
<i>Outer London</i>	
Barking and Dagenham	4,000
Barnet	8,800
Bexley	5,400
Brent	6,000
Bromley	10,300
Croydon	11,000
Ealing	7,800
Enfield	7,200
Greenwich	6,800
Harrow	4,700
Havering	5,000
Hillingdon	6,300
Hounslow	4,900
Kingston upon Thames	4,600
Merton	4,600
Redbridge	6,400
Richmond upon Thames	6,900
Sutton	4,500
Waltham Forest	6,400

¹ Figures have been rounded to the nearest 100.

² Data Source: Ofsted—total includes childminders, child care on non-domestic premises, child care on domestic premises and home child carer.

Mrs. Maria Miller: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families how much Ofsted received in registration fees from all child care settings in 2008-09. [325316]

Dawn Primarolo [holding answer 6 April 2010]: This is a matter for Ofsted. The Chief Inspector, Christine Gilbert, has written to the hon. Member and copies of her reply will be placed in the House Libraries.

Children: Day Care

Mr. Hendrick: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families how many childcare places have been created in Preston since 1997. [311066]

Dawn Primarolo: Information on the number of child care places is not available below local authority level.

Children: Mental Health

Mr. Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families what account the Targeted Mental Health in Schools programme takes of needs related to emotional well-being of children with (a) a learning disability, (b) an autistic spectrum disorder, (c) a physical disability and (d) a sensory disability. [325736]

Dawn Primarolo: The Targeted Mental Health in Schools Programme (TaMHS) builds on the existing universal approaches to supporting emotional well-being that schools are already using, such as SEAL, by offering targeted therapeutic interventions for individuals or groups of children at risk of developing mental health problems. Funded by the DCSF by £60 million from 2008 to 2011, all local authorities are now involved in offering the programme within school clusters that are participating. The inclusion of special schools is particularly encouraged within the conditions of grant.

TaMHS is focused on identifying the children who may be vulnerable to mental health issues and need additional support, and offering them appropriate evidence-based interventions. While the programme is not designed to replicate or replace other funded support (such as through a statement of SEN) all children's needs should be considered equally when identifying who should be offered targeted interventions through TaMHS. Each child's individual circumstances, including whether they have additional needs, and any funded support that they already receive, will be taken into account when deciding what additional support or interventions might be most appropriate.

Children: Sight Impaired

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families what recent representations he has received on the introduction of testing of school pupils for colour blindness. [324733]

Dawn Primarolo: The Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families has not received any recent representations on the introduction of testing for colour vision impairments in schools.

Children: Methadone and Protection

Mr. Burrows: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families with reference to the answer to the hon. Member for Sheffield, Heeley of 17 December 2008, *Official Report*, column 817W, on methadone, if he will take steps to enable the number of child deaths subject to serious case review which are methadone-related to be calculated. [321631]

Dawn Primarolo: Local authorities should notify Ofsted where a death or serious injury occurs and abuse or neglect is known or suspected to be a factor (and so may lead to the commissioning of a Serious Case Review). The precise cause and nature of death may not always be known at the time of the notification, and could change after further investigations are carried out such as a post-mortem or coroner's inquest.

Information held by the Department for Children, Schools and Families is provided by Ofsted and is based on available information at the point of notification by the local authority. Records are sometimes updated if further information is received on the cause of death but this is not undertaken systematically. We have no present plans to extend procedures or the operation of the relevant database in the way suggested. However, making use of the database and of individual anonymised SCRs the authors of the report 'Understanding Serious

Case Reviews and their Impact: A Biennial Analysis of Serious Case Reviews 2005-07', published in June 2009, suggest that:

"A small number of deaths (fewer than six) were as a result of the child ingesting their parent's drug, most often methadone."

Children's Centres: Publicity

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families (1) how much was spent on communications and publicity for Sure Start centres in each year since 2004; how much he plans to spend in 2009-10; and if he will make a statement; [301509]

(2) how many changes of design have taken place for Sure Start Children's Centre signage since 2004; what the reasons were for each change; and if he will make a statement; [301510]

(3) how many promotional leaflets for Sure Start Children's Centres were sent out by door drop in each financial year since 2004; how many are planned for 2009-10; in which (a) post code areas and (b) local authority wards such door drops have taken place in each financial year since 2004; and if he will make a statement; [301511]

(4) how much was spent on radio advertising for Sure Start Children's Centres in each financial year since 2004; how much expenditure is planned for 2009-10; and if he will make a statement; [301512]

(5) how much was spent on press advertisements for Sure Start Children's Centres in each financial year since 2004; how much expenditure is planned for 2009-10; and if he will make a statement; [301513]

(6) how much was spent on creative development of advertising for Sure Start Children's Centres in each financial year since 2004; how much expenditure is planned for 2009-10; and if he will make a statement. [301514]

Dawn Primarolo: The information requested is as follows:

301509

On 16 March, the Prime Minister announced that Government had met its target for 3500 Sure Start Children's Centres. It is important that all families with young children are aware of the range of services available, and where their local children's centre is. The Department undertook analysis in early 2009 of current research which highlighted a lack of awareness about the range of services available or that it is a universal service. The Department has therefore run the first ever national communications campaign to boost awareness of children's centres which commenced September 2009 and early evaluation is positive—with an increase of over 40 per cent. in the number of parents (in areas targeted by the campaign) who know about their local children's centre.

The amount spent on communications and publicity for children's centres in each year is set out in the following table. It is not possible to provide figures back to 2004, because children's centre communications activity was incorporated into wider communications budgets covering early years and childcare. The amount spent in 2009-10 is higher than previous years as 2009-10 is when the Department ran its first national communications campaign for Sure Start Children's Centres, and represents 0.29 per cent. of the total 2009-10 programme budget for Sure Start Children's Centres.

Table 1: Specific Sure Start Children's Centres related communications to the public

Financial Year	Amount (£)
2007-08	35,800
2008-09	188,100
2009-10 ¹	3,418,600

¹ As at 23 March 2010

301510

Since 2004, there have been two updates to the branding guidelines for Sure Start Children's Centres, both of which set out expectations for how external signage should look. The first update was in March 2006, which established Sure Start as the overall brand for all services for 0 to 5-year-olds and created a new SureStart logo. A further update to branding guidelines was made in March 2009, to reflect the establishment of the national network of Sure Start Children's Centres.

301511

As part of the national communications campaign an estimated 2,400,000 leaflets advertising Sure Start Children's Centres were sent to specific postcodes via door drops (see Tables 2 and 3). The postcodes in Table 2 were selected according to population density and deprivation and those in Table 3 according to rurality and deprivation. We do not hold details of which local authority wards these postcodes represent and have supplied details of the upper tier local authority in Tables 2 and 3. A copy of tables 2 and 3 will be placed in the Libraries. Local authorities and individual centres may have conducted their own door drop leaflet distribution, but this information is not collected by the Department. Door drop leaflet distribution is an effective way of targeting potential users of children's centres among families who may be less likely to access children centres.

301512

National radio advertising for Sure Start Children's Centres started for the first time in 2009-10. The total amount spent on radio advertising in 2009-10 was £951800. Radio advertising is effective at building awareness on a national level and reaching out to parents who may be unaware of children's centres and the services they offer.

301513

Press advertising for Sure Start Children's Centres started in 2008-09 and 2009-10. The total amount spent on press advertising in 2008-2009 was £150,000; and in 2009-10 it was £831 600. Press advertising is particularly useful in conveying the range of services available at children's centres.

301514

The Department commissioned specialist creative development of advertising for Sure Start Children's Centres in 2009-10 only. The total amount spent was £87,300 in 2009-10. The creative development is a crucial part of the planning process. This research helps us to understand whether the advertisements are clear and engaging for the audience before they are rolled out nationally. This ensures that we can receive the optimum return on investment.

Children's Commissioner for England

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families what the cost to the public purse was of the operation of the office of the Children's Commissioner for England in the last 12 months for which figures are available. [325746]

Dawn Primarolo [holding answer 7 April 2010]: For the financial year 2009-10 the Office of the Children's Commissioner for England received £2,669,818.00 grant in aid from the Department for Children, Schools and Families.

Curriculum: Expenditure

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families how much (a) his Department and (b) the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency spent on developing the National Curriculum in the latest year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [321200]

Ms Diana R. Johnson: The latest financial year for which figures are available is 2008-09. During that year the Department spent £317,000 on developing the national

curriculum by providing support to the Independent Review of the Primary Curriculum.

During the same period the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency spent £1.6 million on developing the national curriculum in support of the Independent Review of the Primary Curriculum.

Departmental Buildings

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families how much his Department has spent on rooms for staff leisure in each of the last five years. [324433]

Ms Diana R. Johnson: The Department for Children, Schools and Families was created on 28 June 2007. Since then expenditure on rooms for staff leisure was as follows:

	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
London Site Fitness Centre Refurbishment	—	327,538	—
London Site Fitness Centre Annual Occupancy Costs	93,511	191,548	299,722
Sheffield Site Fitness Centre Annual Occupancy Costs	2,253	2,345	2,138

Departmental Consultants

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families how much consultants employed by his Department and its agencies have been paid (a) in total and (b) in reimbursable expenses since its inception. [313999]

Ms Diana R. Johnson: From the year 2005-06 the figures set out in the table reflect comparable annual consultancy costs for DCSF (from FY 2007-08) and its predecessor Department (DFES) covering both administration and programme costs:

<i>Expenditure on consultants</i>	£ million
2005-06	21.5
2006-07	45.1
2007-08	61.4
2008-09	59.2

Figures for prior years are available for administration costs only as these were not recorded centrally before November 2004.

Figures for reimbursable expenses are not recorded separately to consultancy costs and cannot be provided.

These figures cover the Department itself, we do not separately record the costs incurred by our agencies and NDPBs and are therefore unable to provide this detail.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families how much his Department spent on consultancy in the latest year for which figures are available. [316571]

Ms Diana R. Johnson: Figures for the former Department for Education and Skills show that it spent the following sums from administration costs (the Department's internal running costs) on consultancy from 1997:

	£ million
1997-98	3.9
1998-99	5.0
1999-2000	3.7
2000-01	4.3
2001-02	5.0
2002-03	4.0
2003-04	4.7
2004-05	3.9

The costs of consultancy charged to programmes budgets (supporting external front line delivery) before November 2004 was not recorded centrally, and could now be provided only at disproportionate cost. The total cost of consultancy charged to programmes from November to March 2004-05 was £4.4 million.

From the year 2005-06, consultancy costs as a whole have been captured. Set out in the following table are comparable annual consultancy costs for the Department.

<i>Expenditure on consultants</i>	£ million
2005-06	21.5
2006-07	45.1
2007-08	61.4
2008-09	59.2

Departmental Information Officers

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families what the cost to his Department was of employing press and media officers in the last 12 months for which figures are available; and what the cost to his Department was of employing such staff in the financial year 1996-97, expressed in current prices. [324809]

Ms Diana R. Johnson: The Department employs 26 people in the press office.

The total salary cost for the Department's press office in the financial year 2008-09 was £1,350,713.10.

In the financial year 1996-97 the Department employed 19 people in the press office at an actual cost of £702,000. It is not possible to express this in real terms except at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Internet

Jenny Willott: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families (1) how many complaints his Department received on difficulties using its website in each of the last three years; and if he will make a statement; [325203]

(2) how much his Department spent on external website design consultants in each of the last three years; and if he will make a statement. [325221]

Ms Diana R. Johnson: The requested information cannot be provided without incurring disproportionate cost.

Departmental Pay

John Mason: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families what (a) bonuses and (b) incentives have been paid to (i) consultants and (ii) contractors engaged by non-departmental public bodies for which his Department is responsible in each of the last three years. [300642]

Ms Diana R. Johnson: Bonuses and incentives to consultants and contractors are a matter for the non-departmental public bodies themselves. Central records are not held and could be obtained at only disproportionate cost.

Departmental Public Expenditure

Michael Gove: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families what proportion of his Department's expenditure under each line of Table 8.4 of his Department's Report for 2009 is included in the 75 per cent. of the budget to be protected in 2011-12 and 2012-13. [322493]

Ms Diana R. Johnson [*holding answer 16 March 2010*]: The pre-Budget report confirmed that from 2011-13 funding for Sure Start will continue to rise in line with inflation; funding for 16 to 19 learning will rise by 0.9 per cent. year on year with an extra £202 million this year to meet our September Guarantee; and funding for schools will increase by 0.7 per cent. in real terms, which at current inflation levels will mean a cash increase of 2.7 per cent.

This means that 75 per cent. of the DCSF budget has been protected. The document, 'Investing for the Future, Protecting the Front Line: School Funding 2010', published on 15 March, showed how the DCSF budget breaks down in 2010-11 into the front line areas protected in the PBR and the remaining areas from which the Department is finding £500 million savings in the 2011-13 period. A further breakdown will be provided when we publish our annual report later in the year.

Departmental Public Relations

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families with which public relations companies (a) his Department, (b) each (i) non-departmental public body and (ii) executive agency for which his Department is responsible and (c) other bodies sponsored by his Department have had contracts in each year since 2004. [317840]

Ms Diana R. Johnson: Public relations agencies are employed for specific communications tasks, most commonly working alongside our press office to provide campaign support in local, regional and specialist media. The Department's expenditure on public relations for complete financial years, since its formation in June 2007, is outlined in the following table:

	<i>Total spend (£)</i>
2007-08	2,333,000
2008-09	4,023,403

Increased expenditure for 2008-09 is related to the 14 to 19 reform and the diploma, both of which were launched in 2008

The other requested information cannot be obtained without incurring disproportionate cost.

Departmental Theft

Mr. Watson: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families what steps his Department is taking to deter theft from within the Department. [322641]

Ms Diana R. Johnson: DCSF, like all Departments, aims to have effective security measures in place to guard against theft and other threats. Measures to deter, prevent and detect theft are an essential feature of the Department's protective security controls. These controls reflect the standards set out in the HMG Security Policy Framework (SPF) issued by Cabinet Office and available online at:

www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/spf.aspx

It would not be appropriate to provide details of specific controls as this could undermine their effectiveness.

Departmental Travel

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families how much was spent on first-class travel for (a) Ministers and (b) staff of each grade in (i) his Department and (ii) its agencies in the last 12 months. [325106]

Ms Diana R. Johnson: No Ministers or DCSF officials took first class air travel during the period April 2009 to March 2010.

DCSF agency officials spent £8,640 on first class air travel during this period.

DCSF Ministers spent £8,146 on first class rail travel during this period.

DCSF officials spent £2,447,616 on first class rail travel during this period.

DCSF agency officials spent £3,816,469 on first class rail travel during this period.

The data have been provided by the Department's contractor for travel booking, Carlson Wagonlit Travel.

Devolved Schools Grant

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families for what purposes the retained element of the devolved schools grant will be used; and if he will make a statement. [318228]

Mr. Coaker: In accordance with the school finance (England) regulations, local authorities in England are permitted to deduct funding from their schools budget for the purposes of central expenditure. Schedule 2 of the school finance (England) regulations sets out the areas of expenditure that local authorities can retain centrally such as: special educational needs provision, pupil referral units, behaviour support services, education out of school, expenditure on the provision of nursery education other than in maintained schools, threshold and performance pay for teachers' salaries, expenditure on the administration of the local authority's admissions and appeals system for their schools, and school contingencies.

Free School Meals: A-Levels

Michael Gove: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families how many and what proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals were entered for A-levels in each subject in 2009. [318406]

Mr. Coaker: The information requested is given in the following table. Please note that this information covers pupils in school sixth forms only, pupils entered for A-level examinations in sixth form or further education colleges are excluded from the figures.

	<i>Number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals entered in examination</i>	<i>Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals entered in examination</i>
Biology	794	14.1
Biology: Human	23	0.4
Chemistry	652	11.6
Physics	286	5.1
Science: Single award	0	0.0
Science: Electronics	1	1
Science: Environmental	3	0.1
Science: Geology	6	0.1
Mathematics	836	14.8
Mathematics (Pure)	0	0.0
Mathematics (Statistics)	6	0.1
Mathematics (Further)	64	1.1
Additional Mathematics	0	0.0
Computer Studies/ Computing	38	0.7
Information Technology	171	3.0
Business Studies	340	6.0
Business Studies and		
Economics	29	0.5
Home Economics	1	1
Art and Design	198	3.5
Art and Design (Graphics)	36	0.6

	<i>Number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals entered in examination</i>	<i>Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals entered in examination</i>
Art and Design (Photography)	102	1.8
Art and Design (Textiles)	62	1.1
Art and Design (3-D studies)	7	0.1
Art and Design (Critical Studies)	1	1
Fine Art	226	4.0
History of Art	0	0.0
Geography	223	4.0
World Development	3	0.1
History	573	10.2
Economics	188	3.3
Religious Studies	480	8.5
Archaeology	0	0.0
Law	216	3.8
Logic/Philosophy	28	0.5
Government and Politics	178	3.2
Psychology	901	16.0
Sociology	750	13.3
English	205	3.6
English Language	250	4.4
English Literature	863	15.3
Drama and Theatre	280	5.0
Communication Studies	21	0.4
Performing Studies	27	0.5
Media/Film/Television Studies	542	9.6
Film Studies	80	1.4
Dutch	14	0.2
French	124	2.2
German	47	0.8
Italian	5	0.1
Modern Greek	1	1
Portuguese	4	0.1
Spanish	50	0.9
Arabic	30	0.5
Bengali	4	0.1
Chinese	7	0.1
Gujarati	1	1
Japanese	0	0.0
Modern Hebrew	1	1
Punjabi	5	0.1
Polish	1	1
Russian	4	0.1
Turkish	20	0.4
Urdu	46	0.8
Persian	10	0.2
Ancient History	3	0.1
Classical Civilisation	29	0.5
Greek	0	0.0
Latin	1	1
Other Classical Languages	0	0.0
Music	45	0.8
Music Technology	32	0.6
Sport/Physical Education Studies	167	3.0
Dance	34	0.6
Accounting/Finance	29	0.5

	<i>Number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals entered in examination</i>	<i>Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals entered in examination</i>
General Studies	530	9.4
Critical Thinking	21	0.4
Design/Tech and Food	27	0.5
Design/Tech and Systems	4	0.1
Design/Tech and Production	221	3.9

¹ Figures have been suppressed to preserve anonymity.

Note:

Includes maintained schools only including CTCs and academies.

GCE A-level

Michael Gove: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families how many pupils in (a) maintained, (b) independent and (c) comprehensive schools achieved three or more A grades at A-level in 2009. [304906]

Mr. Iain Wright: The information for 2009 and 1997 is as follows:

	<i>2009 (provisional)</i>	
	<i>Number of candidates achieving three or more A grades at GCE/Applied GCE A-level and Double Awards</i>	<i>Percentage of candidates achieving three or more A grades at GCE/Applied GCE A-level and Double Awards</i>
Comprehensive schools ¹	9,600	8.0
All maintained schools ²	15,300	10.4
Independent schools ³	11,400	31.9
All schools	26,700	14.6
	<i>1997</i>	
	<i>Number of candidates achieving three or more A grades at GCE A-level</i>	<i>Percentage of candidates achieving three or more A grades at GCE A-level</i>
Comprehensive schools ¹	4,300	4.7
All maintained schools ²	6,400	5.9
Independent schools ³	6,100	16.9
All schools	15,500	6.7

¹ Includes city technology colleges and academies.

² Includes the results for community and foundation special schools, hospital schools and pupil referral units.

³ Includes non-maintained special schools.

Notes:

1. Figures relate to 16 to 18-year-olds (age at start of academic year, i.e. 31 August).

2. 2009 Figures are provisional.

3. Applied A-levels and Double Awards did not exist in 1997.

The 2009 information is derived from table 1 of the "GCE/Applied GCE A/AS and Equivalent Examination Results in England, 2008/09" Statistical First Release, found at the following link:

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000881/index.shtml>

Figures for 1997 are derived from the Achievement and Attainment Tables data.

GCSE

Michael Gove: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families how many and what proportion of pupils did not gain one or more GCSEs, excluding equivalents, at grade (a) G, (b) E, (c) D and (d) C or above in 2009. [316407]

Mr. Coaker: The information required is given in the following table:

<i>Grades</i>	<i>Number and proportion of pupils who did not gain one or more GCSEs, excluding equivalents at the selected grades</i>			
	<i>1997</i>		<i>2009</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Proportion (percentage)</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Proportion (percentage)</i>
G or above	45,074	7.7	19,867	3.1
E or above	65,329	11.1	37,813	6.0
D or above	101,822	17.4	65,429	10.3
C or above	173,197	29.5	119,687	18.9

Source:

Achievement and Attainment Tables.

The data for 1997 relate to pupils aged 15 and for 2009 relates to pupils at the end of Key Stage 4.

The figures are cumulative, in that if a pupil is included as not gaining G or above, they will also be included in the data as not receiving E or above, D or above and C or above.

Michael Gove: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families how many (a) maintained schools and (b) comprehensive schools in each local authority area entered no students for GCSE examinations for (i) physics, (ii) chemistry, (iii) biology and (iv) all three in the most recent year for which figures are available. [318672]

Mr. Coaker [holding answer 25 February 2010]: The requested figures are given in the following table 2009.

This answer has been derived from the achievement and attainment tables data.

The majority of pupils take Science GCSE (also referred to as core science) and Additional Science GCSE. This combination of science GCSEs provides a perfectly good foundation for further study of physics, chemistry and biology at A level.

The number of maintained schools that had pupils that were entered for all three sciences has increased from just over 600 in 2002 to just over 1,500 in 2009.

The Government have introduced a statutory entitlement for all pupils in maintained schools to be able to study at least two science GCSEs, specifically this includes core and additional science or the three separate science GCSEs of physics, chemistry and biology.

There is a further non-statutory entitlement that those pupils who have achieved at least level 6 at key stage 3 will be given the opportunity to study triple science at GCSE either at their own school or through collaborative arrangements with other schools and colleges.

Since September 2008 all specialist science schools have to offer triple science to at least all pupils achieving level 6+ at the end of key stage 3. Since September 2009

we have expected all engineering and technology colleges to offer triple science, and expect all mathematics and computing colleges to do so from September 2010.

<i>LA name</i>	<i>Number of comprehensive schools entering no pupils at the end of key stage 4 for GCSEs in</i>				<i>Number of maintained mainstream schools entering no pupils at the end of key stage 4 for GCSEs in</i>			
	<i>Biology</i>	<i>Chemistry</i>	<i>Physics</i>	<i>All three separate sciences</i>	<i>Biology</i>	<i>Chemistry</i>	<i>Physics</i>	<i>All three separate sciences</i>
City of London	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Camden	2	3	3	3	2	3	3	3
Greenwich	6	7	7	7	6	7	7	7
Hackney	4	6	6	6	4	6	6	6
Hammersmith and Fulham	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Islington	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Kensington and Chelsea	2	3	4	4	2	3	4	4
Lambeth	2	3	3	3	2	3	3	3
Lewisham	4	4	5	5	4	4	5	5
Southwark	5	7	6	8	5	7	6	8
Tower Hamlets	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Wandsworth	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Westminster	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Barking and Dagenham	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Barnet	7	9	9	9	9	11	11	11
Bexley	4	4	4	4	9	9	9	9
Brent	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Bromley	5	5	4	5	5	5	4	5
Croydon	9	10	10	10	10	11	11	11
Ealing	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Enfield	8	9	9	9	9	10	10	10
Haringey	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Harrow	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Havering	10	9	10	10	10	9	10	10
Hillingdon	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Hounslow	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
Kingston upon Thames	0	0	0	0	3	4	3	4
Merton	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Newham	10	10	11	11	10	10	11	11
Redbridge	3	5	5	5	3	5	5	5
Richmond upon Thames	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Sutton	4	5	5	5	4	5	5	5
Waltham Forest	12	12	12	13	12	12	12	13
Birmingham	38	38	38	39	38	38	38	39
Coventry	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14
Dudley	14	13	13	14	14	13	13	14
Sandwell	12	11	12	12	12	11	12	12
Solihull	6	7	7	7	6	7	7	7
Walsall	7	8	8	9	7	8	8	9
Wolverhampton	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13
Knowsley	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
Liverpool	14	14	13	14	14	14	13	14
St. Helens	6	7	7	7	6	7	7	7
Sefton	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14
Wirral	4	4	4	4	7	7	7	7
Bolton	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Bury	9	8	8	9	9	8	8	9
Manchester	14	16	16	16	14	16	16	16
Oldham	7	7	7	8	7	7	7	8
Rochdale	10	10	9	11	10	10	9	11
Salford	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Stockport	6	7	7	7	6	7	7	7
Tameside	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
Trafford	0	0	0	0	9	9	10	10
Wigan	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Barnsley	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
Doncaster	8	9	9	9	8	9	9	9

<i>LA name</i>	<i>Number of comprehensive schools entering no pupils at the end of key stage 4 for GCSEs in</i>				<i>Number of maintained mainstream schools entering no pupils at the end of key stage 4 for GCSEs in</i>			
	<i>Biology</i>	<i>Chemistry</i>	<i>Physics</i>	<i>All three separate sciences</i>	<i>Biology</i>	<i>Chemistry</i>	<i>Physics</i>	<i>All three separate sciences</i>
Rotherham	6	6	6	7	6	6	6	7
Sheffield	13	14	12	14	13	14	12	14
Bradford	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
Calderdale	7	7	7	7	8	8	8	8
Kirklees	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
Leeds	16	17	16	17	16	17	16	17
Wakefield	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Gateshead	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Newcastle upon Tyne	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
North Tyneside	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
South Tyneside	3	3	4	4	4	4	5	5
Sunderland	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Isles of Scilly	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bath and North East Somerset	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Bristol, City of	7	7	8	8	7	7	8	8
North Somerset	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
South Gloucestershire	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Hartlepool	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Middlesbrough	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Redcar and Cleveland	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Stockton-on-Tees	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
Kingston upon Hull, City of	11	10	10	11	11	10	10	11
East Riding of Yorkshire	6	6	6	7	6	6	6	7
North East Lincolnshire	6	6	5	6	6	6	5	6
North Lincolnshire	5	5	3	5	5	5	3	5
North Yorkshire	20	20	21	21	21	23	24	24
York	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Luton	5	6	6	6	5	6	6	6
Bedford	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Central Bedfordshire	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Buckinghamshire	0	0	0	0	19	20	20	20
Milton Keynes	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Derbyshire	21	23	23	23	21	23	23	23
Derby	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Dorset	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
Poole	2	2	2	2	4	4	4	4
Bournemouth	2	2	2	2	4	7	7	7
Durham	27	27	26	27	27	27	26	27
Darlington	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
East Sussex	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
Brighton and Hove	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Hampshire	24	25	25	25	24	25	25	25
Portsmouth	5	6	6	7	5	6	6	7
Southampton	7	7	6	7	7	7	6	7
Leicestershire	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Leicester	8	8	8	8	9	9	9	9
Rutland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Staffordshire	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24
Stoke-on-Trent	8	8	8	9	8	8	8	9
Wiltshire	10	10	10	10	14	14	14	14
Swindon	2	5	5	5	2	5	5	5
Bracknell Forest	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Windsor and Maidenhead	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
West Berkshire	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Reading	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Slough	1	1	1	1	7	8	8	8
Wokingham	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Cambridgeshire	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Peterborough	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Halton	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Warrington	5	5	5	6	5	5	5	6

LA name	Number of comprehensive schools entering no pupils at the end of key stage 4 for GCSEs in				Number of maintained mainstream schools entering no pupils at the end of key stage 4 for GCSEs in			
	Biology	Chemistry	Physics	All three separate sciences	Biology	Chemistry	Physics	All three separate sciences
Devon	13	16	16	16	13	16	16	16
Plymouth	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Torbay	5	5	5	5	7	7	7	7
Essex	29	29	29	30	29	29	29	30
Southend-on-sea	4	5	4	5	6	7	6	7
Thurrock	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Herefordshire	8	9	9	10	8	9	9	10
Worcestershire	13	13	14	14	13	13	15	15
Kent	8	12	12	12	38	52	49	52
Medway	1	1	1	1	9	10	11	12
Lancashire	31	36	36	38	32	37	37	39
Blackburn with Darwen	7	7	6	7	7	7	6	7
Blackpool	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
Nottinghamshire	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23
Nottingham	10	11	12	12	10	11	12	12
Shropshire	13	14	14	14	13	14	14	14
Telford and Wrekin	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Cheshire East	7	7	7	7	8	8	8	8
Cheshire West and Chester	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Cornwall	11	12	12	12	11	12	12	12
Cumbria	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21
Gloucestershire	17	16	16	17	18	17	17	18
Hertfordshire	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31
Isle of Wight	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Lincolnshire	8	9	9	10	26	28	29	30
Norfolk	24	26	26	26	24	26	26	26
Northamptonshire	12	11	11	12	12	11	11	12
Northumberland	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Oxfordshire	15	16	16	16	15	16	16	16
Somerset	14	15	14	15	14	15	14	15
Suffolk	14	17	17	17	14	17	17	17
Surrey	14	17	16	17	14	17	16	17
Warwickshire	9	10	10	10	12	13	14	14
West Sussex	15	16	16	16	15	16	16	16

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families how many and what proportion of pupils in each local authority area did not attain any GCSEs above grade D in the most recent year for which figures are available. [318898]

Mr. Coaker: The information requested for pupils attending maintained schools (including city technology colleges and academies) has been placed in the Libraries.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families how many pupils not eligible for free school meals attended schools at which fewer than 30 per cent. of pupils achieved five A* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics but excluding equivalents in 2009. [318962]

Mr. Coaker [holding answer 1 March 2010]: In 2009, there were 242,990 pupils not known to be eligible for free school meals attending schools at which fewer than 30 per cent. of pupils achieved five A* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics but excluding equivalents¹ (includes post 16 pupils).

¹ Includes maintained mainstream schools (including academies) with more than 10 pupils that were published in the 2009 Achievement

and Attainment tables. Qualifications include GCSEs, GCSE short courses, GCSE double awards, vocational single and double GCSEs and AS levels.

Michael Gove: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families whether his Department has made an assessment for benchmarking purposes of educational attainment at GCSE in England in comparison with attainment of children of the same age in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. [321321]

Mr. Coaker: The Department does not benchmark educational attainment for England against that for Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland.

The Department does publish data on educational attainment at GCSE across the UK and for England. Equivalent data for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland is the responsibility of, and published by, the respective devolved Administrations.

The following table gives a breakdown of educational attainment at GCSE across the UK since 2005:

GCE, GCSE, SCE/INQ and vocational qualifications obtained by pupils¹ and students (in their last year of compulsory education)

Percentage of pupils achieving GCSE or equivalent ²	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
5 or more grades A*-C ³	59.0	61.3	64.4
5 or more grades A*-C including English and maths	—	—	47.7

¹ Pupils aged 15 at the start of the academic year; pupils in Year S4 in Scotland. From 2004/05, pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 in England.

² From 2007/08 data are for 5+ A*-C, 5+ A*-C including English and Maths and Any Passes.

³ Standard Grades 1-3/Intermediate 2 A-C/Intermediate 1 A in Scotland.

Source:

Education and Training Statistics for the United Kingdom 2009

The following table gives a breakdown for England:

GCSE and equivalent qualifications obtained by pupils at the end of Key Stage 4

Percentage of pupils achieving GCSE or equivalent	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
5 or more grades A*-C	59.0	61.4	65.3	70.0
5 or more grades A*-C including English and maths	45.6	46.3	47.6	49.8

GCSE: Disadvantaged

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families how many pupils eligible for free school meals achieved (a) one or more A to G grades, (b) three or more A to C grades and (c) three or more A grades at A-level in 2003. [318939]

Mr. Coaker: Figures for 2003 are shown in the following table:

Pupils eligible for free school meals achieving	Number	Percentage
(a) one or more A to E grades	4,610	93.4
(b) three or more A to C grades	845	17.1
(c) three or more A grades	94	1.9

Percentages indicated are of all students eligible for free school meals who were entered for at least one GCEA/CE/Applied A Level and Double Awards in 2003.

The figures relate to 16 to 18-year-olds (age at start of academic year, i.e. 31 August 2002) in maintained schools only who were eligible for free school meals. The figures do not include the achievement of students in further education sector colleges previously eligible for free school meals.

Gifted Children

Michael Gove: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families how many and what proportion of pupils with gifted and talented status did not sit any A-levels in (a) 1997, (b) 2003, (c) 2006 and (d) the most recent year for which figures are available. [316870]

Mr. Iain Wright: The Department has collected information about individual pupil's Gifted and Talented status in Secondary schools since 2006. The information available to answer this question is provided in the following table. Please note that this information covers pupils in school sixth forms only, pupils entered for A-level examinations in sixth form or further education colleges are excluded from the figures.

	Pupils with Gifted and Talented status who did not sit any A-levels in selected years	
	Number	Percentage
2006	112	1.0
2008	637	2.3
2009	675	2.1

Source:

National Pupil Database.

Pupils identified as gifted and talented are defined as

“Children and young people with one or more abilities developed to a level significantly ahead of their year group (or with the potential to develop those abilities)”.

Included are students identified for their talent in, for example, creative arts or sports rather than their ability to excel academically.

International Baccalaureate

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families how many schools offer an International Baccalaureate course; and if he will make a statement. [325304]

Mr. Coaker: The Department does not hold information on the courses offered by schools. However, information on the courses entered by students is available.

69 schools¹ entered students for an International Baccalaureate (IB) during the 2008/09 academic year. A further 22 FE colleges had IB candidates in 2008/09.

¹ Maintained and independent schools.

Karen Matthews

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families what recent discussions he has had with the Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board on the timetable for the publication of the executive summary of the serious case review of the Karen Matthews case. [324765]

Dawn Primarolo [holding answer 29 March 2010]: As part of their challenge and support function, officials from the Government office for Yorkshire and the Humber keep in close contact with progress being made by Local Safeguarding Children Boards in their region which are conducting serious case reviews. I understand that the Government office has had a number of discussions with Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board about the timetable for this particular, very complex serious case review. Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board hopes to complete it shortly and to publish the executive summary as soon as they are able to do so, after evaluation by Ofsted.

Languages: GCSE

Michael Gove: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families how many pupils in (a) comprehensive, (b) academy and (c) independent schools were entered for a GCSE in each modern language in the last year for which figures are available.

[314925]

Mr. Coaker [holding answer 2 February 2010]: The information relating to GCSE entries in 2008-09 is given in the following table:

	Number of entries in comprehensive schools	Number of entries in academies	Number of entries in independent schools
Welsh	1	0	0
Irish	1	0	0
Dutch	393	46	30
French	123,942	2,428	26,730
German	52,702	1,024	7,218
Italian	2,415	33	684
Modern Greek	311	15	60
Portuguese	1,134	93	24
Spanish	39,590	1,166	11,228
Arabic	1,325	118	718
Bengali	1,172	66	98
Chinese	959	60	1,280
Gujarati	707	29	114
Japanese	611	0	191
Modern Hebrew	251	0	170
Panjabi	700	48	27
Polish	1,741	117	23
Russian	746	66	630
Turkish	988	84	43
Urdu	3,716	168	911
Persian	364	19	38
All subjects	233,774	5,580	50,217

¹ Figures suppressed due to small numbers

Notes:

1. Figures relate to pupils at the end of key stage 4 in the 2008-09 academic year and include attempts and achievements by these pupils in previous academic years.

2. Entries for academies are also included in the comprehensive schools figures.

Source:

Achievement and Attainment Tables data

Literacy: Primary Education

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families how much his Department spent on (a) publication and distribution and (b) training in respect of the Letters and Sounds programme in the last 12 months for which figures are available. [318261]

Ms Diana R. Johnson: The information is as follows:

(a) Full costs for 'Letters and Sounds' are detailed as follows. We cannot identify specific figures for publication and distribution. These costs form part of the National Strategies contract funding:

Description	2006-07	2007-08
Project management costs	219,508	79,677
Project costs	851,633	1,313,900
Total 'Letters and Sounds'	1,071,141	1,393,577
Total cost of 'Letters and Sounds'	2,464,718	

(b) Training in respect of 'Letters and Sounds' forms part of the work of the National Strategy's regional consultants, and is included in their contract funding. It is not possible to break down specific costs for this.

National Curriculum Tests

Justine Greening: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families how many and what proportion of children achieved the national standard in each of the 13 assessment scales of the Foundation Stage Profile assessments in (a) England and (b) each London borough in each year since the inception of those assessments. [325566]

Dawn Primarolo [holding reply 6 April 2010]: Children who achieve six points or more are deemed to be working securely within the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. The percentage of children working securely in each of the 13 assessment scales has been published in an annual Statistical First Release since 2005.

The information available for 2007 to 2009 can be found in the "Six plus" columns of table A in the additional local authority and Government office region tables of the following Statistical First Releases:

SFR 32/2007, available at

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000752/index.shtml>

SFR 25/2008, available at

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000812/index.shtml>

and SFR 26/2009, available at

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000879/index.shtml>

The information for 2005 and 2006 can be found in table B of the additional local authority tables of the following Statistical First Releases:

SFR 03/2006, available at

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000634/index.shtml>

and SFR 03/2007, available at:

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000704/index.shtml>

Please note that care should be taken when comparing 2005 and 2006 figures between local authorities, as the assessments were not yet well established which may have caused inconsistencies in moderation.

Opposition

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families whether his Department has undertaken costings of the policies of the (a) Conservative Party and (b) Liberal Democrat Party at the request of Ministers or special advisers in the last 36 months. [324243]

Ms Diana R. Johnson: Her Majesty's Treasury coordinates or clears any costing of Opposition policies. I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury on 30 March 2010, *Official Report*, column 1044W.

Pre-school Education

Justine Greening: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families how many nurseries there were in (a) England and (b) each London borough in each year from 1997 to 2009; and what proportion of those nurseries in each area was assessed by Ofsted as inadequate in each of those years. [325565]

Dawn Primarolo [*holding answer 6 April 2010*]: This is a matter for Ofsted. The Chief Inspector, Christine Gilbert will write to the hon. Member and copies of her reply will be placed in the Library.

Schools: Employment

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families if he will issue guidance to school governors on their individual liability in respect of decisions on the employment of staff. [324776]

Mr. Coaker: The Governors Guide to the Law is a guidance document produced by the Department and issued to governing bodies of all maintained schools to provide advice in relation to their statutory roles and responsibilities. This guidance is reviewed and updated biannually to ensure governors are provided with accurate, up to date information. Chapter 3 of the Guide provides specific guidance in relation to governor liability.

Schools: Finance

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families with reference to the answer to the hon. Member for Surrey Heath of 9 September 2009, *Official Report*, columns 1937-8W, on schools, what proportion of the expenditure on curriculum is received by schools; and if he will make a statement. [314157]

Ms Diana R. Johnson: In 2010-2011, £3.5 million will be allocated directly to schools to support the delivery of the science curriculum and at least £21 million for primary languages. However, all planned expenditure on schools will assist them in the delivery of the curriculum.

Schools: Inspections

Michael Gove: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families how much on average an Ofsted inspection of (a) a nursery, (b) a children's centre, (c) a primary school, (d) a secondary school and (e) local authority children's services cost in the latest period for which figures are available. [317081]

Mr. Coaker: This is a matter for Ofsted. HM Chief Inspector, Christine Gilbert, will write to the hon. Member and a copy of her reply will be placed in the Libraries.

Schools: Radicalism

Michael Gove: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families (1) on how many occasions Ofsted undertook an additional school inspection in response to concerns about the effect of possible links with extremism on the standard of education provided in a school in the last five years; and who is responsible for the decision to undertake such an inspection; [325140]

(2) on what occasions (a) Ofsted and (b) his Department has received information from each source on possible links between a school and extremism in the last 10 years; and what steps were taken in response to that information on each occasion; [325141]

(3) on what statutory basis Ofsted undertakes an additional or targeted inspection in response to concerns about the effect of possible links with extremism on the standard of education provided in a school; and what the (a) duration and (b) remit is of such inspections; [325142]

(4) what (a) guidance and (b) criteria are used by Ofsted to determine whether to undertake an additional inspection in response to concerns about the effect of possible links with extremism on the standard of education provided in a school; [325143]

(5) what definition Ofsted uses of extremism in assessing information on possible links between schools and extremism; and what criteria it uses to classify a school as having links with extremism. [325144]

Ms Diana R. Johnson [*holding answer 30 March 2010*]: Ofsted is required to carry out regular inspections of all maintained schools under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. All independent schools are inspected regularly against the standards for independent schools under s. 162A of the Education Act 2002.

In addition, the Secretary of State may require Ofsted to inspect a school outside of the routine programme of inspections under section 8(1) of the Education Act 2005 and section 162A of the Education Act 2002.

Section 8(2) of the Education Act 2002 enables the chief inspector to inspect a maintained school where she is not otherwise required to do so, including in response to a parental complaint.

In the case of independent schools, additional inspection visits can be commissioned by the Department if there is evidence that a school might not be meeting any of the independent school standards including concerns about the quality of education or procedures for safeguarding children. Any remedial action or deregistration would take place on the basis that one or more standard had not been met. If there was evidence of that the law may have been breached, Ofsted would liaise with the police and other authorities as appropriate.

The duration and focus of an additional inspection depends on the individual circumstances but must relate to Ofsted's remit and the legal requirements relating to maintained or independent schools. There is no statutory definition of extremism or extremist organisations other than those proscribed under the Terrorism Act 2000. Therefore neither Ofsted nor DCSF are able to keep systematic central records of allegations about extremism, nor of alleged links between schools and extremist organisations.

Independent schools are inspected against regulatory standards which include a standard governing the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. This requires independent schools to enable pupils to distinguish right from wrong and respect the law and assist pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures in a way that promotes tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions.

Routine inspections of maintained schools include an assessment of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils and the school's contribution to promoting community cohesion and the well-being of all of their pupils.

In the last three years Ofsted has conducted inspection work following allegations made in the press about extremism affecting the quality of education at the two schools belonging to the Islamic Shakhshiyah Foundation and at King Fahad School.

Secure Training Centres: Children

Chris Huhne: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families (1) how many (a) looked after, (b) eligible, (c) relevant and (d) former relevant children are in secure training centres; [323422]

(2) how many (a) looked after, (b) eligible, (c) relevant and (d) former relevant children are in custody with (i) an indeterminate sentence for public protection, (ii) an extended sentence and (iii) life sentence; [323423]

(3) how many (a) looked after, (b) eligible, (c) relevant and (d) former relevant children are in secure children's homes; [323424]

(4) how many (a) looked after, (b) eligible, (c) relevant and (d) former relevant children were in custody in 2008 after the date of their 18th birthday; [323425]

(5) how many (a) looked-after, (b) eligible, (c) relevant and (d) former relevant children there are in young offender institutions. [323506]

Dawn Primarolo: An "eligible child" is a young person aged 16-18 who has been looked after for the prescribed period (13 weeks) and is then eligible for services under the Children (Leaving Care) Act and who remains looked after by the local authority. A "relevant child" is a young person aged 16-18 who has been looked after for the prescribed period (13 weeks) and is then eligible for services under the Children (Leaving Care) Act and who is no longer looked after by the local authority.

A "former relevant child" is a young person aged 18+ (i.e. legally adult) who was either an "eligible" or a "relevant child" or both who as a result will remain entitled to continuing leaving care support from their responsible local authority until age 21 or longer if continuing in an agreed programme of education or training.

Information on the number of children placed in secure units and in young offenders institutions or prisons who were (a) looked after, (b) eligible, can be found in the statistical first release titled "Children looked after in England (including adoption and care leavers) year ending 31 March 2009.

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000878/index.shtml>

Table A3 shows the number of children looked after at 31 March 2005 to 2009, aged up to 17 years (inclusive), who were placed in secure units and in young offenders institutions or prisons. This table can be found in the excel link titled (England Summary tables, included within PDF file).

Information on the number of (c) relevant and (d) former relevant children who are in secure training centres, secure children's homes, young offender institutions or in custody is not collected by the Department. Information on the numbers in custody with (i) an indeterminate sentence for public protection, (ii) an extended sentence and (iii) life sentence is also not collected by the Department.

Information on the number of former care leavers who were in custody around the time of their 19th birthday, who had previously been looked after aged 16, can also be found in the statistical first release titled "Children looked after in England (including adoption and care leavers) year ending 31 March 2009.

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000878/index.shtml>

Table G1 shows the number of former care leavers who were in custody around the time of their 19th birthday. This table can be found in the excel link titled (England Summary tables, included within PDF file).

Social Workers

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families how many foster carers caring for children through special guardianship orders have reported to his Department allegations of (a) intimidation and (b) bullying by social workers in the last 12 months; and if he will make a statement. [309026]

Dawn Primarolo: Data on allegations made about social workers is not collected by the Department for Children, Schools and Families. I am not aware of any allegations about intimidation or bullying by social workers having been reported to the Department by a Special Guardian in the last 12 months.

Social worker employers hold information on allegations made about social workers in their employment as it is their responsibility to investigate such allegations and take appropriate action.

The General Social Care Council also investigates allegations about social workers in its capacity as the regulator of the social work profession in England. The General Social Care Council's report "Raising standards: Social work conduct in England 2003-2008" which includes trend analyses of the cases referred to them in the period 2003-08 is available here:

<http://www.gsc.org.uk/Conduct/Publications+and+useful+documents/>

Specialised Diplomas

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families how many maintained schools enrolled no pupils on a diploma course in the most recent year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [303301]

Mr. Iain Wright: It is estimated that 78 per cent. (2,342) of maintained mainstream schools did not register any diploma learners on the Diploma Aggregation Service (DAS) during 2008/09. Published data on 2008/09 Diploma participation is obtained from the QCDA's DAS, which is used to award diplomas. Schools do not have to register learners on DAS until just before they intend to claim an award. It is possible that there are a number of schools who were delivering diplomas in 2008/09 who did not register any learners on DAS during 2008/09. Similarly, there will be schools which, as members of a diploma consortium, are participating in the delivery of diplomas, but if they are not the 'Home Centre' they will not have learners registered on DAS. The 'Home Centre' is the lead educational institution in the diploma consortium which is responsible for registering the diploma learner on DAS.

Information on the number of schools in 2009/10 currently delivering the diploma is not yet available.

Sports: Primary Education

Michael Gove: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families what estimate he has made of the number and percentage of children in maintained schools who participated in intra-school competitive sports in the latest period for which information is available. [315706]

Mr. Iain Wright: The annual PE and Sport survey collects data from maintained schools relating to pupils' participation in PE and sport. The 2008/09 survey found that 69 per cent. of pupils in Years 1-11 took part in intra-school competitive sport in that academic year.

Teachers: Qualifications

David Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families what recent assessment he has made of the level of qualifications required for teachers at (a) post-16 colleges and (b) sixth forms attached to secondary schools; and if he will make a statement. [319472]

Mr. Coaker: All teachers who joined the further education sector after September 2007 must, within five years of appointment, meet the standards for qualified teacher learning and skills (QTLS) status. Before they can teach unsupervised all new teachers must have attained the Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning sector award. All teachers in the further education sector must undertake at least 30 hours of continuing professional development each year.

Teachers who teach in a sixth form that is part of a school must meet the standards for qualified teacher status (QTS) before taking up their post. A school may temporarily employ a teacher without QTS if no suitable teacher with QTS is available.

Apart from these statutory requirements, schools and colleges may make individual decisions about any other qualifications they require from their staff for a particular role. My Department does not collect data on individual schools' recruitment criteria, and nor does the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills with respect to colleges.

Written Questions: Government Responses

Mr. Purchase: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families when he expects to answer Question 324573, on Ofsted, tabled on 23 March 2010. [325886]

Mr. Coaker: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given on 7 April 2010, *Official Report*, column 1460W.

Young People: Drugs

Mr. Burrowes: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families whether any of the adolescents identified by the National Treatment Agency as having a Class A drug dependency are using (a) more than one Class A drug and (b) one or more of (i) alcohol and (ii) cannabis. [325796]

Dawn Primarolo: The information is not available in the format requested. The NTA report, "Substance misuse among young people: The data for 2008-09", gives figures on numbers of young people (under-18) in drug treatment according to whether each drug type is categorised as the primary or additional substance used as follows:

<i>Drug type</i>	<i>Primary</i>	<i>Additional</i>
Heroin and other opiates	547	204
Cocaine	745	2,305
Crack	110	304
Ecstasy	210	1,429
Cannabis	12,642	4,811
Amphetamines	229	887
Alcohol	8,799	7,248

Youth Parliaments

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families (1) what steps his Department takes to ensure that its funding for county Youth Parliaments represents value for money; and if he will make a statement; [325681]

(2) how much funding his Department has provided to the Surrey Youth Parliament in each of the last three years. [325682]

Dawn Primarolo [holding answer 7 April 2010]: The Department does not directly fund local Youth Parliaments.

We are committed to putting youth voice at the heart of our policies and programmes for young people and it is right that they should have access to the appropriate forums to discuss matters that affect their lives. Giving young people a real say over the issues that affect them leads to better decisions and outcomes, promotes community engagement and helps overturn negative perceptions. Youth Parliaments are one of a number of ways that young people's voices can be heard by local and national decision makers. Many local authorities choose to support Youth Parliaments as part of their overall arrangements for taking account of young people's views.

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Buildings: Energy

Grant Shapps: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government pursuant to the answer of 4 February 2010, *Official Report*, column 524W, on buildings: energy, how many and what proportion of properties on the Non-Domestic EPC Register have a Band (a) A, (b) B, (c) C, (d) D, (e) E and (f) F rating. [316738]

Mr. Ian Austin: The number and proportion of properties on the Non-Domestic EPC Register by rating band as of 8 February is:

Rating band	Number of lodgements	Percentage of lodgements
A+	10	0.1
A	557	0.38
B	11,701	8.00
C	40,392	27.61
D	42,689	29.18
E	25,524	17.45
F	11,876	8.12
G	13,551	9.26

Council Housing: Rents

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government what the average rent paid for (a) one bedroom, (b) two bedroom, (c) three bedroom and (d) all types of council accommodation in (i) City of York, (ii) Yorkshire and the Humber and (iii) England in (A) 2002-03, (B) 2005-06 and (C) in the latest period figures are available. [322089]

Mr. Ian Austin: It has not proved possible to respond to my hon. Friend in the time available before Prorogation.

Empty Dwelling Management Orders

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government how many empty dwelling management orders have been issued by each local authority. [319232]

Mr. Ian Austin: 29 interim Empty Dwelling Management Orders have been authorised by the Residential Property Tribunal to date.

Local authority	Number of interim EDMOs authorised
Bolton Borough Council	1
Carlisle District Council	2
London Borough of Bromley	1
London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham	1
London Borough of Hounslow	1
London Borough of Lewisham	5
New Forest District Council	1
Norwich City Council	6
Peterborough City Council	2
South Gloucestershire Council	1

Local authority	Number of interim EDMOs authorised
South Norfolk District Council	1
South Oxfordshire District Council	1
South Tyneside Borough Council	1
Southend-On-Sea Borough Council	2
Staffordshire Moorlands District Council	1
Swale Borough Council	1
Wychavon District Council	1
Total	29

Empty Dwelling Management Orders should only be considered as a last resort, where all other measures of investigation and negotiation have been exhausted and the local authority has been unable to persuade the owner to bring the property back into use. In many cases the threat of an Empty Dwelling Management Order is sufficient to make owners take action.

First-Time Buyers

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government what the average cost was of a dwelling purchased by a first-time buyer in (a) England, (b) Wales, (c) each Government office region and (d) each local authority area in the most recent period for which figures are available. [323529]

Mr. Ian Austin: The latest average mix-adjusted purchase price of a first-time buyer, for January 2010 as well as previous months back to 2002, for England, Wales and Government Office regions are available on the Department's website.

Emily Thornberry: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government how many homes have been sold to first-time buyers under Government schemes in each year since 1997. [325856]

John Healey: Since 1997 over 160,000 households have been assisted into home ownership through Government schemes.

A full breakdown of low cost home ownership provision can be found in Live Table 1000 of the communities and Local Government website at:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/xls/1406058.xls>

Housing

Grant Shapps: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in what year his Department began keeping reliable figures relating to net housing supply; and if he will make a statement. [318775]

Mr. Ian Austin [holding answer 25 February 2010]: Annual estimates of net supply have been made from annual changes in housing stock since the late 1960's. Prior to that estimates were available every 10 years from the population census, back to 1801. In 2000-01 a new data return was introduced to improve estimates of net supply.

Figures on net supply of housing and an explanation of data sources are included in Communities and Local Government's statistical series "Net supply of housing, England". Statistical releases in this series can be found on the Communities and Local Government website at the following link. The latest release was published on 25 February 2010.

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingstatistics/housingstatisticsby/stockincludingvacants/nethousingsupply/>

Housing: Overcrowding

Grant Shapps: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government what estimate he has made of the number and proportion of (a) households and (b) people in the (i) private rented, (ii) social rented and (iii) owner occupier sector living in overcrowded conditions in each year since 1997.

[316236]

Mr. Ian Austin: The information requested is available on the Department's website.

Housing: Prices

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government what the ratio of lower quintile house prices to lower quintile earnings was in (a) England and (b) each government office region in each year since 1996.

[323528]

Mr. Ian Austin: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Grant Shapps: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government what the average cost was of (a) a detached house, (b) a semi-detached house, (c) a terraced house, (d) a flat and (e) an average dwelling in (i) England, (ii) Wales, (iii) each Government Office region and (iv) each local authority area in (A) 1996-97 and (B) the most recent period for which figures are available.

[324618]

Mr. Ian Austin: A table showing the average sale price by property type for 1996-07 and 2009 for each of the areas requested has been placed in the Library of the House. These figures are taken from the Land Registry data.

Housing: Sales

Grant Shapps: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government how many residential property sales there were in each local authority area in the last year for which figures are available.

[324479]

Mr. Ian Austin: Data on residential property sales are provided by the Land Registry and published by local authority district on the CLG website.

Grant Shapps: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government how many and what proportion of domestic properties sold in each (a) local authority and (b) Government office region were sold at above £325,000 in the latest period for which figures are available.

[324501]

Mr. Ian Austin: The information requested is not available in the form requested.

Housing: Standards

Grant Shapps: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (1) how many Building for Life assessments were carried out in each of the last three years; and how many resulted in an assessment of (a) very good, (b) good, (c) average and (d) poor;

[321548]

(2) how much the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment has received for training local planning authority assessors in the Building for Life programme.

[321551]

Mr. Ian Austin: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Planning Inspectorate: Judicial Reviews

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government how many judicial reviews relating to section 288 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 were brought by each local planning authority against the decision of the Planning Inspectorate in each of the last five years; how many of those were (a) upheld and (b) dismissed in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement.

[325825]

Mr. Ian Austin: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Rented Housing: Overcrowding

Justine Greening: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (1) how many and what proportion of (a) households and (b) people in the (i) private and (ii) social rented sector there were living in overcrowded conditions in (A) London and (B) England in each year since 1997;

[323592]

(2) how many and what proportion of (a) households and (b) people in the (i) private and (ii) social rented sector classified as living in overcrowded conditions there were in each London borough in each year from 1997 to 2009.

[324027]

Mr. Ian Austin: Information in respect of overcrowding is available on the Department's website.

The Survey of English Housing samples are too small to provide reliable estimates at local authority level.

Social Rented Housing

Grant Shapps: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government what percentage of the social homes provided through the temporary social housing programme in each of the last three years were available for (a) up to five years, (b) from six to 10 years, (c) from 11 to 15 years and (d) from 16 years or more.

[321564]

Mr. Ian Austin: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Grant Shapps: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government pursuant to the answer of 4 March 2010, *Official Report*, columns

1330-1332W, on social rented housing: finance, what the average duration of availability was for social homes provided through the Temporary Social Housing programme in each of the last three years. [321589]

Mr. Ian Austin: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Social Rented Housing: Construction

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government how many social homes have been built since April 2006; and (a) how many and (b) what proportion met code level (i) 1, (ii) 2, (iii) 3, (iv) 4, (v) 5 and (vi) 6 of the Code for Sustainable Homes. [319270]

Mr. Ian Austin: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 23 March 2010, *Official Report*, columns 271-72W, to the hon. Member for Welwyn Hatfield (Grant Shapps).

Social Rented Housing: Empty Property

Grant Shapps: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (1) how many social homes were vacant for a period of more than six months in each local authority area in each of the last three years; [320835]

(2) how many social homes were vacant in each local authority area in each of the last three years. [320836]

Mr. Ian Austin: Information is not available on the number of registered social landlord dwellings that were vacant for a period of more than six months in each local authority area.

The other information requested is available on the Department's website.

Social Rented Housing: Waiting Lists

Grant Shapps: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (1) how many households with children were on the social housing waiting list in each of the last three years; and how many children there were in households on that waiting list in each of those years; [323838]

(2) how many households with at least one pregnant member were on the social housing waiting list in each of the last three years; [323839]

(3) what information his Department (a) holds and (b) collects from local authorities on (i) demographics and (ii) waiting times in respect of households on the social housing waiting list; [323841]

(4) how many households with at least one disabled person were on the social housing waiting list in each of the last three years. [323813]

Mr. Ian Austin: Information on waiting times and other characteristics of households on social housing waiting lists are not collected centrally.

The other information requested is available on the Department's website.

Street Cleaning

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government if he will bring forward legislative proposals to require local authorities to clean and maintain unadopted alleyways; and if he will make a statement. [325877]

Barbara Follett: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

TREASURY

Answers received for publication 21 January 2010

Banks: USA

Mr. Drew: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has made to the US authorities on the effect on UK banks in which the Government have a stake operating in the US of the new taxation arrangements in that country; and whether he plans to make such arrangements reciprocal. [311948]

Mr. Timms: On 14 January the US announced the "Financial Crisis Responsibility Fee", which the Government are studying closely. This is a matter for the US authorities and UK banks will be working with them to understand the impact of the proposal as it passes through Congress.

Revenue and Customs: Closures

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether an assessment has been made of the implications for levels of tax collected of proposals by HM Revenue and Customs to close offices and reduce staff. [311999]

Mr. Timms: HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) is restructuring its operations across the UK, by consolidating its staff into larger teams in fewer locations to enable more efficient working practices to be introduced.

During this restructuring HMRC has increased the revenues brought in from its compliance activities, from £7.5 billion in 2005-06 to £12 billion in 2008-09.

Revenue and Customs: Peterhead

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment has been made of the effects of the closure of HM Revenue and Customs' (HMRC) office in Peterhead on the provision of face-to-face advice for clients; how far the nearest HMRC enquiry centre providing face-to-face advice for clients will be from Peterhead following the closure of Keith House, Peterhead; what the estimated disposal costs are of Keith House; what support and guidance HMRC have offered to staff at Keith House over the Workforce Change Programme; whether HMRC plans any compulsory redundancies in respect of staff at Keith House; and how many staff at Keith House will be redeployed by HMRC to other locations. [311975]

Mr. Timms: Provision of face to face advice services currently provided by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) at Keith House, Peterhead will continue either in the existing location or nearby, although no final decision has yet been made as to the actual location. These

services are not affected by the decision to withdraw other HMRC work from Peterhead.

HMRC occupies Keith House under contract with its estates provider, Mapeley, and this contract includes a high level of flexibility for HMRC to vacate properties at nil or limited cost during the life of the contract. HMRC intends to maximise the use of the contract's flexibility and until vacation plans for Keith House are finalised, it is not known whether disposal costs will be applicable.

Following the announcement on 4 December 2008 that HMRC would withdraw from Keith House, managers have held one-to-one meetings with staff to discuss their options, taking account of individual personal circumstances. A regional implementation team was set up to explore redeployment options and find suitable opportunities within HMRC and in other Government Departments and agencies. Seminars for all affected staff are being held, and further support is being planned for those staff who want to continue their civil service careers.

Of the eight staff working in Keith House, plans are currently in place for one to be redeployed or continue to provide enquiry centre services. Those staff who cannot be redeployed are eligible to be considered for voluntary redundancy on compulsory terms. HMRC is committed to avoiding compulsory redundancies wherever possible.

Revenue and Customs: Scotland

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer at how many locations in Scotland HM Revenue and Customs shares office accommodation with other government agencies. [311970]

Mr. Timms: 24.

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether any of the HM Revenue and Customs offices in Scotland earmarked for closure were funded through the private finance initiative. [311971]

Mr. Timms: All of the HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) offices in Scotland identified for closure are held under private finance initiative (PFI) arrangements. The majority are held directly by HMRC under the Strategic Transfer of the Estate to the Private Sector (STEPS) contract with Mapeley, which provides a high level of flexibility for HMRC to vacate properties at nil or limited cost during the life of the contract.

The remaining offices being occupied by HMRC under sharing arrangements with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and subject to DWP's PFI contract with Trillium.

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many cases have been passed from HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) call centres to HMRC offices in Scotland which have been earmarked for closure in each of the last five years; what the estimated cost will be of vacating those offices; and what plans HMRC has for the disposal of such buildings at each location. [311972]

Mr. Timms: The information requested around the number of cases passed from HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) Call Centres to those offices in Scotland is available only at disproportionate cost, due to the work required to extract it from HMRC's systems.

The majority of the HMRC offices in Scotland are held under the terms of the HMRC private finance initiative (PFI) contract with their estates supplier, Mapeley. This contract includes a high level of flexibility for HMRC to vacate properties at nil or limited cost during the life of the contract. HMRC intends to maximise the use of the contract's flexibility and until vacation plans for each office are finalised, it is not known whether disposal costs will be applicable. Formal vacation notices for each office are due to be issued by summer 2010.

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the staff (a) turnover and (b) absentee rate was at each HM Revenue and Customs office in Scotland in each of the last five years. [311973]

Mr. Timms: The information requested is provided in the following tables.

Town	Office name	2009-10 ¹	Turnover				Percentage
			2008-09	2007-08	2006-07	2005-06	
Aberdeen	Ruby House	3.2	22.3	14.3	9.4	9.1	
	Russell House	20.2	26.8	13.6	8.5	12.2	
	Pyramids Business Park	7.7	18.7	20.3	14.2	13.2	
	Moray House	0.0	8.0	8.3	6.7	5.9	
	2 Muirhall Street	0.0	13.6	4.3	3.8	6.3	
	St. Mungos Road	2.5	6.8	10.5	19.2	9.1	
	15 Meadowbank Street	0.0	33.3	0.0	6.3	12.5	
	Government Buildings	48.1	14.3	23.4	10.6	1.8	
Dundee	Caledonian House	3.3	11.6	63.8	7.7	9.3	
	Sidlaw House	10.0	17.7	0.1	14.4	17.0	
Dunfermline	Merchiston House	13.6	23.1	3.2	8.8	5.5	
Dunoon	Auchencraig	21.1	16.7	0.0	0.0	16.0	
East Kilbride	Hawbank Stores	0.0	0.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	

Town	Office name	2009-10 ¹	2008-09	Turnover		Percentage
				2007-08	2006-07	2005-06
	Plaza Tower	3.4	8.2	11.5	10.7	6.0
	Queensway House	4.3	13.6	14.3	7.4	6.5
Edinburgh	44 York Place	5.7	8.3	7.0	3.7	13.2
	Argyle House	13.8	8.2	20.0	18.2	8.8
	Clarendon House	7.8	3.2	6.6	7.6	6.8
	Elgin House	2.7	4.3	9.4	11.0	6.9
	Erskine House	0.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Grayfield House	7.3	20.7	16.4	10.6	9.7
	Meldrum House	1.7	2.7	5.1	7.9	8.5
	Saughton House	5.0	5.4	7.3	7.7	5.4
Elgin	Phoenix House Elgin	0.0	8.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Falkirk	Grahame House	26.4	45.5	22.2	10.0	10.7
Galashiels	New Reiver House	23.3	17.6	23.5	8.7	0.0
Glasgow	Blythswood House	4.2	7.7	3.9	6.6	7.6
	Cotton House	2.1	3.5	4.9	10.3	7.0
	Portcullis House	7.8	16.4	17.7	6.4	15.0
Glenrothes	Saltire House	3.8	9.2	14.9	5.0	6.1
Grangemouth	Custom House Grangemouth	10.6	0.0	10.5	15.2	11.1
Greenock	99 Dalrymple Street	20.4	4.9	50.0	13.7	11.9
	Custom House	42.1	5.5	8.1	9.0	8.2
Hamilton	1 Barrack Street	6.6	14.0	2.7	7.0	4.2
Hawick	Crown Building Hawick	14.4	12.5	18.2	17.4	7.7
Inverness	Longman House	28.8	21.1	9.5	0.0	27.3
	River House	2.9	11.4	7.0	8.6	1.9
Irvine	Marress House	5.6	16.9	3.1	2.9	7.4
Kirkcaldy	26 Victoria Road	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Lerwick	Charlotte House	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Livingston	Almondvale Shopping Centre	19.8	0.0	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Barbara Ritchie House	6.8	19.4	21.5	11.0	22.4
	Pentland House	3.5	3.9	5.4	4.6	6.7
Motherwell	43 Civic Square	0.0	16.2	19.2	6.5	0.0
Oban	Mathieson House	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0
Paisley	Falcon Osprey and Vigilant House	0.9	3.6	2.6	3.1	12.0
	Gilmour House	10.9	3.8	0.0	3.3	6.1
	Glasgow Airport	35.2	13.3	0.0	0.0	26.7
Perth	1 to 3 Water Vennel	23.3	13.3	11.5	74.1	16.7
Peterhead	Keith House	17.6	28.6	10.5	3.6	6.6
Rothesay	9 King Street	0.0	0.0	0.0	21.1	0.0
Stirling	8 Spittal Street	19.8	5.6	26.9	6.4	7.8
Ullapool	24 West Argyll Street	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Wick	Government Buildings and Custom House	10.8	4.3	4.3	4.1	3.6

¹ 1 April 2009 to 15 January 2010.

Town	Office name	<i>Average working days lost (AWDL) based on 12 months of sick absence data and three months of staff in post data (April, October and March) (see following notes)</i>		<i>Projected 12 months AWDL using eight months sickness absence and three months staff in post data</i>
		2007-08	2008-09	2009-10 ¹
Aberdeen	Ruby House	4.26	7.23	6.61
Ayr	Russell House	3.71	6.58	2.95
Bathgate	Pyramids Business Park	13.85	9.28	4.46
Buckie	Moray House	5.23	4.46	3.23
Coatbridge	2 Muirhall Street	7.47	7.19	28.31
Cumbernauld	St. Mungos Road	11.45	12.15	14.32
Dumbarton	15 Meadowbank Street	5.19	8.71	4.47
Dumfries	Government Buildings	5.57	2.53	3.69
Dundee	Caledonian House Dundee	10.39	5.09	8.64
	Sidlaw House	21.94	24.51	19.19
Dunfermline	Merchiston House	12.74	12.85	8.38
Dunoon	Auchencraig	5.76	1.52	0.13
East Kilbride	Hawbank Stores	n/a	0.86	0.00
	Plaza Tower	12.35	13.41	12.37
	Queensway House	12.27	10.98	10.58
Edinburgh	44 York Place	6.14	7.08	9.03
	Clarendon House Edinburgh	4.97	7.99	3.27
	Elgin House	7.86	8.62	6.75
	Erskine House	n/a	n/a	0.00
	Grayfield House	11.93	9.16	9.96
	Meldrum House	6.78	7.17	6.88
	Saughton House	9.85	10.43	11.58
Elgin	Phoenix House Elgin	0.60	1.20	0.00
Falkirk	Grahame House	3.69	2.67	15.59
Galashiels	New Reiver House	1.11	4.98	3.69
Glasgow	Blythswood House	15.50	10.06	15.96
	Cotton House	11.26	10.96	9.13
	Portcullis House Glasgow	3.34	14.39	13.42
	Terminal Building Glasgow Airport	0.00	0.09	0.00
Glenrothes	Saltire House	12.79	14.71	8.64
Grangemouth	Custom House Grangemouth	0.42	4.01	2.68
Greenock	99 Dalrymple Street	11.81	5.59	6.63
	Custom House Greenock	0.88	2.38	2.73
Hamilton	1 Barrack Street	15.04	16.89	17.12
Hawick	Crown Building Hawick	13.52	0.40	0.52
Inverness	Longman House	0.70	0.31	1.21
	River House	6.82	8.75	4.42
Irvine	Marress House	4.60	5.91	3.02
Kirkcaldy	26 Victoria Road	4.11	7.53	12.48
Lerwick	Charlotte House	2.10	9.29	0.00
Livingston	Almondvale Shopping Centre	n/a	7.50	19.29
	Barbara Ritchie House	8.04	16.12	14.65
	Pentland House	16.56	13.49	11.00
Motherwell	43 Civic Square	7.31	6.06	10.22

Town	Office name	Average working days lost (AWDL) based on 12 months of sick absence data and three months of staff in post data (April, October and March) (see following notes)		Projected 12 months AWDL using eight months sickness absence and three months staff in post data
		2007-08	2008-09	
Oban	Mathieson House	0.00	0.00	0.00
Paisley	Falcon Osprey and Vigilant House	5.52	7.46	8.88
	Gilmour House	6.06	14.99	14.77
Perth	1 to 3 Water Vennel	4.19	12.77	4.21
Peterhead	Keith House	2.80	5.22	15.51
Rothesay	9 King Street	1.33	1.80	0.34
Stirling	8 Spittal Street	21.58	16.86	13.76
Ullapool	24 West Argyll Street	0.00	0.00	0.00
Wick	Government Buildings And Custom House	18.41	3.93	2.22

¹ 1 April 2009 to 30 November 2009.

Notes:

1. Average working days lost are calculated as follows:

2007-08—Sick absence for each office, for April 2007 to March 2008.

Divided by 12 month average staff in post (SiP) per office, using April 2007, October 2007 and March 2008 SiP.

Result then multiplied by 12.

2008-09—Sick absence for each office, for April 2008 to March 2009.

Divided by 12 month average staff in post per office, using April 2008, October 2008 and March 2009 SiP.

Result then multiplied by 12.

2009-10—Sick absence for each office for April 2009 to November 2009. (November 2009 is the latest SA data held).

Divided by eight month average staff in post per office, using April, October and November 2009 SiP.

Result then multiplied by 12.

2. SiP data:

This is based on three months staff in post data across each tax year which provides a realistic average per office.

HM Revenue and Customs is unable to provide the same data for 2005-06 and 2006-07 because data for staff on no pay as a result of sickness absence was not linked to office locations.

Answers received for publication 8 April 2010

Aggregates Levy: Wind Power

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the aggregates levy applies to the construction of outside tracking and hard standings in wind farms when using materials excavated from (a) a borrow pit and (b) the foundations for turbine towers. [325855]

Sarah McCarthy-Fry: The aggregates levy is a tax on the commercial exploitation of primary aggregates (sand, rock, gravel) in the UK. There is no specific relief for aggregates used in the construction of wind farms.

Bank Services: York

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will direct UK Financial Investments to request from (a) Northern Rock, (b) Halifax, (c) Bank of Scotland, (d) Lloyds Bank and (e) Royal Bank of Scotland (i) the number of (A) businesses and (B) retail account holders of each who were resident in York in 2009 and (ii) an estimate of the monetary value of the holdings in each bank by residents of York at 31 December 2009. [325841]

Sarah McCarthy-Fry: UK Financial Investments manages the Government's holdings in financial institutions at arm's length and on a commercial basis. In line with its role as a shareholder, UKFI requests only information necessary to achieve its objective as set in its Framework Document and Investment Mandate. The Government

believe that these arrangements are vital to ensure that the taxpayer receives value for money from the investments.

Banks: Finance

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer with reference to Box C4, page 213 of the Budget 2010, what estimate he has made of the net fiscal cost of the Government's financial sector interventions as at 24 March 2010; and when he expects to publish the detailed calculations. [325869]

Sarah McCarthy-Fry: Budget 2010 set out that:

"At current market prices the cost of the financial sector interventions net of fees and other income would total £6 billion" (Financial Statement and Budget Report 2010, p213). Details of the derivation of this figure are given in the text on pages 213 and 214.

Child Care Vouchers

Ms Keeble: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many parents who use childcare vouchers also claimed the childcare element of working tax credit in the last 12 months. [301762]

Mr. Timms: Robust data are not available, but analysis of survey data suggests that only a small proportion of parents using child care vouchers also claim the child care element of the working tax credit.

Civil Servants: Location

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer to the right hon. Member for Horsham of 12 March 2010, *Official Report*, column 516W, on civil servants: location, what targets were set for (a) the Cabinet Office, (b) the

Department for Transport, (c) the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, (d) HM Revenue and Customs and (e) the UK Statistics Authority in respect of (i) percentage relocation and (ii) 2003 baseline staffing figures; and what the performance of each against these targets has been to date. [323537]

Mr. Byrne: Relocation targets were set for the Lyons Programme as an absolute number of civil service posts, not as percentages of staff based in London and the south-east, or as a percentage figure of the total work force.

The following table records: the 2003 national staffing figure as recorded in the annual report on civil service staffing figures produced by the Cabinet Office; the London and the south-east staffing figure; the numerical target for posts to relocate; and progress towards that target as of 30 June 2009, for (a) the Cabinet Office, (b) the Department for Transport, (c) the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, (d) HM Revenue and Customs and (e) the UK National Statistics (then known as the Office for National Statistics).

	2003 national staff figure	2003 London/SE staff figure	Numerical target for posts to relocate	Performance against target as of 30 June 2009
CO	2,540	2,360	250	67
DFT	14,540	3,510	60	38
FCO	5,890	4,640	450	30
HMRC	97,740	23,830	4,250	3,238
UKNS	3,250	1,520	850	523

The Budget statement on 24 March 2010 reported that by December 2009 over 21,500 civil service posts had been relocated against the target of 24,000. More detail on this progress is available on the OGC website:

www.ogc.gov.uk

Departmental Public Expenditure

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his Department has incurred expenditure on (a) foreign exchange derivatives and (b) consulting on currency hedging strategies in each of the last five years. [325121]

Sarah McCarthy-Fry [*holding answer 30 March 2010*]: Under the Credit Guarantee Scheme, HM Treasury uses foreign exchange derivatives to hedge fee income received for debt issued in foreign currencies. HM Treasury does not incur explicit expenditure on these transactions; any fees charged for the use of these derivatives would be reflected in the level of the foreign exchange gain received. HM Treasury reports on the Credit Guarantee Scheme, and its financial impacts, annually in its Resource Accounts.

HM Treasury has not incurred any expenditure on consulting on currency hedging strategies.

Income Tax: Young People

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many 16 and 17 year-olds resident in Scotland pay income tax; [315045]

(2) how much income tax liability there was in respect of those resident in Scotland under the age of 18 years between 6 April 2008 and 5 April 2009. [315046]

Mr. Timms: In 2008-09, the number of 16 and 17-year-olds in Scotland with income tax liabilities is estimated at around 6,000, with total income tax liabilities for those under 18 years estimated at £3.7 million.

The figures are based on the 2006-07 Survey of Personal Incomes and projected in line with 2009 pre-Budget report assumptions. The figures should be treated with caution given the small sample size.

Members: Correspondence

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he expects to reply to the letter dated 3 March 2010 from the right hon. Member for Banff and Buchan regarding his constituent Mr. L. Stridgen. [325873]

Sarah McCarthy-Fry: A reply has been sent to the hon. Member.

National Insurance Contributions

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his Department has made an assessment of the merits of (a) reducing National Insurance contributions for businesses taking on a graduate employee and (b) providing a National Insurance contribution rebate to businesses with fewer than 50 members of staff in 2010-11; and if he will make a statement. [323564]

Mr. Timms: All tax and national insurance policy is kept under constant review. Previous experience of schemes with special arrangements for national insurance contributions for specific groups suggests administrative costs could limit take up.

Budget 2010 announced that the Government will extend the £1.3 billion Young Person's Guarantee after March 2011 to ensure young people adversely affected by the recession continue to be offered a Future Jobs Fund job, training or work experience if they cannot find employment within six months.

Non-domestic Rates: Garages and Petrol Stations

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Mole Valley of 5 February 2010, *Official Report*, columns 643-45W, on non-domestic rates: garages and petrol stations, how many of the hereditaments in each category are in each billing authority area. [319111]

Ian Pearson: It has not proved possible to answer the hon. Member's question before Parliament is prorogued later today.

Non-domestic Rates: Ports

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of a moratorium on payments of retrospective rates on port businesses. [325712]

Barbara Follett: I have been asked to reply.

It has not proved possible to respond to my hon. Friend in the time available before Prorogation.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many companies have registered for his Department's scheme to enable retrospective business rate charges to be paid over eight years; and how many such companies are (a) newly-rated port companies and (b) located outside ports. [325713]

Barbara Follett: I have been asked to reply.

It has not proved possible to respond to my hon. Friend in the time available before Prorogation.

Non-domestic Rates: Post Offices

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many post office branches were on the rating list in (a) 1997 and (b) 2010, according to Special Category code information held by the Valuation Office Agency. [315035]

Ian Pearson: It has not proved possible to answer the hon. Member's question before Parliament is prorogued later today.

Revenue and Customs

Mr. Duncan Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish the remissions and write-offs included in the HM Revenue and Customs Trust Statement (a) 2007-08 and (b) 2008-09 including (i) the amounts not collected and (ii) the reasons for the remissions and write-offs. [325747]

Mr. Timms: The information is as follows:

(i) Table 8.2 on page 100 of HM Revenue and Customs' (HMRC) 2008-09 Annual Accounts sets out the amounts of revenue that HMRC remitted and wrote off in 2007-08 and 2008-09. HMRC's Annual Accounts are available at:

<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/about/hmrc-accs-0809.pdf>

(ii) Tax debts are remitted where they are capable of being recovered but HMRC decides not to pursue a liability. It does this: when the value of a debt is small compared with the likely cost of recovering it; when enforcing payment would cause an individual, or his or her dependents, to suffer financial hardship; or where an earlier error by HMRC would make it inappropriate or unfair for it to enforce payment.

HMRC writes off debts when they have become irrecoverable because there are no practical means for pursuing the debt. This applies where taxpayers have gone missing and HMRC has not been able to trace their current whereabouts or where they have moved overseas to a territory outside the European Union with which the UK has no reciprocal recovery rights.

Debts are also written off where individuals or companies have become insolvent. When this happens, HMRC aims to recover a proportion of what it is owed consistent with its legal rights as a creditor, and it writes off the tax that cannot be recovered in this way. Around 90 per cent. of all HMRC remissions and write offs come from this last category.

Tax Allowances: Housing

Kitty Ussher: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 18 March 2010, *Official Report*, column 195W, on tax allowances: housing, if he will estimate the number of (a) UK taxpayers and (b) hon. Members who varied the nomination of a main residence in order to obtain private residence relief from capital gains tax in each of the last 10 years. [325826]

Mr. Timms: The information requested is available only at disproportionate cost, as the data on main residence nominations is not centrally held on HMRC's systems.

Tax Allowances: Pensioners

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many claims for higher rate tax relief on pensions were rejected by HM Revenue and Customs in financial year 2009-10 on the basis that the period within which claims were required to be submitted had expired. [325858]

Mr. Timms: The information requested is not available.

Taxation

Mr. Leech: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent estimate he has made of the effect on domestic tax revenue rates of relocating offshore (a) public and (b) private sector jobs. [323940]

Mr. Timms: No such estimate has been made.

Taxation: Domicil

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will bring forward in the Budget proposals to end non-domiciliary tax status. [321407]

Mr. Timms [holding answer 9 March 2010]: The rules governing the way in which non-domiciled individuals are taxed in the UK were reformed in 2008. These reforms struck the right balance between increasing fairness and maintaining the UK's international competitiveness.

Valuation Office Agency: Allowances

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer with reference to the answer to the hon. Member for Bromley and Chislehurst of 12 November 2009, *Official Report*, column 810W, on Valuation Office: allowances, how many individual expenses were claimed by the Valuation Office Agency's Director of National and Central Services in 2008-09. [324120]

Ian Pearson: During 2008-09 the Valuation Office Agency's (VOA) Director of National and Central Services claimed 475 individual expenses.

The expenses claimed and paid directly to the individual for 2008-09 totalled £6,632.

All expenses have been counted individually and not totalled for each day of travel or for each, total, claim submitted on the VOA expenses system. For example if a tube, bus and meal allowance has been claimed on the same day this will be counted as three separate expense claims not one.

This sum excludes costs paid direct by the agency's travel providers for hotel accommodation, rail fares etc.

A further detailed analysis of the hotel expense statistics (as supplied by the travel provider) has revealed errors in the way in which the information from the travel supplier was interpreted. This position has now been clarified but, as a consequence, the figures shown on 12 November 2009, *Official Report*, column 810W, should show the revisions shown in brackets.

	Expenses claimed	
	1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008	1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009
Director of National and Central Services	0	34,039 (23,732)

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer with reference to the answer to the hon. Member for Bromley and Chislehurst of 12 November 2009, *Official Report*, column 810W, on the Valuation Office: allowances, what individual expenses were paid to the Valuation Office Agency's (a) Chief Executive from April 2007 to March 2009, (b) Director of Data Strategy from April 2007 to March 2009 and (c) Deputy Chief Executive from April 2007 to March 2009. [324233]

Ian Pearson: The individual expenses paid to the chief executive, deputy chief executive and the director of data strategy of the Valuation Office Agency from April 2007 to March 2009 are shown in the following table:

	2007-08	2008-09
Chief executive	235.70	237.60
Deputy chief executive	535.46	376.69
Director of data strategy	945.45	1,369.91

A further detailed analysis of the hotel expense statistics (as supplied by the travel provider) has revealed errors in the way in which the information from the travel supplier was interpreted. This position has now been clarified but, as a consequence, the figures shown on 12 November 2009, *Official Report*, column 810W, should show the revisions shown in brackets.

Expenses claimed		
	1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008	1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009
Chief executive	4,934 (4,792)	3,194 (3,216)
Deputy chief executive	4,283 (3,083)	2,018 (2,843)
Director of data strategy	3,757 (2,649)	4,132 (1,956)

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Answers received for publication 12 April 2010

Croydon

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if he will set out with statistical evidence relating as closely as possible to the Croydon Central constituency, the effects of his Department's policies on the constituency since 2005. [325820]

Mr. Sutcliffe [*holding answer 7 April 2010*]: My Department's aim is to improve the quality of life for everyone through cultural and sporting activities, to support the pursuit of excellence and to champion the tourism, creative and leisure industries.

The impact of bodies and policies of my Department on the Croydon, Central constituency since 2005 include:

£4,955 given from Arts Council England to organisations based in Croydon in 2008-09 through the Grants for the Arts programme.

£58,000 of English Heritage grant offers to the Croydon, Central constituency in 2008-09.

Digital switchover is due to take place in Croydon, Central in 2012. By the time switchover is complete at the end of 2012, 98.5 per cent. of households nationwide will be able to receive digital TV—the same number that can currently receive analogue.

Over £5,117,088 of national lottery grants made to applications from the Croydon, Central constituency since 2005.

The Croydon, Central constituency has also benefited from other policies and spending whose impact cannot be broken down by constituency. This includes:

£4 billion of Exchequer funding spent on culture.

More than £5.5 billion invested in sport by the Government and the national lottery since 1997.

Almost 750,000 free swims taken in London in the first eight months of the Free Swimming programme.

A 68 per cent. increase in national museum visits from 1998-99 to 2008-09—10 per cent. of which were by adults from lower socioeconomic groups.

£416.6 million in grants allocated by English Heritage since 1997.

48 per cent. of buildings on the original 1999 Buildings at Risk Register having their future secured.

90 per cent. of all pupils taking part in at least two hours of high quality PE or sport per week in 2008 from an estimated 25 per cent. in 2003-04—exceeding our target.

Departmental Electricity Supply

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what (a) voltage optimisers and (b) equivalent technologies are used within buildings occupied by his Department. [324979]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Department has two 830kVA powerPerfactor units.

Football: Finance

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what funding his Department has allocated to support youth development and training at non-league football clubs in the last 12 months. [324705]

Mr. Sutcliffe [*holding answer 30 March 2010*]: In the last financial year Sport England has provided funding of £7,851,278 to the Football Association (FA) to increase participation, rates of retention and strengthen talent pathways for women and girls and disability players.

In addition, approximately £6 million was committed through the Physical Education Sport Strategy for Young People Programme; community club facilities; clubs development, coach development; FA skills and 16-18 retention programmes.

Sport England also allocates £15 million Exchequer funding a year to the Football Foundation. Part of this funding will support the youth development in community football clubs.

Government Art Collection

Mr. Hunt: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many pieces from the Government Art Collection have been reported missing in each year since 1997; and what the monetary value of each such piece was. [323709]

Mr. Bradshaw [holding answer 23 March 2010]: There are more than 13,500 works of art in the Government Art Collection's (GAC) holdings, on display in over 400 different buildings in the UK and around the world. The GAC carries out audits remotely and in person and some works are occasionally reported as missing from their previously reported locations. The GAC make extensive searches, after which time, many of the items are accounted for.

This table details those Government Art Collection prints and paintings which have been reported as missing since 1997 and not yet recovered:

<i>Year went missing</i>	<i>Work/artist</i>	<i>Value (£)</i>
1997	Sacred Place 20/50 by M. Ayrton	50
1997	NW Prospect of Gloucester by S. & N. Buck	500
1997	E Prospect of Burton on Trent	500
1997	Sheep at Dusk near New Tredegar by C. Molyneux	25
1998	Charles Abbott 1st Baron Tenterdon by W. Owen	250
1998	Alex Wedderburn 1st Earl Rosslyn by J. Reynolds	50
1999	The Tate Gallery by J. Griffiths	50
2000	Poppies with Sunflowers by M. Thompson	50
2000	How to make 16 Squares out of Forty Rods by M. Porter	50
2000	Jesus College, Cambridge by J. Trevelyan	50
2000	The Deer House, Bishop Auckland, County Durham by J. Thirsk	30
2000	View of Walton Bridge from Oatlands by Farington	75
2000	Fawley Court and Henley by Farington	75
2000	NW Prospect of City of Bristol by S. and N. Buck	500
2000	Jesus College, Cambridge by J. Trevelyan	50
2001	Exhibition Room, Somerset House by Rowlandson	100
2001	The Mosque of Sultan Achmet by anonymous	100
2001	Syon House by A. Bury	50
2001	On London Bridge by Edwin La Dell	50
2001	Offering to Jupiter by M. Rocca	80,000
2001	Lake Landscape by G. Arnald	35,000
2001	Landscape by E. Williams	60,000
2001	St. James's Park and Banqueting House by A. Highmore	60,000
2001	Sir Woodbine's Parish by T. Phillips	5,000
2001	The Cathedral of St. Magnus, Kirkwall, Orkney by W. Daniell	20
2002	Boys and Girls in Boats, Windsor by L. Rosoman	30
2002	Walter Runciman, 1st Viscount Runciman by W. Strang	100
2002	Regent Street looking towards the Quadrant by T. S. Boys	100

<i>Year went missing</i>	<i>Work/artist</i>	<i>Value (£)</i>
2002	Westminster Abbey, West Front by T. H. Shepherd	30
2002	Richmond Castle, Evening by D. Muirhead	30
2002	St. Paul's 15/75 by J. Trevelyan	100
2002	Shadwell Park 4/75 by J. Piper	300
2003	The Rose Garden, British Embassy, Washington by E. Croner	100
2003	The New Law Courts, Main portion of Strand Facade by G. E. Street	50
2003	The New Law Courts, Portion of the West Front by G. E. Street	50
2003	Stepping Stones by T. Gilman	2,200
2003	Paradox No. IV 15/25 by D. Hirst	25
2004	Blackfriars from Southwark Bridge by T. Shotters Boys	100
2005	Gondola III 39/100 by M. Krosh-Frishman	50
2005	3ra Day of Creation A/P by E. Sharf	50
2005	Hall of Christ Church Hospital by T. Rowlandson and A. C. Pugin	75
2006	Penman-Mauer taken from near Aber, North Wales by W. Daniell	20
2007	The New Foreign and India Offices: The Park Front by M. Jackson	50
2007	The Grand Staircase at the New Foreign Office by anonymous	50
2007	Boats A/P by R. Jarvis	100
2007	Horse Guards from the Old Entrance, Scotland Yard by M. A. Rooker	500
2008	Monument to Balance 4,30 by Ernest A. Dunn	100
2008	The Wording of Police Charges 37/150 by R. B. Kitaj	500
2008	Plague 37/150 by R. B. Kitaj	500
2009	The Cathedral Church of St. Peter in Chichester by L. Knyff	250
2009	Bambridge on Trial for Murder by Committee of House of Commons by W. Hogarth	200
2009	The Railway Station by W. P. Frith	600
2009	Derby Day by W. P. Frith	600
2009	Leaving by D. Evans	500
2009	House Plant 2/25 by Boyd and Evans	500
2009	Evening Menu 31/70 by P. Caulfield	1,600
2009	Untitled by P. Collingwood	3,000

This table details Government Art Collection prints and paintings which were reported missing but subsequently recovered:

<i>Year went missing</i>	<i>Work/artist</i>	<i>Value £</i>
2001	Dung Gate, Jerusalem by H. G. Gray	1,000
2001	Jaffa Gate, Jerusalem by H. G. Gray	1,000
2001	Zion Gate, Jerusalem by H. G. Gray	1,000
2001	St. Stephen's Gate, Jerusalem by H. G. Gray	1,000
2001	Damascus Gate, Jerusalem by H. G. Gray	1,000
2001	Herod's Gate, Jerusalem by H. G. Gray	1,000
2001	Golden Gate, Jerusalem by H. G. Gray	1,000
2001	The Citadel, Jerusalem by H. G. Gray	1,000
2003	The Mansion House looking towards Cheapside by T. Malton	50
2003	Henry Brougham, 1st Baron Brougham and Vaux (1778-1868) Lord Chancellor by R. Bowyer	50
2003	A Perspective View of Lincoln's Inn by J. Maurer	75
2004	Forced Labour 34/250 by A. Hrdlicka	500
2004	Cartmel Fell, Windermere 45/100 by N. Ackroyd	500
2004	Les Premiers Astres 21/50 by J. Dickson	50
2005	Calcutta by H. Salt	1,000
2005	Lower Wessex Lane, Summer 9/10 by Stevens	50
2005	Lower Wessex Lane, Spring 28/75 by Stevens	50

<i>Year went missing</i>	<i>Work/artist</i>	<i>Value £</i>
2005	Stand On The Green by R. Burn	50
2005	Key Print to Field Marshal, the Duke of Wellington giving orders to his Generals previous to a General Action	50
2006	Abstract by S. Kaner	100
2007	Rival 29/100 by Procktor	400
2007	Sir William Chambers by F. Cotes	75,000
2007	Shipping by J. T. Serres	7,000
2008	Yellow Square Plus Quarter Blue 30/72 by W. Scott	3,000
2008	Mudbanks by J. Trevelyan	500
2008	Calypto 36/50 by J. Trevelyan	500
2008	Breeze I 40/50 by J. Brunson	50

Leisure: Birmingham

Richard Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much funding his Department has provided for (a) public libraries, (b) museums, (c) galleries, (d) arts development and support, (e) open spaces, (f) sport and leisure facilities, (g) school sport and (h) other cultural services in Birmingham in each year since 1997. [325168]

Mr. Bradshaw: Information on funding levels in Birmingham for (a) public libraries, (b) museums, (c) galleries, (e) open spaces, (f) sport and leisure facilities, and (h) other cultural services is not held centrally.

I am able to provide details of funding in Birmingham for:

(d) Arts development and support

The following table details funding provided under the Grants for the Arts programme in the Birmingham local authority area since the programme was introduced in 2003:

<i>Amount of grants for the arts funding provided to organisations based in the Birmingham local authority area</i>	<i>£</i>
2003-04	2,306,449
2004-05	3,464,364
2005-06	3,313,558
2006-07	4,627,704
2007-08	2,457,633
2008-09	2,238,845
Total	18,408,553

and

(g) School sport

Every community in England will benefit from investment into delivery of the five hour offer, which is targeted through our national network of 450 school sport partnerships and 49 county sport partnerships. Exchequer funding for school sport partnerships in Birmingham began in 2004 and is continuing through the PE and Sport Strategy for Young People, (PESSYP), jointly funded by my Department and the Department for Children, Schools and Families.

Funding provided for school sport partnerships in Birmingham in each year since 2004 is shown in the following table:

Funding for school sports partnerships in Birmingham

	<i>£</i>
2004	1,829,386
2005	2,306,047
2006	2,627,371
2007	2,364,633
2008	2,847,453
2009	2,914,155
Total	14,889,045

Funding provided for sports colleges in Birmingham in each year since the first sports college was established is shown in the following table:

Funding for sports colleges in Birmingham

	<i>£</i>
2000-01	471,580
2001-02	766,522
2002-03	734,788
2003-04	796,354
2004-05	1,147,896
2005-06	1,231,120
2006-07	1,291,855
2007-08	1,476,157
2008-09	1,430,315
2009-10	1,462,089
Total	10,808,676

Birmingham county sport partnership has received PESSYP funding via the Sport Unlimited, Leadership and Volunteering and Recruit into Coaching programmes. The key investments are outlined in the following table:

<i>Programme</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Funding (£)</i>
Sport Unlimited	2008-09	214,450
	2009-10	271,938
	2010-11	333,296
	Total	819,684
Leadership and Volunteering	2008-09	22,000
	2009-10	22,000
	2010-11	22,000
	Total	66,000
Recruit into Coaching	2009-10	8,786
	2010-11	12,500
	Total	20,286

Museums and Galleries: Overseas Visitors

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) whether he has made an estimate of the (a) total financial contribution made by foreign national visitors to national museums and galleries in each year since 1997 and (b) proportion of the turnover of those museums attributable to such contributions in each of those years; and if he will make a statement; [323664]

(2) what estimate he has made of the number of foreign nationals who have visited national museums and galleries in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [323665]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The number of overseas visits reported by 17 of the national museums and galleries since 1998 are in the table. This is an agreed museum performance indicator.

<i>Overseas visitors</i>	
<i>Financial year</i>	<i>Number</i>
1998-99	6,053,600
1999-2000	6,044,299
2000-01	9,348,709
2001-02	9,139,763
2002-03	9,589,987
2003-04	11,805,327
2004-05	10,882,420
2005-06	10,912,808
2006-07	14,256,408
2007-08	15,179,212
2008-09	13,907,317

The Department does not hold the data for 1997.

The financial contributions and proportion of turnover to national museums and galleries by overseas visitors is not collected centrally.

National Lottery

Mr. Cash: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if he will make it his policy to refuse consent to Camelot to offer a facility to make cash payments for utilities and other services through National Lottery terminals. [325863]

Mr. Sutcliffe: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Royal Parks Agency: Finance

Justine Greening: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport pursuant to the answer of 17 March 2009, *Official Report*, column 997W, Royal Parks Agency: finance, what revenue has been raised by the Royal Parks Agency in each Royal Park from (a) car park charges, (b) fixed penalty notices, (c) other fines and (d) other revenues in (i) 2008 and (ii) 2009. [323897]

Margaret Hodge: Revenue raised from parking charges, excess charge notices and other revenue during the 2008-09 financial year has been provided by The Royal Parks (TRP) in the following table:

<i>Royal Park</i>	<i>Car parking</i>	<i>Excess charge notices¹</i>	<i>Other revenue²</i>	<i>£000</i>
Hyde Park	346	41	3,290	
St. James's Park ³	n/a	n/a	1,251	
Kensington Gardens ³	n/a	n/a	256	
The Regent's Park	815	70	1,564	
Greenwich Park	240	34	293	
Richmond Park	n/a	n/a	1,045	
Bushy Park	n/a	n/a	188	
Total	1,401	145	7,887	

¹ The excess charge figure is also included in the car parking figure

² These figures exclude grants from agency-wide projects, which are managed centrally.

³ Parking charges are not applicable at these parks because there is no public parking.

There is no charge at present for parking in Richmond or Bushy Parks. TRP does not receive revenue from fixed penalty notices or other fines, but receives revenue from catering and other concessions, from fees for events, permits and licences and from rents. The excess charge notices figure is included in the figures for car parking.

Television: Scotland

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what consultation was undertaken by his Department on the transfer of the Scottish Borders television region to the Scotland pilot scheme; when the transfer will take place; what (a) technical and (b) regulatory process will be required to effect the transfer; and if he will make a statement. [325457]

Mr. Bradshaw: As part of the announcement of the procurement process for the independently funded news consortia (IFNC) pilots the Government said they wanted to look at the option for a news service for the whole of Scotland subject to costs and technical feasibility.

The IFNC proposition is about an enhanced local news service that is relevant for audiences. The option of transferring the Scottish borders regional news service remains under review. No decisions have yet been made about whether or not a transfer will take place or the timing. If a decision is taken to transfer the news provision, then any necessary technical and regulatory processes will be addressed.

Tourism: Essex

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps he is taking to promote tourism in South East Essex; and if he will make a statement. [324390]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The information requested regarding the promotion of tourism in South East Essex is not held centrally. Responsibility for tourism in the regions was taken over by the regional development agencies (RDAs) in 2003.

I have therefore asked the chief executive of the East of England Development Agency to write to the hon. Member directly. Copies of the response will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

In 2009-10, DCMS contributed £3.4 million to the RDA single budget, in respect of tourism support in the regions. This money is not actually ring-fenced for tourism, but is intended to support the broader tourism promotion investment of the RDAs, which totalled £60 million in 2009-10.

The overall level of public sector investment in tourism from local, regional and national sources is likely to significantly exceed £2 billion in the current spending review period—2008-09 to 2010-11 (including resources made available for skills development).

In partnership with the industry and the wider public sector, the DCMS has a clear and coherent policy framework for industry growth. This includes branding and marketing; skills development; driving up product quality through accommodation grading schemes; and promoting sustainability and accessibility.

In addition a number of other DCMS programmes contribute to tourism. DCMS sponsors “Sea Change”, which has allocated £38 million to 32 seaside resorts, to support projects for cultural regeneration and the visitor economy. The “Renaissance in the Regions” programme is a ground-breaking initiative to transform England’s regional museums. Renaissance has seen an investment of £242.8 million from 2002-09 and it is anticipated that nearly £300 million will have been invested by March 2011.

Letter from Deborah Cadman, dated 8 April 2010:

As requested by the DCMS, I write in response your Parliamentary Question about support for tourism in South East Essex.

Support for tourism promotion in South East Essex is provided in close working partnership by Southend Borough Council, Essex County Council, and East of England Tourism (EET), which is funded by EEDA.

Essex County Council support includes:

featuring tourism businesses in guides, on their website, and in their tourism market campaigns

with EET, keeping local authorities informed about tourism issues and advising them on specific opportunities, for example hotel development

taking advantage of the Olympics to promote South East Essex, which will host the mountain biking in 2012 at Hadleigh Castle

representing South East Essex in its public relations work, including at trade shows

Southend Council support includes:

investing an additional £100,000 last year in its events programme, which aims to help extend the tourism season and promote Southend as a short-break destination as well as a day visitor destination

redeveloping its website last year and developing a new brand for Southend to help challenge perceptions and open up new markets

East of England Tourism (EET) provides regional and national level marketing for South East Essex through its marketing campaigns, successful website, and other services for tourism businesses.

For example, last year Southend featured in the following EET initiatives:

The Lets Go! promotion with National Express

a marketing campaign with C2C

Stansted guides and special offers

a double-page spread in The Independent

an Evening Standard press campaign

In addition, EEDA itself has directly invested in new cultural facilities in South East Essex, including Metal in Southend, and the Royal Opera House Production Park in Thurrock. We are also leading the region’s effort to take advantage of the Olympics opportunity, which we estimate could deliver a £450 million return for tourism for the region as a whole, with South East Essex especially well-placed to benefit.

Should you wish to know more about our work supporting tourism in South East Essex please do not hesitate to contact us.

Ministerial Corrections

Thursday 8 April 2010

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

Departmental Travel

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much his Department spent on travel in each year since 1997.

[273678]

[Official Report, 23 June 2009, Vol. 494, c. 788W.]

Letter of correction from Mr. Chris Bryant:

Errors have been identified in the table in my written answer to the hon. Member for Shrewsbury and Atcham (Daniel Kawczynski) on 23 June 2009.

The correct answer should have been:

Chris Bryant: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has spent the following amounts on overseas and UK travel in each of the last five financial years. Until 2006-07 FCO Services travel was accounted for under the FCO. From 2007-08 FCO Services costs are accounted for separately and therefore are not included in the table.

Financial year	Overseas	UK
2004-05	39,864,709	1,518,089
2005-06	46,453,117	1,987,552
2006-07	50,274,236	2,380,926
2007-08	46,931,294	1,159,086
2008-09	52,978,790	1,779,031

The year on year increases in travel costs are largely due to increases in fuel costs over the period affecting ticket prices.

Obtaining information on costs of travel before this period would incur disproportionate cost.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Bonn Declaration

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much funding his Department has allocated under each budget heading for the purposes of meeting its obligations under the Bonn Declaration in each year from 2001 to 2008. [306700]

[Official Report, 14 December 2009, Vol. 502, c. 804-805W.]

Letter of correction from Mr. Gareth Thomas:

An error has been identified in the written answer given to the hon. Member for North Southwark and Bermondsey (Simon Hughes) on 14 December 2009. The answer given was as follows:

Mr. Thomas: The 2001 Bonn Declaration committed signatories to providing \$410 million per year, from 2005-08, for developing countries to respond to climate

change. The European Community was one of these signatories and the UK Government agreed to contribute approximately £30 million (\$61,467 million) per year. The following table provides the amount spent through each budget heading, which has exceeded that original commitment.

	2005-06	2006-07	£ million 2007-08
Special Climate Change Fund	3.3	3.3	3.8
Clean Energy Investment Framework	0.43	1.3	0.36
Global Environment Facility (climate focal area)	10.4	10.4	11.66
Bilateral (including research)	9.27	18.35	26.18
Least Developed Countries Fund	—	—	3.5
Other Government Department spending	6.63	7.4	7.4
Total	30.03	40.75	52.9

The Department for International Development (DFID) contributed through the Special Climate Change Fund, the Clean Energy Investment Framework, the Global Environment Facility, the Least Developed Countries Fund and through Bilateral aid.

The correct answer should have been:

Mr. Thomas: The 2001 Bonn Declaration committed signatories to providing \$410 million per year, from 2005-08, for developing countries to respond to climate change. The European Community was one of these signatories and the UK Government agreed to contribute approximately £30 million (\$61,467 million) per year. The following table provides the amount spent through each budget heading, which has exceeded that original commitment.

	2005-06	2006-07	£ million 2007-08
Special Climate Change Fund	3.3	3.3	3.3
Clean Energy Investment Framework	0.43	1.3	0.36
Global Environment Facility (climate focal area)	10.4	10.4	11.66
Bilateral (including research)	9.27	18.35	26.18
Least Developed Countries Fund	—	—	7
Other Government Department spending	6.63	7.4	7.4
Total	30.03	40.75	55.9

The Department for International Development (DFID) contributed through the Special Climate Change Fund, the Clean Energy Investment Framework, the Global Environment Facility, the Least Developed Countries Fund and through Bilateral aid.

BUSINESS, INNOVATION AND SKILLS

Higher Education: Chelmsford

Mr. Burns: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills pursuant to the answer of 26 January 2010, *Official Report*, 848-9W, on higher education: Chelmsford, how many applicants from (a) West Chelmsford constituency and (b) Chelmsford local authority area did not get a place at university in (i) 2005-06, (ii) 2006-07 and (iii) 2007-08. [314497]

[*Official Report*, 3 February 2010, Vol. 505, c. 333-334W.]

Letter of correction from Mr. David Lammy:

Errors have been identified in the written answer given to the hon. Member for West Chelmsford (Mr. Burns) on 3 February 2010. Due to an administrative error, some of the figures in the answer were incorrect. The incorrect figures were in the rows labelled "applicants" and "obtained a place".

The correct answer should have been:

Mr. Lammy [*holding answer 1 February 2010*]: The information is in the following table.

Applicants to full-time undergraduate courses via UCAS from West Chelmsford constituency and Chelmsford local authority area 2005-06 to 2007-08

	Year of entry		
	2005	2006	2007
<i>West Chelmsford constituency</i>			
Applicants	753	786	834
Of which:			
Obtained a place	632	657	684
Unplaced	121	129	150
<i>Chelmsford local authority</i>			
Applicants	1,190	1,195	1,287
Of which:			
Obtained a place	1,008	988	1,057
Unplaced	182	207	230

Source:
UCAS

CABINET OFFICE

Civil Servants: Pay

Mr. Maude: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office which of the jobs advertised on the (a) internal and (b) public versions of the Civil Service jobs website had salaries of £150,000 or over in the last six months. [318128]

[*Official Report*, 25 February 2010, Vol. 506, c. 697-98W.]

Letter of correction from Angela E. Smith:

Errors have been identified in the response given to the right hon. Member for Horsham (Mr. Maude) on 25 February 2010. The figure 43 should be replaced with 40 and the figure 32 should be replaced with 29.

The answer given was as follows:

Angela E. Smith: Not all vacancies advertised on the civil service jobs site show salary details. Of those that were advertised in the last six months showing salary details, 43 roles fell within the £81,600 to £220,000 salary range. The total figure of 43 was made up of 11 jobs advertised on the public part of the civil service jobs site and 32 on the internal part of the site.

The correct answer should have been:

Angela E. Smith: Not all vacancies advertised on the civil service jobs site show salary details. Of those that were advertised in the last six months showing salary details, 40 roles fell within the £81,600 to £220,000 salary range. The total figure of 40 was made up of 11 jobs advertised on the public part of the civil service jobs site and 29 on the internal part of the site.

HEALTH

Swine Flu: Vaccination

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many units of Swine influenza vaccine are available to be dispensed to UK patients. [319958]

[*Official Report*, 4 March 2010, Vol. 506, c. 1403-04W.]

Letter of correction from Gillian Merron:

An error has been identified in the written answer given to the hon. Member for Brecon and Radnorshire (Mr. Williams) on 4 March 2010. I am sorry that two of the figures cited were incorrect. The amount of vaccine calculated as held centrally did not take account of vaccine that had been delivered to the devolved Administrations, as only vaccine delivered to the NHS in England was subtracted from the total.

The answer given was as follows:

Gillian Merron: As of Friday 26 February 2010, the amount of swine influenza vaccine available to be dispensed was 25.3 million doses, held centrally, plus the stock currently held in the National Health Service across the United Kingdom.

This is based on the total amount of swine influenza vaccine delivered to the United Kingdom from Baxter and GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) at approximately 38.5 million doses, less the total number of doses sent out to the National Health Service (NHS) England, up to 24 February, which was approximately 13.2 million.

The correct answer should have been:

Gillian Merron: As of Friday 26 February 2010, the amount of swine influenza vaccine available to be dispensed was 21.35 million doses, held centrally, plus the stock currently held in the national health service across the United Kingdom.

This is based on the total amount of swine influenza vaccine delivered to the United Kingdom from Baxter and GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) at approximately 38.5 million doses, less the total number of doses sent out to the national health service (NHS) UK, up to 24 February, which was approximately 17.15 million.

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