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**HOUSE OF COMMONS
OFFICIAL REPORT**

**PARLIAMENTARY
DEBATES**

(HANSARD)

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House of Commons

Monday 12 July 2010

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Helen Jones (Warrington North) (Lab): On a point of order, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker: Order. It would not be a point of order, now, I am afraid.

Oral Answers to Questions

EDUCATION

The Secretary of State was asked—

Building Schools for the Future Programme

1. **Philip Davies** (Shipley) (Con): For what reasons he has ended the Building Schools for the Future programme for Ilkley and Bingley grammar schools.
[6956]

The Secretary of State for Education (Michael Gove): As I set out in my statement last week, the Building Schools for the Future programme has been over-bureaucratic and inefficient. I therefore decided that where financial close had not been reached, future projects provided under BSF could not go ahead. Ilkley and Bingley grammar school projects have not reached financial close, and BSF plans for those two schools have therefore stopped. However, we will continue to invest in schools capital projects.

Philip Davies (Shipley) (Con): In the catchment areas for both Ilkley and Bingley grammar schools, there has been excessive house building, so there is no longer sufficient capacity on their existing sites to meet local demand. Can my right hon. Friend ensure that those schools that need new build to increase capacity to meet local demand will still receive capital expenditure?

Michael Gove: I very much take the point made by my hon. Friend. One of the defects of the BSF scheme was that, in many parts of the country where there was real need as a result of a growing population, the money was not there to provide new school places. As a result of our capital review, we will ensure that where there is additional population pressure and additional basic need, particularly in primary schools, which BSF did not cover, we will provide the support that is necessary. I look forward to working with my hon. Friend to help the parents and teachers in those two great schools.

Ed Balls (Morley and Outwood) (Lab/Co-op): For parents, children and teachers in Ilkley and Bingley, the initial shock of learning that their new school building has been cancelled will have turned to outrage at the

seemingly arbitrary and chaotic way in which the Secretary of State has made and announced his decisions. The right hon. Gentleman must now know that there is widespread anger in all parts of the House. Following weekend reports that he was advised by his officials not to publish a list of schools at all, I wrote to him yesterday to request answers in advance of today's oral questions. I have received a reply that does not answer any of my questions: it merely attaches a new list—list No. 5—containing 20 additional cancelled schools compared with a week ago.

I shall ask the right hon. Gentleman for a straight answer to a specific question. Did he at any point receive written or oral advice from departmental officials or Partnerships for Schools urging him not to publish a list of schools until after he had consulted local authorities, to make sure that his criteria were sound and his facts were right?

Michael Gove: The right hon. Gentleman says that there was anger across the House. There was—at the way in which the BSF project had been run by the right hon. Gentleman. There was justifiable anger at the way in which a project that was originally supposed to cost £45 billion ended up costing £55 billion, and it was shared by those who were shocked that under the previous Government, one individual received £1.35 million in consultancy fees—money that should have gone to the front line. From the moment that I took office, everyone involved in this process said to me, “Make sure that you ensure that this faltering and failing project ends.” That is what I have done. I inherited a mess from the right hon. Gentleman, and we are clearing it up.

Several hon. Members *rose—*

Mr Speaker: Order. Both the Secretary of State and the shadow Secretary of State have had their say, and I know that we will now want to return to Ilkley and Bingley.

Ed Balls: The right hon. Gentleman cannot give a straight answer to a straight question. The people of Bingley and Ilkley will not be satisfied by that answer, and nor are we. Interestingly, his letter today says very clearly that his fifth list has been validated by local authorities—presumably a clear admission that the information should have been validated before the list was published in the first place, including by Bradford authority, in which the schools of Bingley and Ilkley are situated.

Let me ask the right hon. Gentleman another straight question. Is it not the case that he was advised of the risk of legal challenge from private contractors, but that he personally decided to ignore that advice and take that risk with taxpayers' money? That is a very simple question. We all know that he is on shaky ground, and that he is fast losing the confidence of pupils, parents and teachers. If he had any sense, he would end this shambles, withdraw these error-strewn lists, and let our communities have new schools.

Michael Gove: I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for once again stretching so far the geographical definition of Bingley and Ilkley. Let me point out that under him the cost of setting up the procurement vehicle for Building Schools for the Future was £10 million, before a single brick was laid. The taxpayers of Bingley and Ilkley have

re-elected a Conservative MP because they are disgusted with the waste and squander of the right hon. Gentleman. There is a dividing line between this side of the House and that side of the House: when mistakes are made, we apologise and we take responsibility. The right hon. Gentleman has never apologised for a single mistake in his life; that is why he is on that side of the House and we are on this side of the House clearing up his mess.

Several hon. Members *rose*—

Mr Speaker: Order. I want to help the House. I appreciate the enormous interest in the subject of BSF in Ilkley and Bingley—conceivably also elsewhere—and there will be opportunities, if Members look, to raise these matters later.

Academy Status

3. **Julian Smith** (Skipton and Ripon) (Con): How many expressions of interest in academy status have been received from schools in (a) Skipton and Ripon constituency and (b) North Yorkshire. [6958]

The Minister of State, Department for Education (Mr Nick Gibb): So far five expressions of interest in academy status have been received from schools in Skipton and Ripon. Fifteen expressions of interest have been received from schools in North Yorkshire.

Julian Smith: Does the Minister agree that schools with foundation trust status should be given credit for the work they have already done in moving along the path to independence, and can their path to academy status therefore be made slightly easier?

Mr Gibb: May I welcome my hon. Friend to the House and congratulate him on his election? I understand his point. Trust status was a useful form of independence, which is why it surprises me that Labour Members are so critical of our moves to boost the academies programme and to give more schools the independence and the trust in professionals that is inherent in the trust school system. Our concern about the trust school basis is that it did not give sufficient freedoms to schools; we want to ensure that schools have those extra freedoms.

Tristram Hunt (Stoke-on-Trent Central) (Lab) *rose*—

Toby Perkins (Chesterfield) (Lab) *rose*—

Mr Speaker: Order. May I gently say to Members that Stoke-on-Trent and Chesterfield are a considerable distance from Skipton and Ripon and, more widely, North Yorkshire? This is what we call a closed question, I am afraid.

Poor Families (Assistance)

4. **Esther McVey** (Wirral West) (Con): What steps his Department is taking through the education system to assist children from poor families. [6959]

The Minister of State, Department for Education (Sarah Teather): We have made a clear commitment to narrowing attainment gaps between children from disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers through our recently announced pupil premium. This will help

us to give more support to the children who are most disadvantaged and who need it most, and to their schools. We will announce more details of our proposals in due course.

Esther McVey: I would like to push the Secretary of State for greater details on the pupil premium and on where the extra funds will be allocated.

Sarah Teather: I thank my hon. Friend for promoting me, but it is a little premature.

We will be announcing more information about the pupil premium in due course. However, to quote the Prime Minister, it will involve a “substantial” extra sum from outside the education budget. We are determined, in particular, to tackle the pockets of deprivation that have not been dealt with by other forms of deprivation funding, ensuring that the funding follows the students and that schools then have the freedom to decide how best to spend the money.

Mr Tom Watson (West Bromwich East) (Lab): Sandwell is home to some of the poorest families in the country. Last week, officials confirmed that school cuts in the borough were made because the outline business case for their wave 5 bid was not signed off until after 1 January. Can the Minister confirm that no school that retained funding missed that deadline? Does she think that the criteria used for the funding is fair given that children in Labour-controlled Sandwell lose £140 million of support while those in the neighbouring borough, Conservative Wolverhampton, gain £360 million?

Sarah Teather: I appreciate the particular difficulties with Sandwell. However, I remind the hon. Gentleman that BSF was set up by his Government, and it is because of the slowness and inefficiency of BSF that schools in Sandwell were so late in getting anything from the bid at all.

Mr Graham Stuart (Beverley and Holderness) (Con): Children from poorer areas of Hull have rightly had additional funds come to their local authority to help with their education. However, when those children travelled across the border to be educated in East Riding, the money that was given to support their education in Hull did not follow them. Ministers in the previous Administration, despite repeated representations, refused to make that change. Will the pupil premium follow the child wherever they go to school?

Sarah Teather: The hon. Gentleman makes a very good point. It is precisely for that reason that we need a funding system that follows the student and reflects their individual needs. We see widely varying levels of deprivation funding from one area to another.

Helen Jones (Warrington North) (Lab): Does the hon. Lady believe that cancelling new schools in the most deprived areas of my constituency will assist poor children with their education? Did she have any discussions with Warrington borough council about deprivation in the borough before cancelling those building projects?

Sarah Teather: Simply because some projects under BSF have been cancelled does not mean that schools will not be rebuilt or renovated in the future. That is precisely the reason why the capital review is happening—to ensure that we have enough money to rebuild and

renovate schools in the future. Unfortunately, BSF is such an inefficient way of doing that that there would not have been any money left.

Child Protection

5. **Laura Sandys** (South Thanet) (Con): What progress has been made on the Munro review of child protection; and if he will make a statement. [6960]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education (Tim Loughton): Professor Munro's review, which was launched on 10 June, appointed a top-level reference group to advise her. It met for the first time on 6 July. Professor Munro has issued a call for evidence with a 30 July deadline. We have asked her to report in three stages, the final report being in April 2011. The review has come about because the system of child protection in our country is still not working as it should be, despite the immense dedication and hard work of front-line professionals.

Laura Sandys: Does the Secretary of State agree with me and many children's charities that out-of-area placements for children taken into care should be considered only in extreme circumstances?

Tim Loughton: I, too, am grateful for the promotion.

I know that my hon. Friend has already established her credentials in this matter. She will be pleased to know that as part of the care planning guidance that came out of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008, which we supported, a new sufficiency duty will come into effect from next April, which should lead to a significant drop in the number of children placed far away from their original homes. I know that that is a particular problem in her constituency, as it is in mine and those of other hon. Members with seaside constituencies in particular.

Cathy Jamieson (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab/Co-op): Would the Minister be concerned if, as a result of the review of the role of the Children's Commissioner that I understand has been announced, more children who are in care because of abuse were put at risk because no one was there to stand up for their interests? Will he confirm that there will be no dismantling of the office of the Children's Commissioner prior to the completion of the review that he has referred to and the implementation of its recommendations?

Tim Loughton: The hon. Lady makes a point about the review of the role of the Children's Commissioner and her office, which is quite separate from the Eileen Munro review. I share her concerns about the rights of children in care, and she will be aware that the children's rights director has a direct role in that matter, which he has carried out with enormous respect over recent years, ensuring that the concerns and voices of children in care are heard loud and clear.

Public Spending

6. **Mary Creagh** (Wakefield) (Lab): Pursuant to the written ministerial statement of 5 July 2010, *Official Report*, columns 1-2WS, on public spending control,

how much of the £1 billion of reductions in his Department's expenditure in 2010-11 will take effect in (a) Wakefield constituency and (b) West Yorkshire. [6961]

The Secretary of State for Education (Michael Gove): The budgets that will be affected were published on the Department's website on Monday 5 July. We will shortly write to all local authorities setting out the impact on their allocations.

Mary Creagh: I thank the right hon. Gentleman for that reply, but the promises of rebuilding and repairing schools ring a little hollow in the light of the £1 billion cut to the schools capital programme that he is making in-year. Given that almost a third of the financial year has passed and he has not yet written to Wakefield or any other West Yorkshire authority with the details of how much will be cut from their reparation programmes, is his cut not in effect more like £1.3 billion or £1.5 billion, as the cuts will have to be made in-year?

Michael Gove: I am grateful to the hon. Lady for her question, but I refer her to a letter from the permanent secretary of my Department to the right hon. Member for Morley and Outwood (Ed Balls). He pointed out last week that, last year, the Treasury wrote to clarify its expectations of the use of end-year flexibility capital. The Treasury wanted to limit its use, but the Department refused to acknowledge it. The Treasury said clearly to the right hon. Gentleman that he was playing fast and loose with that capital stream. The issue had not been resolved by the time of the election, and instead of the dysfunctional relationship between the right hon. Gentleman and the Treasury, we now have a proper relationship involving a coalition Government who are clearing up the mess that we inherited from the hon. Lady's Government.

Mr Iain Wright (Hartlepool) (Lab): Why was not a single word about that further £1 billion cut in education mentioned in the Secretary of State's oral statement to the House last week? Will he confirm that the additional cuts in education, at the expense of hundreds of thousands of pupils in Wakefield, West Yorkshire and elsewhere, are being made so that he can open free market schools for the benefit of mere hundreds of pupils?

Michael Gove: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman, but he made two mistakes in his question. First, in my statement to the House last week, I explicitly mentioned that the right hon. Member for Morley and Outwood had abused end-year flexibility. That is why he was kind enough to write to me, and why the permanent secretary was kind enough to write to put the record straight and to explain that the Treasury was in dispute with the right hon. Gentleman—not for the first, nor, I suspect, the last time. The hon. Gentleman's other mistake is over the fact that the reduction in the—to my mind—unwarranted exploitation of end-year flexibility has been to restore sanity to the public finances after the mess that the right hon. Gentleman created. The capital allocation for our free schools is just £50 million, and it comes from a lower priority set of IT programmes. The permanent secretary makes it clear in his letter that the previous Government left us in a mess, which we are trying to resolve.

Free School Meals

7. **Amber Rudd** (Hastings and Rye) (Con): What assessment he has made of the educational achievement of pupils in receipt of free school meals in (a) Hastings and (b) England. [6962]

The Minister of State, Department for Education (Sarah Teather): Information is published on an annual basis on the performance of all pupils, including those eligible for free school meals, and it can be accessed on the Department's website. We have made a clear commitment to narrowing attainment gaps between children from disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers through the pupil premium. We will announce more details of our proposals in due course.

Amber Rudd: I thank the Minister for that answer. Will she confirm that the children who are eligible for free school meals will qualify for the pupil premium? Those who have high numbers of children on free school meals in our constituencies, as I do in Hastings, are looking forward to having that advantage to help our children do well.

Sarah Teather: We are looking at the best measure to ensure that we can target extra money at students. It is a question of ensuring that we have a system that is attached to the child, the child's background and the particular school. We will be able to say more about that shortly. However, we are clear that extra money will follow the student.

Emma Reynolds (Wolverhampton North East) (Lab): Thanks to the previous Labour Government, a further 8,000 pupils in Wolverhampton now benefit from free school meals. As somebody who benefited from free school meals, I know that there is a link between nutrition and the ability of pupils from lower income families to do better at school. Does the Minister acknowledge that link, and will she extend the pilot scheme in Wolverhampton and roll it out throughout the country?

Sarah Teather: I recognise the link, and I agree with the hon. Lady. However, we are in difficult financial circumstances and unfortunately we were unable to extend free school meals simply because it was an unfunded pledge. However, I recognise the hon. Lady's point, which was well made.

Chris Skidmore (Kingswood) (Con): After 13 years of the previous Government, only 75 free school meals pupils gained three As at A-level. That is a disgrace. What do the Government propose to do about it?

Sarah Teather: I agree with my hon. Friend that it is a scandal that, after 13 years of a Labour Government, the greatest predictor of achievement at school is still parents' income. That is precisely why the coalition is so committed to introducing a pupil premium and investing in early years. It is also why the Prime Minister appointed the right hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr Field) to conduct a review of life chances.

Diana R. Johnson (Kingston upon Hull North) (Lab): The publication last week of figures showing, contrary to claims by the Health Secretary, the biggest increase

in the take-up of school meals, proves that Labour's policy on school food worked. The work of people such as Jamie Oliver was also successful. Does the Minister wish to reconsider the coalition's reversal of those successful policies, as the Government let the junk food industry call the tune and snatch free healthy school meals from the poorest half million children in England?

Sarah Teather: I think that Jamie Oliver did the nation a great service in raising the issue of standards in school food, but the next stage is for the Government to take forward, particularly on take-up. I was pleased that take-up of school meals has increased, but there is a lot more work to do.

School Discipline

8. **Margot James** (Stourbridge) (Con): What his most recent assessment is of the level of discipline in schools. [6963]

The Minister of State, Department for Education (Mr Nick Gibb): The latest Ofsted reports tell us that in 95% of primary schools and 80% of secondary schools inspected in 2008-09 pupils' behaviour was good or outstanding, but that means that behaviour in one out of five secondary schools is still no better than satisfactory. To address this, I announced to the House on 7 July a series of measures that will give head teachers and teachers the powers they need to ensure discipline in the classroom and to promote good behaviour.

Margot James: I thank my hon. Friend for his answer. Two teachers from a primary school came to my surgery in despair over school discipline. They and others have advised me that schools are deterred from excluding pupils because they believe that doing so would have a negative impact on their Ofsted score and budgets. Does he agree that discipline and a head teacher's ability to exclude pupils is being undermined by that and other aspects of schools policy that prevailed under the previous Government?

Mr Gibb: I thank my hon. Friend for that question. I welcome her to the House and congratulate her on her election. She is right: head teacher authority must be absolute in the classroom and we will remove deterrents that may prevent schools from properly exercising their powers to exclude pupils. The vast majority of head teachers intervene early to prevent exclusions becoming necessary, but when they are necessary we need to be sure that any deterrent is removed.

Academy Status

9. **Mr Marcus Jones** (Nuneaton) (Con): How many expressions of interest in academy status his Department has received from schools in (a) Nuneaton constituency, (b) Warwickshire and (c) England. [6964]

The Secretary of State for Education (Michael Gove): So far, 15 expressions of interest have been received from schools in Warwickshire, including one from an outstanding school in Nuneaton. A total of 1,836 expressions of interest have been received from schools in England.

Mr Jones: I thank my right hon. Friend for his reply. Several schools in my constituency may wish to become academies. However, after 13 years of the previous Government, they are carrying a tremendous amount of debt, which seems to prevent them from doing so. Will he consider what he can do to make it easier for such schools to become academies?

Michael Gove: I sympathise with my hon. Friend, who was so handsomely elected at the last general election—a fact that reflects how angry people in Nuneaton and across Warwickshire were at the scandalous way in which education was underfunded and managed by the previous Government. Let me assure him that I look forward to working with him and the local authority to ensure that the many outstanding schools and teachers in Warwickshire have the chance to enjoy the benefits of academies.

Vernon Coaker (Gedling) (Lab): We know that the Secretary of State has had one or two problems with lists of schools in recent days. Is he aware that he has listed a number of schools almost as if they have applied to become academies, when all they have done is request information from his Department? Is he also aware of the comments of people such as Mark Lacey, head teacher of Parson Street primary in Bedminster, who said:

“We responded out of a desire to receive the information in order to keep up with what is happening—not because we want to become an Academy”?

Is that not another inaccurate list that the Secretary of State should now withdraw, just like the inaccurate remark he made earlier? As he will know, the letter from the permanent secretary actually corrected his mistakes, not the mistakes of my right hon. Friend the Member for Morley and Outwood (Ed Balls).

Michael Gove: I am grateful for that “two for the price of one” question from the shadow Minister. The letter from the permanent secretary actually did correct the errors of the right hon. Member for Morley and Outwood. On the question of lists, as I said in my earlier answer, there were 1,836 expressions of interest. As the hon. Gentleman should know, being a former teacher, it is vitally important for people to listen in class before they put their hands up.

Local Education Partnerships

10. **Charlotte Leslie (Bristol North West) (Con):** What assessment he has made of the effectiveness of local education partnerships; and if he will make a statement. [6965]

The Secretary of State for Education (Michael Gove): As I set out in my statement to the House last week, local education partnerships are part of an over-bureaucratic and inefficient procurement model. The capital review that I announced last week will consider alternatives to ensure that, at last, capital spending achieves value for money, raises standards, and actually helps the most disadvantaged.

Charlotte Leslie: I have raised concerns about the local education partnership in my constituency in relation to the project with Elmlea school. Essentially, money has been snatched from children and schools to line the pockets of contractors and consultants. I am sure that

Opposition Members will share my concern about that. Will my right hon. Friend promise to stop this terrible reverse Robin Hood approach to public spending?

Michael Gove: I could not agree more with my hon. Friend. There is a dividing line between this side of the House and that one. As far as the Opposition are concerned, a Building Schools for the Future programme that enriches consultants and ensures that one man can earn £1.35 million is defensible, whereas we believe that that money should be going to the front line to ensure that the most dilapidated schools are repaired as quickly as possible. It is the contrast between a Government who wasted money like there was no tomorrow and a Government here at last who are building a better tomorrow for all our children.

Fiona Mactaggart (Slough) (Lab): In that capital spending programme, will money be reserved for areas such as Slough, which has a rapidly growing school population and insufficient secondary school places to educate the children?

Michael Gove: I sympathise with the hon. Lady and she is right. One of the reasons why we had to halt the Building Schools for the Future programme was that far too much money was being wasted inefficiently on secondary schools when that money is needed to ensure that children who arrive at primary school in Slough, the south-east and across the country receive the classrooms that they need. Our first priority is ensuring that every child who needs it has a good school place, instead of ensuring that money goes to consultants, architects and the others in receipt of the cash that was being funnelled to them by the right hon. Member for Morley and Outwood (Ed Balls).

Mr John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con): Does the Secretary of State accept that many of us, and many people outside, would love these quangos that cannot count and cannot provide accurate lists to be abolished, saving the money on salaries to spend on bricks and mortar?

Michael Gove: My right hon. Friend, as ever, is a redoubtable scourge of waste, and it is always a pleasure to hear him as he turns his eye to yet another non-departmental public body.

Ed Balls (Morley and Outwood) (Lab/Co-op): The letter from the Secretary of State, which was published at 2.35—the fifth list—refers to local education partnerships. It will be no surprise to the House to learn that already, within 25 minutes, the first mistake in this list has been found. The right hon. Gentleman referred earlier to past mistakes and the SATS fiasco. In that case, there was an independent inquiry. If he would like to establish an independent inquiry now into the BSF shambles, he would not find it easy to repeat his failure to answer questions in this House. Is not the truth that he should withdraw this list, apologise to local education partnerships and stop treating children and this House with such total contempt?

Michael Gove: I am grateful once more to the right hon. Gentleman for his question. I would welcome an inquiry into just what went wrong with Building Schools

for the Future and Partnerships for Schools under the previous Government. The Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee pointed out in February 2009 that the estimates of progress for which the right hon. Gentleman's Government were responsible were fanciful, but steps were not taken to ensure that we were moving in the right direction. The list that we have issued today is one that has been verified by Partnerships for Schools and by the Department for Education. The most important thing that we need to ensure is that the waste that characterised the previous Government does not characterise this one. That is why we have taken steps to ensure that in future the public money that should be going to the front line is protected. The mess that the right hon. Gentleman and his team created is being cleared up by this Government—these two parties—who are at last acting in the public interest.

Academy Status

11. **Tracey Crouch** (Chatham and Aylesford) (Con): How many expressions of interest in academy status his Department has received from schools in the Kent and Medway local authority area. [6966]

The Minister of State, Department for Education (Mr Nick Gibb): Ninety-five expressions of interest in academy status have been received from schools in Kent, and nine expressions of interest have been received from schools in Medway.

Tracey Crouch: I thank the Minister for his reply, and I am sure that he will be reassured to hear that many of the head teachers I have spoken to are genuinely very enthusiastic about the programme. The Minister will be aware that many of the schools in Kent and Medway that have expressed an interest are grammar schools. Can he assure the House that if they were to become academies they would retain their selective status?

Mr Gibb: I am happy to give my hon. Friend that assurance.

Early-years Provision

12. **Damian Hinds** (East Hampshire) (Con): What steps he is taking to reform early-years provision. [6967]

The Minister of State, Department for Education (Sarah Teather): Last week, the Government asked Dame Clare Tickell, chief executive of Action for Children, to carry out an independent review of the early years foundation stage to consider how the framework could be less bureaucratic and more focused on young children's learning and development. The review will formally start in September this year, and will report in spring 2011. It is our intention to undertake a full consultation before any changes are implemented. A statement has been placed in the House outlining further details of the scope of the review.

Damian Hinds: We all want to see the very highest standards promoted in pre-schooling, but does the Minister agree that the over-prescriptive, box-ticking approach favoured by the previous Government is likely only to stifle the sector and reduce parental choice?

Sarah Teather: Indeed. This is a question of building on some of the good things about the foundation stage, but ensuring that we can reduce the burden on the sector, and particularly on the smaller providers. In fact, I was in a nursery school in Brent on Friday, and the head teacher said to me that she was grateful that we had begun a review of the foundation stage, because although there were many good things about it, the assessment is bureaucratic and she was hoping for something rather better.

Mr Gerry Sutcliffe (Bradford South) (Lab): Can the Minister explain why my constituents in Bradford should trust what this coalition Government say on education? We have lost Building Schools for the Future and the free school meals pilot, and we have an education authority that needs to be developed because of the failure of the private sector. Can the Minister tell us that Sure Start in particular will remain a key part of early years provision?

Sarah Teather: The current review of the foundation stage is independent, and we have asked Dame Clare Tickell—who I am sure would command respect right across the House—to conduct it.

Funding (Hexham)

13. **Guy Opperman** (Hexham) (Con): What recent representations he has received on funding for schools in Hexham constituency; and if he will make a statement. [6968]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education (Tim Loughton): We have received just one representation on the subject of school funding from a school in Hexham. We will bring forward our proposals for school funding in due course.

Guy Opperman: Schools in the Hexham constituency in rural Northumberland all complain of a funding shortfall that was dramatic under the previous Government. What assurances will the Minister give me and the teachers in that particular school that this imbalance will be changed?

Tim Loughton: I am only too well aware of many of the discrepancies in the system that prevailed for far too many years under the previous Government. I am aware that Hexham middle school in my hon. Friend's constituency has raised concerns about problems in tackling rural deprivation and sparsity of population that have not been dealt with in the past. That is one area that we will be looking at, and the pupil premium will be a priority in ensuring that we recognise deprivation and have effective measures to deal with it.

Professional Development (Teachers)

14. **Mr Barry Sheerman** (Huddersfield) (Lab/Co-op): What steps he is taking to ensure availability of continuing professional development for teachers. [6969]

Mr Speaker: Minister—any Minister.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education (Tim Loughton): I am sorry, Mr Speaker—[*Interruption.*]

Mr Speaker: Order. I do not need to be advised by the Government Whip on the Front Bench. The hon. Member for Rochford and Southend East (James Duddridge) should remain quiet. We are on Question 14 and we have a Minister at the Box; I require no advice from the hon. Gentleman whatever.

Tim Loughton: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I was expecting some interest in Hexham from the Opposition, but clearly there is none.

I agree with the hon. Member for Huddersfield (Mr Sheerman) that the quality of teachers and professional development is important. International evidence shows that teachers learn from observing good teachers, and this happens best in schools. That is why the Government are committed to encouraging schools to demonstrate a strong culture of continuing professional development, with teachers leading their own development and that of others, and sharing effective practice within and between schools. That is why we are currently reviewing our policies and existing activities to ensure that they focus on that vision.

Mr Sheerman: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that teachers are finding it much more difficult to get out of the classroom to go to good CPD sessions, particularly in places such as the science learning centres in York and elsewhere, because of the way in which the “rarely cover” provision is being interpreted as part of the work force agreement? Not only is CPD suffering; so are kids’ visits to out-of-school facilities.

Tim Loughton: The hon. Gentleman makes a good point. I am aware of the limiting factors of “rarely cover”, which is an area that we will look at in our assessment of the problems facing teachers in getting continuing professional development. Having to pay supply teachers can be an obstacle to getting CPD, which is why this Government want to free up school pay and conditions and give greater powers back to heads to ensure that they can devise the best methods for ensuring that their teachers get the best continuous professional development and training.

Free School Meals

15. **Stephen Gilbert** (St Austell and Newquay) (LD): What assessment he has made of the educational achievement of pupils in receipt of free school meals in St Austell and Newquay constituency. [6970]

The Minister of State, Department for Education (Sarah Teather): Information is published on an annual basis on the performance of all pupils, including those eligible for free school meals, and these can be accessed on the Department’s website. We have made a clear commitment to narrowing attainment gaps between children from disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers through the pupil premium, and we will announce more details on these proposals in due course.

Stephen Gilbert: Children across the country who are in receipt of free school meals are only half as likely as their peers to get good GCSE results. Does the Minister

agree with me that only the pupil premium proposed by this Government will address the educational inequality left by the previous Government?

Sarah Teather: I absolutely agree. The scandal of educational inequality left by the previous Government is testament to their legacy, and I am very sad that they have not been willing to support the pupil premium. I hope that, with their change of leader, they will consider a U-turn on this policy.

Glenda Jackson (Hampstead and Kilburn) (Lab) *rose*—

Mr Speaker: Order. It is always a pleasure to hear the hon. Lady, but I must observe in passing that Hampstead and Kilburn are some considerable distance from St Austell and Newquay.

Teachers Pay (Wales)

16. **Hywel Williams** (Arfon) (PC): What recent discussions he has had with Welsh Assembly Government Ministers on teachers’ pay in Wales. [6971]

The Secretary of State for Education (Michael Gove): I met the Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning in the Welsh Executive, Mr Leighton Andrews, on 28 June, as part of a schedule of meetings since taking up my post. I look forward to having an ongoing discussion with him and his colleagues on this and other important issues.

Hywel Williams: I thank the Secretary of State for that answer. What consideration is he giving to introducing regional variation in teachers’ pay outside London?

Michael Gove: As I am sure the hon. Gentleman knows, teachers’ pay and conditions are set by the School Teachers Review Body, which governs England and Wales. I will have ongoing discussions with the Welsh Assembly Government, and it is important that we ensure that teachers have certainty in the future. It is my understanding that the current arrangements are working in the interests of teaching unions and teachers across England and Wales, but I would be very happy to receive any representations from the hon. Gentleman to ensure that the recruitment and retention of teachers in his constituency—in a very beautiful part of north-west Wales—are made as easy as possible.

Academies Bill

17. **Barry Gardiner** (Brent North) (Lab): What recent representations he has received on the provisions of the Academies Bill; and if he will make a statement. [6972]

The Secretary of State for Education (Michael Gove): Many schools have told us that they welcome the opportunity to acquire academy freedoms through our Bill. Officials and Ministers have had positive meetings so far with teaching unions, the Special Education Consortium, the Church of England and the Catholic Education Service. Alongside these representations, we have also had approaches from individual peers and MPs, which have been dealt with through correspondence and meetings with Ministers.

Barry Gardiner: Why does the Secretary of State continue to call these schools academies? Under the old system, academies were a means of getting extra money from outside the system to children from poor and disadvantaged backgrounds who were not doing well. Under the new system, academies are taking money from within the system away from poor and disadvantaged children and giving it to schools that are already doing very well. Why does he continue to call them academies?

Michael Gove: I know that the hon. Gentleman served with distinction as a Minister in Tony Blair's Government, and was then defenestrated when the right hon. Member for Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath (Mr Brown) took over. He should be aware that Tony Blair made it clear, when he was Prime Minister, that academy freedoms should be extended to all schools. In that respect, we are simply carrying on the good work that was begun under the Prime Minister who was wise enough to have the hon. Gentleman on his Front Bench, rather than following the disastrous course that was taken by Gordon Brown and the right hon. Member for Morley and Outwood (Ed Balls).

Dr John Pugh (Southport) (LD): I have here a press cutting in which a local head teacher in my constituency complains about his school appearing on the Department's database as "interested in academy status", when all that he had actually done was to ask for details of a sketchy scheme. He now says that the chances of his school wanting academy status are minimal and that people are "playing politics" with this. How could such things happen? Could it be that the demand for academy status is being overstated? Also, will the Secretary of State correct the database?

Mr Speaker: Order. One question will probably suffice; one answer certainly will.

Michael Gove: I have consistently made it clear that all those who have expressed interest have only ever expressed interest. I am delighted that so many have done so, but as I am sure my hon. Friend knows, our legislation is permissive, and it will be for schools to decide, rather than Ministers or bureaucrats. That will be a welcome change from the dirigiste methods that so scarred education under the right hon. Member for Morley and Outwood.

Special Educational Needs

18. **Lilian Greenwood** (Nottingham South) (Lab): What plans he has for support for children with special educational needs. [6973]

The Minister of State, Department for Education (Sarah Teather): I will launch a Green Paper in the autumn to look at a wide range of issues for children with special educational needs and disabilities. Before then I will be looking at the results of the Ofsted review of special educational needs expected later this summer, along with the many other reviews of policy in recent years. I will also be listening to the views of parents, teachers and organisations with an interest in this area.

Lilian Greenwood: Does the Minister agree that children in Nottinghamshire with the most profound special needs deserve to be taught in first-class facilities? Is it not therefore fortunate that the previous Government

were committed to investing in their education and that they built the wonderful new Oak Field school under Building Schools for the Future?

Sarah Teather: As I said in an earlier answer, simply because some projects have been stopped under Building Schools for the Future does not mean that schools will not be rebuilt or renovated in the future. This Government are absolutely committed to renovating school buildings, which is why we have had to have a review of capital—to ensure that there is still money for children to be able to learn in decent facilities.

Patrick Mercer (Newark) (Con): This morning, I met all the head teachers in my constituency, the most vocal of whom was the head teacher of the Orchard special educational needs school. When it rains heavily, the children in this school have to stop being taught in order to hold buckets under the leaking roof. I ask the Secretary of State, or one of his Ministers, to visit the Orchard school and others in my constituency to find out exactly what the situation is.

Sarah Teather: One of the Ministers will come and visit the Orchard school.

Topical Questions

T1. [6981] **Christopher Pincher** (Tamworth) (Con): If he will make a statement on his departmental responsibilities.

The Secretary of State for Education (Michael Gove): As I pointed out earlier, because of the dysfunctional system we inherited, it has been difficult to establish the absolute truth about the number of schools affected by the rules-based announcement I made last week. Today, an hour and a half before the House met for questions, I distributed to the right hon. Member for Morley and Outwood (Ed Balls) and others the latest updated list of the schools affected. This list has been verified by Building Schools for the Future and by my Department, which has contacted every local authority affected. I am looking forward to hearing from the individual local authorities in due course.

May I also take the opportunity to correct the record on one further matter? In last week's statement, I referred to six schools built under BSF that had suffered from design or construction flaws. On Thursday evening, I was told that three of the schools I mentioned—Carr Manor, Lawnswood and Primrose high—were, in fact, built under a predecessor private finance initiative scheme that sought to renovate the school estate in Leeds. Some of the renovation was financed through BSF; the schools themselves were not procured through BSF, but instead through that predecessor programme. The other schools I referred to in last week's statement were procured through BSF.

We have also issued a written ministerial statement today, pointing out that we are going to review the Office of the Children's Commissioner. As I am sure the whole House will appreciate, this is very much a season for ensuring that we get value for money from our quangos.

Christopher Pincher: Will my right hon. Friend confirm that fewer than 100 schools have been rebuilt under Building Schools for the Future, none of which, incidentally, are in Tamworth, where we have been waiting more

than three years for this labyrinthine process to happen, but not a brick has been laid? Will he confirm that this is yet another example of the former Government failing to keep their promises?

Michael Gove: I sympathise hugely with my hon. Friend. Only 97 schools were built under Building Schools for the Future during the period when the previous Government were in charge. Now we know that under this coalition Government, 706 schools will benefit from BSF and more than half of those will be new builds. Where the previous Government failed, this Government are succeeding.

T5. [6985] **Stephen Twigg** (Liverpool, West Derby) (Lab/Co-op): On Friday, I visited Holly Lodge school—one of six in my constituency affected by last week's announcement. For Liverpool, investment in our schools is crucial to our economic future. Will the Secretary of State undertake to visit Liverpool between now and the end of September to meet schools, the business community, my colleagues and the local council to discuss this crucial issue for the future of our city?

Michael Gove: I am very grateful to the hon. Gentleman, who was a distinguished schools Minister, for that question. I know how hard he works for his constituents and, indeed, for every parent, child and teacher in Liverpool. I am aware that the consequences of the regrettable decision we had to take last week will be felt particularly hard in Liverpool, so either I or a member of my ministerial team will commit to come to Liverpool to talk to him and those affected—by the end of the year, I hope, but certainly as soon as possible.

T2. [6982] **Damian Collins** (Folkestone and Hythe) (Con): Under the previous Government, 186 special schools closed. On Thursday, I will attend the annual prize-giving at Highview special school in my constituency—one that you, Mr Speaker, have visited. May I take the Secretary of State's message of support for special education under the new Government as meaning that the school will have a sustainable future and the support it needs?

Michael Gove: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his question. It is a tragedy that the ideologically driven closure of special schools under the last Government meant that so many children with special educational needs did not receive the education they deserved. That ideologically driven closure will end under this Government, and under the Minister of State, Department for Education, my hon. Friend the Member for Brent Central (Sarah Teather) we will review support for children with special educational needs. Their care should always be our first concern.

T9. [6989] **Chris Bryant** (Rhondda) (Lab): The Secretary of State will know that one problem in many of the poorest constituencies in the land is the high level of teenage pregnancy in this country—five times higher than in the Netherlands. Before Government Members start blaming Labour—or, for that matter, me personally—let me tell them that the figures rose dramatically under the Conservative Government and then did not fall sufficiently under a Labour

Government. The Secretary of State fought hard in the previous Parliament to ensure that we did not have good compulsory sex and relationship education, for every child, in all schools in the land. Will he reverse the argument that he advanced then, because in countries with low levels of teenage pregnancy, the existence of such education is the big difference?

Michael Gove: The hon. Gentleman is a former vicar of the Church of England; he has been accused of many sins, but contributing to teenage pregnancy has never been one of them, to my knowledge. May I say that I entirely appreciate the importance of proper sex and relationships education? My dispute with the previous Government was simply over a question of individual liberty. I felt it important that parents had the right to withdraw their children from sex and relationships education if they thought it inappropriate. I agree, however, that it is vital that all children have high-quality sex and relationships education, in order to ensure that they make the right decisions later in life.

T3. [6983] **Mr David Burrowes** (Enfield, Southgate) (Con): Further to my right hon. Friend's answer to the question from my hon. Friend the Member for Shipley (Philip Davies), is he aware of the situation in Enfield, where increasing housing, migration and birth rates are putting acute pressure on primary and secondary school places? Will he ensure that future capital funding focuses more on increasing capacity and less on increasing bureaucracy, as happened under the previous Government?

Michael Gove: My hon. Friend makes a very good point. One of the demographic changes to which the previous Government did not pay sufficient heed was the increase in the number of pupils arriving at primary schools, particularly in London and the south-east. That growth in basic need is our first priority.

T10. [6990] **Mr Gordon Marsden** (Blackpool South) (Lab): The Secretary of State has already spoken of his great concern about special schools. Has he done any cumulative assessment of the impact on special schools of his BSF cuts last week? The programme for all three such schools in Blackpool—Woodlands, Park and Highfurlong—will be affected and stopped, because they were co-operating with other secondary schools. What assurance will he give the House that he will consider the cumulative impact on special schools, and what assurance will he give me that he will look at the problems in Blackpool in particular?

Michael Gove: I am very sensitive to the problems in Blackpool. I had the opportunity to visit one of the schools that the hon. Gentleman mentions—Highfurlong—with my hon. Friend the Member for Blackpool North and Cleveleys (Paul Maynard). I appreciate the problems on that site and want to do everything possible to ensure that our capital review guarantees that children attending special schools get the money that they need for the facilities that are crucial to their education, as quickly and efficiently as possible.

T4. [6984] **Amber Rudd** (Hastings and Rye) (Con): Is my right hon. Friend aware that, under the overly cumbersome Building Schools for the Future, it took

on average 13 months from first meeting to first construction of a site? What can be done under this Government to ensure that that does not happen again?

Michael Gove: My hon. Friend makes a critically accurate point. As a result of the massive bureaucracy that used to exist under the Building Schools for the Future scheme, people in dilapidated classrooms were denied the resource that they needed, as it was going into the pockets of bureaucrats rather than into bricks and mortar for those most in need.

Jack Dromey (Birmingham, Erdington) (Lab): The Secretary of State will be aware that in his announcement to Parliament last week, a special needs school in my constituency of Birmingham, Erdington was listed under two separate titles, “Stopped” and “Unaffected”. Hopes were raised, confusion was then caused, and hopes have been shattered. Will the Secretary of State come to my constituency to meet the head of Queensbury school, which, along with its sister school Kingsbury, has a remarkable vision for a world-class centre of excellence catering for the children of Birmingham with special needs?

Michael Gove: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his question and for showing me the great courtesy of calling me before the weekend to explain precisely the question that he would ask. We will have the opportunity to meet one on one later this week to discuss the precise circumstances of the school that he mentions. I or one of my ministerial team will certainly join him in a visit to that school, to provide the head, teachers and parents with all the information that they need to ensure that in future we do everything possible to help to support them and the great work that they do.

T6. [6986] **Conor Burns** (Bournemouth West) (Con): I thank my right hon. Friend for visiting St Michael’s primary school in Bournemouth with me last week. If the head teacher of St Michael’s, Mr Bob Kennedy—or, indeed, any other head teacher—were to ask him what excuse could be given for spending £60 million of local authority Building Schools for the Future money on consultants rather than the front line, what on earth would he say in reply?

Michael Gove: It was a pleasure to meet my hon. Friend and the teachers who were doing such outstanding work at St Michael’s. It was a fantastic school, and a pleasure to visit.

If a head teacher were to ask me why the last Government spent so much money on consultants rather than on teachers, for once I would be dumbstruck.

Stella Creasy (Walthamstow) (Lab/Co-op): I recognise that there are many pressing issues in Ministers’ diaries, but may I beg the Secretary of State to take seriously the request by Willowfield school in Walthamstow to host a meeting for him, for parents from the Walthamstow area, and for parents affected by the decision to stop all the wave 1 school projects in Walthamstow, including those involving William Morris school and Holy Family college? There could then be a discussion about how we can meet our urgent need for school places in the locality, given that all those buildings have been condemned as not fit for purpose—a bit like the present Government.

Michael Gove: I am grateful to the hon. Lady for asking a very good question with a nice scorpion sting in the tail. I appreciate that in some parts of the country, because of the way in which Building Schools for the Future was run, the decision that we had to make bites more sharply. Waltham Forest is one of them, Somerset another, and Liverpool a third. For that reason, I will ensure that one of my Ministers or officials contacts the hon. Lady very quickly to see what we can do to alleviate this necessary blow.

T7. [6987] **David Mowat** (Warrington South) (Con): Given that last week’s announcement on BSF has had an impact on several schools in Warrington—including Penketh high school, where the need is great—will the Secretary of State tell us when his capital review is likely to report, and what criteria will be used in the review to prioritise schools? Is he willing to meet me and Warrington educationalists to discuss their needs?

Michael Gove: My hon. Friend was good enough to lobby me several weeks ago about the fate of the school that he mentioned, and schools in Warrington overall. He was, as ever, articulate and powerful on behalf of his constituents. I recognise that his constituents have been let down by the fact that Building Schools for the Future spent so much money on bureaucracy, and not enough on bricks and mortar. The purpose of our capital review is to ensure that money reaches the front line more quickly, and that the dysfunctional system that was established under the last Government—which they took no steps to reform or abolish—is transformed. I believe that there will be an interim report in a few months’ time and a final report by the end of the calendar year, both of which will transform school buildings for the future.

Tristram Hunt (Stoke-on-Trent Central) (Lab): Is the Secretary of State aware that figures from his department show that academy schools are, on average, teaching one third less GCSEs in history and geography than schools in the maintained sector, and are often inflating their grades through the use of GCSE equivalents? If that is to be the model for the future, what steps is the Secretary of State taking to ensure that academic subjects are protected in academies?

Michael Gove: Like the hon. Gentleman, I am committed to academic excellence, so I should point out that he should have said “fewer”, not “less”. However, he has made a good point. I am worried about the use of so-called equivalent qualifications instead of academic GCSEs. When I raised the issue from the Opposition Benches, the then Secretary of State said that I was talking achievements down, but I am glad to note that we can now form a coalition for excellence across the Dispatch Box.

Andrea Leadsom (South Northamptonshire) (Con): Does my right hon. Friend agree that it is regrettable that five secondary schools in my constituency which are in dire need of expenditure on the framework of their buildings have received absolutely nothing under the Building Schools for the Future programme, simply because in theory they are in a reasonable area where children are, in theory, receiving a good education?

Michael Gove: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for her question, which points to one of the many weaknesses in the Building Schools for the Future programme. Because its operation was area-based, some schools which were not dilapidated and which occupied serviceable buildings—not ideal, but serviceable—received large sums of money, while in many other parts of the country children suffered poor education in dilapidated buildings that were not prioritised for investment. That has to change.

Julie Hilling (Bolton West) (Lab): Will the Secretary of State or a member of his team undertake to meet the pupils of Westhoughton high school, who will be making an educational visit to Parliament this Thursday, to explain to them why they have wasted the last two years designing and developing their programme for their new school and why they will now have to spend the rest of their school career in a crumbling school?

Michael Gove: The hon. Lady is an impassioned advocate for Bolton West, but I have to tell her—and she can tell this to the children and parents concerned—that the reason why this process took so long is because of

the bureaucracy her Government put in place. The reason why those children are losing out is because of the decisions made by the right hon. Member for Morley and Outwood, and if she is angry, as I am, that children's destinies have been compromised, that anger—that righteous anger—should be directed at the right hon. Gentleman, the person who presided over this debacle in the first place.

Graham Evans (Weaver Vale) (Con): Free schools have the potential to make a massive positive impact on the education of children in my constituency, Cheshire and the north-west as a whole. When does the Secretary of State anticipate that the first free schools will be able to open and begin their vital work?

Michael Gove: September 2011.

Several hon. Members *rose*—

Mr Speaker: Order. I am grateful to the Secretary of State for that pithy reply, but I am afraid that demand has exceeded supply and we must now move on to the statement.

NHS White Paper

3.31 pm

The Secretary of State for Health (Mr Andrew Lansley):

With permission, Mr Speaker, I would like to make a statement on the future of the national health service.

The NHS is one of our great institutions, and a symbol of our society's solidarity and compassion. It is admired around the world for the comprehensive care it provides and for the quality, skill and dedication of its staff. I begin today by paying tribute to the staff of the NHS and the commitment they daily show to patients in their care.

This Government will always adhere to the core principles of the NHS: a comprehensive service for all, free at the point of use, based on need, not ability to pay. That principle of equity will be maintained, but we need the NHS also consistently to provide excellent care.

The NHS today faces great challenges: it must respond to the demands of an increasing and ageing population, advances in medical technology and rising expectations; it remains stifled by a culture of top-down bureaucracy, which blocks the creativity and innovation of its staff; and it does not deliver outcomes in line with the best health services internationally—many of our survival rates for disease are worse than those of our neighbours. The NHS must be equipped to meet those challenges. We believe it can do much better for patients, so today I am publishing the White Paper, "Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS", so that we can put patients right at the heart of decisions made about their care, put clinicians in the driving seat on decisions about services, and focus the NHS on delivering health outcomes that are comparable with, or even better than, those of our international neighbours.

For too long, processes have come before outcomes, as NHS staff have had to contend with 100 targets and over 260,000 separate data returns to the Department each year. We will remove unjustified targets and the bureaucracy that sustains them. In their place, we will introduce an outcomes framework setting out what the service should achieve, leaving the professionals to develop how.

We should have clear ambitions, and our approach will be set out shortly in a further consultation document. For example, our aims could be: to achieve one and five-year cancer survival rates above the European average; to minimise avoidable hospital-acquired infections; and to increase the proportion of stroke victims who are able to go home and live independently—in short, care that is effective, safe and meets patients' expectations.

The outcomes framework will be supported by clinically established quality standards, and the NHS will be geared across the board towards meeting them. We will do that by rewarding commissioners for delivering care in line with quality standards; strengthening the regulatory regime so that patients can be assured that services are safe; and reforming the payment system in the NHS, so that it is a driver not just for activity, but also for quality, efficiency and integrated care.

Patients will be at the heart of the new NHS. Our guiding principle will be "no decision about me, without me." We will bring NHS resources and NHS decision making as close to the patient as possible. We will extend "personal budgets", giving patients with long-term

conditions real choices about their care. We will introduce real, local democratic accountability to health care for the first time in almost 40 years by giving local authorities the power to agree local strategies to bring the NHS, public health and social care together. Local authorities will also be given control over local health improvement budgets. This will give an unprecedented opportunity to link health and social care services together for patients. We will give general practices, working together in local consortiums, the responsibility for commissioning NHS services, so that they are able to respond to the wishes and needs of their patients. This principle is vital, bringing together the management of care with the management of resources. With commissioning support, GPs collectively will lead a bottom-up design of services.

In addition, we will introduce more say for patients at every stage of their care, extending the right to choose far beyond a choice of hospital. Patients will have choice over treatment options, where clinically appropriate, and the consultant-led team by whom they are treated. They will have the right to choose their GP practice, and they will have much greater access to information, including the power to control their patient record. We must ensure also that patients' voices are heard, so we will establish HealthWatch nationally and locally, based on local involvement networks, to champion the needs of patients and the public at every level of the system.

To achieve these improvements in outcomes, we need to liberate the NHS from the old command-and-control regime, so all NHS trusts will become foundation trusts, freed from the constraints of top-down control, with power increasingly placed in the hands of their employees; and we will allow any willing provider to deliver services to NHS patients—provided that they can deliver the high-quality standards of care we expect from them. Our aim is to create the largest social enterprise sector in the world, but it is not a free-for-all. Monitor will become a stronger economic regulator to ensure that the services being provided are efficient and effective, and that every area of the country has the NHS services it needs to provide a comprehensive service to all. The Care Quality Commission will safeguard standards of safety and quality. An independent and accountable NHS Commissioning Board will be established to drive quality improvements through national guidance and standards, in order to inform GP-led commissioning. The board will allocate resources according to the needs of local areas, and lead specialised commissioning.

In the coming weeks, detailed consultation documents will enable people to comment on the implementation of this strategy, leading to the publication of a health Bill later this year. I recognise that the scale of today's reforms is challenging, but they are designed to build on the best of what the NHS is already doing. Clinicians are already working to facilitate patient choice, giving patients the information they need to make effective decisions. GP consortiums are already established in some areas of the country and are ready to go. Local authorities in some areas are already working closely with local clinicians to co-ordinate health and social care and improve public health. Payment by results already gives us a starting framework for building a payment system that really drives performance. Foundation trusts are already using the freedoms they have to innovate. We will build on this progress, not dismantle it.

With this White Paper we are shifting power decisively towards patients and clinicians. We will seek out and support clinical leadership. That means simplifying the NHS landscape and taking a further, radical look at the whole range of public bodies. We will reduce the Department of Health's NHS functions, delivering efficiency savings in administration. We will rebalance the NHS, reducing management costs by 45% over the next four years and abolishing quangos that do not need to exist, particularly if they do not meet the Government's three tests for public bodies. We will also shift more than £1 billion from back-office to the front line. Form must follow function. As we empower the front line, so we must disempower the bureaucracy. Therefore, after a transitional period we will phase out the top-down management hierarchy, including both strategic health authorities and primary care trusts.

Later in the summer, we will be publishing a report setting out how we see the future of NHS-related quangos. I can say now that this will mean a reduction of at least a third in the number of such bodies. This is part of a wider drive across government to increase the accountability of public bodies and reduce their number and cost. The dismantling of this bureaucracy will help the NHS realise up to £20 billion of efficiency savings by 2014, all of which will be reinvested in patient care. Today's reforms set out a long-term vision for an NHS that is led by patients and professionals, not by politicians. It sets out a vision for an NHS empowered to deliver health outcomes as good as any in the world. I commend this statement to the House.

Andy Burnham (Leigh) (Lab): I thank the right hon. Gentleman for his statement and for giving me advance sight of it, although in keeping with the style of this Government, it would appear that this House was the last to find out, behind every media outlet in the land.

Last month, the Commonwealth Fund gave its verdict on Labour's NHS, saying that it was top on efficiency and second overall on quality compared with other developed health care systems. Today, we have further evidence of progress, with figures from Cancer Research UK showing that long-term cancer survival rates have doubled. This progress was hard won; it took 10 years of painstaking work piecing together a detailed jigsaw. The right hon. Gentleman, with this White Paper, has today picked it up and thrown the pieces up in the air. It is a huge gamble with a national health service that is working well for patients.

The right hon. Gentleman's spin operation bills this as "the biggest revolution in the NHS since its foundation 60 years ago".

That is something of a surprise, given the ink was barely dry on a coalition agreement that said:

"We will stop the top-down reorganisations of the NHS that have got in the way of patient care."

What has happened since the publication of the coalition agreement to justify a U-turn of such epic proportions? Manifesto commitments have been casually dropped but this must be the first time that that agreement has been so spectacularly ripped up.

This reorganisation is the last thing that the NHS needs right now; it needs stability, not upheaval. All its energy must be focused on the financial challenge ahead. It needs confident, motivated staff, but the 1.3 million

people who work for the NHS will not be comforted by this White Paper and they will be alarmed that their systems of national pay bargaining are being torn up. We support a strong say for clinicians and GPs in improving quality. That was the direction that Lord Darzi set out, after broad consultation. We introduced practice-based commissioning within a framework of public accountability and population-wide commissioning supported by primary care trusts. What we do not support is the wiping away of oversight and public accountability, and the handing over of £80 billion of public money to GPs, whether they are ready or not. Michael Dixon, chair of the NHS Alliance, says that only about 5% of GPs are ready to take over commissioning. Sir David Nicholson, chief executive of the NHS, has judged that even the best GP practice-based commissioners are "only about a three" out of 10 in terms of the quality of their commissioning. So what sound evidence does the right hon. Gentleman have that 100% of GPs are ready, willing and able to commission services for the entire population?

The right hon. Gentleman's statement talked of rewarding commissioners who hit outcomes. Does he mean yet more money for GPs? How much will all GPs be paid for taking on this role? How many jobs does he expect to be lost in the NHS and how much money has he put aside for redundancy costs? What guarantees can he give the House that people will not simply be paid off by the NHS to be re-employed by a GP practice?

How does the right hon. Gentleman think loyal primary care trust staff felt when they read this quote—I apologise, in advance, for the language, Mr Speaker—from "a senior Department of Health source",

which was anonymously briefed to the *Health Service Journal*? It reads:

"PCTs are screwed. If you've got shares in PCTs I think you should sell".

That is no way to treat loyal public servants, who have served the NHS and are now worried about their future. On page 10, the right hon. Gentleman says that the reforms are vital to deal with the financial situation, but is it not the case that there has never been an NHS reorganisation that did not cost money and divert resources in the short term? Is not the handing of the public budget to independent contractors tantamount to the privatisation of the commissioning function in the NHS? Will there be any restrictions at all on the use of the private sector by GPs?

Added to this, the right hon. Gentleman is bringing a series of market reforms into hospitals. He tells us that the first role of Monitor will be to promote competition and talks of any willing provider and freedoms for foundation trusts. Is not that the green light to let market forces rip right through the system with no checks or balances? Are not the hearts of NHS staff sinking as they read the White Paper?

On bureaucracy, we will support the Government where sensible reductions can be made, but what he calls pointless bureaucracy, we call essential regulation. What are his plans for the Food Standards Agency and are the reports correct that he has waived his right to regulate in return for funding for Change4Life? Can he explain how 500 or more GP consortiums, all of whom will need administration and management, can be less bureaucratic than 152 primary care trusts?

[*Andy Burnham*]

Lastly, where are the public accountability and the accountability to this House? How will GPs be held to account for the £80 billion of public money for which they will be responsible and how will the new NHS commissioning board—the biggest quango in the world—be accountable to this House and to Members of Parliament?

In conclusion, this White Paper represents a roll of the dice that puts the NHS at risk—a giant political experiment with no consultation, no piloting and no evidence. It is the right hon. Gentleman at his confused and muddled worst, but the sadness is that he is taking an £80 billion gamble with the great success story that is our national health service today. At a stroke, he is removing public accountability and opening the door to unchecked privatisation. He is demoralising NHS staff at just the time we need them at their motivated best. For patients, it opens the door to a new era of postcode prescribing where services vary from street to street. It turns order into chaos, and we will oppose it.

Mr Lansley: I am just astonished that the shadow Secretary of State seems to have gone to the barricades for the primary care trusts. The primary care trusts and strategic health authorities are organisations that, under his watch as Secretary of State—for about a year—increased their management costs by 23%. In the year for which he was in charge, they spent £261 million on management consultants. Before the election, when it had a majority of Labour Members, the Select Committee on Health said that PCT commissioning was weak and that it was not delivering what was intended. He set up a programme called world class commissioning—it never worked. Central to delivering better commissioning in the health service is ensuring that those people who incur the expenditure—the general practitioners, on behalf of their patients—and who decide about the referral of patients are the same people who, through the commissioning process, determine the shape of the services in their area. It is more accountable.

How often have all of us, on both sides of the House, asked Labour Ministers about what primary care trusts are doing locally in terms of service change only to be told, “It’s nothing to do with us; it’s all happening locally”? We are going to be very clear about the accountability. One thing that the coalition programme has enabled us to do, as two parties bringing our programmes together, is to strengthen the accountability to local authorities. Local authorities, through their strategies that mesh NHS services, public health and social care, will ensure that major service changes and the design of services reflect the interconnection between those things. Those who have complaints and problems will be able to have them addressed through HealthWatch and through their local authority. We will be able, through local authorities, to ensure that the commissioning support to GP commissioning consortiums can be more effective.

The shadow Secretary of State talked about the Commonwealth Fund. I do not know whether he has even read the Commonwealth Fund report, but it said that the UK health care system was the second worst on hospital-acquired infections, that the UK delivers the poorest level of patient-centred care and that, on outcomes, we performed the second worst overall on mortality amenable to health care.

The right hon. Gentleman stood up and said that cancer mortality rates have improved. They have—since the 1970s, and all over the world. However, the issue is where we stand in relation to the rest of the world. If we were to meet the European average on cancer survivals, 5,000 more people would live each year rather than die. If we were to do the best in Europe, 10,000 more would live each year. For stroke, the figure is 9,000. We have to measure ourselves on the outcomes relative to the other health systems that are comparable to ours.

Nine years ago, the right hon. Gentleman’s Prime Minister, Tony Blair, said that we must spend as much as Europe. Through this White Paper and the reforms that we will bring in, we are determined to achieve results for patients that are at least as good as those in the rest of Europe. It is not just about inputs and spending, but about the results we achieve. The right hon. Gentleman, on behalf of his party, has just abandoned the reforms that his Prime Minister, Tony Blair, put forward. In 2006, Tony Blair said that we must have patient choice, practice-based commissioning, the independent sector and foundation trusts—reforms that Labour failed to deliver and, indeed, undermined. We, as a coalition Government, are now determined to put those reforms in place to deliver results for patients.

Mr Stephen Dorrell (Charnwood) (Con): I congratulate my right hon. Friend on setting out a clear vision for the NHS that is committed to high-quality outcomes for patients and good value for money for the taxpayer. Does he agree that the delivery of that objective depends critically on effective commissioning? Does he recall that the last Labour Government said that engaging GPs with the commissioning process was the key to success? Does he recall that the White Paper setting out the plan for practice-based commissioning said that GP commissioning was not a new idea to the NHS? Indeed, it is not. He is to be congratulated for holding out the prospect that, at last, this idea can be made good and made powerful in the interests of patients.

Mr Lansley: I am grateful to my right hon. Friend for his comments. In his capacity as the Chairman of the Select Committee on Health, we will be responding to him very shortly regarding the Select Committee’s report from before the election on commissioning in the NHS. What he has just said is absolutely right; we have to be able—this is a central task in commissioning—to bring together the responsibility for the management of patient care with the responsibility for the commissioning of services. The current situation is akin to a shopping trolley being pushed to the checkout while the primary care trust is standing there with a credit card, bleating about whether things should be taken out of the trolley. We have to ensure that the design of services follows the best clinical leadership in terms of the services that are required for patients. He and I very much agree on precisely that objective.

Several hon. Members *rose*—

Mr Speaker: Order. More than 30 hon. and right hon. Members are seeking to catch my eye. As always, I would like to accommodate everybody, but what is required, both in questions and in answers, is brevity—a legendary example of which I am sure will now be provided by the right hon. Member for Don Valley (Caroline Flint).

Caroline Flint (Don Valley) (Lab): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Is it not already the case, in PCTs, that it is clinical directors, who are professionally trained as doctors, who lead in terms of providing services in conjunction with GPs at a local level? Can the Secretary of State assure the House that his proposals will make the system any better? I do not think so.

Mr Lansley: I am sorry, but when the right hon. Lady was a Minister, she should have talked to more GPs. Overwhelmingly, they would have told her that they do not feel that the PCTs listen to them. They feel that the PCTs tell them what to do and get in the way. We are going to empower GPs to deliver services for their patients.

David Tredinnick (Bosworth) (Con): I, too, congratulate my right hon. Friend on his statement. If he is going to get more choice for patients in treatment options, he will have to expand integrated health care so that herbal medicine, acupuncture, back treatments and homeopathy are more widely available across the country. Will he look at the American model of the consortium of 44 academies that has been considering integrated health care? Can he reassure me that his NHS commissioning board will not block options for integrated health care across the country?

Mr Lansley: The job of the NHS commissioning board will be to inform GP-led commissioning through scientific evidence, clinical evidence and guidelines, but it will be for GPs themselves, managing their budgets, to enable patients to exercise greater choice. The working out of what that choice looks like should not be dictated by politicians, but should be determined by patients and their clinical advisers.

Miss Anne Begg (Aberdeen South) (Lab): The Secretary of State has not answered the question of my right hon. Friend the Member for Leigh (Andy Burnham) about the future of the Food Standards Agency. The Scottish arm of the FSA is based in Aberdeen, and I wonder whether the Secretary of State has had any discussions with the Scottish Government about its future. If not, is this yet another example of the new relationship that is meant to be in place between Scotland and the rest of the UK?

Mr Lansley: The shadow Secretary of State will have had the chance to see that there is nothing in today's White Paper about the FSA—no such proposal.

Andy Burnham: You have been briefing about it.

Mr Lansley: I have not been briefing anything to anybody. *[Interruption.]* I have not. It is very straightforward. The FSA, along with other bodies associated with our public health responsibilities, will be the subject of a public health White Paper in the autumn. There is no proposal.

Andrew George (St Ives) (LD): In seeking to reassure the House that this is not the top-down reorganisation that the coalition agreement derided, would my right hon. colleague reassure my constituents, who are quite excited by the idea of more patient and local authority involvement in local decision making, that where the

primary care trusts in which they are going to be appointed will be abolished, there will be more GP commissioning groups than PCTs at the end of the process?

Mr Lansley: Yes, I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman. The number of GP-commissioning consortiums will be determined not least by GPs themselves, deciding what makes sense in their locality. He and his Cornish colleagues have often been frustrated by the way in which a top-down bureaucracy has sought to dictate to the people of Cornwall, often in specific localities, at a considerable distance from their hospital services, what services should be provided locally in places such as Hayle and Penzance. He and his constituents can be really comforted by the thought that their clinical advisers and general practitioners in local consortiums can in future make those decisions about their services.

Hazel Blears (Salford and Eccles) (Lab): Despite the tremendous improvements that have been made in Salford and Eccles over the past few years in tackling cancer and heart disease, significant inequalities remain that require substantial resources. Will the Secretary of State confirm that in shifting commissioning powers to GPs and allowing the NHS commissioning board to allocate resources, the funding formula will still properly reflect the needs and deprivation factors in areas such as mine and right across the country?

Mr Lansley: The White Paper makes it clear that the NHS commissioning board will be required to allocate resources across the NHS in England on the basis, as far as possible, of seeking to secure equivalent access to NHS services. That will clearly be relative to the prospective burden of disease. In tackling health inequalities, the right hon. Lady will know that we need separately to allocate resources to local health improvement plans, which will be led through local authorities, and which will enable them to create local public health strategies to secure improvements in health outcomes and to reduce health inequalities.

Nadine Dorries (Mid Bedfordshire) (Con): May I congratulate the Secretary of State on what is a truly exciting White Paper? Will he confirm that in addition to GPs having responsibility for commissioning, there will be the opportunity for them to become actively involved in the provision of care and deciding what care is allocated to which patients?

Mr Lansley: Yes, my hon. Friend understands that GPs are often providers beyond their primary medical services responsibilities. One of the difficulties with fundholding was that there was an opportunity for that conflict of interest to arise and not be properly resolved, so we have made it clear that, in the commissioning framework that we will publish, we will set out consultation proposals on how we ensure that that conflict of interest is not allowed to arise. Where GPs wish to be providers, we do not constrain them, but how that contract is arrived at is transparent and open.

Mr Nick Raynsford (Greenwich and Woolwich) (Lab): How can the Secretary of State, with a straight face, say that he opposes the culture of top-down bureaucracy and decisions being taken by politicians, when he himself,

[Mr Nick Raynsford]

in the past six weeks, has stopped the implementation of a clinically led and agreed programme for improving health care provision in south-east London, which was going ahead until he stopped it? Does he now accept that his words carry very little force for those of us who know what his actions indicate?

Mr Lansley: No is the answer. I set out on 21 May criteria on listening to patients and understanding what patient choice will be in future; on engaging the public, including local authorities, which are now following through on that accountability; on following the clinical evidence of what can best deliver outcomes; and on ensuring that GPs, as we have made clear, must be supportive and engaged. If any proposal in London is made at local level, such as the one the right hon. Gentleman refers to in Oxleas, satisfies those criteria, which are bottom-up and locally led, there is no difficulty in its proceeding.

Mr Steve Brine (Winchester) (Con): I congratulate the Secretary of State on his statement, which many people outside the House will recognise is a breath of fresh air for our NHS, unlike the flagging leadership bid we heard earlier—the second this afternoon—from the Opposition.

Will the Secretary of State confirm that the new consortiums of GPs can regain responsibility for out-of-hours care, the provision of which is a great worry for many of the people I represent across Winchester and Chandler's Ford?

Mr Lansley: Yes. The commissioning responsibility will include urgent and out-of-hours care. I commend to my hon. Friend what the White Paper says about how we can deliver improvements in efficiency and effectiveness in terms of urgent care, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Mr Dennis Skinner (Bolsover) (Lab): Speaking as someone with a successful outcome, twice, under the national health service in recent times, could the Secretary of State explain to me why these private elements within the NHS—that is, the GP practices—which are getting another £80 billion to spend are not going to be watched over by the primary care trusts or, seemingly, anybody else? Who is going to watch them spend that money—the private sector?

Mr Lansley: I am astonished that Labour Members are still attacking general practice. I thought that shadow Ministers—former Ministers—had had enough of doing that. [Interruption.] I will answer the hon. Gentleman. GP practices will be accountable to patients who exercise choice; accountable to their local authority, through which a strategy is established; and accountable to Parliament and to Ministers through the NHS commissioning board with which they will have their contract.

Jacob Rees-Mogg (North East Somerset) (Con): In welcoming this statement, I wonder whether the Secretary of State will be able to put in place any interim measures for people such as a constituent of mine who have been prescribed life-prolonging cancer drugs such as Lapatinib but are being denied them.

Mr Lansley: I am pleased to be able to tell my hon. Friend that as part of the coalition programme we have said that we will implement a cancer drugs fund from April 2011. Indeed, my ministerial colleagues—not least the Minister of State, Department of Health, the hon. Member for Sutton and Cheam (Mr Burstow)—and I are looking urgently at what we can do in the meantime to try to ensure that we no longer continue with a situation where patients do not have access to cancer drugs that are routinely available in other countries.

Mr David Lammy (Tottenham) (Lab): Most people will recognise that GPs are at the cornerstone of the NHS, but also that since 1948 they have been independent practitioners running for-profit businesses. What safeguards has the Secretary of State put in place, and what is he doing about conflicts of interest? He said nothing about that in his statement. Is not what is proposed like asking pharmaceutical companies to be in charge of the NHS drugs bill?

Mr Lansley: I must not be unkind to the right hon. Gentleman, because he has not yet had a chance to read the White Paper—

Mr Lammy: It is here—I have read it.

Mr Lansley: That is my statement. When the right hon. Gentleman reads the White Paper, it will become obvious to him that, yes, we are looking to GPs to take responsibility for commissioning, but, unlike the problems that arose with fundholding, there will not be an opportunity for GPs to generate surpluses on their commissioning budget, and so money in their pocket. It will not work like that: there will be a clear separation between the commissioning budget and their personal budget. We will focus on the thing that really matters, which is GPs taking a commissioning responsibility in designing services.

Nicholas Soames (Mid Sussex) (Con): I welcome the Secretary of State's bold and imaginative statement on a White Paper that I am sure will be broadly welcomed in the NHS, not least because it will give people within the NHS the opportunity to give true vent to their creativity. Does he agree, however, that he is setting very demanding targets and challenges; and what time line does he envisage before this is finally implemented?

Mr Lansley: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. I will not go through the White Paper in detail now, but within it he will find that we look towards some GP commissioning consortiums taking an early adopter place from 2011-12, with consortiums generally taking, as it were, a shadow responsibility but not a legal responsibility in 2012-13, and then taking full responsibility, subject to the passage of the legislation to establish that, from April 2013 onwards—the point at which we anticipate that primary care trusts will be abolished.

Liz Kendall (Leicester West) (Lab): The Minister will know that about 80% of patient contact with the NHS is in primary care. Will GP commissioning groups be allowed to commission GP and other primary care services from themselves, and if so, how will they be held to account for that decision?

Mr Lansley: No, the NHS commissioning board will contract for the primary medical services provided by GPs themselves. GPs will commission for the additional services, including all the community and hospital services. There will be a combination of individual practices taking a responsibility, rewarded through their quality and outcomes framework for the service that they provide to their patients individually, and a general commissioning responsibility for those practices together with others in a local consortium.

Ben Gummer (Ipswich) (Con): Could the Secretary of State confirm what will happen to those trusts that have not yet achieved foundation trust status and those that are in the middle of applying for it?

Mr Lansley: I am grateful for that question, because what is important is that we have coherent reform in relation to both commissioners and providers. That means that by 2013-14, we should not only have energised the commissioning process and patient choice but set free the hospital providers. My objective, set out in the White Paper, is that by that time all NHS trusts should become foundation trusts. We will need to put in place measures to support them to do that.

Mr Geoffrey Robinson (Coventry North West) (Lab): Is the Secretary of State aware that those of us who listened to his speeches in opposition were much encouraged, but that with this first statement he has totally disillusioned everybody who believed that he was going to avoid the faults of the past? He has now introduced the biggest top-down, ill thought-through reorganisation that there has ever been in the NHS, and it has about as much chance of success as any previously introduced.

Mr Lansley: I would encourage the hon. Gentleman to go and talk to GPs in Warwickshire whom I have talked to, and to talk to those at Walsgrave about the freedoms that they want to enjoy.

I wish to make it absolutely clear to the hon. Gentleman that there is great consistency between what we said in opposition and what I am announcing today, but that there are some major improvements. Frankly, they have come about because of the conversations that I have had with my colleagues from the Liberal Democrat party. Not least, those conversations have enabled us to focus on the fact that instead of leaving what was a diminishing, residual role for primary care trusts, which withered on the vine, it is better and stronger for us to create a strategic responsibility for local authorities on public health and on joining up health and social care. That will allow us to remove the bureaucracy associated with PCTs, and it is more coherent and stronger than the proposals that we had in opposition.

Dr Sarah Wollaston (Totnes) (Con): My right hon. Friend recognises how toxic many targets were in the NHS, but they were not all bad. There were some that ensured that standards were maintained, for example the two-week wait for cancer referrals. How will he ensure that standards are maintained when targets are abolished?

Mr Lansley: I am grateful to my hon. Friend, who is absolutely right. That is why, as I said in my statement, not only will we be clear about what we are trying to achieve—for example, where cancer is concerned, one

and five-year survival rates at least as good as the European average and hopefully as good as any in Europe—but we will require the NHS to look towards clinically led, evidence-based quality standards that enable those working in the NHS to be clear about what constitutes quality. That will enable us to deliver those outcomes.

Glenda Jackson (Hampstead and Kilburn) (Lab): Some of the greatest health inequalities occur in areas of the greatest deprivation, which are not infrequently areas that are not attractive to GPs. We also have in London a very large number of people who have never registered, and will never register, with a GP. They tend to use accident and emergency departments. How will their medical needs be presented to this top-down body, the NHS commissioning agent, when there can be no input from GPs? If I read the Secretary of State's statement correctly, GPs' recommendations will be disregarded by the NHS commissioning board.

Mr Lansley: I do not recognise the hon. Lady's latter point. Some 7% of the population in London are not registered with a GP, which is one reason why commissioning consortiums of GPs will take responsibility for their locality, not just their registered patient population.

In relation to hospitals such as the Royal Free, one reason why the hon. Lady, I and other Members were campaigning against her Government before the election was that we recognised that we cannot shut down accident and emergency departments when patients are coming in the door by the tens of thousands because there is no alternative provision. The best way to design services in the community that better meet the needs of patients is through general practitioners designing them around the needs of their patients.

Mr John Baron (Basildon and Billericay) (Con): I very much welcome the White Paper's increased focus on improving outcomes, and particularly my right hon. Friend's comments about the introduction of one-year and five-year cancer survival rates, for which the all-party group on cancer has been pushing. How does he envisage GP commissioning of cancer services improving with the White Paper, given that part of the problem is that a typical GP will see only eight new cancer presentations a year?

Mr Lansley: I pay tribute to my hon. Friend's work. He will have noted that I deliberately said both one-year and five-year cancer survival rates—he made an important point about that. Clearly, there are many specialist commissioning services, which will become the NHS commissioning board's responsibility. To that extent, GPs should not be expected to commission specialised services—they have little experience of that. However, GPs as commissioning consortiums, like primary care trusts at the moment, are capable of having a relationship with their cancer networks to establish the services that they need for their patients. Indeed, that applies more to GPs because many of the patients and those who work in cancer services to whom I speak are critical of the lack of awareness on the part of PCT commissioners of the available services. Those who work in cancer services do not believe that PCT commissioners understand the service that they provide. Not every GP understands every aspect of cancer care, but they are much better placed to work with cancer specialists to design the services.

Mr Michael Meacher (Oldham West and Royton) (Lab): Given the transfer of £70 billion of NHS funds from PCTs to 500 GP consortiums, the vast majority of which have neither the expertise nor the inclination for such a huge administrative task and will have to buy in specialists from the private sector to do it for them, is not it clear that the real motive behind the reforms is to enable US multinational corporations, such as UnitedHealth, or UK corporations, such as BUPA or Virgin, to parcel out health care to the private sector on a vast scale?

Mr Lansley: No. That is completely wrong on all counts.

Dr Julian Lewis (New Forest East) (Con): I congratulate my right hon. Friend on his firm grasp of the subject and on taking an axe to the forest of bureaucracy. As he proposes to phase out the strategic health authorities, may I nominate the South Central strategic health authority—he knows what is coming—because that would ensure that it was no longer able to waste hundreds of thousands of pounds of our money on fighting a hopeless legal case to impose fluoridation on a population, three quarters of whom have indicated that they do not want it?

Mr Lansley: Yes, I am indeed aware of precisely what my hon. Friend says and will certainly take it into account.

Jeremy Corbyn (Islington North) (Lab): The Secretary of State has been asked by many Members about the accountability of GPs, and he has not answered. Some £80 billion is to be pumped through GPs, who will then buy in services. Who manages them? Who monitors them? Who checks on what they are doing? Will we get value for money or, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Oldham West and Royton (Mr Meacher) said, will the system in reality be administered by private health companies, just as GPs are private contractors in the NHS?

Mr Lansley: At the risk of repetition, let me say that GPs will be accountable to patients, who will exercise more control and choice. They will be accountable to the NHS commissioning board, which will hold their contracts, for financial control and for their performance, through the quality and outcomes framework. They will be accountable to their local authority for their strategy and for the co-ordination of public health services and social care.

Jason McCartney (Colne Valley) (Con): Thousands of patients in my constituency are desperate for specialist maternity care to be returned to Huddersfield royal infirmary, which was downgraded under the previous Government. Does the White Paper make the return of consultant-led maternity services to Huddersfield more likely?

Mr Lansley: The White Paper will enable GPs in an area, plus their local public and their local authority, to make decisions about the shape of services rather than its being done by ministerial diktat.

Alex Cunningham (Stockton North) (Lab): The Secretary of State referred to delivering for the patient. Will he guarantee that patients such as those who need a new

knee or a new hip can expect their treatment in 18 weeks, or is it more likely to be 18 months under today's proposals, as it was under the previous Tory Government?

Mr Lansley: Ah! That was one of the Opposition Whips' handout questions, wasn't it? I will tell the hon. Gentleman that actually, patients are more likely to get their treatment more quickly. Let me give him an example. Patients with rheumatoid arthritis need rapid treatment, but they were losing out and suffering as a consequence of the 18-week target, because hospitals were hitting 18 weeks, but not providing the care needed by those patients in the light of their conditions. We must focus on what is in the best interests of patients, not on what is in the best interests of political grandstanding.

Bob Blackman (Harrow East) (Con): The Secretary of State's announcement will be warmly welcomed in my constituency. On Friday, I went to see a group practice of 12 GPs who are totally frustrated by the local PCT. They are concerned that when the reforms are introduced, they will also be frustrated by the GP consortiums. Will my right hon. Friend give me some assurances on how the GP consortiums will be formed? What will happen if some GPs disagree with how a consortium is set up?

Mr Lansley: I can tell my hon. Friend that I am looking to GPs in a locality to create GP commissioning consortiums that represent an area. They must decide on the geography of that and make proposals. It will not be possible for GPs simply to say, "This is nothing to do with us," because in future, we must expect GPs, who are senior professionals in public service and paid appropriately, to be responsible not only for the care of the individual patient in front of them, but collectively for the quality of care provided to their population at large.

Ms Gisela Stuart (Birmingham, Edgbaston) (Lab): Prior to 1997, there was no cancer strategy and cancer was not a priority. The Secretary of State is absolutely right to make reaching European levels of one and five-year survival rates one of his priorities and an aspiration, but he knows very well that the one thing that is holding us back is the problem of early diagnosis. Precisely how does he think his abolition of targets and his woolly assurances will ensure early diagnosis? I will wager him that under his proposals, we will fall backwards rather than make progress.

Mr Lansley: Let me tell the hon. Lady that only just over 40% of those who were diagnosed with cancer actually came through the two-week wait process at all. She is right that it is very important that patients' signs and symptoms should be identified at an earlier point and that they should have earlier diagnosis. Whom does she imagine is best placed to identify signs and symptoms and to take action on them other than patients and the GPs who are responsible for their care? *[Interruption.]* If Opposition Members stop interrupting from a sedentary position, I can continue. Actually, patients need—*[Interruption.]* The shadow Secretary of State should understand this, having held responsibility for it. For early diagnosis, awareness of signs and symptoms on the part of patients is critical. Only 30% of members of the public had any idea what cancer signs and symptoms

were beyond the presence of a lump or swelling. We need to change such things and the responses of GPs to those early signs and symptoms.

Mr Speaker: Order. Members really should not chunter, witter or otherwise heckle from a sedentary position, because they thereby reduce their chances of getting in, or of their colleagues getting in.

Margot James (Stourbridge) (Con): Older people and people with long-term medical conditions have not been well served by the division between health and social care, which has lasted many years. I congratulate the Secretary of State on his plan to give local authorities control over local health improvement budgets. Can he say any more about how those reforms will break down the barriers between health and social care?

Mr Lansley: I am grateful for my hon. Friend's question. There is an unprecedented opportunity for local authorities and the NHS to create a much more integrated and effective strategy for health and social care working together. That is partly about focusing on outcomes, partly about listening to patients, and partly about extending personal budgets for patients, so that they themselves can break down such barriers. However, critically, it is also about local authorities exercising the responsibility that we will give them, plus their existing powers in relation to well-being right across their areas, to seal that working together, to deliver better public health and better integration between their social care responsibility and NHS commissioning plans.

Tony Lloyd (Manchester Central) (Lab): Without any shame, the Secretary of State is introducing an internal market in the health service. In that context, how will he guarantee that GPs will not look for cheaper medicine rather than better medicine?

Mr Lansley: Because patients will have increased choice—[HON. MEMBERS: "How?"] Because patients will make their choices on the quality of service they receive, because the service will be free to them.

Dr John Pugh (Southport) (LD): The coalition agreement pledges to introduce true local democratic accountability through citizens actually being elected on to a health board. What can the Secretary of State do to persuade me—because he has not so far—that we will have local citizens, not doctors, making any decisions about the shape and configuration of local NHS services other than in public health, and will any of them be consulted about his structural changes or allowed to do things differently locally?

Mr Lansley: Yes. I feel very strongly that we have deliberately set out to improve local democratic accountability and we have found an effective mechanism for doing so. Local authorities will themselves have statutory powers to agree local strategies that encompass not only local health improvement, but the commissioning plans and the social care commissioning strategies locally. If a major service change is contemplated as a consequence, the commissioning consortiums will not be able to proceed without the agreement of the local authority through its joint strategic assessment. The White Paper makes it clear that if they do not agree, the local

authority will continue to have the capacity to send the proposals to the independent reconfiguration panel and, if necessary, to the Secretary of State.

Austin Mitchell (Great Grimsby) (Lab): May I tell the Secretary of State that north-east Lincolnshire has developed an effective care trust plus, which worked with the local authority to link care and health in exactly the way that he proposes, but the effect of his proposals on that trust will be to deprive it of most of its functions and cause it to issue redundancy notice to most of its staff. Has he heard of the old adage, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it"?

Mr Lansley: It is broke, and we are fixing it. We are fixing it because primary care trusts have not succeeded in delivering the outcomes that we are looking for, and they have consumed an enormous amount of money. I remind the hon. Gentleman that in the last year, at a time when we knew that there was a financial crisis facing the public sector and that the NHS would have to deliver more for less, the strategic health authorities and primary care trusts increased their management costs—not their spending on patients—by 23% in one year. It was outrageous.

Jeremy Lefroy (Stafford) (Con): I thank my right hon. Friend for his statement. As he will know, concerns were expressed about the role played by Monitor in the authorisation of the Mid-Staffordshire foundation NHS trust. Does he have any plans to beef up Monitor's role and ensure that it plays a better role in the future in the authorisation of trusts?

Mr Lansley: Yes, and hon. Members will see in the White Paper the way in which we can strengthen the role of Monitor. It is not just about the authorisation processes for foundation trusts, but a continuing responsibility for the quality and standard of care being provided in all our trusts, NHS trusts or foundation trusts. It is important to focus on quality, on what constitutes quality and on ensuring sufficient incentives to support quality. In addition, I hope that some of the lessons that will be learnt from the inquiry being conducted by Robert Francis QC will inform how we can put a better system in place.

Paul Flynn (Newport West) (Lab): How much will be created in additional bureaucracy and new costs by dumping on GPs tasks for which they are not trained?

Mr Lansley: The hon. Gentleman has not talked to GPs across England who are keen to take on this responsibility. In the process, we will reduce the costs of bureaucracy in the NHS by more than £1 billion a year.

Nick de Bois (Enfield North) (Con): Does the Secretary of State agree that where moratoriums are in place, practising GPs should be encouraged to seize the opportunity to determine the future of hospital accident and emergency departments, as with Chase Farm hospital in my constituency?

Mr Lansley: Yes, I very much agree. As he knows, his local GPs, patient representative groups and the local authority are already demonstrating how they can come together to devise the right solutions for the people of Enfield and the district around Chase Farm.

Valerie Vaz (Walsall South) (Lab): The Secretary of State talks about choice in the NHS, but could he confirm that GPs will be given the choice to join a consortium?

Mr Lansley: GP practices will all have to be members of a consortium, otherwise it will not be possible for them collectively to commission emergency and urgent care, and they will need to do that.

Clive Efford (Eltham) (Lab): The Secretary of State seems to misunderstand one thing. When patients go in to be treated by a GP, they expect to get the best possible treatment available. The Secretary of State said in an earlier answer that he would expect patients to have the knowledge of drugs to be able to determine whether a GP was supplying cheaper or better drugs. What local accountability will there be of GPs, what resources will be put into HealthWatch networks, what resources will be left available for local health improvement budgets, and what teeth will local authorities have to impose local health plans?

Mr Speaker: Order. That was four questions, to which one answer will suffice.

Mr Lansley: The answer is that I said no such thing as what the hon. Gentleman suggested, and the record will show that.

Harriett Baldwin (West Worcestershire) (Con): I welcome the fact that my right hon. Friend has said that an extra £20 billion will be going into patient care by 2014. Can he clarify how much more that is under our Budget, compared with Labour's Budget, which would have cut the NHS budget?

Mr Lansley: My hon. Friend is right. It appears that the Labour party's policy is to cut the NHS. Our policy is to do something that Labour never achieved: deliver greater efficiency and greater productivity in the NHS, not least through the reforms that I have announced. Every penny saved will be a penny reinvested to the benefit of patient care.

Meg Munn (Sheffield, Heeley) (Lab/Co-op): Sheffield is one of the areas that already has GP consortiums. They have been developing their relationships with the primary care trust and are now starting to make progress. What guarantee can the Secretary of State give to my constituents that today's unwanted change will not set back that process and not cause significant problems with the progress that has already been made?

Mr Lansley: It is not an unwanted change. All over the country, GPs themselves have resisted the concept that they do what the primary care trust tells them to do, when they are better placed to design services on behalf of their patients. They can, and I know that the GP commissioning consortiums in many places will want to take on board the key teams in primary care trusts that they think would help them deliver commissioning. However, GP commissioning consortiums will not be required to do so, although they will be required to deliver better outcomes for their patients.

Charlotte Leslie (Bristol North West) (Con): If hon. Members speak to GPs and professionals, who not only sit here and just talk about the NHS, but actually run it, day by day, they will find that it is not change or the White Paper that has caused demoralisation, but the machine-gun fire of targets and the monolith of management. The reason why that has caused so much demoralisation among the work force is that target box-ticking is so often different from the provision of quality care, as we have tragically seen in Staffordshire. Can my right hon. Friend reassure me that his reforms will mean that box-ticking is replaced by quality of care?

Mr Lansley: My hon. Friend is absolutely right and expresses her point superbly. The process is going to be about quality, not tick-box targets, and it is going to enable the front-line staff of the NHS to have not only access to the resources that they need, but the power to use them more effectively.

Fiona Mactaggart (Slough) (Lab): Who will have the legal responsibility for delivering the Secretary of State's welcome promise of a health care service free at the point of delivery? If we have expensive patients who are not being well treated by the GPs, what resource do we have, as Members of Parliament representing the interests of those patients?

Mr Lansley: The hon. Lady will see, in the White Paper and the subsequent legislation, the continuation of the existing legal framework, which does not allow additional charges to be levied inside the NHS.

Derek Twigg (Halton) (Lab): It is interesting that the Secretary of State said in the statement, "We will allow any willing provider to deliver services to NHS patients". Does he rule out any area of services in the NHS where private providers will be able to provide services?

Mr Lansley: I am adopting an any-willing-provider policy that was the policy of the hon. Gentleman's Government, until the shadow Secretary of State abandoned it in September 2009 at the behest of the trade unions. I am adopting a policy designed to achieve the best possible care for patients by giving them access to all those who will deliver NHS services within NHS prices.

Dr Daniel Poulter (Central Suffolk and North Ipswich) (Con): Is my right hon. Friend aware that Hartismere hospital in my constituency was closed by Suffolk PCT, while at the same time, the PCT was able to afford to spend £500,000 on opening a new car park for managers? Does he agree that community hospitals such as Hartismere are still a valuable part of health care and that the White Paper might see a return to valuing them once again?

Mr Lansley: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for that question. I did in fact visit Hartismere hospital with his predecessor, and I entirely sympathise with his point. At that time, the primary care trust in his part of Suffolk was regarded as "initiative central". It had to pursue every initiative from the Department of Health, and the money just went out the door. Those initiatives lasted just a year or two and then disappeared. That is

not the basis on which to design the national health service. GPs are an excellent basis for this work because they are committed to their areas, and to the patients they look after, in the long term.

Alan Keen (Feltham and Heston) (Lab/Co-op): If the Secretary of State is correct in saying that we need clinicians and GPs to have more influence and even control over the commissioning process, will he explain why he does not simply legislate for them to take over the current trusts? That would achieve his aim immediately, and if any inefficiencies appeared and changes to the management commissioning structure were needed—whether in the present PCTs or following reorganisation—they could take place after a period of time. Instead, these slash and burn proposals are going to cost millions of pounds and cause a lot of disruption.

Mr Lansley: The simple answer is because GP commissioners want to create their own commissioning consortiums according to their own needs and local circumstances. They do not want to be saddled with the legislative structures and costs that currently bedevil primary care trusts.

Rachel Reeves (Leeds West) (Lab): In my constituency, a local charity called Healthy Living Network Leeds is commissioned by the PCT to provide health services in the most deprived areas, including among the Traveller community. What guarantee can the Secretary of State give to my constituents that those community-based health services will continue, and that they will be overseen to ensure that those treatments continue in the most deprived areas?

Mr Lansley: The answer is that GP commissioning consortiums will have a responsibility that goes beyond their registered patient population, and that when they set out their commissioning plans, those plans will have to be agreed by the local authority. In the hon. Lady's case, Leeds city council will have a responsibility to ensure, through its health improvement plan and through NHS commissioning, that the needs of groups such as Travellers are properly met.

Sajid Javid (Bromsgrove) (Con): My right hon. Friend will know that community hospitals, including The Princess of Wales community hospital in my constituency, have been under threat because of the policies of the previous Government. Does he agree that these new initiatives will make it more likely that local communities will take back control of their health care?

Mr Lansley: Yes, exactly. Last Thursday I was in Cumbria, and that is exactly what has happened there. The GP commissioners have collectively taken over responsibility for the Cockermouth community hospital. Instead of its being run down, as was intended, they have built it up as a base from which they are providing services for their area.

Andrew Gwynne (Denton and Reddish) (Lab): Given that not all primary care trusts are coterminous with local authority areas, how will the public health aspect of the reorganisation be dealt with in areas such as Tameside and Glossop? It will not be as simple as just

moving functions across to a single local authority in an area where a single health economy is greater than just one district.

Mr Lansley: As I am proposing to abolish primary care trusts, the problem of a lack of coterminosity will no longer apply. Health improvement plans, led by local authorities, will be set out on a basis consistent with many of the other services that make a significant contribution to delivering the kind of health and well-being that we are looking for.

Emma Reynolds (Wolverhampton North East) (Lab): Wolverhampton primary care trust, working closely with GPs, has been at the forefront of driving improvements throughout Wolverhampton. For example, there has been a reduction in teenage pregnancies and in infant mortality. What evidence does the Secretary of State have that GP-led consortiums will be better placed than primary care trusts to carry forward further improvements in those areas, which affect the poorest communities in my constituency?

Mr Lansley: There is good evidence that physician-led commissioning of services for patients is very effective. Precedents in this country and across the world have shown that. The hon. Lady mentioned teenage pregnancy and infant mortality, and this is principally about the relationship between NHS services and wider public health services. Given such responsibility, I am sure that the local authority will be able to deliver local health improvement strategies that will impact on those factors more effectively than has been possible with the NHS doing it solely using NHS services and resources.

Chris Leslie (Nottingham East) (Lab/Co-op): But if the Secretary of State is going to force GPs to spend all this extra time on bureaucracy and managing the NHS, does it not mean that they will have less time to spend with their patients? Is that the reason why he scrapped patients' right to see a GP within 48 hours?

Mr Lansley: Many GPs will find that they spend much less time trying to negotiate services for their patients through a PCT and NHS bureaucracy that get in the way. Of course GPs are operating collectively in a commissioning consortium, and I am not going to turn them into individual managers. Some GPs will be leaders—I am looking for clinical leadership—but they will also look for commissioning support. They can derive that from existing primary care trust teams if they think they are doing a good job; they can do it via local authorities or from independent sector providers of commissioning services as well.

Joan Walley (Stoke-on-Trent North) (Lab): Does the Secretary of State not realise that there are greater health inequalities in some parts of the country, as in Stoke-on-Trent? Can he explain how this new arrangement of GP-led commissioning is going to deal with those health inequalities? Is it all going to be rolled out at one and the same time, or will there be pilot projects as part of a rolled-out programme? How is he going to ensure that health inequalities are dealt with, when local authorities in Stoke-on-Trent have to make £70 million of cuts over the next three years? How is it all going to be provided for?

Mr Lansley: It would be a good idea if Labour Members at least acknowledged that over the last 13 years health inequalities have widened in this country. We have not achieved health outcomes here that are at least as good as the European average, and in some respects regarding some diseases we are among the worst in Europe. We are going to turn this round. In order to do so, we are going to work not only with national strategies but with local strategies that are geared towards identifying those health inequalities and that expressly set out to reduce inequalities by looking beyond the NHS. Local authorities, the NHS, social care, the community and the voluntary sector will work together to make it happen.

Alison Seabeck (Plymouth, Moor View) (Lab): The right hon. Gentleman talks about empowering GPs—some willingly and some unwillingly, I suspect. Some of them will need upskilling and training in order to understand the new process. What assessment has he made of the time GPs will need to devote to their training, and that of their staff, and of how much it will cost—or will GPs themselves be expected to pay for it?

Mr Lansley: I wonder whether the hon. Lady has met doctors in Devon. I have been to their local medical committee conference and discussed these issues with them. They are keen to go. If there was any difficulty, it was that at least one Plymouth GP had very high referral rates. I do not think he had ever checked those rates with his colleagues. It was interesting to hear them talk to one another. It became perfectly obvious that peer review—that sense of working collectively to manage services in an area—is going to hold GPs to account very effectively within consortiums as well. *[Interruption.]* The hon. Lady and all her colleagues completely underestimate the capacity of general practitioners, who are responsible for the overwhelming majority of patient contact in the NHS, not only to take on the responsibility of deciding whether they should incur the expenditure for the referrals they make but to have a say in designing those services.

Points of Order

4.38 pm

Helen Jones (Warrington North) (Lab): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You will be aware that the Secretary of State for Education today issued his fifth list of schools affected by the cancellation of the Building Schools for the Future programme. That list was not available to Members until 2.35 pm—after the first question on Building Schools for the Future had been taken at Question Time. Is there anything you can do to ensure that Members have the right information in front of them before we debate these issues?

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Lindsay Hoyle): The hon. Member has made the point that it would have been beneficial if this information had been in place before Education questions. She has now put the point on the record, so it can be taken into account.

Ms Gisela Stuart (Birmingham, Edgbaston) (Lab): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In the statement on the White Paper, the Secretary of State for Health asserted in response to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton North East (Emma Reynolds) that there was evidence that GP-led commissioning was superior in outcomes to PCT-led commissioning. Am I right to assume that the Secretary of State will either substantiate that assertion in a letter to the Member concerned or by lodging substantiating information in the Library?

Mr Deputy Speaker: We have already had our debate on that issue and we cannot carry on with it now. It is not a point of order for the Chair.

Finance Bill

[1ST ALLOCATED DAY]

Considered in Committee

[MR LINDSAY HOYLE *in the Chair*]

Ordered,

That the order in which proceedings in the Committee of the whole House on the Finance Bill are taken shall be: Clauses 1 and 2, Schedule 1, Clause 3, Schedule 2, Clauses 4 to 6, Schedule 3, Clause 7, Schedule 4, Clause 8, Schedule 5, Clause 9, new Clauses, new Schedules, Clauses 10 and 11.—(*Mr Gauke.*)

Clause 1

MAIN RATE OF CORPORATION TAX FOR FINANCIAL
YEAR 2011

4.40 pm

John McDonnell (Hayes and Harlington) (Lab): I beg to move amendment 11, page 1, line 6, at end insert—

‘(2) Subsection (1) shall not have effect unless the Chancellor of the Exchequer has laid before the House of Commons a report on the extent of avoidance and evasion of corporation tax and on the measures he proposes to take to ensure the payment of tax which is due.’

I almost feel like apologising for returning to the issue of tax evasion and tax avoidance, which I have pursued for a number of years since the debate that we had about the merger of Inland Revenue and Customs and Excise to form Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs. The amendment is fairly straightforward in seeking that a report be prepared by the Chancellor of the Exchequer before corporation tax and capital gains tax measures are agreed by the House. I will not repeat myself in relation to amendment 12 to clause 2, although I will move amendment 12 formally. We have argued consistently about how to tackle evasion and avoidance and the investment required to do so.

Let me explain the rationale behind the amendment. I listened to the Second Reading debate into the early hours, including the discussions about Randalls of Uxbridge, which were enlightening at that point in time—

Mr Kevan Jones (North Durham) (Lab): Refreshing even.

John McDonnell: As my hon. Friend says from a sedentary position, the discussions were refreshing, to say the least. I think there is another sale on at the moment.

The debate was about how to resolve the deficit that has arisen as a result of the credit crunch and the economic crisis that we face. Clearly, the division was around the level of reductions in public expenditure required and the time scale for their implementation. There was fierce debate about the level of public expenditure decreases and their implications for jobs losses, cuts in services and the impact on communities.

What was absent from the debate was a discussion of increasing tax revenues as an alternative to cuts. Everyone appreciated that the deficit needs to be reduced. There was some agreement, even across Benches, on some cuts, particularly with regard to ID cards and, perhaps, Trident. With regard to cuts in education and welfare

benefits, however, there were strong differences. We need to look again at tax avoidance and evasion. There has been confusion about definitions in previous debates. Tax evasion is defined closely as the illegal non-payment or under-payment of taxes, usually resulting from the making of false declarations, or from no declarations of taxes to tax authorities, and can result in legal penalties. Tax avoidance is seeking to minimise a tax bill without deliberate deception, but contrary to the spirit of the law.

Mr Jones: Does my hon. Friend agree that many people who will face the harsh effects of the proposed cuts will not be able to understand the difference between the two?

John McDonnell: The difference is clear with regard to legality and illegality. The technical implementation of tax legislation can be complex, so people can misunderstand which side of the fence they fall. During earlier debates in the House, the Denis Healey quote was cited that the difference is a prison wall. The implementation of measures to tackle tax evasion in particular is critical to the sound management of public finances and, obviously, to probity in the management of tax resources.

Mr Andrew Love (Edmonton) (Lab/Co-op): Does my hon. Friend agree that avoidance and evasion are the same to the extent that, in the context of both, it will take a motivated and full work force at HMRC to deliver the benefits that the Government supposedly seek?

4.45 pm

John McDonnell: I agree wholeheartedly. I shall say more about that shortly, because it is one of the issues that we raised—I think—four years ago at the time of the merger of the departments. We hoped at that stage for a more detailed report on personnel management and the number of staff who would be employed to deal with tax evasion in particular.

The fact that Her Majesty’s Treasury does not distinguish between evasion and avoidance in its global figures suggests that the Treasury itself finds the distinction difficult to define. I tried to find a clear Treasury quantification of what is generally described as the tax gap in order to draft an amendment that would have some purchase in the real world, especially the world of Treasury practice.

Lorely Burt (Solihull) (LD): I am interested in the discussion of avoidance and evasion, but does the hon. Gentleman not agree that neither problem has been improved by his own party’s complication of the tax rules, to the extent that ordinary people require a professional to help them to interpret those rules?

John McDonnell: Complication is certainly an issue. That is partly why I want the Chancellor to report to the House on the measures that will be used to tackle tax evasion and avoidance. We need a simplification of the process, but we also need to know how many staff the Government will employ for collection purposes.

Mr Love: I thank my hon. Friend for being so generous in giving way. Does he agree with the Institute for Fiscal Studies that the terms of the Budget are likely to make

[Mr Love]

the tax system more complicated, rather than introducing the simplicity that the Government claim is one of the objectives of their Budget?

John McDonnell: Let me say as objectively as I can that I have not yet seen a Budget that simplified the taxation system, and I have been here for 13 years. I live in hope, which is why my amendment requests a further report that might indicate the path that the Government intend to take. I am merely a humble seeker for truth in this matter, as always.

I investigated various sources in my search for estimates of the tax gap. The latest HMRC estimate that I could find was £40 billion, but there is an element of uncertainty reflected in a reported memorandum circulated to staff in HMRC and the wider Treasury, asking people to come up with ideas for identifying and calculating the gap.

The HMRC estimate has been challenged by others. I chair a group called the Left Economics Advisory Panel, which brings together a number of Left economists including some who have been working with the Tax Justice Campaign. Over the years many Members will have worked with Richard Murphy and John Christensen, who are held in respect across parties because of the work they have undertaken in this sphere, and the advice that they have given to the Treasury and other organisations for a number of years. According to their estimate over the past year, the tax gap could be anything between £70 billion and £120 billion.

Mr John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con): If the gap is so enormous, can the hon. Gentleman explain why 13 years of Labour government did not close it?

John McDonnell: I can only say that that is one of the reasons why I have raised the issue so consistently. I hope that some Government will address it, and will do so effectively. It is also why I have sought to amend the Bill in a consensual way. All I am asking is for the Treasury to produce a report setting out our best current estimate of the extent of avoidance and evasion, and to propose measures that the Government could take. That would be a way for the Government to demonstrate that they are taking the issue seriously and tackling it.

There have been other estimates of the tax gap that go beyond that of Richard Murphy, some of which are as high as £150 billion a year. Interestingly in respect of the Treasury's £40 billion figure, it estimated in a table it published earlier this year that corporation tax accounted for 16% of its tax gap and that capital gains tax along with national insurance contributions and so forth accounted for 6%, so the taxes this particular amendment addresses are significant contributors to the tax gap.

I fear that unless this issue is addressed we will continue to have a sterile debate in the House about cuts in public services, whereas if we tackled the tax gap we would avoid a significant amount of the public service cuts that will impact upon all our communities. I therefore urge that we have a serious debate and that the Treasury produces a report quantifying more exactly the levels of tax avoidance and tax evasion, and that we then look at possible measures—including, I agree, on simplification. Issues to do with what resources we apply to tackling tax evasion and avoidance are also of relevance, however, and that comes down to staffing.

Dr John Pugh (Southport) (LD): Should we not recognise that tax avoidance and tax evasion are two very different things, and that although we can make a rational guess as to the extent of the former, tax evasion that is successful is not detected at all and therefore any estimate of it must be highly speculative?

John McDonnell: I fully concur, which is why I think that HMRC must apply a lot more resources to tackling quantification. The estimates I have been given range widely from the £40 billion from the Treasury for both avoidance and evasion—its figures do not distinguish between them—to the £25 billion from the TUC solely for tax avoidance, to the higher estimates of anything between £70 billion and £150 billion for both evasion and avoidance. I know that Richard Murphy in particular has focused on evasion, which could account for anything between 40% and 60% of the budget deficit—the structural deficit as well—that this House has recently been debating, and dividing on almost unnecessarily it seems to me.

Andrew George (St Ives) (LD): I congratulate the hon. Gentleman both on raising the issue and on the manner in which he is doing so. He has made it clear that he has raised it under two Governments. Putting aside the tribal aspects of the debate, I agree that we need to bear down on this issue, and I have asked parliamentary questions on evasion and avoidance that are due for answer today. Does the hon. Gentleman agree that it is to be hoped that once we understand a great deal more about this issue, we will be able to close the loopholes, and address other issues such as where Treasury officials go and work after they leave the Treasury?

John McDonnell: I fully agree.

I have not included any reference to VAT, which is one of the largest areas of tax evasion and avoidance. Interestingly, it appears from the responses we have had over the years from the Treasury that it uses different methodologies to calculate the different forms of evasion and avoidance for particular taxes. I find that extremely confusing.

The amendment has been described as not tribalist. Well, I am a tribalist, but I am trying not to be on this issue; instead, I am being as consensus-seeking as I can be. Even though I come from a class-based politics, I am trying to come at this from a straightforward administrative perspective, asking how we can arrive at a situation in which HMRC will report to the House—to the Chancellor of the Exchequer—on the extent of evasion and avoidance and the measures that are going to be pursued. The reason why I am making a link to the changes in tax measures is that I want there to be a time limit, so that we get a report back to the House; otherwise, this situation will continue year after year.

This issue does relate to that of staffing, which I raised with the previous Government and am raising with this one. I chair the cross-party PCS trade union group in Parliament, which regularly meets PCS members who work in HMRC and who are tax inspectors. It is clear that they have performed an excellent service to our country over the years, and their productivity has been increasing year on year. However, over the past three years job cuts totalling 12,000 within HMRC have been announced that specifically affect staff involved in

tax generation. At a time when we are desperately trying to tackle the deficit through measures other than reductions in public expenditure and cuts in public services, we could do that by tackling tax evasion and tax avoidance. However, at the same time, we have the prospect of another 12,000 jobs being lost within HMRC.

Mr Redwood: If a constituent of the hon. Gentleman's had a deposit in a savings product that was paying interest, on which they were paying tax, and they switched that into a tax-free national savings product, would that be tax avoidance or sensible investment?

John McDonnell: That is an interesting point. Tax compliance should be a duty in law, so there should be a requirement on us all to pay our appropriate level of tax. Tax planning is perfectly consistent within the law and is appropriate for individuals and organisations in order to ensure that they pay the appropriate tax. However, such devices should not be used to avoid paying the rightful level of tax and certainly should not be used for the purposes of tax evasion, which is the illegal avoidance of tax.

As I was saying, my concern is that, just when we need staff to tackle tax evasion and avoidance, we are faced with the previous Government's plan for a further 12,000 job cuts within HMRC. I urge the new Government to review the matter and to look again at the staffing level that will be required if we are seriously to address tax evasion and avoidance. That is another reason why my amendment calls on the Chancellor of the Exchequer to lay before us a report that sets out the measures he proposes to take

"to ensure the payment of tax which is due".

In devising those measures, appropriate discussions will need to take place about the level of staffing and the qualifications and abilities required of such staff. Such factors will militate against the scale of job cuts that have taken place.

On another issue, but one that has certainly been close to the hearts of several Members over the past two years, such measures will need to take into account not just staffing levels but staff location. The closure in recent times of local tax offices has reduced HMRC's ability to respond to tax evasion and tax avoidance on the basis of local knowledge, and to assist local companies and individuals in proper tax planning so that they can comply with the law. I request that any report that the Chancellor introduces deal with the implications of the closure of local tax offices and, therefore, the appropriate location of the staff themselves.

I have tabled two amendments, the first of which, amendment 11, deals with corporation tax.

Mr Love: Does my hon. Friend agree that any such report dealing with HMRC must also deal with the difficulties that arose on the amalgamation of Revenue and Customs because of the very different cultures within those organisations? We really must address those difficulties, which still reverberate around the organisation, even at this late stage.

John McDonnell: I appreciate the point that my hon. Friend makes. I accept that there have been issues relating to a new department settling down over time, but I want to pay tribute to the staff involved for the

excellent job they have done in the set-up of the new organisation, for the flexible way they have worked and for the co-operation that has worked across past agencies as they have come together. I accept that that might be an issue and it could be referred to.

I will not repeat the same speech when we deal with amendment 12.

5 pm

Sajid Javid (Bromsgrove) (Con): May I say that there seems to be a big confusion between tax evasion and tax avoidance? The hon. Gentleman keeps referring to "avoidance and evasion" and treating them in almost exactly the same way. Clearly one of them, avoidance, is entirely legitimate—it is a basic human instinct for someone to try to hold on to more of their own money, which they have earned through their hard work—whereas the other, evasion, is an illegal activity. Would he not do well to focus on what might be the issue, rather than trying to confuse it?

John McDonnell: I understand the point that the hon. Gentleman is making. My amendment tackles tax evasion, which is clearly an illegal activity, but we need to address a wider issue that goes beyond the normal tax planning: tax avoidance beyond the spirit of the law. In previous debates, we have tried to insert into the tax laws of this country a general duty of tax compliance, which exists in other countries. Such an approach puts an onus—as a duty in law—on the individual to comply and to try to emphasise that duty, rather than to look for every possible means to avoid tax. There is a gradation in these matters, but I tackle both these things because they are both legitimate concerns in wider society and will become increasingly pressing ones as individuals experience the public expenditure cuts that will take place as we seek to tackle the deficit.

Stewart Hosie (Dundee East) (SNP): The hon. Gentleman is making his case extremely well, but surely he should be pushing at open door, given that the Red Book itself talks about changes

"to prevent avoidance of corporation tax using accounting 'derecognition' rules".

It also discusses tax avoidance involving "the creation" of certain things "for corporate investors", and mentions alternative investment funds, financial securities, inheritance tax on trusts and so on. There is also the possibility of a general anti-avoidance rule, as this is being considered informally by this Government as we speak.

John McDonnell: That is why I was hoping my amendment would achieve consensus in this House, although that might be a first for me. I was hoping that it went with the flow of Government policy, as well as with past Government policy, if not with past practice under successive Governments. A number of practices of tax avoidance clearly incur public opprobrium. The hon. Gentleman has cited a number that are listed in the Red Book, but there are others. These are seen as instances where people are not doing the right thing within the spirit of the law, which is why, no matter how difficult it can be at times, we can identify practices that fall within either tax evasion or tax avoidance by the practical response from the community.

[John McDonnell]

This is an issue whose time has come, particularly because of the current financial climate. There is clearly a concern among Members in all parts of the House about tax evasion and tax avoidance, and there will increasingly be concern about it in the wider community. Therefore, my simply asking for the Treasury to produce a report before this latest round of taxes are implemented—this would give an element of timetabling and immediacy to the proposals that will be introduced by the Treasury—is nothing but helpful and will be seen in the wider community as actually getting the Treasury to examine this issue with some seriousness in a way that may not have been happening under previous Administrations of all political parties. I cannot see how anybody could vote or argue against this, but I shall sit down and wait for the argument to come.

Several hon. Members *rose*—

The Chairman: I call Karl McCartney. May I just remind Members that this is a maiden speech?

Karl McCartney (Lincoln) (Con): Thank you, Mr Hoyle, in your role as Chairman of Ways and Means and as the House sits in Committee to consider the amendments to this Finance Bill, for allowing me the opportunity to make my first speech in the House.

I intend to comment on two matters of importance today: the amendments to the Finance Bill and Lincoln, the constituency that I have been elected to represent. Before I discuss either matter, however, I want to pause to pay tribute to my parents, John and Brenda McCartney, who are here in the Gallery, along with my wonderful wife, Cordelia. I am pleased that she is still here, as I am indebted to her for so much, not least our two sons, Henry and Freddie.

Let me now return to the Finance Bill. What concerns me most is the lack of support for long-term share ownership that is eminently displayed by the current capital gains tax regime, which, ironically, now seems to be based on principles that are at odds with how we are to treat banker bonuses whereby an increasing proportion of their compensation is compulsorily taken in shares of their employing parent company. That has the quite admirable aim of encouraging actions that have at their centre the long-term interests of the companies for which they work. This is commendable.

Less commendable is the loss of taper relief, which encourages long-term share ownership and investment. Surely many on both sides of the House see the retention of taper relief as desirable. Also less commendable is the loss of indexation relief. Following a change introduced by the previous Government, payers of capital gains tax will continue to be taxed on illusory gains. A simple example might help to explain my concern. Let us say that the average price for a pint of beer is £2.50. Instead of buying a pint, one could invest that £2.50. If inflation averages 7% per annum for five years and the investment keeps pace, the beer will have risen in price to £3.50, as will the value of the investment. The investor would therefore expect that the investment would still buy a pint, except that it would not, because 28% capital gains tax would have to be paid and the investment would therefore be worth only £2.50 net of tax. That is clearly

inequitable. Given the widespread acceptance that short-termism from investors is a problem faced by businesses up and down the country that are trying to attract capital for start-up funding, working capital and expansion, surely that is short-sighted.

I know that this matter is important to a number of people who are resident and work in the city of Lincoln. My fellow constituents are industrious and hard-working, and many of them either own their own business, want to start their own business or work for a small family-owned business. They know the importance of access to capital as an owner, a manager or an employee. Enabling measures that encourage investment is surely what this House should be about. What we have in place now enjoys the invidious merit of achieving the exact opposite and I hope that my senior colleagues will rethink these issues at the earliest opportunity. I know that we are where we are because of the utter mess bequeathed to us by Labour in the last Government, so I hope that as soon we have rebalanced the nation's finances, we can reverse these measures, if we cannot do so now.

Let me now say a few things about the history of Lincoln and some of the main issues that affect the constituency. I shall summarise my thoughts and areas of interest, as well as detailing my predecessors and the military links that the constituency enjoys.

It is a privilege and an honour to represent the constituency of Lincoln. When I first embarked on the long and arduous B-road to selection, reselection and election, I did not imagine that I would have the privilege of representing such an ancient, traditional and famous constituency as Lincoln. I aim to show my constituents that they chose wisely, as a Jedi might say.

Lincoln is not just another name in the list of 650 constituencies. It is a city that plays and will continue to play a pivotal role in our nation's democratic tradition. Naturally, I am proud to represent Lincoln and, as hon. Members might know, it is one of the oldest constituencies in the country. The Romans quartered a legion in the city and Edward III presided over a Parliament in our cathedral. The cathedral, which is one of the glories of English architecture, dominates the city and a large swathe of Lincolnshire. It is still as impressive today as when it stood as the tallest building in the world for 238 years—the only building in the UK ever to have held that title. If my Government ever feel the need, I am sure that Lincoln will be willing again to host a meeting of Parliament or of the Cabinet at a date of their choosing.

Although I am not an historian, I can safely reveal to hon. Members that the historical evidence for Parliaments before 1295 is quite patchy. Lincoln and York head the list of towns summoned to send Members in 1265 and, with the recent splitting of the city of York into two seats, it would seem that Worcester and Exeter appear alongside Lincoln in having a possible claim to being the oldest continuously existing borough constituencies.

Lincoln has so much more to commend it as a destination and as a place of history and worship than its two equally ancient constituencies. The cathedral is stunning and has proved a welcome sight and landmark for many travellers over the centuries and for our brave airmen in Bomber Command during the second world war. Lincoln is also home to one of only three existing original copies of the Magna Carta, the foundation of British, and therefore world, democracy. With our new

Government's plans for a great repeal Bill, we can see the relevance that the Magna Carta still has today, nearly 800 years after it was signed.

The city's MPs have included the redoubtable Dick Taverne, who continues to sit in the other House, and the right hon. Member for Derby South (Margaret Beckett), originally Miss Margaret Jackson in Lincoln, eventually Mrs Beckett. More recently, I am honoured to follow in the footsteps of the last Conservative Member for Lincolnshire, Sir Kenneth Carlisle, who served happily between 1979 and 1997 and for whom there is a mutual, deep affection for and from the city of Lincoln and its people. My direct predecessor was Gillian Merron, who worked hard for constituents and was incredibly photogenic, appearing in our current daily paper with regularity—something that I fear I will not be able to emulate, not least because many of my friends say I have the perfect face for radio.

The people of Lincoln and Lincolnshire are proud to be yellow-bellies—a hark back to the original Lincolnshire “Poachers” Regiment, which is now part of the Royal Anglian Regiment, some of whom I met earlier today out in Westminster yard. They serve us well abroad and in many fields of conflict, and I know that the people of Lincoln are immensely proud of them and all the armed services associated with our city, which is linked with the RAF and the Grenadier Guards.

As well as the city, my constituency covers the lovely villages of Skellingthorpe, Bracebridge Heath and Waddington, where the RAF is based. RAF Waddington is one of the busiest and most varied operational air bases in the United Kingdom, as well as one of the longest established. It has played an important role in the defence of the country and in supporting and servicing our armed forces. Soon, Waddington is due to become the home of the Red Arrows, who are another well-loved and appreciated aspect of Lincoln life as we are often treated to their practice sessions in the skies above our city.

Despite its wealth of attractions both historical and current, Lincoln has poor transport links that have worsened over recent years. There is now, unfortunately, only a post-election promise of one direct rail link to London and there are inadequate connections to other places. The A46 is soon to be dualled from Nottingham to Newark and the knock-on effect might be that the A46 single carriageway and roundabouts that plague our western, and only, bypass might cope even less well than they do now. The only other route is through the centre of our city, using the single carriageway A15 or negotiating our High street with its famous level crossing.

I am not aware of any other city in our country that is being held to ransom by Network Rail, which is currently threatening the city with the closure of that level crossing for up to 40 minutes in the hour throughout the day to allow freight trains that are of no benefit to Lincoln to pass through. Lincoln needs investment in its transport system that will provide a vital benefit to the long-term prosperity of both the city and the whole county, such as the east-west link road that is currently proposed. On all these transport issues, the Secretary of State for Transport and his Ministers can expect continued representations from me and my fellow Lincolnshire MPs, I am sure.

Many experiences, people and types of employment have shaped my life so far, and I am a great believer in

being the owner of one's destiny. If individuals feel that the world owes them a living, it does not, but if they are willing to believe in their own self-determination, there are no limits to what they can do. Many individuals from both sides of the House are testament to that philosophy. I now have the opportunity and ability to help to make decisions that affect our nation and to question and challenge them properly in the House, with, I hope, the important addition of compassion. It is a privilege to have that opportunity, in tandem with serving the kind and generous people of Lincoln, who did me such a great service in electing me to represent them in this traditional and great place. Doing my best for our city will be a major preoccupation of mine for as long or as short a time as the people of Lincoln allow me the privilege of representing them in this House.

5.15 pm

Mr Redwood: Let me start by saying a few words about my new hon. Friend the Member for Lincoln (Karl McCartney). I am sure that the House will join me in praising him for his speech and in wishing him every success now that he has joined us here. It is good to hear someone with a radio face with a passionate voice for his constituency. If he continues that, I am sure that his constituents will be well served. It was great to be reminded of the hugely important Lincoln cathedral, which many of us have visited and admired, and of the fact that Parliaments were once more peripatetic. In those days, there was probably less security and fewer people in the baggage train, so it was probably cheaper to take Parliament around the country than it would be today. I fear that he might have quite a long wait before the next Parliament at Lincoln.

We are here to debate tax avoidance and evasion. I listened carefully to the hon. Member for Hayes and Harlington (John McDonnell), but I think that the House is pursuing a will-o'-the-wisp if it seriously believes that there is £120 billion of tax evasion and avoidance generally, and that there is substantial tax evasion and avoidance in particular on corporation tax, which we are debating, that we can tackle and get the money in from. Every hon. Member would like to think that there is an easy way out of the financial crisis. If there were a great pot of money representing tax dodging that we could identify and bring into the Treasury, it would have been done by now. It is not a matter of party dispute. If there are tax evaders out there whom we know about, they need to be brought to book—we all agree with that. Labour spent 13 years trying to do it, but the hon. Gentleman does not think that it did it well enough, and is now urging the coalition Government to do it. The coalition Government will pursue it in similar ways, with similar intensity, to the outgoing Labour Government. I fear that they will be no more successful than the previous Government at finding that £120 billion pot of gold because, in all honesty, I do not think that it exists in the form that hon. Members wish that it did.

Let us take evasion—the more serious case. I am sure that everyone in the House agrees that if someone is deliberately evading tax, it is a criminal offence. The House has said that it is a serious offence, and made it a criminal offence, or series of criminal offences, and we wish to see those people pursued and prosecuted. In the case of corporation tax, for example, if a company deliberately misreports its income, and says that it receives less income than it earned—one way of misleading the

[Mr John Redwood]

tax authorities over corporation tax—the book should be straightened, the record corrected, and they should be prosecuted. If the company deliberately overstates its costs to try to suppress its profits—the other way in which people could evade corporation tax, if they were seeking to do so—that, too, should be something that the authorities can identify on investigation, leading to a correction of the accounts. False accounting would be involved, as well as the criminal offence of tax evasion, and there are methods of tackling it. The state has a range of powers, introduced by Governments of all persuasions, to allow company investigation, including second-guessing the audit, and going in if it is thought that crooked directors are misrepresenting their costs or revenues, and the auditors have missed it. I wish my right hon. and hon. Friends the Ministers in the Treasury every success in trying to capture genuine crooks, because we do not need them in our community, and we need to flush them out.

There is another kind of failure to pay the amount of tax that the corporation tax authorities think is correct which, in some people's language, could be evasion. A company may report honestly its revenues and costs, but comes to a different conclusion from the Revenue about what the taxable profit should be, given its income stream and costs. It attempts to understand the complexity of the law—it may well have its own tax advisers and auditors in support, because any medium or large company does not do this in isolation; the directors want the comfort of knowing that they have serious tax experts behind them, because of the complications of the law—and it makes its case to the Revenue, which disagrees with them. I do not think that that should be treated as a severe criminal offence leading to the imprisonment of the directors. What should usually happen—and what tends to happen—is a fierce of exchange of views between the Revenue, which is trying for one view of the tax, and the company and its tax advisers with a different view. Eventually, agreement is reached. If it is thought to be a bad case, the Revenue has the power to impose financial penalties as well as to secure the tax that it thinks that it is owed.

Clive Efford (Eltham) (Lab): I am interested in the right hon. Gentleman's train of thought, but will he clarify something? Is he saying that there is no such thing as avoidance of corporation tax, or is he saying that anything that comes about is just the result of a misunderstanding?

Mr Redwood: Has the hon. Gentleman been in the Chamber while I have been talking? The first part of my speech was about bad cases of evasion in which a company has deliberately misrepresented its financial condition. Like him, I think that those cases should be taken seriously, and prosecution should result. I am going on to the second set of cases, in which evasion is thought to have taken place according to the Revenue, but when we look at what is going on there is a genuine disagreement between one group of tax experts, lawyers and company advisers and another lot advising the Revenue, which sometimes needs to consult counsel on these complicated matters to try to reach a conclusion. Such cases are often sorted out slightly more amicably, and rightly so, because the companies concerned were

obviously not trying to do down the Revenue but to pay the minimum amount of tax to comply with the law, as most sensible people try to do, and there was a disagreement that had to be sorted out sensibly. That might result in financial penalties or in an agreement not to have financial penalties, but usually the Revenue has a certain amount of strength in having its way.

That is evasion, and then there is avoidance, which is much more problematic. I am sure that billions-worth of avoidance is going on all the time, because it is a perfectly legal approach; one man's avoidance is another man's sensible tax planning. That is why I asked the hon. Member for Hayes and Harlington for an example relating to personal income tax, which is easier for people listening in to this debate to understand. Many small savers switch from tax-paying savings to tax-free savings, which is avoidance of tax, is it not? They realise that they can do better by having a tax-exempt savings product; surely we should not condemn that, because it is about someone trying to get the most for their money. Indeed, that is something that the Government positively encourage. They encourage tax avoidance because they say, "We have the unique power to provide tax-exempt products for savings, and we want you to buy ours rather than the taxed private sector product."

Stephen Timms (East Ham) (Lab): My hon. Friend the Member for Eltham (Clive Efford) asked a telling question, and I am not sure what the right hon. Gentleman's answer is. The question is this: does he deprecate any tax avoidance, or is he saying that as long as it is strictly in compliance with the law, anything goes? As he knows, there have been some very ingenious, and indeed expensive, schemes used by companies to avoid paying tax, clearly contrary to the spirit of the law but arguably in compliance with the letter of the law. Does he not deprecate that kind of activity?

Mr Redwood: I do not want to get drawn into the moral issue of deprecating or not deprecating: what I am interested in is the efficiency of revenue collection and the clarity of the law for the people having to meet it. It is the job of this House to have a clear tax law that people have to follow, and we often have these debates to try to carry out that task. Sometimes tax law is so complicated, or people outside this House are so ingenious, that there are ways round it that I might disagree with and the right hon. Gentleman will often disagree with, and that is when we come back to legislate again. We say, "We haven't done our job well enough. People are avoiding tax more easily than we would like them to be able to, and so we're going to add another complication"—or sometimes even a simplification or clarification—"to the tax law to try to capture that." That is the job of this House. The shadow spokesman and I will sometimes agree that an avoidance scheme goes too far and we need to legislate to stop it; on other occasions, we will disagree. I will say, "That's perfectly rational tax planning—don't be such a party pooper", he will say, "I don't like people getting away with that kind of thing", and we will have our disagreements.

Mr Love: Given the thrust of the right hon. Gentleman's remarks, does he agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Hayes and Harlington (John McDonnell) that cutting the number of HMRC employees by 10,000 might not assist in the process that he is outlining of ensuring that those who take part in avoidance are brought to book?

Mr Redwood: It would clearly be a false economy to cut back on the number of staff needed to tackle serious cases of tax evasion; I do not think anybody wants to do that, and I certainly would not recommend it to Front Benchers. It would also be wrong, however, to exempt Revenue and Customs from pressure to improve efficiency and to do more with less at a time of enormous strictures on public spending. I hope that there will be ways to accommodate the hon. Gentleman's wish for us still to have Revenue and Customs pursuing tax evasion and our coming back to legislate on tax avoidance that it thinks is going too far, as we have under past Conservative and Labour Governments, and that that will be done efficiently and effectively in the way that we wish to see.

John McDonnell: To follow up on the question of my right hon. Friend the Member for East Ham (Stephen Timms), are there any measures that the right hon. Gentleman would consider tax avoidance that should be brought within the purview of Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, such as the large-scale offshoring mechanisms that corporations use to avoid tax? All that the amendment asks is for a report to be made about the measures that the Government will take on such issues.

Mr Redwood: I do not necessarily disagree about the need for us to consider another report on tax avoidance and evasion, but I am trying to set some of the parameters for that report and the framework of the debate. This is an opportunity to discuss why the matter is difficult, and why past Governments have not lived up to the hon. Gentleman's expectations. I have no problem with having a report, although I do not want to link it to the particular corporation tax rate in clause 1, as his amendment would.

John McDonnell: I am grateful for that response. Successive Governments have pragmatically examined the latest tax avoidance mechanisms and then sought to work through them systematically to address them. The amendment is intended simply to bring forward a report on those mechanisms so that the House can have more oversight of that process.

Mr Redwood: As the hon. Gentleman knows, I am all in favour of more oversight by this House, and the more informed a debate we can have about this and other issues the better. Public debate in Britain has been stifled in recent years for all sorts of political reasons that we need not go into. It is better if we can bring such debates out into the open, but we need collectively to think through what avoidance is and what evasion is. If we do not know that, we cannot hope to guess its scale or optimise our measures for dealing with the features of it that we do not like. I am trying to deal with avoidance, on which I believe there is more scope for disagreement than on evasion, which we are all against.

I return to the point that some people's avoidance is a bad practice and other people's is common sense. Let us take another example of a matter on which the Government encourage avoidance. I gave one from personal tax, but we ought to be concentrating on corporation tax. The previous Labour Government were keen to encourage avoidance of corporation tax because they wanted companies to invest—a perfectly worthy aim. They said to companies, "If you invest more than you otherwise would do, that is an allowance against your corporation tax so that you will be able to avoid some tax in order to

invest more." One debate that the Committee will have is whether this Government are cracking down too much on investment avoidance by removing some of that allowance and giving everybody the benefit of a lower rate. I hope that Opposition Members will see that they are not as pure as they think they are on avoidance, and that there are certain types of avoidance that they see as a very good thing. It is a well-known feature of many tax structures to encourage avoidance in order to encourage good works or change conduct.

Mark Tami (Alyn and Deeside) (Lab): The right hon. Gentleman talks about avoidance all the time, but is it not about the Government giving companies incentives to invest, rather than allowing them to avoid tax?

Mr Redwood: The hon. Gentleman has made my point beautifully. I have just said that one man's avoidance is another man's tax incentive—that is exactly the point that I am trying to make. There are good types of avoidance and bad types. Sometimes all the parties in the House agree that a certain type of avoidance is bad, and then it is in our own gift, because we are the legislature, to table business on any day to stop that tax avoidance in its tracks by changing legislation explicitly and clearly to send a signal. At other times we come together to legislate in favour of tax avoidance, because there are things that we wish to encourage. As he rightly says, sometimes the best thing to do is to give people a lower tax bill to encourage such procedures. That is surely encouragement of tax avoidance of a benign kind and a perfectly reasonable thing to do.

Mark Tami indicated dissent.

Mr Redwood: The hon. Gentleman shakes his head, but what else is it? Why are people investing more than they otherwise would have done? Because they are allowed to avoid tax and pay less tax than they otherwise would.

Stephen Timms: The right hon. Gentleman is uncharacteristically abusing the English language. To say that something that is explicitly provided for in the law is tax avoidance is not what most people mean by the term.

Mr Redwood: Fine—that is a very good linguistic point, and if the right hon. Gentleman wishes to define tax avoidance more narrowly as actions that we all disagree with, we can do that and it makes the debate much simpler. However, he has to understand that there are a series of grey areas, and it is not a black-and-white matter. There is not a set of actions that everybody agrees are tax avoidance and another set that everybody agrees are perfectly reasonable incentives or sensible ways of paying less tax.

Let us get on to the more difficult corporation tax cases, having dealt with the investment one—everybody in the House thinks that investment is a good thing and that corporations should therefore pay less tax one way or another, either through the rate of tax or through explicit relief.

5.30 pm

Let us consider overseas offshoring, which has already been mentioned. Multinational companies have some flexibility about where they invest, borrow and carry out their activities, and they regard the taxation regime

as one of the important considerations in determining all those matters. If it is benign, they are more inclined to borrow the money, put up the facilities and earn the full profits in the country concerned by carrying out the whole process and adding all the value. However, if the taxation regime is more hostile to enterprise, they might make different arrangements. Any country that takes part in the multinational free enterprise world has a choice. It must decide whether it wants to be tax friendly, in which case it has to allow people to pay rather less tax, or tax tough, in which case those who stay will end up paying more tax, but there will not be so many businesses here, and some will decide to offshore more of their activities.

Offshoring presents a difficult set of cases. I am sure that Opposition Members can find examples of offshoring that we would all regard as unacceptable avoidance, but much other offshoring represents simple, rational business decision making because the country being offshored against does not have a favourable tax regime, and that is why our decisions tonight and on other occasions when we try to settle the corporation tax regime are terribly important to whether our constituents get more jobs, whether our businesses make more money and whether more action will take place here. Companies have many footloose decisions that they can make about where to borrow, where to spend, where to invest, where to create jobs and how much value to add.

I see nothing wrong with more parliamentary accountability and scrutiny. If my hon. Friends have more capacity to produce a report on tax avoidance and evasion, it would be useful. I hope that my remarks have outlined some of the complexities of trying to determine the elements of avoidance that are to be condemned and about which we need to legislate more, and those that are simply common sense, or even tax promotion schemes, which the Government are producing.

I remind the House that I have recorded in the Register of Members' Financial Interests that I offer business advice to a global industrial company and to an investment company.

Clive Efford: I pay tribute to the hon. Member for Lincoln (Karl McCartney), who made his maiden speech. Many of us remember his predecessor with great fondness, and we certainly notice the difference in appearance to which he referred. She was a popular Member here, as I suspect that she was in her constituency. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will do an able job in his time as Member of Parliament for Lincoln.

The thrust of the argument of my hon. Friend the Member for Hayes and Harlington (John McDonnell) is that the House should be able to scrutinise the Government's actions on enforcement of corporation tax to avert some of the severe and harsh cuts elsewhere in public expenditure. The Red Book refers to the need to reduce all sorts of evasion. Indeed, paragraph 1.96 mentions the Government's measures on corporation tax, which a later group of amendments tackles, and states the need to alter the rate of corporation tax to reduce the avoidance of payment. A practice has been created of people avoiding other forms of tax and paying capital gains tax at a lower rate to minimise the amount that they pay in tax. I therefore agree with the thrust of the point that the right hon. Member for Wokingham (Mr Redwood) made that there are times

when we need to tweak the tax system to close down loopholes. In that sense, the tax system has historically been like turning a thermostat up and down. We introduce one set of regulations, that area overheats, the thermostat is turned down, another section of the tax system responds and people move in that direction to avoid paying tax.

With amendment 11, my hon. Friend is trying to ensure that the House can hold the Government to account for what they do to fulfil what they say in the Red Book, and thereby ensure that the Government maximise the amount of corporation tax that is paid.

Kwasi Kwarteng (Spelthorne) (Con): Will the hon. Gentleman clarify his basic position? Does he believe that in principle corporations ought to pay more tax than they are paying already?

Clive Efford: The point, on which I believe we are all in agreement, is that everyone should pay the tax that they are due to pay. Amendment 11 proposes not that corporation tax should be raised or reduced, but that it should be paid, that the Government ought to take action to ensure that companies that are liable to pay it do so, and that the House should have the role of providing a check and balance to ensure that the Government are carrying out that function.

Mr Love: Does my hon. Friend believe that there is a tax gap, as I think all Opposition Members do? Whether the gap is £40 billion, £60 billion or £100 billion, it is very significant, and we ought to turn our minds in this Budget to doing something about it.

Clive Efford: I could not agree more. If I were to start listing some of the harsher items in the Budget, such as the £1.9 billion that the Government are trying to take out of housing benefit or the overall £11 billion from the welfare budget, I would risk incurring your wrath, Mr Amess. I would also risk that if I were to point out some of the actions of the previous Government in relation to the medical tests that disability living allowance claimants were forced to go through. The coalition Government, supported by the Liberal Democrats, tell us that things will become even harsher for DLA claimants, so our discussion of minimising avoidance of corporation tax is absolutely relevant.

Stewart Hosie: May I ask the hon. Gentleman to put a number on that? What is his estimate of the value of lost revenue yield as a consequence of the 12,000 Revenue staff lost under the previous Labour Government?

Clive Efford: The hon. Gentleman makes a point that I could repeat. Cutbacks in Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs staff make more distant the target of maximising the amount of tax taken. He may have joined me on the odd occasion when I voted against the previous Government, so we have been on the same side of such arguments from time to time. Some of us are sinners turned saints, and even as a loyal Labour Back Bencher, I might agree with elements of the criticisms of the previous Government.

We have been given instruction in tautology on the question of avoidance and evasion, but we are quite clear that we are talking about people whose actions are

not within the rules. We need to ensure that action is taken so that they pay their fair share, because clearly, the increase in taxation—the VAT increase and other measures—and the cuts will hit the poorest in our communities first. That is why it is absolutely essential that we have discussions such as the one instigated by my hon. Friend the Member for Hayes and Harlington.

Mr George Mudie (Leeds East) (Lab): Does my hon. Friend agree that it would be a shame to let this debate go by without mentioning the activities of Barclays bank, and particularly its capital section? The head reputedly earned £90 million a year. We should consider that amount of money, because that group was set up to find ways for companies to avoid paying corporation tax, or indeed any tax.

Clive Efford: My hon. Friend's intervention needs no comment from me, other than to say that it is an excellent example of the sort of practices that we need to bear down on. We pay a plethora of accountants and financial advisers to advise on how to invest our money wisely, and that is a legitimate area of activity. It is right that people may order their finances within the rules to maximise their income, but if that becomes exploitation or unfair in terms of what people are contributing, we have to act. That is where the amendments that we have tabled on capital gains tax, which we will discuss later, come in.

The hon. Member for Dundee East (Stewart Hosie) mentioned the cut in tax staff, and if we are going to see substantial cuts in staff, it will make it even more difficult for HMRC staff to perform their task on whatever tax they are pursuing, be it corporation tax or any other.

The right hon. Member for Wokingham seemed to dismiss the issue of tax evasion, suggesting that we could pursue evaders until the cows came home, but they would never pay the tax so we would not be able to close the deficit by pursuing them. He then went on to talk about the difference between evasion and avoidance, rather than focusing on what we can do—as the people who scrutinise legislation—to ensure that the Government are delivering on their words in the Budget.

Mr Redwood: I wish to correct the record. I made it very clear that if a company were evading tax, we should throw the book at them and get the money back.

Clive Efford: My point is that that was the sum total of the right hon. Gentleman's contribution on that subject. He then elaborated on other issues. The point is that the thrust of the amendment is evasion—people working the system in a way that breaches the rules and means that they do not make the contributions that they should make. Those are the people we should bear down on. In my intervention in his speech, he accepted that there was such avoidance, and that those people should be dealt with. It is how we scrutinise that that we are discussing now. It is the function of this House to hold the Government to account, and the amendment asks for a report to Parliament on what exactly the Government are doing.

I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Hayes and Harlington on his amendment, and I look forward to hearing what the Government have to say in response.

Gavin Williamson (South Staffordshire) (Con): I shall try to be brief, as I was always told that brevity is a virtue. I am sure that many hon. Members will be brief in all their contributions this evening.

I pay tribute to my hon. Friend the Member for Lincoln (Karl McCartney), who painted such a stirring picture of the city of Lincoln that most hon. Members will be hotfooting it there at the weekend if their constituency duties allow.

I listened with great interest to the hon. Member for Hayes and Harlington (John McDonnell), especially when he said that in his 13 years as a Member of Parliament taxation had never been simplified. I suggest that that is because of the 13 years of Labour Government during his time in Parliament; that is why the taxation system has got so complicated. To reduce tax avoidance we need to ensure that we have a simple and plain tax system. It might be a difficult concept to accept, but the less tax we have to raise, the less chance there is of having tax avoidance. It is beautifully simple, but beautifully true.

5.45 pm

I honestly believe that the measures outlined in the Budget and the Bill will make an impact on encouraging all companies to pay their way, contributing the correct amount in their taxable allowances, thereby reducing avoidance. However, the simple reality is that we have had 13 years of incredibly complicated tax systems, which has acted as a massive disincentive for everyone to pay the tax that is due, because there have been too many opportunities to avoid tax. I believe that the measures taken will make a positive impact in setting that right.

Stewart Hosie: The case for a simple tax regime is well made. Had the Government abandoned capital allowances and the annual investment allowance, that would have been simpler, but instead they just reduced and changed them. Can the hon. Gentleman explain how that simplifies the tax code in the way that he has described, rather than otherwise?

Gavin Williamson: I am obviously far below the pay grade of my hon. Friends on the Front Bench, but I am sure that they have great plans to make the tax system much fairer and more equal, right across the board.

One important thing that my hon. Friends have done is reduce corporation tax, which will help so many businesses. Most importantly, they have helped small businesses—it is often small businesses that have had the most difficult time over the past few years—which is something that I warmly welcome.

Mr Love: On small businesses, is there not some concern that unincorporated individuals will now incorporate because of the reduction in the small business tax rate, which will cause avoidance by another route?

Gavin Williamson: The hon. Gentleman makes an interesting point, although more people becoming incorporated as limited companies will reduce the amount of tax avoidance from which people could perhaps benefit as sole traders.

Stephen Timms: I join others in congratulating the hon. Member for Lincoln (Karl McCartney) on his maiden speech. He launched some important claims on behalf of his constituents. I was interested in the case that he made for reintroducing indexation and taper relief on capital gains tax. I suspect that these debates will gain a new currency, given the increase in the rate of capital gains tax that the Bill introduces. I also welcome the evidence of independent thinking that he showed the Committee today, and I appreciate, as many will, his generous remarks about Gillian Merron, who was certainly a very popular Member of the House, as well as a popular feature in the local press in the hon. Gentleman's constituency.

I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Hayes and Harlington (John McDonnell) for raising this issue. He has done us a service by raising some important points. I do not agree with his criticism of the previous Government in that respect, as I shall explain, but it is right that we should have this debate in this part of our consideration of the Bill.

I enjoyed listening to what the hon. Member for South Staffordshire (Gavin Williamson) said a moment ago. What he was saying, I think, was that he was expecting the new Government to simplify the tax system. Well, maybe, although I do not think that there is much simplification in the Bill. In fact, there is a major new complication, as we will see when we come to clause 2. For the first time ever, the rate of capital gains tax is being changed in the middle of a year. That is a significant new complexity that the Bill introduces. Although I am touched by his faith, I suspect that he might find himself somewhat disappointed as time goes on.

My hon. Friend the Member for Hayes and Harlington was right to pay tribute to the work of Richard Murphy and the tax justice campaign. I want to pay particular tribute to Richard Murphy for developing, and first arguing for, the idea of country-by-country reporting. We are debating the avoidance, and indeed evasion, of corporation tax, and of course, that is a matter not only for the UK but for developing countries on a large scale as well. Richard Murphy was the first person to argue that companies should report, on a country-by-country basis, the profits that they make in each country and the tax that they pay in each country, so that everyone can see if there is a mismatch between the two.

The previous Government supported that call, and I am pleased that the OECD is taking the matter up. I think that we are now going to see some progress on that front, thanks to Richard's efforts. I note from his blog that he has been on the receiving end of some unwarranted online harassment recently on account of his work. I certainly wish him well in what he is doing. However, I am not entirely persuaded by his criticism, or that of my hon. Friend the Member for Hayes and Harlington, of the work of HMRC on the tax gap. As my hon. Friend rightly mentioned, however, it is inevitable that any estimates in this area will be uncertain because no one knows precisely what is being hidden from the tax authorities.

Narrowing the tax gap was an important priority for the previous Government, and I was grateful for the comments made by the hon. Member for Southport (Dr Pugh) and by the Minister in the debate on tax avoidance that was held in Westminster Hall on 14 June. In that debate, my hon. Friend the Member for Wallasey

(Ms Eagle) set out the key elements of the progress that the previous Government had made on tackling the problem of avoidance. One of the initiatives that we took was to propose a voluntary code of practice for the banks, and I hope that the Minister will be able to tell us more about this when he winds up the debate. My hon. Friend the Member for Leeds East (Mr Mudie) mentioned one of the banks a few moments ago. The idea was that banks would sign up to the code of practice and, in doing so, would agree to stick not only to the law on the payment of taxes but to the spirit of the law as well.

Having listened to the arguments put forward by the right hon. Member for Wokingham (Mr Redwood), I imagine that he would be opposed to that initiative, because he would feel that it should simply be a matter of asking, "Are you or are you not complying with the letter of the law?" and that, if a problem arose, the Government should legislate to close the loophole. The problem with that approach is that we can get into an arms race, as we have certainly done on many occasions, in which the Government and Parliament agree on changes to the law and everyone knows perfectly well what they mean, but the banks then commission ingenious accountants to find ways round the spirit of the law, even though the letter of the law is being complied with. If we were to stick with the approach for which the right hon. Gentleman is arguing, Parliament would then have to close the loophole, perhaps a year later, and the circle would continue to go round. He made an interesting case, but we have to find a way of breaking that vicious circle, because huge amounts of money are being spent by taxpayers and by HMRC, and, in the end, nobody benefits.

Mr Redwood: The right hon. Gentleman is quite right to say that there can be an arms race, but would he also acknowledge that, while quite a lot of companies accept that they need to pay a fair whack of tax, there are many judgments involved? Those companies seek advice on that judgment, but they do not always get the same advice as HMRC. It is not that they are all trying to cheat the taxpayer; these are complicated matters and a view needs to be taken on cost overhead allocation, transfer prices and so on. Judgments are reached and the Revenue disagrees, but these are judgment matters, and this subject is not easy to handle.

Stephen Timms: The right hon. Gentleman is absolutely right about that. I entirely accept that that often happens, but I hope that he will accept that there are also people who commission very highly paid accountants to find ways of getting round the law. Everyone involved in that practice knows perfectly well that they are going against the spirit of what Parliament intended, and that is the kind of damaging avoidance that we need to bear down on.

Kwasi Kwarteng: Clearly, we have laws, but people are also going to try to pay the minimum amount of tax that they can. That is an entirely rational thing for them to do. It is our job to frame the laws as simply as possible, so that there are no loopholes. As my hon. Friend the Member for South Staffordshire (Gavin Williamson) pointed out, because there is so much more complication in our tax system, there are far more opportunities for loopholes. Surely the way to tackle the

problem is to simplify the tax code, rather than pursuing people through the law courts or making the code even more complicated.

Stephen Timms: I am happy to subscribe to the view that the tax code should be as simple as possible, and I look forward to the new Government introducing measures along those lines. Simplicity is certainly a virtue, but, as I have said, those who are pressing for such measures might find that they have a rather longer wait than they would have liked. Let me also make it clear, in agreeing with my hon. Friend the Member for Hayes and Harlington, that there is absolutely nothing wrong with tax planning or with people ordering their affairs in a sensible way from a tax point of view.

Mr Mudie: I thank the Minister for giving way. I am sorry, I should have said “the shadow Minister”—old habits die hard. Does he recall that it was reported last year that the majority of the top 100 companies paid no tax whatever? That was not a matter of the tax system being complicated; it was a simple matter of their going to enormous lengths—working with the worst culprit, Barclays bank—to devise systems and work through offshore companies to avoid paying any tax. Do not Members on the Government Benches get angry that ordinary people work hard and pay their taxes while multinationals and other large companies go to extreme lengths to pay no tax whatever?

Stephen Timms: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. There are some flagrant examples of that, not least in the banking sector. Indeed, some of those examples were very well documented in the excellent series in *The Guardian* earlier this year. I would particularly welcome an update from the Minister on the progress of the voluntary code of practice for the banks, which could be an effective way of tackling the problem that he is dealing with.

Andrew George: Of course we all agree that we should seek the holy grail of a more simplified tax system, but what assessment did the right hon. Gentleman make of the announcement of 12,000 job cuts in HMRC, which we have discussed, and particularly of the breaking up of the compliance teams that were scrutinising the very areas of tax avoidance and tax evasion that we are now debating?

Stephen Timms: HMRC, for which I was responsible, has a very difficult task on its hands. I was persuaded, and remain convinced, of the case for HMRC being able to discharge its functions a good deal more efficiently in the future, thanks to the use of new systems and to a reorganisation into larger groups. In the past, HMRC was characterised by lots of offices with not very many people working in them. It is now clear that that was not very efficient or effective, and I think that the reorganisation will help. There is no escaping the fact that it has a tough job to do, but I think that it is setting about it in the right way.

The financial crisis since 2008 has led to a big shift in the approach to tax evasion and tax avoidance. Following the crisis, the previous Government made certain that the UK was at the forefront of the drive for change. Internationally, there was recognition that a lack of transparency in the international financial system had presented previously unrecognised but nevertheless

significant systemic threats to the global financial architecture, that those threats had to be dealt with and that progress had to be made quickly. In the forum of the G20 and in the aftermath of the credit crunch, good progress was made, but that momentum needs to be maintained. I hope that the Minister will set out for us today how he sees it being maintained.

6 pm

The previous Government measured the tax gap and published for the first time an assessment of it and a detailed breakdown of how it was made up. My hon. Friend the Member for Hayes and Harlington rightly referred to the £40 billion figure as the overall assessment, and a detailed breakdown of it was published at the time of the Budget in a document called “Measuring Tax Gaps”. I hope that the Minister will tell us that it is his and the Government’s intention to publish this assessment regularly, and I hope that my hon. Friend will be reassured by that.

The figure in that analysis for corporation tax as a contribution towards the overall £40 billion gap is £8.9 billion, which is 16% of the total corporation tax—a very significant contribution. Indeed, 16% is one of the largest of the direct tax losses, although it is not quite as much a loss as that from diesel duty in Northern Ireland or hand-rolled tobacco duty. Apart from those, however, the proportion of corporation tax not being collected is the largest of the taxes set out in the analysis.

Gavin Williamson: In 1997, we had the 11th lowest rate of corporation tax, whereas in 2010 we have only the 23rd lowest. Does the right hon. Gentleman believe that that might have some impact on corporation tax evasion?

Stephen Timms: I believe that it is important, as the previous Government made clear was their continuing intention, to have the lowest rate of corporation tax in the G7. That is why we reduced corporation tax when we were in government, and when we come to debate the rate, as we will in a few minutes’ time, I will press the Minister to reiterate on behalf of the present Government the commitment that was made and indeed fulfilled by the previous Government—to have a competitive corporation tax regime.

Gavin Williamson: When global companies are looking across the globe to where they should locate their headquarters, is the right hon. Gentleman not concerned that we slipped so far down the rankings under a Labour Government?

Stephen Timms: No, we were successful in maintaining a competitive business tax system in the UK. It is true, of course, that if a company goes to Ireland, it will pay a much lower rate of corporation than it would in the UK, but that rate of corporation tax in Ireland is lower than in any G7 country. Our commitment was to keep the UK’s corporation tax rate the lowest in the G7, and that is what we successfully did. It was important that we did so.

There is debate about whether the £40 billion figure is correct. I believe that HMRC did a serious and careful analysis. I also think there should be more discussion

[Stephen Timms]

with people like Richard Murphy. I believe his figure for the tax gap on corporation tax was about £12 billion—not vastly more than the £9 billion or so in the HMRC figure. Richard Murphy also makes the point that there is uncertainty—perhaps more uncertainty—about that figure than some of the others that he estimates. Continuing discussion between people such as the tax justice campaign and HMRC is important so that we make these figures as accurate as possible. I very much hope that the Minister will confirm that it is his intention regularly to update the analysis that has been published, to be frank and robust in publication and to discuss the issues with the tax justice campaign, which takes a different view, and the TUC, which has also taken a close interest. Ultimately, it is in everyone's interest to have the best possible information available. I hope that the Minister will reassure us on that.

Matthew Hancock (West Suffolk) (Con): The right hon. Gentleman has just admitted that since 1997, in respect of avoidance or evasion of corporation tax, the tax gap was reduced by only £3 billion. Does he not agree, then, that it is wrong to go around the country telling people that the entire deficit could be dealt with if we just got to grips with this one issue? It is, of course, important to get to grips with it, but it will not on its own resolve the deficit. Is it not wrong to tell people that it could?

Stephen Timms: I am sorry if I misled the hon. Gentleman into thinking that the figure was reduced by only £3 billion as result of the previous Government's efforts. I did not say that at all. I would be happy to go through in more detail the efforts of the previous Government on this issue, but the crucial initiative was the disclosure regime, which we introduced in 2004 to great howls of protest, yet it has undoubtedly saved many billions in tax that would otherwise not have been collected. The total figure is certainly a great deal more than £3 billion. As to whether addressing this problem could be the sole solution to the problem of the deficit, however, I agree that it could not.

Stewart Hosie: The shadow Minister makes a point about the success of the disclosure scheme. It has been successful, but does he now regret not implementing a pre-commencement validation system with the Revenue before such avoidance schemes were put in place rather than a post-commencement disclosure, when the money has to be clawed back through retrospective legislation? Is it not better to avoid any avoidance happening in the first place?

Stephen Timms: The hon. Gentleman, who knows a lot about these matters, is right that this is one of the subjects that will have to be considered in looking at a general anti-avoidance rule. The problem, I think, is HMRC having to respond quickly to potentially huge numbers of pre-clearance requests of that kind, which would be a massive additional burden. If I were in the Minister's shoes, before going down that road, I would press very hard for some cast-iron assurances on the part of HMRC that those clearances could be provided quickly. The problem is that a lot of new bureaucracy would be required.

Stewart Hosie: I understand the argument and I have heard it before—last year, in fact. I welcome what the shadow Minister is saying, but given the concept of promoters or introducers of these schemes—effectively a clear register of people who might engage in this kind of activity—might it not now be easier than it would have been even two or three years ago?

Stephen Timms: I think it would still be difficult, complex and cumbersome. A judgment will have to be made about whether it is the right thing to do—effectively, the benefit of reducing avoidance would have to be worth the additional complexity. I am sure that this debate is still to come.

The Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury (Mr David Gauke): Before responding to amendment 11, I would like to thank my hon. Friend the Member for Lincoln (Karl McCartney) for making his maiden speech earlier. He is rightly proud to represent that fine constituency, and I am sure that his constituency will be rightly proud of him. I hope he represents his constituency for many years to come. I will deal with the issues he raised about capital gains tax—as already noted, he shows great independence of mind on this point—when I respond to a later grouping of amendments.

I am very pleased to see the right hon. Member for East Ham (Stephen Timms) back at the Dispatch Box. It is good to see him returned here and I hope he is returning to good health. He is certainly a formidable person to face on the other side of the Dispatch Box, as he has great expertise and experience in this particular subject. He was a highly popular and effective Minister, performing the same role as I now perform. His are big shoes to fill and I am sure that there will be plenty of disagreements in the months ahead, but it is none the less a great pleasure to see the right hon. Gentleman back, well and in good form.

Amendment 11 seeks the publication of a report assessing corporation tax avoidance and evasion and setting out measures to ensure the payment of tax before the reduction in the main rate of corporation tax can be applied. The Government are committed to a competitive corporation tax rate, which will show that the UK is open for business and encourage growth. The amendment is narrowly focused on the role of evasion and avoidance, so I shall explain later and in more detail our reasons for the more general changes proposed.

Terminology was a large part of the debate on the matter. As we have heard, tax evasion occurs when someone acts against the law. Tax avoidance involves compliance with the letter but not the spirit of the law, and it is right that the Government seek to minimise that. Tax planning is a case of acting in both the spirit and the letter of the law. There is a distinction, although there will be occasions when the line is a little blurred.

The Government are committed to tackling robustly avoidance and evasion, which undermine the effectiveness of the tax system, distort competition and increase the burden of taxation on those who do comply with the spirit and letter of the law. The emergency Budget clearly sets out the Government's strategic approach to reducing tax avoidance and evasion. As a number of my hon. Friends have pointed out, some matters relate to how we make tax law, and to ensuring that tax law has as much clarity as possible. At the time of the

Budget, we produced a well-received publication setting out a more deliberative and consultative way to make tax law.

There is also a strong case for a more simplified tax code. Too many allowances and reliefs and too much complication within the tax system provide opportunity for tax avoidance, which we seek to address. We will address long-standing avoidance risks, and I have announced an informal consultation on the introduction of a general anti-avoidance rule. I appreciate that there are arguments on both sides, some of which we heard from the right hon. Member for East Ham. We will ensure that we make changes in the law in a way that prevents increasing complexity and reduces the need for frequent legislative revisions. We will also ensure that we build in sustainable defences against avoidance opportunities when undertaking policy reform. The Government have already closed specific loopholes to prevent the avoidance of corporation tax, and clauses 8 and 9 protect about £200 million of tax revenues per year.

The Government fully support the type of transparency for which the hon. Member for Hayes and Harlington (John McDonnell) calls in his amendment. As others have pointed out, that form of transparency already exists. The right hon. Member for East Ham pointed out that HMRC has published an assessment of corporation tax avoidance and evasion, although it deals with not just corporation tax but tax across the board. In December 2009, HMRC published the document, “Measuring Tax Gaps 2009”, which estimated the overall tax gaps across HMRC’s regimes for the first time. Alongside that statistical release, HMRC also published estimates of the tax gap by behaviour, including avoidance and evasion, as well as the actions being taken to reduce the gap. As we have heard, HMRC’s estimate for the tax gap as a whole is £40 billion, and the definition includes evasion and avoidance, debt and legal interpretation—as my right hon. Friend the Member for Wokingham (Mr Redwood) pointed out, there are sometimes disputes between two parties, both acting in good faith.

6.15 pm

HMRC estimates that corporation tax avoidance by large companies amounts to £3.4 billion, and that such avoidance by small companies amounts to £0.3 billion. We have heard a lot this afternoon about the TUC figures produced by Tax Research UK and by Mr Richard Murphy in particular. As I understand it, his figure for corporation tax avoidance is £12 billion. I note that the right hon. Member for East Ham disagrees with Mr Richard Murphy’s estimate of the tax gap. Mr Murphy’s calculations on corporation tax avoidance are on the basis of the gap between the statutory rate, which was 30% at the time of the assessment, and the effective rate, which was somewhat lower. That estimate does not take into account those reliefs and allowances that Parliament has determined should be available, for example capital allowances, to the extent that they are more generous than depreciation treatment would allow. Mr Murphy has acknowledged that point and is considering it further.

In addition, as far as we can see, no allowance is made for double taxation relief, which prevents a taxpayer from paying tax twice, in two different jurisdictions, for the same profits. The right hon. Member for East Ham referred to country-by-country reporting, and we continue to consider whether there is a practical way forward in

that regard. If we are to have country-by-country reporting, however, double taxation relief becomes all the more important. As far as I can see—if I am wrong, I am sure that Mr Murphy will correct me in his lively and entertaining blog, as he follows these matters closely—the Exchequer cost of double taxation relief is £16.7 billion. It is not clear that that is taken into account in the distinction between the statutory and effective rates. Such a top-down approach does not work for corporation tax.

There are other flaws in Mr Murphy’s methods. For example, he does not appear to take into account any tax recovered through HMRC’s compliance activity.

Mr Redwood: My hon. Friend reinforces my point: avoidance covers a variety of different things. In this case, it seems to cover conduct that a Government are trying to encourage, as well as conduct that a Government are trying to repress or stop. That is why the House needs a little more humility instead of rushing into saying, “There’s all this tax being avoided.” Some of it is being avoided for reasons that the previous Government approved of.

Mr Gauke: I am grateful to my right hon. Friend, who brings me to my next point.

The Government see the distinction between tax avoidance and tax planning, but those lines can be blurred, and sometimes use of the terminology is not as accurate as it might be. For example, I quote the “Missing Billions” report, produced for the TUC, which, after setting out a series of numbers leading towards the estimate for corporation tax avoidance, states:

“Much may be due to legitimate tax planning, but by no means all is. Some, undoubtedly, is due to tax avoidance.”

That seems to me to suggest a slight blurring of the lines. Again, I am sure that I will be corrected in Mr Murphy’s blog if I am wrong, but there does appear to be some confusion.

I am not suggesting that tax avoidance and tax evasion do not matter. The £40 billion figure is significant. However, it is also true that we cannot pretend that if we just address this problem, the deficit will go away. Although it is always tempting for a new Minister in a new Government to attack everything that happened before, I must point out—not purely out of fondness for my predecessor, the right hon. Member for East Ham—that, in international terms, £40 billion is not too bad as a percentage of tax revenue raised.

HMRC does not do particularly badly. Indeed, it tends to lead the field in this respect. Nor has it deteriorated during a period in which it has incurred substantial job losses, as a number of Members have pointed out. I believe that it employed 97,000 people in 2005, and the most recent figure is 69,000. It is a question of deploying resources as effectively and efficiently as possible.

None the less, to the extent that it is possible to go further in reducing evasion and avoidance, the Government are keen to do so, and I have set out some of the ways in which we intend to do so. I can tell the hon. Member for Hayes and Harlington that we already assess the amount of tax lost through avoidance and evasion, and that we are committed to reduce those losses as much as possible. We will also continue to publish the tax gap figures as frequently as possible, to provide a focus for HMRC and to ensure that our debate is well informed.

[Mr Gauke]

I hope that what I have said gives some reassurance to the hon. Member for Hayes and Harlington. Let me also remind the shadow Minister that HMRC introduced a banking code of practice in 2009, and HMRC's annual report will provide anonymised statistics on the number of banks that have adopted it. We believe that the code encourages banks not to enter into, or be party to, avoidance arrangements, but we will of course continue to monitor and review its operation.

John McDonnell: I am grateful for the Minister's assurance that information on the tax gap will continue to be published, but my amendment also deals with when it will be published, and asks for further information to be given on the measures that will be taken to tackle the problem.

Mr Gauke: The hon. Gentleman's points have been noted. Today's debate is the second on this matter in which I have taken part in my present post—the first was in Westminster Hall—and I am well aware that it is of considerable concern to Members on both sides of the House. It has also featured heavily in Treasury questions, which will take place again tomorrow. Who knows? There may be a question on this very subject then.

The hon. Gentleman is right to hold Ministers and HMRC to account in regard to how we seek to reduce the tax gap. The Government are taking the matter seriously, and, in the spirit of transparency in which we operate, we will provide as much information as we can so that our debate is as well informed as possible. In the light of that assurance, I hope the hon. Gentleman will accept that the amendment is not necessary and will withdraw it.

John McDonnell: I think that the debate has been helpful to Members on both sides of the Committee. An attempt has been made to get out of the trenches, and to engage in a wide-ranging discussion of how we can proceed in a pragmatic way. I believe that this will become one of the key issues that people will expect us to address as the economic crisis continues. If they see public expenditure cut so that their local schools are not refurbished, and if they see a tax on welfare benefits, they will expect us at least to maximise the revenue from the tax that people and organisations should be paying. Justice and fairness in the taxation system will become critically important to more and more people.

Some of the arguments that we have heard today have been very helpful, and at times they have been entertaining. I am fascinated by the concept that reducing taxation reduces evasion and avoidance: that is almost an argument for no taxation at all, although it may not gain much purchase in the House. We all accept the arguments about simplicity, but the problem with simplicity is that it makes loopholes possible, and we then need complexity to tackle the loopholes. It is a circular problem. However, it is a joint venture for us to try to ensure that the legislation that we draft is appropriately simple.

Kwasi Kwarteng: What was said was that simplicity aided the avoidance of loopholes, and that complexity led to more loopholes. The hon. Gentleman has just contradicted that.

John McDonnell: I was talking about what had been experienced in the past, but we can all sign up to the pious statement that we will achieve as much simplicity as possible. I merely say on the basis of practical experience in the House that, unfortunately, when we have sought simplicity, people have argued for further complexity to tackle the loopholes. However, we will all aim for simplicity, and the onus is on us to try to draft legislation in a way that achieves it.

I welcomed the Minister's statement about the continuation of, and consultation on, the commitment to the anti-avoidance rule, but I hoped that at some stage a future report from Government would enable us to engage in a wider debate on how we could install in legislation the duty to comply more simply and effectively. As my right hon. Friend the Member for East Ham (Stephen Timms) pointed out, the issue that arises time and again is the ingenious use of devices to avoid the spirit of the law. In other contexts, we draft legislation in such a way that when a device appears it can be seen to be a device, which is patently against the spirit of the legislation and whose effect can therefore be outlawed. I also welcomed the wider debate on the anti-avoidance principle to be installed in legislation.

This has been a helpful debate. I leave the Minister to the savagery of Richard Murphy's blog: I am sure that Mr Murphy will respond to each of the points that he raised. Let me make this point, however: whether the tax gap is £40 billion or £120 billion, when people out there are experiencing cuts in public services and reductions in their pensions and are having to work for longer, they will expect us to collect those taxes. The subtle distinctions between evasion and avoidance will be lost on them. They will expect the House of Commons to produce legislation ensuring that HMRC is sufficiently staffed and sufficiently resourced to bring in the tax, and to deal with the significant part of the deficit that we have identified in the past few weeks.

On the basis of the assurances that we have had from both Front Benches of co-operative working on this issue, I beg to ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Chris Leslie (Nottingham East) (Lab/Co-op): I beg to move amendment 21, page 1, line 6, at end add—

'(2) The main rate of corporation tax for financial year 2011 will remain at 28 per cent. on the profits of banking institutions as defined by section 2 of the Banking Act 2009.'

The Temporary Chairman (Mr David Amess): With this it will be convenient to discuss the following:

Amendment 34, page 1, line 6, at end add—

'(2) Prior to this rate taking effect, the Chancellor will place in the Library of the House of Commons an assessment of the impact of this clause on the banking sector.'

Amendment 50, page 1, line 6, at end add—

'(2) This section shall not come into force until the Treasury has laid before the House of Commons as assessment of the impact of this section on—

(a) the banking sector, and

(b) all other sectors to which corporation tax applies.'

Chris Leslie: My amendment is quite simple. It does not seek to alter the rate of corporation tax suggested in the Budget, except in one respect: it should not apply to

banks and banking institutions. Surely few issues can highlight the unfairness and injustice of the Government's Budget more effectively than the suggestion that, of all the sets of institutions that should benefit from more advantageous tax arrangements, the banks should be given such a windfall at such a time.

I was prompted to table the amendment by a flurry of reports that appeared immediately after the Budget statement, suggesting that the banks would be net beneficiaries. Deutsche Bank analysts were reported as saying that the Budget was a "good outcome for banks", and John-Paul Crutchley, an analyst at UBS, expected that Lloyds and HSBC would benefit by 2012 as a result of, particularly, the cut in corporation tax.

We must look at this measure in the context of the other Budget provisions. While the Finance Bill is, I suppose, substantial to a degree, it addresses only one short set of Budget measures that presumably will be brought before the House in different Bills at different times in the coming year, and it is a shame in a way that we will not get a chance to address this corporation tax measure in that wider context. I do not think any Members are opposed in principle to the banking levy that the Chancellor announced, although many might question whether it is tough and stringent enough.

Mr Kevan Jones: Does my hon. Friend agree that this cut will be unfair to small businesses in that while the major banks that got us into the financial mess two years ago will benefit from it, many small and medium-sized businesses will have to pay for it through the cut in the annual investment allowance from 2012?

Chris Leslie: Indeed, I think there is a set of unfairness issues that affect not only public services and our constituents, but business to business. Many small businesses will be incredulous at this giveaway to the banks, which are having their corporation tax cut. HSBC's own banking analysts agreed that they would be better off. One of them was quoted in the media as saying:

"We'd expect most domestically-orientated banks, for example Lloyds, to be better off after four years than they were pre-Budget."

Analysts at Redburn Partners said that Lloyds in particular would see a 3% rise in its earnings per share by 2012, especially as corporation tax is planned to be reduced to 24% over time. The measures in this Bill make only a 1% change in that tax from 28% to 27%, but as the years pass the banks' gains clearly will accrue and become even greater.

It was no coincidence that the share prices of some of our leading banks leapt after the Budget statement, even though, paradoxically, it included a banking levy that they supposedly feared. Lloyds shares gained 2.7% the morning after the Budget, and others were similarly jumping for joy. The *Daily Mail*—a journal of great repute—reported that a city insider was privately very happy, saying that

"some banks will have a feeling of glee at the way this has worked out. But none would be stupid enough to say anything openly."

It will be for the Minister to defend this measure of course, and I look forward to hearing him explain why, of all institutions, the banks deserve this windfall at this time.

The interplay between the banking levy and the impact of the corporation tax cuts must be at the heart of our considerations this afternoon, and I am glad that my

Front-Bench colleague my right hon. Friend the Member for East Ham (Stephen Timms) and the hon. Member for St Ives (Andrew George) have tabled amendments that also seek to probe that issue. My amendment would have the effect of not passing on the corporation tax cut, and theirs' would insist that at the very least the Treasury conduct a review of these matters.

My concern remains that the banking levy was set at far too low a rate—starting at 0.04% and rising to the heady heights of 0.07%. I gather that might even be about half the level at which the Americans set their banking levy. The notion that this was all done internationally at the same level is absolutely not the case. For some bizarre reason, the Chancellor really held back. He made great play of this levy in the Budget statement because he knows the general public are angry about the situation the banks have left in this country. They are furious that the banks were the source and cause of many of our national debt problems and the deficit we face today. I am glad that the Government say at page 26 of the Red Book that they will consult on the final details of the banking levy, and I urge the Minister to think carefully about how that levy will play in relation to the corporation tax reduction, because if the banks are gaining from that, it must be possible to ensure that they pay their fair share at some point.

Matthew Hancock: Does the hon. Gentleman regret his party's position before the last election, which was that we should not have a banking levy unless everywhere else in the world signed up to it? Does he therefore applaud the current Government's leadership in unilaterally putting forward a bank levy?

Chris Leslie: I may be wrong, but it is my recollection that a number of countries simultaneously came out with their banking levy arrangements, on the continent as well as America, and it was, of course, the natural point at which to introduce a banking levy. It is a matter of nuance whether we get a collection of large industrial countries to act simultaneously or we act on our own as a country, but I think it is necessary to have a banking levy that recoups all the payments that the banks took from our taxpayers.

Mr Kevan Jones: My hon. Friend refers to page 26 of the Red Book, which states at paragraph 1.63 that

"the Government will introduce a levy based on banks' balance sheets from 1 January 2011, intended to encourage banks to move to less risky funding profiles."

The paragraph concludes by saying:

"The levy will result in a rebalancing of the burden of taxation between banking and other sectors."

Does my hon. Friend agree that that actually supports his amendment, in the sense that we should not take decisions on the banks' corporation tax rates before this levy is introduced?

Chris Leslie: I could not agree more. It would not be in order to stray too far from the topic of corporation tax, but it is important that we see this change in context. It appears that the Chancellor press-released the fact that he was taking, in some brave measure, an amount of money from the banks through the banking

[Chris Leslie]

levy, but failed to publicise that he was also giving that back with the other hand through the reduction in the corporation tax rate.

We are talking about significant and serious amounts of money, and the Minister ought not to be so careless with this revenue as it is needed to repair our deficit and to protect our public services. I am very surprised that the Treasury did not take action to plug this loss of revenue, but chose instead to apply the reduction in corporation tax across the board.

We must not forget that the banks have already benefited from an enormous amount of largesse from the taxpayer more widely. The Royal Bank of Scotland and Lloyds Banking Group had £76 billion of their shares bought by the taxpayer. The Bank of England had to be indemnified against losses incurred in providing more than £200 billion of liquidity support. There have been guarantees of up to £250 billion of wholesale borrowing by the banks to strengthen liquidity. Also, £40 billion of loans and other funds were made to Bradford & Bingley and the Financial Services Compensation Scheme. There was insurance cover of more than £280 billion for bank assets as well. These changes were not unnecessary at the time; they were absolutely vital as a way of ensuring that our banking system—our credit system—did not collapse entirely.

Had the coalition parties been in power at that time they would have had to fulfil exactly those same commitments, assurances and undertakings to make sure that our banking system did not collapse. That is why it infuriates so many members of the public to hear Members on the Government Benches claiming that that was a partisan cause or that our spending such a large share of our national income on public services is the real cause of our deficit, when in fact responsibility lies squarely at the feet of our banking sector.

Mr Love: May I correct something my hon. Friend has said? Most of the measures the previous Government introduced to safeguard the financial system were in fact opposed at the time by the Conservative party, although it appears to have changed its mind. I also want to ask about the public concerns about the widespread reports from banking spokespersons in respect of this supposed levy. They are suggesting that there will be an opportunity during the consultation to weaken the legislation and reduce the amount of tax they pay. Does my hon. Friend deprecate such projects, and will he try to ensure that the Government stand firm against any such thing?

Chris Leslie: That is entirely so. Those with significant financial wherewithal—the corporate advisers, the consultants, the accountants—are always exceptionally adept at lobbying Ministers and making their points in their detailed ways, often with the general public entirely unaware that such measures are being put in place to their advantage. Clearly, the banks have been very aggressive in lobbying for these changes. It appears they may well have been successful in watering down the banking levy, while at the same time gaining benefit from this corporation tax change.

The Minister may argue, “Ah well, some of our banks made very significant losses in previous financial years, and because of the complexities of our corporation

tax law, companies have certain rights to recoup some of those losses from the corporation tax they paid previously.” In my view, the banks should also be excluded from making such claims—or at least, their ability to do so should be lessened. I was unable to frame my amendment in that way—that takes a certain level of drafting—but we must ensure that the Treasury does not allow the exceptionally clever and highly paid advisers whom the banks can employ to find their way round the provisions and take even more money from the taxpayer.

Mr Kevan Jones: Reference has already been made to Barclays, whose full-year profits increased, I understand, by 92% in 2009 to stand at some £11.6 billion. Does my hon. Friend agree that Barclays will also gain from what is now proposed?

Chris Leslie: That is especially true over the longer term, and, as I was saying, although clause 1 refers only to the financial year 2011-12, the Government clearly intend to go even further even faster.

There may well be a case for saying that all companies need to be treated the same and that it would be wrong to discriminate against a particular class, and the Minister may argue that there are other sets of corporations—large oil companies, the privatised utilities and so on—that the public would frown on if they regained a corporation tax benefit, for example. In my view, the public are getting wise to the cause of the reduction in public spending, some of which, naturally, is driven by Conservative party ideology. However, the reductions that are driven by the existence of the deficit are largely the result of the costs incurred in bailing out the banks and the subsequent recession. Because of the lack of credit available in the wider economy, we had fewer tax receipts. In fact, the real story of the deficit is not that we are spending so much on public services, but that tax receipts are considerably lower.

Ian Lucas (Wrexham) (Lab): Is my hon. Friend as confused as I am by the Government’s trumpeted aim of rebalancing the economy, while at the same time they introduce a corporation tax cut such as this, which favours companies across the board—from retail to banking—but not manufacturing? In fact, the capital allowances scheme actually penalises manufacturing companies. Does not the generality of the Government’s approach contradict their own headlines?

Chris Leslie: Indeed. This is a very perplexing set of Budget measures and if we have the chance to debate clause 1 stand part, there are a number of other questions we might want to probe the Minister on. For instance, why, inexplicably, are the reductions in the “small profits rate” of corporation tax not in the Bill? It seems that the Government are very adept at putting at the head of the queue the large institutions that will bleat and shout the loudest. It is incredible to me that the Government are giving priority to those institutions, which should be more contrite and should contribute a fair share. It is the concept of a fair share that eludes both the banks and the Government.

6.45 pm

Andrea Leadsom (South Northamptonshire) (Con): Is the hon. Gentleman confusing a healthy banking sector that can contribute to the regeneration of a healthy economy with the issue of banks paying bonuses?

I do not see what reducing the headline rate of tax that banks pay, which inevitably leads to healthier balance sheets and greater ability to lend to companies and is good for our economy, has to do with what I think he is talking about, which is the banks' payments to themselves. I see those two issues as being very different. Perhaps he can explain.

Chris Leslie: I am grateful to the hon. Lady who, I am sure, would have wanted to declare an interest had she been in her previous guise. I understand that she was previously employed in the banking industry, although I may be wrong and I do not want to disparage her in any way. However, it is important to know.

Andrea Leadsom: It was 10 years ago.

Chris Leslie: I just wanted to place the hon. Lady's comments in their particular context.

It is certainly true that the general public have a distaste for the excessive bonuses and remuneration of those in the banking industry, but such remuneration would not be possible were it not for the high profit rates that the banks were able to post and report on so many occasions. We are indeed all shareholders in many ways—either directly, or indirectly through our pension funds or as taxpayers—and Members on both sides of the House will hope that, over time, the banks will be returned to some level of normalcy. However, necessarily, they must not, as institutions, evade—or avoid; I want to use the correct parlance—paying their fair share.

Mr Kevan Jones: It is not just the general public who feel that way. On 20 April 2010, the now Deputy Prime Minister—I think he and his party are still one and the same—called bankers “reckless and greedy”, saying that they have been allowed to hold a gun to our heads.

Chris Leslie: My hon. Friend is right. Before the general election, there was a lot of tough talk and rhetoric from both Conservatives and Liberal Democrats. Indeed, *The Sun*—a journal of great repute—said on 20 March that the then Leader of the Opposition

“singled out the banking industry as one example of ‘vested interests’ he is determined to confront and who he accuses Prime Minister Gordon Brown of failing to stand up to. ‘We had the biggest bank bail-out in the world. We can’t just carry on as if nothing happened’”.

I am afraid we may well be carrying on as if nothing had happened, especially if the banking levy is offset by this giveaway in corporation tax.

Mr Jones: Let me add another example of the feeding frenzy. In December 2008, the current Prime Minister told Channel 4 that he wanted to see more senior bankers in prison.

Chris Leslie: I would not want to set the hare running across the City of London that the long arm of the law is necessarily about to grab them on the shoulder, but I understand the frustration and anger of the British public more widely, and all politicians in this House should be angry. While it is fun and games for the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats constantly to say, “Ah well, it was the Labour party that left us in this

predicament”, they know very well that the root cause was the greed and excess of the banking sector, which ought to pay its fair share.

Andrea Leadsom: The banking sector is far from being given a free ride by this Government. We are absolutely not going to allow it to get away with past transgressions—far from it. In fact, it is this Government who are going to restore banking supervision and lender-of-last-resort powers to the Bank of England. The tripartite system that Labour put in place, and which led to some of the failings of the banking system, was a key mistake. This Government are not going to ignore those issues. We also have a commission to look at competition, which is key, because we have to re-establish fair competition in our banking system and get rid of the tendency towards ever larger and more consolidated banks. I agree, in part, with the hon. Gentleman, in that we have to take the banking system seriously, we have to improve it and we absolutely have to make it more competitive. However, I do not agree that we should consider a differential rate of tax, as that is simply uncompetitive.

Chris Leslie: The hon. Lady makes her case. We can all, in hindsight, say that regulatory improvements should clearly have been made. The British Government could claim that work should have been done to ensure that that was the case in America, in every country in Europe and all the around the world. It is absolutely true to say that the whole worldwide banking system ought to have been more closely regulated, but that was the first time I have heard a Conservative Member defend the reduction in the corporation tax rate—that is the specific measure that we are discussing. There may be a need to debate the regulatory changes that should apply to the financial services industry—I look forward to those proposals being made—but I still do not understand her argument about anti-competitiveness. It is important to hear why the Government believe that the banks deserve this particular cut.

Mr Kevan Jones: The hon. Member for South Northamptonshire (Andrea Leadsom) has just said that we should not have a differential rate of tax, but may I again cite paragraph 1.63 on page 26 of the Red Book, which comments on the introduction of the banking levy? Its final sentence says:

“The levy will result in a rebalancing of the burden of taxation between banking and other sectors.”

Is that not exactly what we are going to see here?

Chris Leslie: Quite, and this is important. We could send a signal from this House that we, as politicians and representatives of the general public, believe that that particular industry has to pay back the cost it has left upon the shoulders of the general public. Is it not always the case that the general public—the ordinary working people—have to dig us out of the hole created by those affluent and comfortable individuals who work in the banking system?

Clive Efford: I am grateful to my hon. Friend, because his probing is uncovering who is winning the arguments on the Government Benches. The Liberal Democrats went into the election calling for a 10% levy on banks, but the outcome is that what has been raised in the levy

[Clive Efford]

has more than been compensated by the corporation tax cuts. We are seeing who is winning the arguments on the Government Benches on making the banks pay their fair share.

Chris Leslie: That is the case, and we have seen the glee with which the banking industry reacted after the Budget to this puny banking levy of less than 0.1% on the banks' profit and asset base.

Chris Heaton-Harris (Daventry) (Con): A few moments ago, you were talking about the banking industry that had received the "largesse" of the taxpayer, but your amendment deals with the whole banking industry, which includes those banks that did not come to the Exchequer asking for a bail-out. How do you differentiate between the two? Or are you quite happy just to nail the whole thing?

The Temporary Chair Order. It is "the hon. Gentleman", not "you".

Chris Heaton-Harris: I apologise, Mr Amess.

Chris Leslie: The hon. Gentleman makes a fair point. I have tried to define "banking institutions" by referring to the Banking Act 2009. I believe that I would thus exclude the building societies and other more mutual, co-operative institutions that I would not regard as being as culpable as the plc-based financial institutions. Irrespective of whether a particular bank received a direct sum from the taxpayer, all those banking institutions benefited from the implicit and implied safety net that the taxpayer provided. Were it not for that underwritten implicit guarantee, banks such as Barclays and others would have been in significant trouble. They may not have taken the handout themselves, but had the markets not felt that the Government of the day were prepared to act were they so requested or had it been necessary to do so, all those banking institutions would have been in an entirely different position.

Ian Lucas: I commend my hon. Friend's response, because he has just said exactly what I was going to say about the fact that the whole sector, including those organisations that did not receive direct investment from government, benefited from the decisive action taken by the then Labour Government, which, I repeat, was vociferously opposed by the Conservative party.

Chris Leslie: That is absolutely the case, and it perhaps betrays the enlightenment of Government Members on this particular issue. Each and every one of them who votes against my amendment, or even against the other amendments on the Order Paper, will need to go back to their constituents tonight and explain why they feel that the banking institutions deserve this handout. This is an incredibly important point and it is very useful to have the chance to debate it.

Mr Edward Timpson (Crewe and Nantwich) (Con): I have been considering the hon. Gentleman's amendment carefully and listening to what he has had to say. What I really need to hear from him is whether he has assessed its impact on the competitiveness of banking institutions in this country and on this country's competitiveness in terms of attracting banking institutions to the UK to

do their business? Without such an assessment it is difficult to know whether his amendment is going to do what I hope it would do.

Chris Leslie: I am delighted that that hon. Gentleman is thinking about supporting the amendment. That is incredibly important and a good step forward. I genuinely welcome his support this evening, because this could be a close-run thing. I have made an assessment, as far as I can as a humble Back Bencher. My assessment is that there are hundreds of millions of pounds at stake here that the banks could be gaining. However, I also support the amendments grouped together under this clause. We need the Treasury to undertake an urgent assessment. If the Minister says that he accepts the principle of my amendment but that he wants to do more work on it to get the details right, I would, like him, be happy to consider my position on pressing this amendment.

Matthew Hancock: Does the hon. Gentleman have any evidence to suggest that the reduction in corporation tax on banks would offset the £2.5 billion to be raised by the bank levy?

Chris Leslie: Yes I do, and at the outset of my comments, I quoted a series of highly professional and well-respected analysts from across the City of London. They were saying that this was a "good outcome", that there would be "a feeling of glee" about the Budget measures, and that they expected "most domestically-orientated banks...to be better off after four years".

It is important to remember that the £2.5 billion supposedly gained from the banking levy is obtained only as it progresses to years four or five. At the outset, it generates an exceptionally small amount of revenue—I believe the figure is less than £1 billion.

Matthew Hancock: Can the hon. Gentleman supply any evidence that the corporation tax cut is larger than the £2.5 billion to be raised by the bank levy, because none of the things that he read out was evidence of that?

Chris Leslie: If some analysts, who on the secondary evidence before me are saying publicly that they believe that the corporation tax—

Mr Kevan Jones: Cashback.

Chris Leslie: If they are saying that the corporation tax cashback, as my hon. Friend says, will offset the levy, perhaps by less than the banking levy or perhaps by more, then I think this would be wrong. It sounds as though the hon. Member for West Suffolk (Matthew Hancock) is defending the cashback arrangement that he wants to implement— [Interruption.] The hon. Gentleman says he is in favour of cutting the corporation tax rate for the banks. Government Members will vote that way. I am incredulous about that.

Mr Jones: Does my hon. Friend agree that that is completely at odds with the rhetoric we heard from both the Liberal Democrats and the Conservatives in the lead-up to the election? I hasten to add that the Conservatives went very quiet the nearer we got to election day.

7 pm

Chris Leslie: Indeed. I cannot keep track of the turns and U-turns, with so many permutations, that the Government go through or of the chameleon-like arrangements of some hon. Members. There are honourable ladies and gentlemen in all parties—even in the parties opposite—and I appeal to them to consider the amendments carefully. These are incredibly important suggestions. I have not yet heard a case in the interventions—except, perhaps, for the competitiveness argument, which I shall discuss in a moment—for why there should be a corporation tax windfall, this boon for our large banks. Perhaps I shall hear one from the hon. Lady.

Andrea Leadsom: I want to clarify. It is to all our benefit to have a healthy financial services sector. Obviously, all parties agreed, when we had the financial crisis, that we simply could not afford to see our banking system go into meltdown. There is no doubt that that is precisely what would have happened. Nevertheless, through the banking levy the Government are seeking to make the banks compensate the taxpayer for the undoubted support that they received. If there were a reduction in corporation tax alone with no offsetting bank levy, of course the Opposition could say that the banks were getting a free ride. However, the existence of a bank levy means that the banks are paying compensation to taxpayers for their largesse while at the same time ensuring that we retain a highly competitive financial services sector that can encourage and help our economy to recover.

Chris Leslie: I am interested in the hon. Lady's arguments. She is saying that it would be wrong for the banks to receive a corporation tax cut—that is an important concession—but that it is all right because they are paying the banking levy. As I reckon it, that puts them right back to the standstill that they were at in the first place. In other words, they would not be paying any more and there would be no reparations, as I see it, for the public at large. They would simply be standing still. It beggars belief that the Government, having talked tough before the election, are now going to give a free ride to the banks and offset some of the costs of the banking levy.

The hon. Lady mentioned earlier that there is, of course, the Government's independent commission on banking. I understand that the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills is a promoter of it and I would be interested to hear his views on whether we should give a corporation tax cut to the banks. He has gone from saint to axeman in a matter of weeks, but it is the impact on public services that we are worried about most of all.

As I was saying, it is the unfairness of this measure that strikes home most of all. People who are in a comfortable position are lecturing the world about the cuts to our public services that are needed. What really sticks in the craw is the statement, "We are all in it together", which hon. Members will have heard. Well, that is not the case for the banks. They are not in it with the rest of us.

It reminds me a little of the polite and well-spoken cat-burglar who sneaks in to one's home as a thief in the night and tries to purloin all sorts of goods and chattels but, when caught red-handed, explains, "No, I'm not

stealing from you. I'm just rearranging the furniture and decluttering the house." It is a grab of the worst possible kind—a grab on the public services on which the poorest in our community rely. The revenue from this measure and from reducing the corporation tax on the banks is needed by our vital public services. I hope that the Treasury will take the amendment seriously. The banks have not earned the right to this windfall. They do not deserve it and I commend the amendment to the Committee.

Vernon Coaker (Gedling) (Lab): On a point of order, Mr Amess. Has the Secretary of State for Education given you any indication that he wishes to come to the Chamber to explain some of the errors that have already come to light in his fifth list? Additionally, during questions this afternoon, the Secretary of State claimed that one individual had received more than £1 million in consultancy fees. The Department for Education has now admitted that that was £1.35 million of consultancy fees paid to KPMG as a whole over three years. Do you not think that the Secretary of State should be coming to this Chamber and have you had any word from him that he wishes to do so?

The Temporary Chair: I have listened very carefully to what the hon. Gentleman has said, but I am afraid that the point of order is of no relevance to the Committee stage of the Finance Bill.

Andrew George: I want to speak in support of amendment 50, which is tabled in my name and those of my colleagues. I congratulate the hon. Member for Nottingham East (Chris Leslie) on the manner in which he proposed his amendment. The broad thrust of the case that he seeks to probe and possibly to press to a vote later on—we do not know—is, I think, worthy of being probed. The House should obtain a great deal more information on the issue before we make a decision.

I have asked a large number of parliamentary questions on the subject and, more particularly, on the banking levy and the basis on which assessments have been made to set that proposed levy at the level at which it will be set. It is rather frustrating for many of us who wish to engage in the debate on corporation tax and to cross-reference it with the banking levy that both measures are not contained in the Bill. I understand, of course, that there will be a consultation on the banking levy before its implementation in January, and I am sure that the Minister will say that they could not both be contained in the Bill because it was proposed that the arrangements would be undertaken in such a manner. However, leaving aside the politics of the issue, the broad thrust of the argument, on which I understood that all parties were agreed, is that when we came to set the first Budget after the general election, those who dropped this country in it and caused the public finances to be in such a serious state would do most to help us to get out of it and to help to restore our public finances. We should be looking to those sectors that are most culpable to make the greatest contribution.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer was absolutely right to conclude that what we should seek to achieve in the Budget is that those who can afford it most should contribute most, with the vulnerable protected. Although I do not want to return to a Second Reading-type

[Andrew George]

debate and to relate this measure to all the other measures and to the public spending re-profiling or cuts that are due in the autumn, on which we are to get more detail, that is the context in which this issue has to be considered.

Amendment 50 is remarkably similar to amendment 34, tabled by the right hon. Member for East Ham (Stephen Timms). I tabled amendment 50 because we need to probe and fully understand the likely impact of the banking levy and the corporation tax cut on the banking sector. We need a better assessment of that. It was interesting that the hon. Member for Nottingham East, in response to proper and reasonable questions about the relationship between the impact of the bank levy, as opposed to that of the corporation tax cut, on the banking sector was unable to give a quantifiable answer. That is because the Treasury do not provide one. In the responses to the questions that I have asked on the issue, that relationship has not been clear. That is why it would be better for us to say honestly that if we are properly going to come to a measured conclusion, it would be far better to have the best possible estimates of the likely impact of both measures beforehand, so that we can measure one against the other and make a proper, balanced and reasonable assessment of the impact at the end of the process.

I do not wish to delve into the party politics of what people said and did not say prior to the election, although that adds to the excitement and interest in this Chamber, but the Business Secretary, my right hon. Friend the Member for Twickenham (Vince Cable), was right in predicting a lot of what needed to happen and in encouraging the then Government to take the action that they ultimately took on Northern Rock and in relation to other interventions. The hon. Gentleman was wrong to place the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats together in the previous Parliament as taking the same line on the issue. As a candidate in the last general election, I was particularly keen that we went into it seeking to ensure that the banking sector made a significant contribution to restoring the public finances. I was looking forward to that, and I was very pleased to see the banking levy in the Budget, along with a large number of other measures, such as raising personal allowance and the pension guarantee; the Liberal Democrats were pleased to see those. The hon. Gentleman is right, however, that one thing that came out the day after the Budget was the sense that the banking sector was breathing a sigh of relief.

Clive Efford: I apologise to the hon. Gentleman in advance for going back to what was said during the general election, but it is important in this context. The Liberal Democrats said that they were in favour of a banking levy, as he has just said, but they went further and said that it would be in addition to corporation tax. What we are debating is corporation tax that compensates the banks for the levy, cancelling it out. How can he possibly defend that position?

Andrew George: I am a free-ranging Liberal Democrat Back Bencher and I am quite clear that I want to probe this issue. I tabled my amendment because I want to ensure that we have the facts before we make what I hope will be a balanced decision on this important issue. If the hon. Gentleman does not mind, I will sidestep the tribal arguments.

Geraint Davies (Swansea West) (Lab/Co-op): The hon. Gentleman will be aware that there is a banking levy in the United States. Does he agree that if the banking levy in Britain is offset by the corporation tax reduction, our marketplace will reward bad bankers and encourage them to migrate here? At a time when the rhetoric is about creating a non-financial economy and building new strengths into the economy, we will be encouraging bad practice by rewarding bankers during the horrendous aftermath of what we have all had to witness, the costs of which are being paid by people across the country.

Andrew George: The hon. Gentleman's point is, in a way, a development of an argument that was made earlier, when he was not here, regarding the contrast between the proposed level of the banking levy in the UK and that in the US. That potential osmosis of banking activity and investment may or may not happen. The hon. Member for South Northamptonshire (Andrea Leadsom) argued that having differential rates of corporation tax would be anti-competitive, but, at the same time, Members on the Government Benches are arguing for differential rates in the sense that the banking levy differentiates between the banking sector and all other sectors. One of the purposes of my amendment is to probe the issue further.

7.15 pm

It is often only one, two or three days, or possibly even a week, after the Budget announcement that people finally get the opportunity to scrutinise the Red Book and consider the issues and what the financial press have been saying. I have to say that after the Budget, my initial euphoria at the announcement of the banking levy was somewhat dampened when I looked into matters further. On 8 July I received an answer from the Financial Secretary to the Treasury to six questions that I had asked. Among other things, I asked about the discussions that the Treasury had had on this issue; the research that it had commissioned on the impact; the modelling it had done; the criteria that were used to determine the proposed rate of the banking levy; and the estimates that the Department had made of the revenue that would accrue to the Exchequer if the bank levy were set at various incremental rates from 0.05% to 0.15% over the forthcoming period. However, not much information is available in that regard. The Financial Secretary's reply states:

"No external research was commissioned in respect of the bank levy prior to the financial statement. The proposed rate reflects the risks posed by the banking sector to the financial system and wider economy, whilst taking account of current economic circumstances and the UK's competitive position."

His answer also cites the Treasury's costings that were published alongside the Budget and adds:

"No quantitative estimates have been made of the differential behavioural effects of setting the levy at these other rates. An impact assessment will be published alongside the forthcoming consultation document."—[*Official Report*, 8 July 2010; Vol. 513, c. 412-13W.]

Page 19 of the costings document addresses the post-behavioural yield of the banking levy. It states:

"The key behavioural changes that we have assumed will impact on the yield forecasts beyond the pre-behavioural effects are: a reduction in the tax base as a result of the potential incentive for banks to remove liabilities from the levy base; a further switch towards longer-term funding at a similar magnitude

to pre-behavioural estimates; the levy will further reinforce existing incentives for banks to increase their capital positions in anticipation of expected regulatory reforms...in terms of avoidance behaviour we have assumed avoidance activity will decrease the yield by 5 per cent in each year of operation. This assumption is made to allow for appropriate margin in the public finances and does not represent an official estimate of avoidance.”

That goes back to an earlier debate. So, despite my having probed this matter by asking a number of questions, we do not have any clear answers on the balancing effects of the reduction in corporation tax against the banking levy.

Ian Lucas: I commend the hon. Gentleman on tabling the amendment, but will he clarify the reference to “all other sectors to which corporation tax applies”?

Does he think it would be helpful if that assessment took into account, for example, the effect of the reduction in capital allowances when making judgments about whether that is a wise course to take?

Andrew George: I am not sure that I am qualified to advise, but I am sure that the hon. Gentleman is right. If the Treasury could be encouraged to adopt this approach, I hope that it would at least ensure that it was sufficiently free-ranging to deal with any of the consequential behavioural activities that might arise as a result of such proposals.

Mr Kevan Jones: Although we are rewarding the banking sector, the proposals on annual investment allowances, which are cut in the Budget from £100,000 to £25,000, will directly affect many small and medium-sized businesses. Surely it is wrong that we are rewarding the people who got us into this mess in the first place, but penalising small businesses, which are getting a double whammy, because they are penalised by the lack of lending from the very institutions that we are rewarding.

Andrew George: Opposition spokesmen and the Treasury Ministers will have heard that intervention, which further embellishes the point that the hon. Gentleman wishes to make. I have no further comments to add, and I look forward to the Minister’s response.

Mr Kevan Jones: It is a pleasure to follow the hon. Member for St Ives (Andrew George), who has become a rather lonely figure on the Government Benches. Last week, he was the only Liberal Democrat who was not defending the indefensible, for which I pay him credit. At least he is prepared to come to the Chamber and argue against the measures in the Budget that will affect his very poor community in Cornwall, unlike some of his colleagues, who make comments in the press, but are absent from debates on the Finance Bill. I hope that on at least one or two occasions he will join us in the Lobby to stop the effects of the measure on his constituents and mine, although I know that he feels uncomfortable about voting against the coalition.

In 2008, in the run-up to the general election, bashing the bankers was something that everyone wanted to do. It is strange that we now have a Finance Bill that will reward them. There has been a change in the past few months from the stance that the Deputy Prime Minister adopted on 20 April, when he described bankers as “reckless and greedy” and holding

“a gun to the head”

of the country.

I support the amendment tabled by my hon. Friend the Member for Nottingham East (Chris Leslie) and by my right hon. Friend the Member for East Ham (Stephen Timms), and the amendment tabled by the hon. Member for St Ives. I wish to deal with the effect on other sectors, which that amendment raises. We have discussed the banking sector a great deal, but it is important to look at other sectors, too. There has been a feeding frenzy, which suggested more or less that the previous Government got things wrong, and that we should be penalising the banking sector. That view was reinforced by the Prime Minister himself who, when he was in opposition, said on Channel 4 in December 2008 that “more senior bankers should be sent to prison.”

On another occasion, he should that they should do voluntary work rather than earn large bonuses in the City. The Conservative party went very quiet at the election, possibly because, as the Deputy Prime Minister said—and I agree with him—it is

“completely in hock to the City”.

We have seen that position defended tonight.

A number of banks have clearly made huge profits. Barclays, as has been mentioned, had a 92% increase in profits in 2009, and stand at £11.6 billion. The Royal Bank of Scotland—remember them?—paid its investment bankers £1.3 billion in bonuses, despite making just £1 billion in profit. Lloyds has made a profit of up to £1 billion. The proposals in the Finance Bill to reduce corporation tax rewards the banks for the mess they got us into, and do not acknowledge the fact that the individuals in question have been carrying on regardless, even though, as several hon. Members have said, the people who have suffered will have their services cut. The members of the public who are the victims are somehow to blame for the financial mess that we are in.

I do not understand how—well, I can, because they are called Conservatives—in the lead-up to the election, people can speak tough words against the banking sector, but one of the first things they do is to reduce corporation tax and reward the individuals who got us into the mess in the first place. Those same Conservatives—this was raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Nottingham East—opposed all the measures that we took not only to ensure that the banking sector did not collapse but to protect the British economy.

Chris Leslie: My hon. Friend is making an extremely strong case for the amendments. Is it not the case that the Government absolutely have to try their best to pin the deficit on the Labour party, rather than, correctly, on the banking sector? If they took the latter course of action, they would have to increase the banking levy and would not make these changes to corporation tax. They are clearly not prepared to see justice done to those truly responsible for the situation we are in.

Mr Jones: That is true. The Government’s drive to reduce public spending has very little to do with reducing the deficit. It is more an ideological move to reduce the size of the state. Unfortunately, like a boa constrictor, they have wrapped themselves round the Liberal Democrats, and will slowly squeeze the life out of them in the coming weeks, months and years. That is dawning on the hon. Member for St Ives, who does not want to be the mouse that gets squeezed at the end of the day. Let us hope that he will escape the clutches of the boa

[Mr Kevan Jones]

constrictor, which is slowly strangling the lifeblood from the modern Liberal Democrat party. I should not be too sympathetic to the Liberal Democrats, however, because I have spent a lifetime opposing them both in local government and nationally, so their demise might not be an unwelcome consequence of that strategy.

My hon. Friend the Member for Nottingham East has tabled an amendment that suggests that there should be a 28% tax on the profits of the banking industry, as defined by section 2 of the Banking Act 2009. The reason for that is supported very well in the Red Book. Paragraph 1.63 on page 26, which is entitled “Bank levy” says that

“the Government will introduce a levy based on banks’ balance sheets from 1 January 2011, intended to encourage the banks to move to less risky funding profiles. The Government believes that the banks should make a fair contribution in respect of the potential risks they pose to the UK financial system and wider economy. Final details of the levy will be published later this year, following consultation. The levy will result in a rebalancing of the burden of taxation between banking and other sectors.”

We have seen a very strange Finance Bill this year, with a very short preamble to be followed later by major changes. If we are going to have a major change which, in the Government’s own words, is going to rebalance “the burden of taxation between banking and other sectors”,

I cannot understand why they are allowing the reduction in corporation tax for this year to apply to the banking sector. To me, it would seem right to wait for whatever the banking levy comes up with. That fits in very well with what my hon. Friend the Member for Nottingham East is proposing.

7.30 pm

When people who are going to face higher rates of VAT and other taxation realise that this money is going to be given to the banking sector, they will find it very difficult to understand. Earlier, it was said that the banks will not get back all the money taken off them by the levy—no, but they will get a large portion of it back. [Interruption.] I will give way to the hon. Member for West Suffolk (Matthew Hancock) if he wants to intervene. Is he suggesting that they should get the money back pound for pound? If we are talking about rebalancing, it is not much of a rebalancing act to take money away from them at one point and give the majority of it back through the back door.

Matthew Hancock: I thank the hon. Gentleman for inviting me to intervene. He has just admitted something that the hon. Member for Nottingham East (Chris Leslie) could not deny, but did not admit. After this Budget, because of the banking levy, the banks will be paying more tax relative to other sectors of the economy, and that is stated on page 26 of the Red Book. I am very grateful for that important admission.

Mr Jones: No, I am sorry, we do not admit that. I am not sure what point the hon. Gentleman is trying to make or whether when he went into the general election in May, he had on his election leaflets, “Yes, we will be tough on banks for the rhetoric in the lead-up to the election, but if we get into power we will do a con trick where we take the money with one hand and gave it back with the other.” If, as the hon. Member for St Ives said, we do not know what the figures are, that makes it

worse. We are asking the public to take severe cuts in public services and higher taxation, while at the same time the people who are still being paid high bonuses will get money back. That was reflected in a comment made earlier about the increase in bank share prices that took place once the Budget had been announced.

Clive Efford: To correct the hon. Member for West Suffolk (Matthew Hancock), it is just not true to say that the banks are going to pay more. Deutsche Bank has said:

“Taking 2% off the 2012 tax rate for the five banks listed in the UK would increase profit by £1.16bn, that is it should almost offset all of the banks tax. Overall a good outcome for the banks.”

Similarly, HSBC said:

“We’d expect most domestically-orientated banks, for example Lloyds, to be better off after four years than they were pre-budget”.

Mr Jones: I am grateful for my hon. Friend’s intervention, which completely blows a hole in the myth that this coalition Government are somehow being tough with the banking sector. Not for the first time, we are seeing rhetoric overtaking reality. The spin and presentation that is the hallmark of the Prime Minister is clearly catching up with him now he is in power and able to help his friends in the financial sector.

This policy also has an effect in terms of the banking sector itself, because the banks that are being rewarded are the ones that got us into the mess in the first place. Most people will rightly be horrified by that prospect.

Ian Lucas: Does my hon. Friend agree that what makes it even worse is the fact that the banks are still not lending? We all have examples in our constituencies of businesses that have good business cases but are not securing the lending from these banks that are making massive profits.

Mr Jones: That is a good point. We have heard about banking codes and other ways of forcing the banks into lending, but many small and medium-sized enterprises will be paying for this. They are facing a double whammy, because they are paying for it not only through the reduction in investment allowances but, as my hon. Friend rightly says, through not getting access to the lifeblood of working capital that they need.

That brings me to what the hon. Member for St Ives said about other sectors. Amendment 50 says:

“This section shall not come into force until the Treasury has laid before the House of Commons an assessment of the impact of this section on—

(a) the banking sector, and

(b) all other sectors to which corporation tax applies.”

That makes an important point about how this cut in corporation tax is being paid for—that is, through the reduction of the annual investment allowances, which from 2010 will fall from £100,000 to £25,000. That will affect a lot of SMEs in the manufacturing sector. One need only look at some of the comments that were made on Budget day. The Engineering Employers Federation, representing manufacturers, said:

“Reducing the corporation tax rate over time was in principle the right course of action. But financing it, in part, by cuts to investment allowances will be a heavy price to pay, especially for smaller companies. It might be a positive signal for large companies, but not for their suppliers.”

That reflects a key point made in the amendment—the need to look at the effects on other sectors of the economy and how they are paying for this.

Even members of the coalition are feeling some concern about the corporation tax plans. The Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills signalled a recognition that they could hinder the interests of British industry when he said in the *Financial Times* on 14 May:

“The one thing I would want to make sure is that the productive parts of the British economy are helped and not hindered by corporation tax changes...I will certainly make an input to the debate defending the interests of British industry and making sure there are proper incentives to invest.”

We are now seeing this time and again in policy areas. The Liberal Democrats can protest all they wish, but they are being overruled on every single occasion, and this is clearly another example of that happening.

The Institute for Fiscal Studies and the EEF have both criticised the Government for reducing investment and capital allowances. The IFS's post-Budget briefing on business and capital taxes dated 23 June said:

“Biggest benefits go to low-investment, high-profit firms—banks and supermarkets rather than manufacturers”.

The Budget talked about rejigging the economy away from the public sector and the banking sector into manufacturing, but this will not assist the manufacturing sector in any way at all. One can add to that the pressures that are resulting locally from the abolition of the regional development agencies and the nonsense that is going on with the freezing of grants for business investment. For example, Geka Manufacturing in my constituency, which vitally needs such a grant to secure 130 jobs in Stanley, has had it frozen by the Government. Local manufacturing SMEs are not only being hit by the corporation tax changes in the Budget but affected by the winding up of the RDAs in terms of the small business support that is vital for their investment decisions.

If we are to consider the effect on other sectors, as the hon. Member for St Ives suggested, we need to ensure that that includes not only SMEs but the manufacturing sector. If the Red Book is to be believed, I do not understand how the levy will result in a rebalancing of the burden of taxation between banking and other sectors. Clearly the SME sector will pay dearly, and that is in addition to some of the other matters that will affect it.

The cuts in capital allowances will prevent many SMEs from investing in vital equipment. That is no way to grow the economy in the way that the Government are suggesting. Despite the rhetoric that we heard before the election about bashing the bankers—[*Interruption.*] I say to my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow East (Margaret Curran), who looks at me in horror, that I said “Bashing the bankers”. Instead, the Government are going to give back to banks the money that they will take from the levy. As my hon. Friend the Member for Nottingham East pointed out, it would have been right to wait for the results of the 1 January review, whenever they come, before introducing the decrease for the banks.

I ask hon. Members to support the amendment, which makes sense. Once the public recognise what the Con-Dem Government are doing, they will be disappointed that the Government are basically letting the banks off scot-free.

Sajid Javid: I shall keep my contribution brief. I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Lincoln (Karl McCartney) on making a very good maiden speech, and I draw hon. Members' attention to my entry in the declaration of Members' interests.

Chris Leslie: There is not a Register of Members' Financial Interests currently published, so for the benefit of the debate could the hon. Gentleman inform the House what that interest is?

Sajid Javid: Yes, I am shareholder in a bank. [HON. MEMBERS: “Which one?"] It is called Deutsche Bank.

Chris Leslie: How much?

Sajid Javid: That is not relevant. The hon. Gentleman can read the entry in the declaration of interests.

If we are to address the amendments properly and consider the changes to corporation tax that the Government have proposed not just for banks but for all companies, we cannot get away from the serious mess that the economy is in. As Members have heard on a number of occasions, as an inheritance from the previous Government, the Government are borrowing some £3 billion a week and our budget deficit is £155 billion, which is 12% of GDP—the highest in all G7 countries and the highest in Europe.

To address the issue, we need to consider how to restore growth to the economy and start paying back our debt. That will not just be through the changes in the Budget, such as raising extra taxes and cutting spending, but through restoring growth in our economy. That is at the heart of the changes to taxation, especially corporation tax, put forward in the Budget. The gradual reduction of corporation tax from 28 to 24% is all about giving business people and entrepreneurs incentives once again to take the risks that are always involved in starting and running businesses. It is such growth that will rejuvenate our economy and create the employment that we need to push up GDP and help us repay the debt that we have inherited.

Mr Kevan Jones: I know that the hon. Gentleman is a banker, and therefore possibly a bit detached from the SME sector and others, but how can cutting the investment allowances of SMEs and rewarding bankers with cuts in corporation tax make sense as a way to generate and grow new businesses?

Sajid Javid: I am not detached from small business, because my father was a small business man, I grew up in a small business and I know what it takes to make a small business grow. As well as hard work, it takes low taxes, less regulation and a desire for Government to get out of the way of business people. That is what this Government are desperately trying to restore after 13 years of the opposite.

7.45 pm

Stephen Timms: Was the hon. Gentleman surprised that the Office for Budget Responsibility reduced its estimate of future growth in the British economy following the Budget?

Sajid Javid: That is a misleading question, and it does not go to the heart of the matter. It is a nice try, but the right hon. Gentleman will really have to try harder than that.

To return to banks and how to get our economy going, as well as restoring incentives we need to get banks lending again. That was the only vaguely accurate

[Sajid Javid]

or factual point that I could pick up from the speech of the hon. Member for North Durham (Mr Jones). If we are to do that, we need to understand why they are not lending at the moment, and the major reason is a lack of capital for British banks. Banks across the world face the same problem. As a Government, we need to work out a way to restore the capital positions of banks so that they are willing to take the risks that are a necessary part of making lending decisions.

There are only three ways for banks to try to raise capital. The first is through the free capital markets, but today those markets are effectively closed to virtually all banks. Prior to the financial crisis, there were many instruments that banks could use to try to raise capital, including types of subordinated debt, hybrid equity instruments, tier 1 and 2 securities and common equity. Not only are those markets closed to banks today, but if Opposition Members have watched carefully what has happened in the financial markets over the past three or four months, they will know that banks cannot even raise senior debt effectively, let alone capital. Banks throughout Europe—especially those on the continent, but British banks included—are in many cases unable to raise that type of debt, let alone equity. The capital markets as an avenue to raise capital are closed.

The second option is for the Government themselves to give capital to banks. After the £70 billion-odd injection made by the previous Government, I do not believe that any Member of any party is advocating the Government injecting more capital into the banking system.

There is one final way left, which is to allow banks to hold on to some of their profits, if they are in a position to generate profits. No matter what Opposition Members would like to think, unless we create the conditions inside a bank that make it want to lend, there is no way to force it to do so.

Stewart Hosie: Technically, those are the three ways in which capital can be raised. Is the hon. Gentleman making a case, then, to oppose the Government's bank levy, which would keep an extra £2 billion in the banks and perhaps allow an extra £40 billion of lending?

Sajid Javid: No, not at all. We have to separate the two issues. The levy is about working towards a way of taking something back from the banks to build an insurance-type system, so that if things such as happened during the financial crisis happen again, the Government will have a mechanism to withdraw some capital from the banks. However, if we are to cut corporation tax on all companies, it would be madness to leave out the banks. They need to be allowed to build capital, not just for the sake of getting them lending again by putting them in a comfortable enough position to make that decision, but also because of the impact on their competitiveness.

Whether we like it or not, our financial sector is a huge part of our economy, and it is much bigger as a percentage of GDP than that of many of our international competitors, even after the financial crisis. It accounts for thousands of jobs up and down the country, not just in the City but probably in each and every constituency that Members represent. If we are to restore some

health to our financial sector, it makes no sense to make it uncompetitive when compared with other sectors in our economy and with other countries. The banking and financing sector is one of the most mobile of all our economic sectors. If we have differentiated tax rates for one sector of the economy compared with others, that will only make matters worse. I therefore oppose the amendments.

Stephen Timms: I am grateful to the Exchequer Secretary for his kind remarks on my return to the Dispatch Box. He, along with many Members of all parties, was good enough to write to me after I was attacked and injured. I greatly appreciated all the messages of good will that I received, and I would like to put on record my thanks to all those from across the House who got in touch; I think that those messages have accelerated my recovery. I am grateful to the Exchequer Secretary for his words.

My hon. Friend the Member for Nottingham East (Chris Leslie), in an excellent speech when moving the amendment, raised some important points. I was also encouraged by the comments of the hon. Member for St Ives (Andrew George). I am pleased that he described himself as free ranging, and I hope that his freedom of ranging includes joining us in the Lobby. I am particularly keen to have the opportunity to vote on amendment 34.

The Chancellor told us in his Budget speech that he was being tough on the banks. Listening to some Conservative Members' speeches, I wonder whether they heard that part of his speech. He explained rightly:

"The failures of the banks imposed a huge cost on the rest of society, so I believe that it is fair and right that in future banks should make a more appropriate contribution, reflecting the many risks that they generate."

At that stage, it could well be that the Chancellor's words were consistent with the comment in the Red Book, to which the hon. Member for West Suffolk (Matthew Hancock) drew our attention. It states:

"The levy will result in a rebalancing of the burden of taxation between banking and other sectors."

Who knows to what a "rebalancing of the burden" amounts? It could mean something pathetic and small. However, the Chancellor went further in his Budget speech. He said that the introduction of the bank levy would entail

"a greater contribution from the banking sector—one that far outweighs any benefit that it will receive from the lower tax rates that I have just announced." —[*Official Report*, 22 June 2010; Vol. 512, c. 175.]

The Chancellor told the House that the cost of levy to the banks would "far outweigh" any benefit that the banking sector received. Listening to the speeches of the hon. Member for West Suffolk and the hon. Member for Bromsgrove (Sajid Javid), I do not think that they heard that part of the Chancellor's speech.

My hon. Friends the Members for Nottingham East and for North Durham (Mr Jones) queried whether the levy, in so far as we know about it—the hon. Member for St Ives told us something about it—would fulfil the Chancellor's words and far outweigh any benefits that the banks receive from the reduction of corporation tax. It is odd, as my hon. Friend the Member for Nottingham East pointed out, that for all the appearance of toughness in the Chancellor's speech, bank shares actually went up after his announcement.

Matthew Hancock: The right hon. Gentleman may have misheard my earlier comment. Can he be surprised about the Chancellor's comments when page 101 of the Red Book states that the bank levy raises £2.5 billion and the corporation tax cut in 2013-14 will cost £700 million? It is therefore no surprise that the bank levy raises more than the cut in corporation tax to the banks. That is precisely the point that I made earlier.

Stephen Timms: I am not sure about the figure of £700 million. I hope that the hon. Gentleman is not telling us that the reduction in corporation tax will decrease that tax take by £700 million. That is incorrect—perhaps he was citing a partial figure. However, that is why we need a report. I would genuinely like to know the impact specifically on the banking sector of a four percentage point reduction—it was not long ago that the banks accounted for a quarter of all the corporation tax receipts that the Exchequer collected—compared with the £2 billion cost of the levy.

Andrew George: The Red Book costings on page 19, in table 3 refer to the yield from the bank levy across fiscal years. In 2011-12, the figure is £1.15 billion, and in 2012-13, it is £2.32 billion. It is important to clarify that for the record.

Stephen Timms: I am grateful for that clarification. However, my hon. Friend the Member for Nottingham East described the background, pointing out the rather surprising fact that, after the tough talk, banking shares rose. He cited some of the analysts and mentioned the note from BNP Paribas, entitled

“UK Bank Levy: Bark Worse Than Its Bite?”

The note explained the reasons for that. It states:

“As things turned out for all the pre-election vitriol aimed at the UK banking system, the impact of today's measures appears materially lighter than expected.”

The ratings agency Fitch said the levy would have “no impact” on the ratings of any UK bank. FT.com reported ideas being developed by the Swiss bank, UBS, to reduce the impact of the levy through some careful so-called “balance sheet management.” My hon. Friend the Member for North Durham pointed out that the banking levy is supposed to be based on bank balance sheets, so I suppose that it is no surprise that organisations such as UBS are thinking about what they can do to manage to balance sheets in such a way as to reduce the impact of the levy. That takes us back to our earlier debate on avoidance and evasion, and why legislation often turns out to be more complex than people originally intend: it has to address such behaviour.

My hon. Friend the Member for Nottingham East also rightly made the point that several banking analysts were quoted after the Budget as saying that the cut in corporation tax from 28 to 24% would “negate” the impact of the levy on bank profitability. We need to know the truth of the matter, and that is why the amendment calls for a report. It is certain that the amount payable under the levy will be offset—at least in part and possibly wholly—for banks making a profit by the reduction in corporation tax in the next few years. It is entirely plausible for the amount due under the levy to be more than offset for some banks—possibly for all banks—by the reduction in corporation tax under the clause, together with reductions over the next few years.

The Chancellor said in his Budget speech that the contribution under the new levy would “far outweigh” the benefit from corporation tax reduction, but to put it kindly, it is by no means clear that that will be the case. I would not favour a different, higher rate of corporation tax for the banks. That would raise several difficulties, but given that the Chancellor has made clear his view that the banks should make a larger contribution in the light of what has happened, that the increase in the tax they bear should “far” outweigh the reductions they enjoy—of which the clause outlines the first—I hope that the Exchequer Secretary will agree that a report along the lines suggested in the amendment, and in the strikingly similar amendment that the hon. Member for St Ives tabled, would be a valuable contribution to transparency and to understanding the impact of the Budget measures. I also hope that the Minister sets out as much information as possible to illuminate the impact of the corporation tax cut on the banks in comparison with the bank levy.

The nub of the issue is this: can the Minister substantiate the Chancellor's claim that the impact of the bank levy will “far outweigh” the impact of lower corporation tax? If the Minister is unable to accept amendment 34, I should like to press it to a Division.

8 pm

Matthew Hancock: I shall keep this contribution extremely brief, given the hour. I was surprised by some of the arguments made by Opposition Members. I am not all that surprised that the right hon. Member for East Ham (Stephen Timms), the shadow Minister, does not support amendment 21, which was moved by the hon. Member for Nottingham East (Chris Leslie), not least because before the election he said we would need any bank levy to be globally agreed. Indeed, the current shadow Chancellor, the right hon. Member for Edinburgh South West (Mr Darling), said:

“Countries can't go it alone. It is very important that we do this internationally”.

Conservatives and Liberal Democrats campaigned during the election for a unilateral bank levy, no matter what happened in the rest of the world, so it is not surprising that we do not listen to Opposition Members who argue that they are now in favour of one. They have performed a U-turn in an extremely short time.

Another point I want to make is that the shadow Minister said that his party's policy is that corporation tax should be the lowest in the G7, but Italy's corporation tax is now 27.5% and Canada's is set to be reduced to 27.2%, which means that Labour's policy is to reduce corporation tax, including on the banks, as he just confirmed, without the bank levy. A bank levy would more than offset the corporation tax reductions, so Labour Members are in all sorts of a tumble on this.

Everybody will note the difference between the Government, who argued before the election that we needed a unilateral bank levy and who are delivering it within seven weeks, and Labour Members, who argued that we should not have a bank levy, before performing a U-turn within 10 weeks.

Mr Gauke: Amendments 21, 34 and 50 relate to the impact of the corporation tax cuts on the banking sector. Amendment 21 would leave the “main rate of corporation tax for financial year 2011...at 28%”

[Mr Gauke]

for

“banking institutions”, disapplying the 1% decrease, and amendments 34 and 50 ask for an assessment of the impact of the rate reduction on banks.

The proposals are helpful. Understandably, there is a frustration with the banking sector and a desire that it pay a fair share. The Government share that belief. We think that banks should make a fair contribution in respect of the risk that they pose for the UK financial system, which we have seen in the past few years. That is exactly why we announced in the Budget the introduction of a bank levy from 1 January 2011. Tomorrow, my hon. Friend the Financial Secretary to the Treasury will announce a public consultation with a view to implementing the levy on that date, and the measure will be included in next year’s Finance Bill.

The levy is a surgical approach, intended to encourage banks to move to less risky funding profiles, and a contribution reflective of economic risk. A tax based simply on profits, such as corporation tax, is not related to risk and will not create the behavioural effect that we believe the banking levy will achieve.

The overall impact on banks of the proposed reduction in corporation tax depends on a number of factors, and I will provide some details in a moment. None the less, I should like to put it on record that it is entirely right that hon. Members ask such questions. My hon. Friend the Member for St Ives (Andrew George) made a thoughtful and probing speech, and I was also interested to hear the comments of the right hon. Member for East Ham (Stephen Timms). However, I wondered, given his concern about the impact on the banking sector, precisely which angle he was coming from. Those who remember the debate prior to the general election will recall, for example, the remarks of the then Chancellor, the right hon. Member for Edinburgh South West (Mr Darling) who, in an interview on “The Andrew Marr Show” on 21 March, argued against proposals for a unilateral bank levy, saying that he thought it could work only if there were international agreement, as my hon. Friend the Member for West Suffolk (Matthew Hancock) said.

Of the Conservatives’ policy of introducing a unilateral bank levy, which was also a policy of the Liberal Democrats, the then Chancellor said that we were taking a hell of a risk, given that the banking industry employs more than 1 million people in this country. He seemed to be somewhat concerned that we were going to far and too hard. I do not know whether the shadow Minister is worried because the proposals are too tough on the banks, or because they are not tough enough.

Chris Leslie *rose*—

Mr Gauke: That is not an accusation of ambiguity that I could lay at the hon. Gentleman’s door.

Chris Leslie: I thank the Minister at least for that recognition, but I wonder whether he could take some time to justify the fact that the proposed banking levy is so low in relation to, for example, the American arrangement. Does he understand the incredulity and frustration that banks should be given this cashback bonus in the form of the corporation tax cut at this particular time? I want to hear him justify that.

Mr Gauke: Let me turn to the heart of this matter, because we have had quite a lengthy debate on it. We have heard concerns that the corporation tax would cancel out the effect of the bank levy or offset it, and that there would be a cashback bonus, to use the hon. Gentleman’s phrase. The shadow Minister asked whether the banking levy will “far outweigh” the benefit to banks of the cut in corporation tax. Perhaps the easiest thing I can do in response—there is much more one could say about corporation tax, and I will in future debates—is to refer to my answer to the right hon. Member for Holborn and St Pancras (Frank Dobson), who asked the

“Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the revenue from the financial services sector to be foregone by the Exchequer as a result of the proposed reduction in corporation tax in each financial year to 2015-16.”—[*Official Report*, 1 July 2010; Vol. 512, c. 610W.]

We have the numbers only until 2014-15, and I should point out that the financial services sector is somewhat broader than just banks. It includes insurance, pension funds and auxiliary financial services, so the numbers refer to the corporation tax cost not only for banks, but for other financial services. However, I will compare those with the bank levy yield. For 2011-12, the corporation tax costs will be £0.1 billion, whereas the bank levy yield will be £1.15 billion; for 2012-13, corporation tax costs will be £0.2 billion, compared with a bank levy yield of £2.32 billion; and for 2013-14, corporation tax costs will be £0.3 billion, compared with a £2.5 billion additional yield from the bank levy; and for 2014-15, the corporation tax costs will be £0.4 billion, compared with a bank levy yield of £2.4 billion. Even in this last year, where the differential is at its narrowest, we can see that it has not been cancelled out or offset. There is no cashback, and the banks are not quids in as a consequence.

The test that the shadow Minister gave was whether the bank levy yield far outweighs the benefit of the corporation tax change, and the answer is clearly yes. Given that the proposal for a differential corporation tax rate in amendment No. 21 is not supported by the Front-Benchers of the party to which the hon. for Nottingham East (Chris Leslie) belongs, I urge him to withdraw it.

Chris Leslie: The Minister is saying that £400 million is a small amount to be given in cashback to the banks in this corporation tax giveaway, but that sum could offset the necessity to scrap the health in pregnancy grant. It could offset the need to reduce the maternity allowance to just the first child. Those are important for users of public services, and he surely understands that.

Mr Gauke: Our aim was to rebalance the tax system. We are requiring the banking sector to pay at least £2 billion more in tax as a consequence of these proposals. That is not a minor matter. Other sectors, including manufacturing, will benefit from the reduction in corporation tax, but the banks will not benefit because we are introducing the bank levy. I urge the hon. Gentleman to withdraw amendment No. 21, given that his Front Benchers recognise the difficulties of a separate corporation tax rate for banks. I believe that I have satisfied the tests set out by the right hon. Member for East Ham, because the bank levy yield far outweighs the benefits of the corporation tax for banks.

I hope that I have satisfied my hon. Friend the Member for St Ives—

Andrew George: The corollary to the corporation tax cut is the banking levy, but although I respect the information that my hon. Friend has given in his reply so far, he has not yet addressed himself to the criteria for the setting of the banking levy and why it has been set at the proposed level—[*Interruption.*]

The Temporary Chair (Mr Benton): Order. The background noise is a little high. Will Members please keep it down?

Mr Gauke: Beginning tomorrow, we will consult on the bank levy. The intention is to find a means of discouraging risk, and that is why the targeted approach of the bank levy is appropriate. It will raise additional revenue, and it is right to do so. We think that we have the balance right in raising additional revenue while enabling banks to lend more, and we are also taking steps to encourage that further.

In conclusion, I think that I have satisfied the concerns underlying the amendments and I hope that the amendment will not be pressed to a Division.

Chris Leslie: Having heard what the Minister had to say, I am not convinced that he makes a case for giving away £400 million to the banks, especially as Members on the other side of the House constantly ask us where the money would come from and how we would reduce the deficit. That sum would offset the need to abolish the health in pregnancy grant. It would offset the need to reduce to the CPI the indexation of housing benefit. It would offset the need to scrap the maternity allowance for second children, and so on. I hope that my hon. Friends will remember the £400 million giveaway to the banks in this corporation tax reduction.

I recognise that the consensus in the debate is that it is important to test the right amendment this evening. I therefore wish to withdraw my amendment, but I hope that one of the amendments that would require the Treasury to justify and assess the impact of the corporation tax change on the banks will be tested. That is the least we should be doing.

I beg to ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendment proposed: 34, in page 1, line 6, at end add—

‘(2) Prior to this rate taking effect, the Chancellor will place in the Library of the House of Commons an assessment of the impact of this clause on the banking sector.’—(*Stephen Timms.*)

The Committee divided: Ayes 228, Noes 318.

Division No. 16]

[8.15 pm

AYES

Ainsworth, rh Mr Bob
Alexander, rh Mr Douglas
Ali, Rushanara
Allen, Mr Graham
Anderson, Mr David
Bailey, Mr Adrian
Bain, Mr William
Banks, Gordon
Barron, rh Mr Kevin
Bayley, Hugh
Beckett, rh Margaret
Begg, Miss Anne

Benn, rh Hilary
Berger, Luciana
Betts, Mr Clive
Blackman-Woods, Roberta
Blears, rh Hazel
Blenkinsop, Tom
Blomfield, Paul
Blunkett, rh Mr David
Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben
Brennan, Kevin
Brown, Lyn
Brown, rh Mr Nicholas

Brown, Mr Russell
Bryant, Chris
Buck, Ms Karen
Byrne, rh Mr Liam
Cairns, David
Campbell, Mr Alan
Campbell, Mr Ronnie
Caton, Martin
Clark, Katy
Clarke, rh Mr Tom
Clwyd, rh Ann
Coaker, Vernon
Coffey, Ann
Connarty, Michael
Cooper, Rosie
Corbyn, Jeremy
Crausby, Mr David
Creagh, Mary
Creasy, Stella
Cruddas, Jon
Cunningham, Alex
Cunningham, Mr Jim
Cunningham, Tony
Curran, Margaret
Dakin, Nic
Danczuk, Simon
Darling, rh Mr Alistair
David, Mr Wayne
Davidson, Mr Ian
Davies, Geraint
De Piero, Gloria
Denham, rh Mr John
Dobbin, Jim
Dobson, rh Frank
Docherty, Thomas
Doran, Mr Frank
Dowd, Jim
Doyle, Gemma
Dromey, Jack
Dugher, Michael
Durkan, Mark
Eagle, Ms Angela
Eagle, Maria
Edwards, Jonathan
Efford, Clive
Elliott, Julie
Ellman, Mrs Louise
Engel, Natascha
Esterson, Bill
Evans, Chris
Field, rh Mr Frank
Fitzpatrick, Jim
Flelo, Robert
Flint, rh Caroline
Flynn, Paul
Fovargue, Yvonne
Francis, Dr Hywel
Gapes, Mike
Gardiner, Barry
Gilmore, Sheila
Glass, Pat
Glendon, Mrs Mary
Godsiff, Mr Roger
Goggins, rh Paul
Goodman, Helen
Greatrex, Tom
Green, Kate
Greenwood, Lilian
Griffith, Nia
Gwynne, Andrew
Hain, rh Mr Peter
Hamilton, Mr Fabian

Hanson, rh Mr David
Harman, rh Ms Harriet
Havard, Mr Dai
Healey, rh John
Hendrick, Mark
Hepburn, Mr Stephen
Heyes, David
Hillier, Meg
Hilling, Julie
Hodge, rh Margaret
Hopkins, Kelvin
Hosie, Stewart
Howarth, rh Mr George
Hunt, Tristram
Ilsley, Mr Eric
Irranca-Davies, Huw
Jackson, Glenda
James, Mrs Siân C.
Jamieson, Cathy
Johnson, rh Alan
Johnson, Diana R.
Jones, Graham
Jones, Mr Kevan
Jones, Susan Elan
Joyce, Eric
Keeley, Barbara
Keen, Alan
Kendall, Liz
Khan, rh Sadiq
Lavery, Ian
Leslie, Chris
Lewis, Mr Ivan
Lloyd, Tony
Llwyd, Mr Elfyn
Love, Mr Andrew
Lucas, Caroline
Lucas, Ian
MacNeil, Mr Angus Brendan
Mactaggart, Fiona
Mahmood, Shabana
Mann, John
Marsden, Mr Gordon
McCann, Mr Michael
McCarthy, Kerry
McClymont, Gregg
McCrea, Dr William
McDonagh, Siobhain
McDonnell, John
McFadden, rh Mr Pat
McGovern, Alison
McGovern, Jim
McGuire, rh Mrs Anne
McKechin, Ann
McKinnell, Catherine
Mearns, Ian
Michael, rh Alun
Miller, Andrew
Mitchell, Austin
Morden, Jessica
Morrice, Graeme
Morris, Grahame M.
Mudie, Mr George
Munn, Meg
Murphy, rh Mr Jim
Murphy, rh Paul
Murray, Ian
Nandy, Lisa
Nash, Pamela
O'Donnell, Fiona
Onwurah, Chi
Osborne, Sandra
Owen, Albert

Perkins, Toby
 Phillipson, Bridget
 Pound, Stephen
 Qureshi, Yasmin
 Reed, Mr Jamie
 Reeves, Rachel
 Reynolds, Emma
 Reynolds, Jonathan
 Riordan, Mrs Linda
 Ritchie, Ms Margaret
 Robertson, Angus
 Robertson, John
 Robinson, Mr Geoffrey
 Rotheram, Steve
 Roy, Mr Frank
 Roy, Lindsay
 Ruane, Chris
 Seabeck, Alison
 Sharma, Mr Virendra
 Sheerman, Mr Barry
 Sheridan, Jim
 Shuker, Gavin
 Singh, Mr Marsha
 Skinner, Mr Dennis
 Slaughter, Mr Andy
 Smith, rh Mr Andrew
 Smith, Angela (*Penistone and Stocksbridge*)
 Smith, Nick
 Smith, Owen
 Soulsby, Sir Peter
 Straw, rh Mr Jack

Stringer, Graham
 Stuart, Ms Gisela
 Tami, Mark
 Thomas, Mr Gareth
 Thornberry, Emily
 Timms, rh Stephen
 Trickett, Jon
 Turner, Karl
 Twigg, Derek
 Twigg, Stephen
 Umunna, Mr Chuka
 Vaz, Valerie
 Walley, Joan
 Watson, Mr Tom
 Watts, Mr Dave
 Weir, Mr Mike
 Whiteford, Dr Eilidh
 Wicks, rh Malcolm
 Williams, Hywel
 Williamson, Chris
 Wilson, Phil
 Winnick, Mr David
 Winterton, rh Ms Rosie
 Wishart, Pete
 Woodcock, John
 Woodward, rh Mr Shaun
 Woolas, Mr Phil
 Wright, David
 Wright, Mr Iain

Tellers for the Ayes:
Helen Jones and
Mrs Sharon Hodgson

NOES

Adams, Nigel
 Afriyie, Adam
 Aldous, Peter
 Alexander, rh Danny
 Andrew, Stuart
 Arbuthnot, rh Mr James
 Bacon, Mr Richard
 Bagshawe, Ms Louise
 Baker, Norman
 Baker, Steve
 Baldry, Tony
 Baldwin, Harriett
 Barclay, Stephen
 Barker, Gregory
 Baron, Mr John
 Barwell, Gavin
 Bebb, Guto
 Beith, rh Sir Alan
 Bellingham, Mr Henry
 Benyon, Richard
 Beresford, Sir Paul
 Berry, Jake
 Bingham, Andrew
 Binley, Mr Brian
 Birtwistle, Gordon
 Blackman, Bob
 Blackwood, Nicola
 Blunt, Mr Crispin
 Boles, Nick
 Bone, Mr Peter
 Bradley, Karen
 Brake, Tom
 Bray, Angie
 Brazier, Mr Julian
 Bridgen, Andrew
 Brine, Mr Steve
 Brokenshire, James

Brooke, Annette
 Browne, Mr Jeremy
 Bruce, Fiona
 Bruce, rh Malcolm
 Burley, Mr Aidan
 Burns, Conor
 Burns, Mr Simon
 Burrowes, Mr David
 Burstow, Mr Paul
 Burt, Lorely
 Byles, Dan
 Cairns, Alun
 Campbell, rh Sir Menzies
 Carmichael, Mr Alistair
 Carmichael, Neil
 Cash, Mr William
 Chishti, Rehman
 Chope, Mr Christopher
 Clappison, Mr James
 Clark, rh Greg
 Clifton-Brown, Geoffrey
 Coffey, Dr Thérèse
 Collins, Damian
 Colville, Oliver
 Cox, Mr Geoffrey
 Crabb, Stephen
 Crockart, Mike
 Crouch, Tracey
 Davies, David T. C.
 (*Monmouth*)
 Davies, Glyn
 Davis, rh Mr David
 de Bois, Nick
 Dinenage, Caroline
 Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
 Dorrell, rh Mr Stephen
 Dorries, Nadine

Doyle-Price, Jackie
 Drax, Richard
 Duddridge, James
 Duncan Smith, rh Mr Iain
 Ellis, Michael
 Ellison, Jane
 Ellwood, Mr Tobias
 Elphicke, Charlie
 Eustice, George
 Evans, Jonathan
 Evennett, Mr David
 Fabricant, Michael
 Fallon, Michael
 Farron, Tim
 Featherstone, Lynne
 Field, Mr Mark
 Foster, Mr Don
 Fox, rh Dr Liam
 Francois, rh Mr Mark
 Freeman, George
 Freer, Mike
 Fullbrook, Lorraine
 Fuller, Richard
 Garnier, Mark
 Gauke, Mr David
 Gibb, Mr Nick
 Gilbert, Stephen
 Gillan, rh Mrs Cheryl
 Glen, John
 Goldsmith, Zac
 Goodwill, Mr Robert
 Gove, rh Michael
 Graham, Richard
 Grant, Mrs Helen
 Gray, Mr James
 Green, Damian
 Greening, Justine
 Grieve, rh Mr Dominic
 Griffiths, Andrew
 Gummer, Ben
 Gyimah, Mr Sam
 Hague, rh Mr William
 Halfon, Robert
 Hames, Duncan
 Hammond, rh Mr Philip
 Hammond, Stephen
 Hancock, Matthew
 Hancock, Mr Mike
 Hands, Greg
 Harper, Mr Mark
 Harrington, Richard
 Harris, Rebecca
 Hart, Simon
 Haselhurst, rh Sir Alan
 Hayes, Mr John
 Heald, Mr Oliver
 Heath, Mr David
 Heaton-Harris, Chris
 Hemming, John
 Henderson, Gordon
 Hendry, Charles
 Herbert, rh Nick
 Hinds, Damian
 Hollingbery, George
 Hollobone, Mr Philip
 Holloway, Mr Adam
 Hopkins, Kris
 Howarth, Mr Gerald
 Howell, John
 Hughes, Simon
 Hunt, rh Mr Jeremy
 Huppert, Dr Julian
 Jackson, Mr Stewart
 James, Margot
 Javid, Sajid
 Jenkin, Mr Bernard
 Johnson, Gareth
 Jones, Andrew
 Jones, Mr David
 Jones, Mr Marcus
 Kawczynski, Daniel
 Kelly, Chris
 Kirby, Simon
 Knight, rh Mr Greg
 Kwarteng, Kwasi
 Laing, Mrs Eleanor
 Lamb, Norman
 Lansley, rh Mr Andrew
 Latham, Pauline
 Leadsom, Andrea
 Lee, Jessica
 Lee, Dr Phillip
 Leech, Mr John
 Lefroy, Jeremy
 Leigh, Mr Edward
 Leslie, Charlotte
 Letwin, rh Mr Oliver
 Lewis, Brandon
 Lewis, Dr Julian
 Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
 Lilley, rh Mr Peter
 Lloyd, Stephen
 Lopresti, Jack
 Lord, Jonathan
 Loughton, Tim
 Luff, Peter
 Lumley, Karen
 Macleod, Mary
 Main, Mrs Anne
 Maude, rh Mr Francis
 May, rh Mrs Theresa
 Maynard, Paul
 McCartney, Jason
 McCartney, Karl
 McIntosh, Miss Anne
 McLoughlin, rh Mr Patrick
 McPartland, Stephen
 McVey, Esther
 Menzies, Mark
 Metcalfe, Stephen
 Miller, Maria
 Mills, Nigel
 Milton, Anne
 Mordaunt, Penny
 Morgan, Nicky
 Morris, Anne Marie
 Morris, David
 Morris, James
 Mosley, Stephen
 Mowat, David
 Mundell, rh David
 Munt, Tessa
 Murray, Sheryll
 Murrison, Dr Andrew
 Neill, Robert
 Newmark, Mr Brooks
 Newton, Sarah
 Nokes, Caroline
 Norman, Jesse
 Nuttall, Mr David
 O'Brien, Mr Stephen
 Offord, Mr Matthew
 Ollerenshaw, Eric
 Opperman, Guy

Paice, Mr James
 Parish, Neil
 Patel, Priti
 Pawsey, Mark
 Penning, Mike
 Penrose, John
 Percy, Andrew
 Perry, Claire
 Phillips, Stephen
 Pickles, rh Mr Eric
 Pincher, Christopher
 Poulter, Dr Daniel
 Prisk, Mr Mark
 Pritchard, Mark
 Pugh, Dr John
 Raab, Mr Dominic
 Randall, rh Mr John
 Reckless, Mark
 Redwood, rh Mr John
 Rees-Mogg, Jacob
 Reeve, Simon
 Reid, Mr Alan
 Rifkind, rh Sir Malcolm
 Robathan, Mr Andrew
 Robertson, Hugh
 Robertson, Mr Laurence
 Rogerson, Dan
 Rosindell, Andrew
 Rudd, Amber
 Russell, Bob
 Rutley, David
 Sanders, Mr Adrian
 Sandys, Laura
 Scott, Mr Lee
 Selous, Andrew
 Shapps, rh Grant
 Sharma, Alok
 Shelbrooke, Alec
 Shepherd, Mr Richard
 Simmonds, Mark
 Simpson, Mr Keith
 Skidmore, Chris
 Smith, Miss Chloe
 Smith, Henry
 Smith, Julian
 Smith, Sir Robert
 Soames, Nicholas
 Soubry, Anna
 Spencer, Mr Mark
 Stanley, rh Sir John
 Stephenson, Andrew
 Stevenson, John
 Stewart, Bob

Stewart, Iain
 Stewart, Rory
 Streeter, Mr Gary
 Stride, Mel
 Stuart, Mr Graham
 Stunell, Andrew
 Sturdy, Julian
 Swayne, Mr Desmond
 Swinson, Jo
 Syms, Mr Robert
 Tapsell, Sir Peter
 Teather, Sarah
 Thurso, John
 Timpson, Mr Edward
 Tomlinson, Justin
 Tredinnick, David
 Truss, Elizabeth
 Turner, Mr Andrew
 Tyrie, Mr Andrew
 Uppal, Paul
 Vaizey, Mr Edward
 Vara, Mr Shailesh
 Vickers, Martin
 Villiers, rh Mrs Theresa
 Walker, Mr Charles
 Walker, Mr Robin
 Wallace, Mr Ben
 Ward, Mr David
 Weatherley, Mike
 Webb, Steve
 Wharton, James
 Wheeler, Heather
 White, Chris
 Whittaker, Craig
 Whittingdale, Mr John
 Wiggin, Bill
 Willetts, rh Mr David
 Williams, Mr Mark
 Williams, Roger
 Williams, Stephen
 Williamson, Gavin
 Wilson, Mr Rob
 Wollaston, Dr Sarah
 Wright, Jeremy
 Wright, Simon
 Yeo, Mr Tim
 Young, rh Sir George
 Zahawi, Nadhim

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr Philip Dunne and
Mark Hunter

Question accordingly negatived.

8.30 pm

Stephen Timms: I beg to move amendment 49, page 1, line 6, at end add—

“(2) In section 2(2)(a) of the Finance Act 2010, after “companies”, add “not meeting the condition in (c) below”.

(3) At the end of section 2 of the Finance Act 2010 add—

“(c) 26 per cent. on profits of companies whose taxable profits will be increased by more than 1 per cent. as a result of changes in investment allowances.”.

It is a puzzling feature of the Budget that, on the one hand, the Chancellor is gambling on a big increase in investment, and basing his Budget arithmetic on the belief that investment will grow in each of the next three years at a rate that has been achieved in only one year in

the last 40. That is an heroic assumption about investment growth, and if it proves to be untrue, the Budget gamble will fail. At the same time as banking on that huge increase in investment, he has announced that he will drastically cut the incentives for investment. The rates of capital allowances will be reduced from 20% to 18%, and the annual investment allowance will be cut by three quarters, from £100,000 to just £25,000. It is hard to see how the forecast growth in investment can be reconciled with such a big cut in investment allowances. The Budget was billed as Britain being open for business, yet it will clearly reduce the prospects for growth, as the Office for Business Responsibility confirmed in its two projections, before and after the Budget. Indeed, the International Monetary Fund, in its projections last week, also downgraded its growth forecast for the UK economy as a result of the Budget.

We have here a collision of conflicting objectives, which we highlight in the amendment. We propose a lower rate of corporation tax for companies that lose out from the reduction of allowances above a certain threshold. The Institute for Fiscal Studies pointed out before the election that the losers as a result of the Conservatives’ approach would be those making big investments and earning modest profits, notably “in the manufacturing and transport sectors”, and that the gainers would typically be in the financial sector.

We do not yet know what the legislation on allowances will say. The Chancellor said in his Budget speech that the change in the rate of capital allowances and the lower annual investment allowance would not take effect until 2012. Will the Minister confirm that the coalition Government are planning no reduction at all in investment allowances in the current financial year? Will the changes announced by the Chancellor in the Budget be in the Finance Bill later this year or will they be delayed until next year’s Finance Bill? I hope that the Minister will also comment on the principles underlying our amendment. How can it make sense to reduce so drastically the incentives for investment in a period in which the Budget depends so heavily on an unprecedentedly large and sustained increase in investment?

Mr Gauke: As I have already explained, the Chancellor or the Exchequer set out a business tax package in the Budget that included rate cuts and reductions in allowances that are good for business and growth overall. Amendment 49 proposes that clause 1 be amended to reduce the main rate of corporation tax to 26% for those companies whose tax bill will increase by more than 1% as a result of the reduction in investment allowances. That is a somewhat complex mechanism, but it provides an opportunity to raise the matter of capital allowances.

As part of a package to improve the UK’s competitiveness, it was announced that from April 2012 there would be reductions in the rates of writing-down allowances for plant and machinery and a reduction in the annual investment allowance. The Government will reduce the main rate of corporation tax to 26% that year—2012—and by that reduction, alongside changes to allowances, we will achieve the results that the amendment seeks. Furthermore, by not implementing the changes to allowances for two years, but reducing corporation tax rates next year, we are giving companies a full year

[Mr David Gauke]

to benefit from the reductions in rates, alongside current levels of allowances. Further reductions in the main rate of corporation tax follow in later years and capital allowances remain broadly in line with average rates of economic depreciation. To answer the shadow Minister's questions, no changes are made to the so-called investment allowances in this Finance Bill and none is planned for the next financial year.

Barry Gardiner (Brent North) (Lab): Why does the Minister believe that, if the Budget begins to work and we see businesses begin to pull the country out of recession, that is the right time for the Government to take away the incentive for further investment in business growth? That seems paradoxical to us all and to damage the very prospects of the recovery that he claims he wants to aid.

Mr Gauke: As I said a moment ago, the changes to capital allowances will take effect from 2012, and we believe that there is a substantial benefit for the UK economy in reducing the corporation tax rate. Indeed, it is a direction of travel that our predecessors followed when they reduced the rate from 30 to 28%, but we do not think that that went far enough. The point was raised in earlier debates that the UK has lost its competitive advantage in having a relatively low rate of corporation tax, as a number of other countries have cut their corporation tax rates much further than we have over the last 13 years. We believe that the lower rate sends a very clear signal that Britain is open for business and it is a demonstration of the direction of travel in which we are going. Assessment of the impact of Budget measures on investment over the next few years suggests an increase in investment of £13 billion.

The Budget thus provides a set of proposals and a set of reforms to corporation tax that will encourage further investment. As I say, it is a sign that Britain is open for business and a sign to investors and businesses throughout the world that the UK is a good place in which to do business. We believe that the package as a whole is well balanced and that it will aid a private sector recovery, partly funded through reforms to capital allowances and partly through the bank levy, as we debated earlier. Legislation is not required for the changes in capital allowances in this Finance Bill or indeed in next year's, but we have set out a clear sense of direction that has been welcomed by business groups as a whole. We therefore urge the shadow Minister not to press the rather complicated amendment 49. It will not make any difference, because we will legislate to this effect in any event—without the complicated mechanism in the amendment. I urge him to withdraw it.

Stephen Timms: I am disappointed by that response. I am disappointed that my hon. Friend the Member for Brent North (Barry Gardiner) did not get an answer to the telling point that he put to the Minister. There is a real issue about how this large increase in investment is supposed to be achieved at exactly the time that incentives for investment are being reduced. Nevertheless, I shall not press the amendment to the vote. I beg to ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Question proposed, That the clause stand part of the Bill.

Stephen Timms: We have had useful and important debates about the amendments to clause 1, but some important points remain to be discussed. I have no wish to oppose the clause, and I will not encourage my hon Friends to vote against it. However, we need to ask some significant questions, in particular about why the clause does not contain items that we might have expected.

Small companies will face a worrying and uncertain time over the next few months, and we would all sign up to the proposition that they are the lifeblood of the UK economy, yet the Bill does nothing to help them. The Budget did not do much either, but at least it included the 1 percentage point reduction in corporation tax. Inexplicably, that measure has been omitted from the Bill. Will the Minister tell us why? What was the basis for selecting the measures in the Bill? Is the Bill's purpose simply to ensure that the increase in VAT is legislated for before Liberal Democrat Members have the opportunity over the summer to learn what their constituents think about it, or perhaps before their party conference has a chance to express a view in September? Were the other measures included just to make up the numbers and pad out the Bill? Alternatively, is there another criterion—urgency, presumably—for what is included in or omitted from the Bill? If so, why was it urgent to legislate for the large companies rate but not the small companies rate? The more we look at the Bill, the more it appears to be a rag-bag of measures to give an impression of substance, when in reality it is all about railroading the VAT increase through Parliament before the Liberal Democrats wake up.

Businesses of all sizes face a worrying time. As the National Institute of Economic and Social Research pointed out last Thursday,

“Fiscal consolidation, both in the UK and the euro area, will restrict growth”.

The IMF's startling post-Budget growth downgrade for the UK last week made the same point. *The Daily Telegraph* expressed it bluntly on Friday, “UK austerity drive threatens to snuff out recovery, IMF warns”, and went on to summarise the IMF message thus:

“Britain's fledgling recovery may be nipped in the bud by the savage cuts”.

A lot of other evidence points in the same direction. Last Monday, the monthly report on business confidence showed that, far from the Budget placing an “Open for business” sign above Great Britain plc as the Chancellor had hoped, business confidence suffered the biggest one-month fall ever recorded in June, the month in which the Budget announcements were made. With confidence on a sharp downward trajectory, the truth is that the Chancellor is taking an enormous and unwarranted risk with the UK economic recovery.

Our case is clear: in taking such an enormous and unjustified risk with the recovery, the Budget judgment was wrong. Businesses and their employees, as well as those who work in the public sector, will pay the price. As was mentioned earlier, small manufacturing firms will be hit particularly hard by the Budget, as the Engineering Employers Federation pointed out in its Budget response, to which my hon. Friend the Member for North Durham (Mr Jones) referred. The EEF said:

“Reducing the corporation tax rate over time was in principle the right course of action. But financing it, in part, by cuts to investment allowances will be a heavy price to pay, especially for smaller companies.”

It might be a positive signal for large companies, but not for their suppliers.

8.45 pm

The Budget significantly reduces the incentives for investment by small and medium-sized enterprises. I shall say more about that in a moment. Large companies will benefit from the proposed reduction in the corporation tax rate from 28% to 24% over the next four years, but small companies will not. They have been promised a reduction of only 1 percentage point in 2011, from 21% to 20%, and, inexplicably, even that has been omitted from the Bill.

It is perfectly true—as the Minister may well remind me—that before the election we proposed an increase in the small companies rate of corporation tax, rather than the decrease that I am now suggesting. However, we did not propose, as the Budget has, that the annual investment allowance should be cut by three quarters, from £100,000 to £25,000. We did not propose a cut in the rate of capital allowances either.

Now that we appear to have a firm commitment from the Government to reducing the main rate of corporation tax by four percentage points—although for some reason only one of the four is in the Bill, which I also wish to query—I hope that the Minister will be able to hold out the prospect of further reductions for small companies as well, beyond the 1 percentage point reduction announced in the Budget and, for some reason, not included in the Bill. I hope that the Minister can give some comfort to small companies that face great anxieties about what will happen over the next couple of years.

Let me return to the other puzzling omission. Given that the Chancellor made a great show of providing certainty by announcing annual reductions in the rate of corporation tax up to 2014, why does the Bill provide for only one year’s reduction, rather than all four? When I queried that on Second Reading, the Chief Secretary told me:

“the practice in Finance Bills is to legislate one at a time for the changes that are needed in the following years.”

I should be interested to know from the Exchequer Secretary the basis for that claim. When I queried it on Second Reading, the Chief Secretary—prompted, I believe, by the Economic Secretary to the Treasury, the hon. Member for Putney (Justine Greening), who was sitting next to him and who will respond to the debate tonight—told me that there were

“various technical reasons... which the Exchequer Secretary will explain in his closing speech. The basic point is that our method is more business-friendly.”—[*Official Report*, 6 July 2010; Vol. 513, c. 207-8.]

The Exchequer Secretary did not explain that in his closing speech. As I was not present for his closing speech, I will not complain about that, but I do ask him to explain it to us today. How can the Government’s method be “more business-friendly”? Certainty is key here, but in the absence of legislation there can be no certainty.

As I said on Second Reading, the precedent is very clear. Nigel Lawson, as Chancellor, announced a series of four reductions in the rate of corporation tax, from

50% down to 35%, and they were all legislated for in clause 18 of the Finance Act 1984. As far as I know, there is no other precedent for four successive annual reductions in the rate of corporation tax, so what the Chief Secretary said about practice in Finance Bills was clearly incorrect.

The debate in the House on 1 May 1984 makes interesting reading. Roy Hattersley pointed out that because the reduction in the rate was being funded by allowance cuts, there would be an increase in the tax paid by manufacturers. My hon. Friend the Member for Great Grimsby (Austin Mitchell) made a notable contribution. Speaking for the then Government, the Exchequer Secretary’s predecessor John Moore explained that

“The clause proposes a four-year programme of reductions in the main rate of corporation tax.”—[*Official Report*, 1 May 1984; Vol. 59, c. 274.]

So it is certainly not the case that the practice is to legislate a year at a time. I have been unable to find any complaints in 1984 that it was contrary to the interests of business to legislate in one go, and I find it hard to imagine that anyone would have complained. It seems much more likely that the Government simply could not be bothered to produce for the Bill the slightly longer legislation required alongside the very small clause to implement the reduction in the small companies rate of corporation tax because they were making such a headlong rush to get the all-important VAT rise on to the statute book before the summer.

One suggestion has been made for legislating only for the first year, namely the impact on deferred tax. I shall listen with great interest to the Minister’s answer as to whether it is the right explanation. Accounting standards require the declaration of deferred tax assets or liabilities at the rate that has been “substantively enacted” by the date at which a balance sheet is compiled. For companies with large losses to offset for tax purposes against their future profits, a reduction in the rate of corporation tax would require them to reduce the value of their deferred tax assets on the balance sheet. For some banks that could be a very large number, which is why, to refer back to what the Minister was saying, their corporation tax for the next few years will be a lot lower than would otherwise have been the case.

The Minister may therefore be balancing the advantages of providing certainty for inward investors—of showing that Britain is open for business—and the benefits of legislating now for the next four years and of supporting manufacturers against the headache that could be caused for some banks. When the Chief Secretary says it is more business-friendly to do this one year at a time, perhaps he just means that it is helping out some banks.

Stewart Hosie: I am listening carefully to the right hon. Gentleman’s comments, and I rise to seek the following clarification. Am I right that it was in fact the previous Government who—sensibly—allowed unused tax assets to pay, at least in part, for the asset protection scheme to protect all of us against non-performing and toxic assets?

Stephen Timms: Indeed, and I am certainly not arguing against the long-established mechanism allowing tax losses to be used in that way. I am simply querying, just as a matter of fact, whether that is the reason why this

[Stephen Timms]

Bill only makes one of the four promised year's reductions in corporation tax. I have certainly not come across any other suggestions as to why the Bill is doing that in that way. People who have deferred tax liabilities—as opposed to the banks having deferred tax credits—would benefit from early enactment of the lower rate. Typically, that is people such as manufacturers. If that is the reason, this is, sadly, another case of helping out the banks at the expense of manufacturers.

Surely the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales is right to say that

“to provide better certainty for businesses”

there should be legislation

“as soon as possible for the proposed reductions in the main rate of corporation tax”.

When will the Government legislate for the remaining reductions? Will they do so in the Finance Bill that we have been promised in the autumn? Are we really going to have to wait for four years of Finance Bills to complete these reductions, as the Chief Secretary suggested, or can we look forward to legislation in the Finance Bill No. 3 of 2010? If certainty for business is the aim, it surely must be done this year at least.

When do the Government intend to introduce their changes to the rate of capital allowances and the annual investment allowance? I listened carefully to what the Minister said about that and perhaps I missed the point but I did not quite grasp which piece of legislation he envisaged those changes being made in. Will they be in the further Finance Bill in the autumn or will they await next year's Bill? By that time, I suppose we might have some further data on the actual change in business investment in the next 12 months and how that compares with the change on which the Chancellor is pinning his Budget arithmetic.

There is something else about which the Bill is silent but on which we might have expected some change: the differential compared with the main rate of corporation tax inside the North sea ring fence. The ring fence for North sea operations rightly prevents taxable profits from oil and gas extraction in the UK and the UK continental shelf from being reduced by losses from other activities or by excessive interest payments. The ring-fenced corporation tax rate was the same as the main corporation tax rate, until the previous Government reduced the main rate from 30% to 28% from 1 April 2008; we left the ring-fenced rate at 30%. Now that the main rate has been announced as falling to 24%, do the Government intend to leave the ring-fenced rate at 30% throughout the next four years, thus trebling the differential from two to six percentage points or is a reduction to the ring-fenced rate being considered, perhaps along with some other changes to the fiscal regime for oil and gas extraction?

Let me finish by asking one further question. As I reminded the House, it was the previous Government's explicit aim that corporation tax in the UK should be the lowest among the G7 economies, and we succeeded in achieving that aim. That is one of the reasons why the UK has been so successful over the past decade in attracting so much overseas investment into our economy. Do the present Government intend to ensure that we continue to have the lowest rate of corporation tax in the G7? Will that commitment be maintained?

As I explained at the outset of my remarks, it is not my aim to oppose this clause, but I hope that the Minister will provide some explanation for the omissions I have highlighted, and in particular give an account of why the remaining reductions in the rate of corporation tax have been delayed, and say when the legislation for them will be introduced.

Chris Leslie: I am grateful, Mr Benton, that you have seen fit to allow a stand part debate on this important clause, especially at a time when every measure in the Finance Bill and the Budget as enacted needs sufficient scrutiny to ensure that the general public can have confidence in the fact that any revenue forgone is forgone for a good purpose. At a time when our public services are threatened and look set to be cut so significantly, it is very important that, if this country is to give away potential yield through changes such as the corporation tax, this is done for the right reasons.

It is important to note that we want a healthy economy and for our companies, by and large, to be profitable and doing well. I do not, of course, want to revisit in too much detail our debate on the banking sector, but I point out that it is necessary to have an environment in which our companies can be competitive on a global scale, and to ensure that they can succeed. While we want companies to be profitable, we also want them to reinvest a lot of those profits, so that they can improve the capital stock, improve the ingenuity and enterprising innovation that goes on within such companies, and have a longer-term profitability trajectory. It is for those reasons that I am perplexed by the drastic reduction in capital allowances, to just £25,000. Manufacturing companies—the institutions that produce the actual goods we can sell and export abroad—may well be disadvantaged relative to other sectors of the economy.

Barry Gardiner: Is my hon. Friend aware of the predicated growth, contained in the Government's figures, of the private sector generation of income into the Treasury over the next five years, and does he believe that that is compatible with the reduction in capital allowances that has been announced? In particular, would he care to comment on the timing of that reduction at precisely the moment when—if the Chancellor's figures were to work out—the economy would be about to see the largest part of its expansion?

9 pm

Chris Leslie: I am very disturbed that the Chancellor's measures are coming at a time when our manufacturing industries are potentially just finding their feet and beginning to think about turning the corner out of the recession. Taking away some of those crucial allowances will not only affect those niche companies, which will, in turn, be the producers of the tool manufacturing equipment and the entrepreneurs whose work is so necessary and has perhaps been funded and supported by those allowances, but will, in a general context, potentially reduce the competitiveness of that particular sector of the economy.

It is a more general matter of debate whether some sectors of the economy benefit more than others from the corporation tax change. As I have said in previous debates, I am not sure whether my constituents would feel that the oil companies, the utilities and the banking sector should also have the gains from this corporation

tax reduction. As I said in our debate some time ago, I am not convinced that now is the time to be giving away a £400 million windfall to the banking sector in this corporation tax cut.

Jon Trickett (Hemsworth) (Lab): I am listening carefully to my hon. Friend's argument. Has not the largest single factor in this recession been, in effect, a private sector investment strike? I am talking about the fact that £6 out of every £10 of the fall in gross domestic product is attributable to a single factor, which is that the private sector some time ago decided not to invest. There are all sorts of reasons why that should be, one of which is the failure of the banks to provide the capitalisation to allow those companies to invest—that touches precisely on the point that he was just making. Given that level of inactivity in investment, are we not facing both an increasingly inefficient private sector and, as has been said, the cuts in the allowances, which will make things worse?

Chris Leslie: Indeed that is the case. I know that my hon. Friend has done a great deal of work on some of the analysis of these points. There are arguments to be made for reducing corporation tax to boost competitiveness, but clearly that is a way of encouraging profit-taking and, in turn, the removal of money from companies in the form of dividends. That, of course, benefits us all in some ways, because we are all members of pension funds and so on. However, if it is indeed the Government's particular choice at this point in time, as we are coming out of a recession, to try to encourage companies to focus on their long-term profitability, might it not be a better strategy, in some respects, to retain some of those capital allowances to ensure that we can fix our banks such that they are able to supply much-needed credit to small companies, in particular, and to the wider industries across the board?

Barry Gardiner: My hon. Friend rightly talks about the need for companies to pay dividends and the benefits of that for all of us in society, in particular pension fund holders. Does he appreciate that the portfolio of shares that our pension funds all hold can also increase in value by incentivising companies to reinvest in themselves? That happens by the increase in value of the company through the increased investment that it has made in itself. Is that not a more efficient way of doing things than paying out dividends, which may simply go into private pockets for consumption?

Chris Leslie: That is a moot point and I would not go to the wall to argue against reducing corporation tax in this way. All I am suggesting is that there are other strategies that I do not feel that the Government have properly explored. We ought to be focused on growth and on how business can contribute to it. Let us not forget that we have such a deficit situation in this country not because of so-called excessive public service consumption but because tax receipts have been so depressed. That has partly been caused by the credit crunch and the lack of credit available, which provoked the private sector investment strike that has been mentioned by my hon. Friend the Member for Hemsworth (Jon Trickett).

Stewart Hosie: When the hon. Gentleman and his hon. Friend talk about a private sector investment strike, I wonder whether it might not be because there

has been negative growth in unused sterling credit facilities for the past 27 months. Businesses, large and small, have simply been unable to get the cash.

Chris Leslie: Indeed. There are liquidity problems across the economy and they remain. There are rumours in the air about the return of quantitative easing and that we might be entering into double-dip recession territory. All these things prove that the so-called independent Office for Budget Responsibility's downgrading of growth predictions as a result of the measures in the Budget suggests that the Government had a choice in their hands to steer the economy in a particular direction and that they have chosen not the pro-growth path that the Liberal Democrats and the Labour party advocated before the election but, because of the damascene conversion of the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills the day after the general election, the anti-growth path. They will take a whole chunk of money out of the economy by cutting public services so steeply and so massively in such a short space of time.

Andrew Bridgen (North West Leicestershire) (Con): Does the hon. Gentleman not appreciate that there is no money for the private sector from the banks because of the legacy of the last Labour Government? The Government are borrowing £3 billion a week—there is no money left for the private sector.

Chris Leslie: I do not agree that the private sector is crowded out in that way. I do not think that there is quite the evidence to suggest that. However, I am not sure that the hon. Gentleman, had he been in government during the crisis that the credit crunch provoked, would have done anything massively different to underpin and insure some of the banks against their losses at that time, purchasing shares in various banking institutions in order to keep the banking system going. I understand the partisan nature of his point, but all parties would have had to create that safety net for the banks at that time. I do not want to dwell on these matters, because time is limited and it is important to make my speech as brief as I can.

I want to ask the Minister specific questions about the absence of the small profits rate cut from the Bill, a matter on which I tabled an amendment. It is important to know why on earth it is not included. Typically, large corporations with their multi-million pound profits are at the front of the queue as far as this Government are concerned, but the real engine of growth in this economy is small firms. When I asked the Federation of Small Businesses about this, Stephen Alambritis, the head of public affairs, said that he was surprised at the signal sent to small businesses by the way in which the Bill is framed. He told me:

"It is important that small business is recognised in discussions about the Finance Bill. There should be a reduction in the tax rate for small business as there is for larger companies. There seems to be some discrimination from the coalition government, in that they are favouring large companies at the expense of small business".

The Minister might say, "Of course they will get their cut," but can we really trust the Government to deliver that if they are not putting such a measure in the Bill, particularly if they are not putting in the future years of the main rate cut, too?

[Chris Leslie]

A number of questions on this clause are exceptionally important. I obviously do not want to talk for too long, so I shall let the Minister respond.

Mr Gauke: In the Budget, my right hon. Friend the Chancellor announced a programme of measures aimed at improving the competitiveness of the UK economy, including four annual 1% reductions in the main rate of corporation tax, down to 24% in 2014, and a reduction in the small profits rate to 20% from April 2011, in contrast to the previous Government's plan to increase it to 22%. That will reduce the tax rate for some 850,000 companies. The Budget also included, from April 2012, a reduction in the capital allowances main rate from 20% to 18%, a reduction in the special rate from 10% to 8% and a reduction in the annual investment allowance to £25,000. Despite that, investment allowances will permit more than 95% of businesses to offset completely their annual plant and machinery expenditure. As I said in our debate on amendment 49, by delaying these changes to allowances for two years but reducing the corporation tax rate next year, we are giving companies a year's advantage.

We have been asked why we are legislating for the 1p cut in the main rate this year. This is the usual convention as the corporation tax main rate is usually set a year at a time. The right hon. Member for East Ham (Stephen Timms) is right to say that there was an exception in 1984, when four years were done together, but the usual convention is to do these things a year at a time. A distinction has been made between the mainstream rate and the small profits rate. The right hon. Gentleman, who was a distinguished Treasury Minister for several years, may have forgotten that payers of the corporation tax main rate are within the quarterly instalments payment regime and so require advance notice of the rate, as they might be making payments of corporation tax liability before 1 April of the relevant year in which profits fall in the next financial year. Payers of corporation tax at the small profits rate do not require advance notice, as they have until nine months after the end of the accountancy period to pay their tax.

Both main and small profits corporation tax rates have traditionally been set in this manner, and what we are doing is consistent with the usual approach. The right hon. Gentleman asked about deferred tax assets, but they are not the reason why we are doing this; we are simply following the usual convention.

Opposition Members have asked whether business can have faith in what this Government do, but they should give us some time and they will see exactly what we will do: we will follow through on these promises. No great concerns about this issue have been raised with us. On deferred tax assets, when I was in opposition, I received representations not from a bank but from a major manufacturer who made the point that the right hon. Gentleman has made, but that is not what has driven our thinking regarding the timing in this area.

Stephen Timms: The Minister says that it is normal practice to do what the Bill does, but as far as I know, there has been only one occasion since this tax was introduced when a series of reductions was announced, and those reductions were all legislated for in the 1984 legislation. I am not sure what precedent he is

referring to that suggests that the way things are being this time is the normal way, as that is not the case.

Mr Gauke: The usual approach has been that the Finance Bill sets the small companies rate in-year, just as it sets the rate for income tax; the preceding year sets out the large companies rate. The right hon. Gentleman is right that there is a precedent for doing it another way, but we do not believe that business has any concerns that we will fail to follow through on our promises. There is an argument for doing it the other way, but we are pursuing the approach that has been adopted for a number of years.

Why cut corporation tax? As I have explained in debates on amendments to the clause, this package of measures takes real strides towards restoring the UK's tax competitiveness, and will support economic growth in this country. It does so in a sustainable way that provides business with a clear direction on our long-term aims—a 1% cut every year for four years clearly demonstrates our position in making the UK open for business. No other legislative changes are proposed in the Finance Bill, although the small profits rate of corporation tax will reduce from 1 April 2011 from 21% to 20%, instead of rising to 22%, as the previous Government intended. I find it somewhat strange that those who were proposing to raise that tax are now outraged that we are not legislating to reduce it, or are calling for us to reduce it even further.

9.15 pm

In 1997, the UK had the 10th lowest main rate of corporation tax in the current 27 EU countries, but we have now slipped to 20th. According to the World Economic Forum, the UK has fallen from the seventh most competitive economy in the world in 1997 to 13th. Richard Lambert, the chief executive of the CBI, has described our tax system as a

“ball and chain round the ankle of the UK economy”,

and we are throwing off the shackles, so that the private sector can be at the heart of our plan for growth. As we reduce spending—as we must if Britain is to live within her means—only the private sector can lead the recovery. We therefore need to show that Britain is open for business. The Government are taking such action immediately, showing the international business community that the UK is the right place to do business and that our tax system is one reason why. Our changes mean that by 2014, we will have the fifth lowest rate of the G20; the lowest rate of any major western economy; and the lowest rate this country has ever known.

I make four arguments for prioritising this move to reduce corporation tax. First, corporation tax rates are important in themselves in selling the UK. They are an advert for the economy and for the UK as a good place to do business. By reducing our rate we are sending the strongest possible message that Britain is open for business. Secondly, this cut is a necessary step to help to rebalance the economy. As we take tough measures to scale back the public sector, we must provide the necessary boost to the private sector. Thirdly, the OECD's estimates suggest that corporation tax is an inefficient and growth-damaging tax. Lower corporation tax rates encourage investment, which this country needs to support the recovery. Finally, far from merely being a tax cut for profitable companies, they will provide the boost to investment that is vital for Britain, and they will support jobs in the private sector.

The corporation tax package means a reduction in allowances, but it would be inappropriate to view those changes in isolation. Across the economy, the package of reductions in corporation tax rates will offset the reductions in capital allowances, making the cost of capital investment cheaper when the measures are fully implemented. That is expected to lead to an additional £13 billion of business investment between now and 2016, based on Treasury analysis.

We have taken immediate action to restore the UK's competitiveness not only by reducing corporation tax rates but by setting out how we can improve the way in which we make tax law. Competitiveness is about the wider tax environment, which can have as much influence over where a company chooses to locate as the headline rate. We will consult business on the taxation of intellectual property; on the support research and development tax credits provide for innovation; and on the proposals in James Dyson's review for making the UK the leading high-tech exporter in Europe. We will introduce a programme of reforms to the rules for taxation of foreign profits to deliver a more territorial system, including the taxation of foreign branches and the controlled foreign company rules.

The Government are committed to improving the tax system more generally, providing greater certainty, stability and simplicity. The Budget 2010 policy costings document sets out our new, more transparent approach. As I have said, we have set out a framework for developing tax policy making and tax law, set out in a discussion document published alongside the Budget.

The previous Government have left a legacy of complexity and red tape that we are determined to tackle. There is significant work to be done to correct the mistakes of the past, and we will therefore establish an independent office of tax simplification to help us to do just that.

One or two questions were raised in the course of the debate. The shadow Minister referred to the ring-fenced regime for oil and gas. We have not made any announcements on that particular matter; indeed, a period of stability is welcome after the out-of-the-blue supplementary charges introduced by our predecessors.

In setting the corporation tax rate for 2011-12 at 27%, this year's Finance Bill takes a first step towards putting Britain back on the map as an attractive place to do business. That is consistent with sound public finances.

Stephen Timms: Will the hon. Gentleman comment on my question about whether it is an explicit aim of the Government that the UK rate of corporation tax should continue to be the lowest in the G7?

Mr Gauke: Of course, our proposals go beyond that. The explicit aim of this Government is to have the best corporate tax environment within the G20. That is considerably more ambitious, and we think that it will help to lead to the UK developing a stronger private sector that will lead us to recovery. The Bill and the clause represent a step in the right direction that will benefit the UK economy very strongly.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 1 accordingly ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 2 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Schedule 1

RATES OF CAPITAL GAINS TAX

Stephen Timms: I beg to move amendment 30, page 6, leave out lines 13 to 16 and insert—

'(3) The rate of capital gains tax in respect of gains accruing in a tax year to—

(a) the trustees of a settlement is 28%, and

(b) The personal representatives of a deceased person is 18% for the first £10,000 of gains and 28% thereafter.'

The Government have decided to raise the rate of capital gains tax for people paying higher rate income tax. We are not going to object to that; indeed, we are interested to know why a higher rate has not been adopted. The rate will be left at 18% for people paying basic rate tax, but the higher rate of 28% will apply to all trusts. Some people with low incomes have their interests represented by trusts, and there is a case that it would be unfair for them to pay the higher rate. However, it has been agreed that the rate of income tax on discretionary trusts will be 50%, so I accept that it is logical to apply the higher rate of capital gains tax to them as well, although I have no doubt that that this is a question to which the House will want to return in future debates.

Amendment 30 applies to one specific situation that has been drawn to our attention by the Low Incomes Tax Reform Group—that is, the position of so-called estates in course of administration, to which the Bill as drafted would apply, in every case, a capital gains tax rate of 28%. In the case of the majority of estates of people who have died and who paid basic rate income tax prior to their death, those people, had they still been alive, would have been entitled to realise at least some capital gains at the lower rate of 18%. The Bill, however, applies a rate of 28% to any taxable gain.

The most common problem that the Low Incomes Tax Reform Group had in mind was a case in which a house increases in value between the point of the owner's death and the point at which it is sold. Under the Bill as drafted, the whole of any such gain would be taxed at 28%, even if there was no other income or capital gain accruing to the estate at all.

I acknowledge that this is a relatively straightforward problem to identify but rather more difficult to solve. The amendment suggests that to remedy pragmatically what could, as I hope I have set out, otherwise be unfair, the first £10,000 of gains in a year should always be charged at 18%, rather than 28%, with gains above £10,000 being charged at 28%. I accept that that is not an ideal solution, because wealthy estates would benefit as well as the estates of people with low incomes. If the Exchequer Secretary has a better solution, I would be interested and eager to hear it, but I hope that he will recognise that there is a potential unfairness in relation to the estates of people with low incomes that realise capital gains after the individual's death, typically when the estate includes a property.

If the Exchequer Secretary feels unable to accept the amendment, will he agree to reflect on the matter and consider whether it might be possible to address what would certainly be an unfairness in some cases in the next Finance Bill later in the year?

Mr Gauke: The amendment would set the capital gains tax rate at 18% for personal representatives of the deceased for the first £10,000 of gains, while retaining the 28% rate for gains above that level and for trustees. I am grateful to the shadow Minister for the explanation of the thinking behind it. As he said, the matter was raised by the Low Incomes Tax Reform Group. The Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales made a similar point, stating that it would be appropriate to tax the personal representatives of a deceased person in the same way as basic rate taxpayers because it is a completely different situation to that of a trust.

We believe that the treatment of personal representatives in the Bill is appropriate. The amendment would add complexity and could give rise to unfair results or avoidance opportunities. The function of personal representatives is very similar to that of trustees. They have a duty to realise the assets of the deceased person on behalf of the heirs or legatees, and it should be their primary objective to complete their duties as quickly as possible so that the assets of the estate are distributed to those people without undue delay.

The amendment could provide an incentive for personal representatives to hold on to an asset while it appreciated, so that they could sell the asset and pay tax at 18% on the gain, rather than passing the asset directly on to an heir or legatee with a potential liability of 28%. There is no reason to give that sort of incentive to increase the value of a legatee's inheritance by reducing the capital gains tax due.

I appreciate the manner in which the shadow Minister raised the matter and identified the problem. Quite fairly, he was somewhat tentative about the potential solution set out in the amendment, which I appreciate was of a probing nature. As I understand it, it is possible for personal representatives to pass assets to the heirs, so they could pay at 18% on the gains if appropriate. I will reflect further on the right hon. Gentleman's points, but as I believe he recognises, amendment 30 has its weaknesses. It could give rise to avoidance opportunities and some unfair results, and consequently I urge him to withdraw it. However, I am grateful for his comments on the amendment.

Stephen Timms: I am happy not to force a vote, and I beg to ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

9.30 pm

Stephen Timms: I beg to move amendment 31, page 6, line 16, leave out '28%' and insert '25%'.

The First Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means (Mr Nigel Evans): With this it will be convenient to discuss the following: amendment 32, page 6, line 20, leave out '28%' and insert '25%'.

Amendment 33, page 6, line 25, leave out '28%' and insert '25%'.

Amendment 10, page 9, line 29, at end insert—

‘, provided that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has laid before the House of Commons a report on the implications of aligning rates of capital gains tax with rates of income tax.’

Schedule 1 stand part.

Stephen Timms: The amendments are probing amendments. We are keen to understand the thinking that led to the figure of 28% as the rate of capital gains tax. We will not vote against the Government's proposal or for the lower figure proposed in the three amendments.

I noted that some of my hon. Friends, including some who are in the Chamber, tabled an amendment calling for a higher rate at 40%. I understand why, in accordance with convention, it was not selected for debate. However, I am puzzled that no Liberal Democrat Members put their names to that amendment because it appears to reflect the proposal in their manifesto.

The Liberal Democrat manifesto, which is always an interesting read, sets out, under the slogan, “Change that Works for You”, a series of tax-raising measures, including,

“taxing capital gains at the same rate as income, so that all the money you make is taxed in the same way.”

The document, “Liberal Democrat Tax Plans”, went into more detail. It states:

“We propose to tax capital as income in order to remove this anomaly.”

That presumably means applying a 50% rate to those on the highest income, as well as a 40% rate to those on the higher rate tax. The Liberal Democrat document claims that that would raise £3.2 billion a year. It also argues for reducing the annual tax exempt allowance from the current figure of just over £10,000 to £2,000, thereby raising a further £0.9 billion a year. That is more than £4 billion a year—a significant contribution to avoiding the unfair VAT rise, which is at the heart of the Budget and against which the Liberal Democrats campaigned. If more than £4 billion had been raised in that way, one percentage point of the 2.5% VAT rise could have been avoided.

Some of the thinking in the Liberal Democrat documents survived in the coalition agreement, which states:

“We will seek ways of taxing non-business capital gains at rates similar or close to those applied to income.”

The Liberal Democrats were therefore successful in at least getting the idea into the coalition agreement, but they signally failed to get it into the Bill. The Chancellor in his Budget speech flatly rejected the suggestion of reducing the annual exempt allowance. He said he would leave it at £10,000 and, far from reducing it to £2,000, would continue to uprate it in line with inflation in future.

I am encouraged to see the hon. Member for St Ives in his place, together with some of his hon. Friends. He has tabled an amendment, about which he will speak shortly, and he may seek to pursue the ideas in the Liberal Democrat manifesto. It would be interesting to know whether Liberal Democrats really supported those proposals when they campaigned on them. Have they been persuaded by their coalition partners that they were naive or unrealistic, or that the proposals were damaging? Have most Liberal Democrats just given up, smothered in the embrace of their new partners and no longer capable of defending the policies on which they were elected?

I am very much looking forward to what the hon. Member for St Ives has to say on that. He has already described himself as a free-ranging Back Bencher, although he was not quite free enough to range into the Aye Lobby with the Opposition earlier this evening. I am

keen to hear from him and perhaps from other Liberal Democrats, who appeared to have such distinctive views on capital gains tax during the election campaign but who have since seemingly abandoned them, choosing instead to support what is traditionally the Conservatives' favourite tax-raising device, namely an increase in VAT.

We also need an explanation from the Minister, because, as I said, the coalition agreement states:

"We will seek ways of taxing non-business capital gains at rates similar or close to those applied to income".

It is a bit hard to see how 28% can be described as "similar or close to"

40%, let alone to 50%, and I hope the Minister can offer some explanation for the adoption of 28%, which seems to be at variance with the agreement. Perhaps he could shed some light on how vigorously—behind the scenes within the Government—Liberal Democrat members of the coalition fought for the position that they succeeded in negotiating into the agreement. Alternatively, is the truth that having got that into the agreement, they simply gave up, vacated the field and meekly accepted 28% as the best that the Conservatives were going to offer them? It would be of great interest to many of us if the Minister could shed light on those discussions.

Why was the figure of 28% chosen? It somewhat narrows the differential between tax on income and tax on capital gains, but it does not narrow it any further than the position before the introduction of the 50p rate, and nowhere near abolishes it. Indeed, increasing the rate by just 10 percentage points means that somebody on the 50p rate of income tax has exactly the same incentive to convert their income into capital gains as when they paid tax at 40p in the pound. For those people—the highest earners—there has been no reduction in the incentive, but as I understand it, reducing the incentive was the whole reason for the change.

There was one hint in the Chancellor's Budget speech on the reason for choosing 28%. He said:

"I asked the Treasury to examine what would have happened if we had increased the rate much further beyond 28%, and its dynamic analysis showed that that would have resulted in smaller total revenues."—[*Official Report*, 22 June 2010; Vol. 512, c. 178.]

I would be grateful if the Minister could confirm whether the Government's view is that 28% is close to the revenue-maximising rate. Is 28% the rate at which proceeds from capital gains tax are maximised? Is he willing to place in the Library the "dynamic analysis" to which the Chancellor referred that shows how proceeds would decline if the rate were set at higher than 28%, more in keeping with the proposal in the Liberal Democrats' manifesto?

The Red Book tells us that that change will generate £725 million next year. That is certainly a handy and significant sum, but it is only about one sixth of the amount that the Liberal Democrats wanted to raise from increasing capital gains tax. Can the Minister tell us how much of that £725 million will be raised in capital gains tax, and how much of it will be raised in income tax that would otherwise have been avoided by switching to capital gains?

Paul Uppal (Wolverhampton South West) (Con): I pay tribute to the right hon. Gentleman. It is good to see him in Committee. As a new Member, I was appalled by the dreadful event that afflicted him and it is good to see him in good health and good temper.

From my experience of the working of capital gains tax, and from speaking to constituents, it is a tax that is at the discretion of the individual investor. If prudent investors accrued a capital sum over a period of time, under the old system of indexation they would hold it for a long time and then realise the gains, often paying a minimal amount of capital gains tax. He will remember the 1970s, when CGT was very high and private investors would often ask "Why materialise this asset and pay the tax?" The 28% rate strikes a fair deal, and those of us on the Conservative Benches who come from a real business background understand and appreciate that a deal has to be struck with private investors and business.

Stephen Timms: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his kind remarks, and to the Minister for his generous remarks earlier.

Of course taxpayers have opportunities, for example, to defer payment of capital gains tax and I shall come to such instances in a moment. The hon. Gentleman suggests that 28% is a compromise, but the Chancellor suggested that it might be—or is at least close to—the rate at which revenue is maximised. The Treasury has carried out some dynamic analysis to illustrate that, and it would be welcome if it could be placed in the Library so that hon. Members can see it. We need to know more about the reasons for the choice of rate, and I hope that the Minister will be able to provide us and some of his Liberal Democrat partners with some much needed enlightenment.

I wish to press the Minister on two further aspects of the proposed change—the timing of the change and, on the change to entrepreneurs relief, the reason for the increase in its generosity and the change to the way the amount relieved will be calculated. First, on the timing point, the Minister will be very familiar with the arguments against changing tax rates mid-year. Indeed, when our positions were reversed, he used to rehearse regularly the arguments against the kinds of complexities caused by changing rates mid-year. Indeed, some of his hon. Friends said earlier that they were looking forward to the Government simplifying the tax system. This is their first Bill and they have introduced a new and unprecedented complexity. What is it that persuaded the Minister that this particular complication was worth introducing? I am told that there has never been a mid-year change of rate in CGT since it was introduced in the mid-1960s. Will he acknowledge that this should not be the norm—that sudden and unannounced lurches in tax rates, in the middle of a tax year, are damaging and undermine people's confidence in the tax system? Can he assure us that the Government will do their utmost to avoid a repetition in future?

The Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales says that there are likely to be a number of practical problems, in particular with changes to the supplementary pages for capital gains for the self-assessment tax return and for filing online. Are the Government aware of those problems, and is the Minister able to tell us how they will be addressed? ICAEW also makes the point that the transitional provisions for the current financial year are insufficient from a technical standpoint. Is it intended to make further transitional arrangements in the third Finance Bill of this year—the one to be brought forward in the autumn? Is the Minister able to confirm that these matters will be discussed with the

[Stephen Timms]

experts of the CGT liaison group, ensuring through a collaborative approach that the final legislation later this year covers all the issues raised by a mid-year change?

9.45 pm

At the moment, there is free HMRC software to deal with capital gains tax calculations in the tax return. The Institute of Chartered Accountants points out the importance of HMRC modifying that software, testing it fully and having it available to handle the complications created by a mid-year change in time for the beginning of the 2011-12 financial year, so can the Minister confirm that it will be? Can he also confirm that HMRC will work with commercial providers to ensure that third-party software products are also modified in time for the new financial year? If they are not, there will be some serious practical problems next year as a result of the change, as the Minister will appreciate.

That raises the question: why is the change being made now? Why was it not left until the new financial year? I can see that leaving it would create a problem of forestalling, with people rushing to realise their capital gains in this financial year rather than next. However, a puzzling question is: why does the Red Book say that there will be no revenue at all in the current financial year as a result of the change? The Red Book says that making the change will generate £725 million next year and £825 million the year after, but nothing at all this year, even though it has been made less than a quarter of the way through the financial year. With capital gains tax having been increased on 23 June, there must surely be some immediate increase in revenue.

Secondly—and lastly—I want to ask some questions about entrepreneurs relief. The previous Government introduced entrepreneurs relief when the rate of capital gains tax was raised to 18%. We believe it right that entrepreneurship should be well rewarded, and we support the role of entrepreneurs relief for that purpose. However, I wonder whether the Minister can explain to us the thinking behind the increase in the value of gains relievable from £2 million to £5 million. To what extent does that reduce the take of £725 million expected as a result of the overall change next year?

However, the Bill does not just increase the amount of the relief; it changes the way in which it is calculated. That has raised a number of quite difficult technical issues, which I hope the Minister will comment on. When the rate of capital gains tax was 18% and the rate payable for amounts relievable under entrepreneurs relief was 10%—a difference of eight percentage points—it was important that it should be clear precisely when the higher rate was payable and when the lower rate was. However, now that the high rate is 28%, the importance of that point is made that much greater, and there will certainly be strenuous and ingenious efforts to re-classify gains as relievable under entrepreneurs relief in cases where it might not have been worth bothering in the past.

It has been recognised in previous Finance Bill debates that at some point a review of the rules around entrepreneurs relief would be needed. With the increased differential between the rates, would the Minister accept that the case for a review is now more pressing? Prior to the change, someone making an entrepreneurial capital

gain could defer payment of capital gains tax by investing it as a qualifying investment in an enterprise investment scheme company. Then, when they sold the EIS shares, they could still pay capital gains tax on the original gain that they invested at the 10% rate. As I understand how things will work under the schedule, that will no longer be the case. Entrepreneurs relief will not be available when deferral relief has been claimed. That will mean a significant reduction in the incentives for investment in enterprise investment scheme companies. Is that what the Government intended? It might be an accident arising from the different way of applying the relief introduced by the schedule. If so, will the Government bring forward changes in the autumn to correct it?

We do not propose to divide the Committee on this schedule, but the Minister will recognise that we have identified some pressing concerns in this debate. I hope that he will be able to provide both some answers and some reassurance about the Government's intentions.

John McDonnell: Following on from my right hon. Friend's exposition, I want to speak briefly to amendment 10, which stands in my name. Amendment 10 simply calls for a report on the implications of aligning the rates of capital gains tax with those of income tax. I drafted amendments that were not in order, which calls into question the ability of Back Benchers to amend the Finance Bill and is perhaps something that can be discussed at a later date.

When capital gains tax was introduced in 1965, it was an attempt to get some equivalence between income tax and taxation on gains through capital investments. There has been reform since then. It is interesting that, under Conservative Chancellors, capital gains tax was aligned with income tax rates. Then, in the late 1990s, the Labour Government introduced the tapers and the link to the time that an asset was held. In 2007, there was further need for reform when it was discovered that executives of hedge funds were determining carried interest—their bonuses, that is—as part of their capital gains tax relief. As a result, they were effectively paying 10% tax on their income—less than their own cleaners. All parties in the House acknowledged that that was a scandal and recognised the need for reform.

It is accepted that there is an element of compromise between, on the one hand, an equitable tax relationship between income tax and capital gains tax, and, on the other, an arrangement that will support genuine entrepreneurs and business. There has always been an element of fudge, but there was a view that we would try to address the issue in this Finance Bill, whoever was in Government. The previous Government were considering capital gains tax reform, and that was widely supported by the Institute for Fiscal Studies and the Institute of Chartered Accountants. Indeed, Lord Lawson himself made statements about the need for a more equitable relationship between the two, in order to tackle tax avoidance. Such reform was also included in the Liberal Democrats' manifesto. I do not want to bait the Lib Dems tonight. This is too important an issue for that, although it can be quite entertaining.

In an interview with Andrew Marr, the Prime Minister said:

"I think everyone recognises there is a problem. When you have a capital gains tax rate of 18% and a top rate of income tax at 50%, you'll find people finding all sorts of ways to treat income as capital gains."

He went on to say that the new Government would look at taking a different route to help what he described as the fairness agenda. The problem is exacerbated by the 50% increase. With income tax at 50%, even the 28% rate of capital gains tax proposed in the Bill will still leave a 22% differential to encourage further tax avoidance as people designate their income as capital gains.

My amendment simply asks for a report to be produced that will examine afresh the implications of the alignment between income tax and capital gains tax. I believe that we shall return to this issue in further Finance Bills, because I do not believe that this compromise will hold, or that it will be seen to be equitable or fair. I believe that tax avoidance will continue, certainly among the highest paid, who will re-determine their income as capital gains in order to pay the lower rate of 28%. I accept that an increase of 10% is significant, but it is not significant enough to implement the fairness agenda that the incoming Government have proposed.

Andrew George: It is a pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Hayes and Harlington (John McDonnell). I am pleased that, unlike the right hon. Member for East Ham (Stephen Timms), he chose not to bait the Liberal Democrats tonight. At this late hour, it would perhaps not be a good idea to respond to the rather combative approach taken by the right hon. Gentleman in his opening remarks. I shall merely point out that the Labour party, which claims to be the champion of the working poor, created a capital gains tax environment in which the cleaners of wealthy bankers were paying a higher marginal rate of tax than the bankers themselves. That is no doubt a cause of great embarrassment to the previous Government, so I do not think the Liberal Democrats need take any lectures from Labour Members on this issue.

Reducing the capital gains tax rate from 40% to 18% had many unintended consequences for communities across the country, including my own, which sucked in a lot more second home ownership. The more advantageous tax environment enabled more people to purchase second homes, and this made the housing environment, particularly for affordable homes, a great deal worse in many parts of the country. It is worth responding to the right hon. Gentleman: if he wishes to bait, we can certainly fight back. As for the questions he asked, most were directed at those on the Treasury Bench. The intention behind the starred amendments—I cannot refer to those standing in my name—was to probe the Government about the purpose of and background to the decision to set the capital gains tax rate at 28%.

The Exchequer Secretary has done an excellent job of responding to the issues raised this evening. I previously put questions to him—about his Department's economic modelling to determine the level of capital gains tax; what research or impact assessments he undertook before deciding to roll forward with the capital gains tax proposals; and the Department's estimates of the revenue accruing to the Exchequer from capital gains tax if the income tax rates for those with an income above the higher rate threshold were set at a range of different levels—which he answered on 7 July. Unfortunately, I was not given the requisite information to make an adequate assessment of the likely impact of this particular measure in contrast to the setting of capital gains tax at another threshold.

I put questions to my right hon. Friend the Business Secretary in the Budget debate—on 1 July, I believe, but I might have to check that. I asked him why the capital gains tax rate had been set at 28% and not a higher rate. The answer was that there is a law of diminishing returns. By the time that level is reached, the return to the Treasury would be significantly less, making it not worthwhile to take it beyond that particular level. Unfortunately, we do not have the statistical or factual basis on which to make that assessment.

Partly in response to the right hon. Member for East Ham, who commented on the Liberal Democrat manifesto commitments in the context of the level at which the threshold should be set, we have to address ourselves to the lack of evidence and information that the previous Government provided. The information on which many policy decisions were taken might well have been unreliable Treasury estimates at the time.

In conclusion, I urge the Exchequer Secretary to provide a little more information in response to my previous questions, which I think would help us all to understand rather better why the capital gains tax rate has been set at 28% and not at some other level. That would help to reassure us that it is not going to attract those who would have had to pay income tax at a much higher level if they had not simply transferred their assets into capital.

Mr Gauke: Clause 2 and schedule 1 introduce the changes to capital gains tax from 23 June 2010, as we have heard. The coalition agreement involved a commitment by the Government to align capital gains tax to levels similar or close to those applied to income, while providing generous exemptions for entrepreneurial business activity.

Within the Treasury team, we looked at various options as to how best to achieve that. The conclusion we reached, however, was that contained in the schedule. For individuals, the rate remains 18% when their income and gains for the tax year do not exceed their income tax basic rate band. Above that level, the rate is increased to 28%. Therefore, someone who is already paying income tax at the 40% or 50% rates will pay 28% on all their gains. As was mentioned in an earlier debate, the 28% rate applies to trustees and personal representatives, who will pay capital gains tax at that rate on all their gains. That ensures that trusts are not used to shelter personal gains from the higher rate of capital gains tax.

10 pm

The changes come into effect from 23 June 2010, which, as the right hon. Member for East Ham (Stephen Timms) astutely notes, is part way through the tax year 2010-11. Gains chargeable in the earlier part of that year are still liable to CGT at the old 18% rate. As he pointed out, we did that to avoid forestalling and transactions being brought forward before the end of the tax year in such a way as to distort activity. We saw that after the announcement in October 2007 of a reform in the way capital gains tax worked. The disruption within the economy and distortive effect result in the economy becoming less efficient as a consequence of the tax system. We did not go down the routes that were advocated for taper relief or indexation, which would have been difficult to implement immediately. We believe that the simple approach we adopted was the right one.

The right hon. Member for East Ham raised the concerns of some professional groups that the transitional provisions are not fully adequate. We do not accept that. A number of capital gains tax rules do not specify the exact time at which a gain arises, but they do not create difficulties in relation to the change of rate in June 2010. In such cases the facts will determine whether the gain arose before or after 23 June 2010. Exactly the same question could arise in determining whether a gain arises in one tax year or the next. That question normally causes no difficulty, and there is no justification for special provisions for 2010-11.

The right hon. Gentleman and my hon. Friend the Member for St Ives (Andrew George), whom I thank for his kind remarks, raised the key issue of why a rate of 28% was chosen. As the right hon. Gentleman suggested, the answer is that it is close to the revenue-maximising point, as several of my right hon. and hon. Friends have said in recent weeks. There was some discussion about the methodology and how we worked that out, and the right hon. Gentleman requested that we put a copy in the Library. At the time of the Budget, we produced policy costings, which set out in greater detail than ever before how these matters are worked out. I advise him to look at pages 26 and 27 of the document in particular. For the benefit of the House, however, I will comment briefly on the thinking involved.

We start with a static costing for the additional tax that would be raised as a consequence of raising the CGT rate. Two post-behavioural factors then need to be taken into account. The first is the increase in the lock-in effect. As was suggested by my hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton South West (Paul Uppal), fewer gains will be realised if a CGT rate goes up. That finding is based on extensive research, including research in the United States. According to the Treasury's assessment—based on the evidence of a considerable number of studies—

“a 1 percentage point increase in the CGT rate would reduce gains realised in the UK on average by 2.75 per cent. As a result, the 10 percentage points increase in the CGT rate for higher rate taxpayers is estimated to reduce their gains realised by 27.5 per cent. It is assumed that this reduces the pre-behavioural yield”—
of £925 million—

“by around £800 million in 2011-12... over the period.”

The second behavioural impact involves the movement from income to capital. That was raised by several Members. It was also very much behind the thinking in the Liberal Democrat manifesto, which raised the perfectly fair point that the size of the differential was such that it would result in a behavioural change, whether it be tax avoidance or tax planning. The Treasury has concluded that for every 1% reduction in the gap between the CGT rate and the higher rate of income tax, there is an increase in income tax yield of about £60 million. That increases the 2011-12 income tax yield by £600 million. I think that that answers explicitly one of the questions asked by the shadow Minister. The ultimate Exchequer impact of those two changes is that £725 million will be raised in 2011-12.

I know that the Members are anxious to hear me produce the same analysis of the figures for 2012-13, 2013-14 and 2014-15, but I am afraid that they will just have to have a look at the costings, which are available.

Stephen Timms: Why is no yield specified for the current year?

Mr Gauke: I believe that the overall effects for this period balance out, but I shall write to the right hon. Gentleman to confirm that.

The right hon. Gentleman asked about the self-assessment return and guidance notes to help people to work out their final liability. For the tax year 2010-11, HMRC has worked to automate more of the online self-assessment processes in order to help customers with the changes. The software will be available for customers to use from 6 April 2011. The improvements will be conveyed to third-party software developers at the usual time, enabling them to modify their products in good time. Full guidance will be available in the self-assessment notes on HMRC's website and through its helplines.

Andrew George: May I return the Exchequer Secretary to the subject of the “composition of income” behavioural impact that he described earlier? He referred to the tax yield in forthcoming years. Is the tax yield for every reduction of one percentage point assumed as a continuing line beyond the 28%? What happens to the behavioural change after that?

Mr Gauke: The assumption is that there is an ongoing gain—that we will gain more in income tax as a consequence of the rise in the CGT rate.

The reason why there is no yield this year has suddenly dawned on me. We do not get the receipts for capital gains tax through self-assessment immediately; it is only in future that CGT will be paid through the self-assessment process.

Stephen Timms: The Minister has made the point, however, that most of the gain is in fact income tax, which surely would score in the coming year?

Mr Gauke: I think we will see more of that behavioural effect as time goes by, but I am not sure that that will come through immediately. In some cases, it will depend on when the additional income will be crystallised or realised. I think that is the explanation, but if I have anything to add I will write to the right hon. Gentleman.

Mr David Ward (Bradford East) (LD): There is a time lag, which is why the receipts are not shown for this year. There is also a bringing forward of benefit because, as opposed to the lock-in, there is an advance disposal of the assets which would not otherwise have taken place. Also, of course, there will be a release of income tax, rather than a waiting for a capital tax and putting off the delay that would come from the capital gain.

Mr Gauke: I will write to my hon. Friend to explain further why there is no yield in the current year, but I am very grateful for his expertise in this matter.

Questions were also asked about serial entrepreneurs who cannot claim entrepreneur's relief and defer gains under the enterprise investment scheme. People can now choose between claiming entrepreneur's relief and paying capital gains tax at 10% or deferring a tax charge by reinvesting under the EIS and paying 18% or 28% when the postponed gain comes into charge. If they claim entrepreneur's relief they can still invest in EIS companies. The CGT deferral relief will not be available, but income tax relief under the EIS could still be available if the

conditions are met. Serial entrepreneurs who have used up their lifetime limit of entrepreneur's relief will be able to claim the EIS deferral relief on gains above the limit. Allowing individuals to claim both entrepreneur's relief and deferred gains will be highly complex and is inconsistent with the aim of simplifying the tax system.

The right hon. Member for East Ham also asked whether Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs is planning any extra education about the changes for customers and their advisers. HMRC will talk to representative bodies about what extra guidance is required. It will see what practical help it can give to agents generally through the "working together" agent network, and it will look at working with the media and interest groups to raise awareness among individuals who may be affected by the changes.

This is a reform that protects the Exchequer while ensuring that those on lower incomes are protected and the recovery is safeguarded. We have acted in a way that is in the spirit of the coalition agreement. I do not think any Member on the Government Benches would want to raise taxes beyond a level that would maximise revenue—revenue that is, after all, used to fund a substantial increase in the income tax threshold, taking 880,000 people out of income tax. If we had raised the level further, or if we had raised it by less, we would not have been able to do so much in that particular area. Consequently, we believe that 28% is the right level. We do not intend to return to this matter, and I ask that schedule 1 be agreed.

Stephen Timms: I do not propose to press this to a vote. I beg to ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Schedule 1 agreed to.

To report progress and ask leave to sit again.—*(Mr Newmark.)*

The Deputy Speaker resumed the Chair.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again tomorrow.

Business without Debate

DELEGATED LEGISLATION

SOCIAL SECURITY

Motion made, and Question put forthwith (Standing Order No. 118(6)),

That the draft State Pension Credit Pilot Scheme Regulations 2010, which were laid before this House on 10 March 2010, in the previous Parliament, be approved.—*(Mr Newmark.)*

Question agreed to.

COMMITTEES

POLITICAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

Ordered,

That Nick Boles, Mr Christopher Chope, Simon Hart, Mrs Eleanor Laing, Sheila Gilmore, Tristram Hunt, Catherine McKinnell, Sir Peter Soulsby, Mr Andrew Turner and Stephen Williams be members of the Political and Constitutional Reform Committee.—*(Mr Newmark.)*

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Nigel Evans): With the leave of the House, we will take motions 4 to 22 together.

Ordered,

BUSINESS, INNOVATION AND SKILLS

That Luciana Berger, Mr Brian Binley, Jack Dromey, Rebecca Harris, Margot James, Nicky Morgan, Chi Onwurah, Rachel Reeves, Mr David Ward and Nadhim Zahawi be members of the Business, Innovation and Skills Committee.

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

That Heidi Alexander, Bob Blackman, Clive Efford, George Freeman, Mike Freer, Stephen Gilbert, George Hollingbery, James Morris, Toby Perkins and Chris Williamson be members of the Communities and Local Government Committee.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

That Ms Louise Bagshawe, David Cairns, Dr Thérèse Coffey, Damian Collins, Philip Davies, Paul Farrelly, Alan Keen, Mr Adrian Sanders, Jim Sheridan and Mr Tom Watson be members of the Culture, Media and Sport Committee.

DEFENCE

That Mr Julian Brazier, Mr Jeffrey M. Donaldson, John Glen, Mr David Hamilton, Mr Mike Hancock, Mr Adam Holloway, Mrs Madeleine Moon, Alison Seabeck, Bob Stewart, Ms Gisela Stuart and John Woodcock be members of the Defence Committee.

EDUCATION

That Conor Burns, Nic Dakin, Pat Glass, Damian Hinds, Liz Kendall, Charlotte Leslie, Ian Mearns, Tessa Munt, Lisa Nandy and Craig Whittaker be members of the Education Committee.

ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

That Dan Byles, Gemma Doyle, Tom Greatrex, Dr Phillip Lee, Albert Owen, Christopher Pincher, John Robertson, Laura Sandys, Sir Robert Smith and Dr Alan Whitehead be members of the Energy and Climate Change Committee.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

That Nigel Adams, Mr David Anderson, Tom Blenkinsop, Thomas Docherty, Bill Esterson, George Eustice, Mrs Mary Glindon, Neil Parish, Dan Rogerson and Amber Rudd be members of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

That Mr John Baron, Sir Menzies Campbell, Ann Clwyd, Mike Gapes, Emma Reynolds, Andrew Rosindell, Mr Frank Roy, Sir John Stanley, Rory Stewart and Mr Dave Watts be members of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

HEALTH

That Rosie Cooper, Nadine Dorries, Andrew George, Fiona Mactaggart, Grahame M. Morris, Mr Virendra Sharma, Chris Skidmore, David Tredinnick, Valerie Vaz and Dr Sarah Wollaston be members of the Health Committee.

HOME AFFAIRS

That Nicola Blackwood, Mr Aidan Burley, Lorraine Fullbrook, Dr Julian Huppert, Steve McCabe, Mary Macleod, Alun Michael, Bridget Phillipson, Mark Reckless and Mr David Winnick be members of the Home Affairs Committee.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

That Hugh Bayley, Mr Russell Brown, Richard Burden, Mr James Clappison, Richard Harrington, Pauline Latham, Jeremy Lefroy, Ann McKechnin, Anas Sarwar and Chris White be members of the International Development Committee.

JUSTICE

That Mr Robert Buckland, Chris Evans, Mrs Helen Grant, Mrs Siân C. James, Jessica Lee, Mr Elfyn Llwyd, Claire Perry, Yasmin Qureshi, Mrs Linda Riordan, Anna Soubry and Karl Turner be members of the Justice Committee.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

That Mr Richard Bacon, Stephen Barclay, Jackie Doyle-Price, Justine Greening, Matthew Hancock, Chris Heaton-Harris, Joseph Johnson, Eric Joyce, Mrs Anne McGuire, Austin Mitchell, Nick Smith, Ian Swales and James Wharton be members of the Committee of Public Accounts.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

That Kevin Brennan, Nick de Bois, Michael Dugher, Charlie Elphicke, Paul Flynn, Robert Halfon, Greg Mulholland and Mr Charles Walker be members of the Select Committee on Public Administration.

SCOTTISH AFFAIRS

That Fiona Bruce, Cathy Jamieson, Jim McGovern, Mark Menzies, David Mowat, Fiona O'Donnell, Mr Alan Reid, Lindsay Roy, Julian Smith and Dr Eilidh Whiteford be members of the Scottish Affairs Committee.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS (JOINT COMMITTEE)

That Mr Robert Buckland, Michael Ellis, John Hemming, Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger, Mr George Mudie and Toby Perkins be members of the Select Committee appointed to join with a Committee of the Lords as the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments.

TRANSPORT

That Angie Bray, Lilian Greenwood, Mr Tom Harris, Kelvin Hopkins, Kwasi Kwarteng, Mr John Leech, Paul Maynard, Angela Smith, Iain Stewart and Julian Sturdy be members of the Transport Committee.

WELSH AFFAIRS

That Guto Bebb, Alun Cairns, Geraint Davies, Glyn Davies, Jonathan Edwards, Nia Griffith, Susan Elan Jones, Karen Lumley, Jessica Morden, Owen Smith and Mr Mark Williams be members of the Welsh Affairs Committee.

WORK AND PENSIONS

That Harriett Baldwin, Karen Bradley, Ms Karen Buck, Margaret Curran, Richard Graham, Kate Green, Mr Oliver Heald, Sajid Javid, Stephen Lloyd and Shabana Mahmood be members of the Work and Pensions Committee.—(*Geoffrey Clifton-Brown, on behalf of the Committee of Selection.*)

TREASURY

Ordered,

That, notwithstanding the provisions of Standing Order No. 121(2) (Nomination of select committees), John Cryer, Michael Fallon, Mark Garnier, Stewart Hosie, Andrea Leadsom, Mr Andrew Love, John Mann, Mr George Mudie, Jesse Norman, David Rutley, John Thurso and Mr Chuka Umunna be members of the Treasury Committee.—(*Mr Newmark.*)

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Ordered,

That, notwithstanding the provisions of Standing Order No. 121(2) (Nomination of select committees), Gavin Barwell, Gregg McClymont, Stephen Metcalfe, David Morris, Stephen Mosley, Pamela Nash, Jonathan Reynolds, Alok Sharma, Graham Stringer and Roger Williams be members of the Science and Technology Committee.—(*Mr Newmark.*)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Motion made,

That, notwithstanding the practice of the House as to the intervals between stages of Bills brought in upon Ways and Means Resolutions, more than one stage of the Finance Bill may be taken at any sitting of the House.—(*Mr Newmark.*)

Hon. Members: Object.

NHS (Cornwall)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—(*Mr Newmark.*)

10.17 pm

Sarah Newton (Truro and Falmouth) (Con): I am delighted to have this opportunity of welcoming the publication today of the coalition Government's health White Paper, "Liberating the NHS". It received a warm welcome in Cornwall this evening during the evening news on the BBC, with support from patient groups and GPs. I believe that making the NHS more accountable to patients and freeing staff from excessive bureaucracy and top-down control will drive up quality of care and outcomes for patients. I also welcome the measured pace of change and the Government's desire to engage in a wide range of consultations to get the detail of the proposals working for the benefit of patients.

This evening, I would like to describe the current situation and direction of travel of the NHS in Cornwall, and to raise one important aspect outlined in "Liberating the NHS" today: assuring the continued improvement in quality of care in Cornwall. In addition to the ambulance service, we have three organisations that commission or provide care for people in Cornwall: the Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust, the Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, and the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly primary care trust. There have been significant problems with some aspects of the quality of care provided by those organisations, but over the past three to four years improvements have been made. Significant challenges remain, and it is essential that momentum be maintained in the further improvement from ratings of "adequate" and "fair" to "good", and then sustained at that level.

The Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust annual health check ratings demonstrate some steady improvement. Areas that needed work were governance, financial management, infection control and elderly care. The quality of service was rated "weak", and remained weak until 2008-09. However, more recently the trust has demonstrated overall improvement through the interim core standards declaration in October 2009. The trust was registered under the Health and Social Care Act 2008 in April 2010 without conditions and with only minor concerns. The overall annual health check ratings of the Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust demonstrate improvement in performance, particularly since the high-profile investigation of services for people with a learning disability. In 2005-06, the trust's quality of service was rated weak, improving to good in 2007-08, and that improvement was sustained into 2008-09. Its quality of financial management similarly improved. The trust was registered without conditions under the 2008 Act in April 2010, and achieved foundation status on 1 March 2010.

The Cornwall and Isles of Scilly PCT has also seen some improvement in performance. In 2006-07, its quality of commissioning was rated fair, improving to good in 2007-08 and then returning to fair in 2008-09, and its quality of financial management is improving to good. The trust was also registered without condition, however this was with a moderate level of concern.

Also of relevance to all three Cornwall NHS trusts is the report on the inspection of safeguarding and looked-after children's services published by Ofsted on 23 October

2009. Out of 16 outcomes, Cornwall council was awarded only one score of "good"—there were six of "adequate" and nine of "inadequate". Although most issues for action are for the local authority, there were also issues for the health community to address, which involve all three NHS trusts to a greater or lesser degree. Action plans are in place, and oversight and scrutiny of the health element is provided by the South West Strategic Health Authority. It is performance-managing progress on delivery of the action plan weekly and bi-monthly, alongside an improvement board, which has been established.

At such an important time, when Cornwall's NHS trusts are working hard to improve the quality of care, which they need to deliver for Cornwall, it is essential that momentum is not lost. The regulation of the quality of care is vital to patient confidence. The ability of patients and clinicians to access information about the quality of services provided, as well as their being able to feed in information to the inspection and regulation regime, is very important. With the abolition of many centrally imposed targets and more devolved target setting and commissioning, the regulation and inspection of the quality of commissioning will need to adapt to this new environment. Many local factors are important to health outcomes in Cornwall, such as access to services, and those will be able to be taken into consideration. There is also an opportunity to invite the greater involvement of patient and clinical experience of services into the regulation and inspection regime.

The information provided to patients must embrace all that goes on to make up quality, including access, waiting times, cleanliness, infection rates, quality of clinical care, results for patients, access to same-sex accommodation and single rooms, cancelled operations, emergency readmissions, discharge arrangements, numbers of complaints, patient experience and patient-reported outcomes. Most of those data already exist, but they are difficult to access for many people. An open attitude to acknowledging and acting upon criticism is also needed to drive up the quality of care. If we had an open information culture, the scandalous failings that took place in Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells and then at Stafford hospital would not have gone unchallenged.

I am concerned by the number of clinicians in the NHS in Cornwall who tell me that when they challenge their manager and try to improve a service for patients they are told, "Nothing can be done", "There's no point saying anything as nothing will change" and, "Don't ask, don't tell, don't complain". At Mid Staffs there was clearly a sense among some of the professionals, and indeed the public, that the hospital had problems, but that was just the way things were done. That is just not good enough. We should never allow that sort of thing to happen again.

Andrew George (St Ives) (LD): My hon. Friend is making a good point, particularly about whistleblowers in the NHS. It is vital that they are treated seriously and not threatened or bullied as a result of their whistleblowing.

Within the coalition agreement, to return to the role of patients and the local community, there was a commitment to a strong voice for patients locally through directly elected individuals on the boards of local primary care trusts, with the other members being representatives from the local authorities. However, those PCTs will be

[Andrew George]

abolished. Does my hon. Friend agree that in Cornwall we need to ensure that there is some democratic accountability and community representation in the overview, scrutiny and management of the local NHS?

Sarah Newton: I thank my hon. Friend for that comment and I am sure that when the Minister replies he will describe some of the proposals in the White Paper to give local authorities and representatives far greater involvement in the overview and scrutiny of health services.

Instead of whistleblowing being seen as going outside the organisation, we should see such challenges as integral to safety and improvement within the organisation. In April 2009, John Watkinson was dismissed from his role as chief executive of the Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust. He took his case to an employment tribunal, which has published its judgment that he was unfairly dismissed. In the opinion of the tribunal, he was unfairly dismissed because he made a “protected disclosure” covered by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. The disclosure was linked to the reconfiguration of upper gastro-intestinal services in Cornwall. The tribunal also found that the trust acted as it did as a result of pressure from the South West strategic health authority. Verita, a specialist company that conducts independent investigations, reviews and inquiries, has been commissioned to undertake a review and will report later this year. With a different culture in the NHS, this difficult situation might well have been avoided.

In the same way, instead of seeing complaints as a burden, distraction or something to be dealt with outside mainstream service provision, we must see them as integral to the improvement of the service that we provide. Learning from our mistakes, listening to complaints, comparing what we do, evaluating our performance and constantly seeking to improve quality are the features of the best performing organisations in every sector, and they can be already found in the best performing NHS trusts.

Listening to patients—asking, reporting and learning from patient experience—will be of great importance in designing and improving services, including achieving greater efficiency. However, the NHS too often asks insufficiently penetrating questions, insufficiently frequently, of too few patients. The NHS patient survey, which asks whether patients are satisfied with the care they received, is too much like asking patients if they are grateful.

I have read with interest the section in the White Paper entitled, “Autonomy, accountability and democratic legitimacy”. It sets out the outline of the proposed registration, evaluation and inspection regime. The Care Quality Commission process is new and generally thought to have made a good start in Cornwall, and I am pleased to see that it has an extended role in regulating quality of care.

Given the important stage that the NHS trusts have reached in Cornwall, assistance from those aiding the improvements that have already been identified in action plans needs to continue. As a result, I want to understand what plans the Minister has to develop the regulation and inspection of care providers and commissioners to ensure that standards of health care and the confidence

of clinicians and patients in that care are improved. What is the time frame for migrating from the current regime to the new one and who will be involved in the consultation process for the creation of the new regime?

10.29 pm

The Minister of State, Department of Health (Mr Simon Burns): May I say, Mr Deputy Speaker, what a particular pleasure it is to have you in the Chair this evening for this important and interesting debate on the NHS in Cornwall? I pay tribute to my hon. Friend the Member for Truro and Falmouth (Sarah Newton) for securing her first Adjournment debate on this subject, which is important not only to her constituents but to the constituents of all other hon. Members and hon. Friends from Cornwall. I know from an earlier debate in Westminster Hall with my colleague the hon. Member for St Ives (Andrew George) that he has long-term concerns about funding for the NHS in Cornwall.

The comments of my hon. Friend the Member for Truro and Falmouth about my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State’s announcement on the White Paper, liberating the NHS, and the way it has found approval in her county are replicated throughout the country. That is, as she rightly said, because of the freedoms and liberation that the Government are giving to the NHS, not only in Cornwall but throughout England, so that we do not have an NHS that is distorted by targets and in which clinical decisions are taken not on clinical grounds but to meet deadlines. We will not have politicians and civil servants in Whitehall seeking to micro-manage the NHS throughout the country.

Next to reducing the deficit, the NHS is the Government’s top priority. That is why we have decided that, despite the dire state of the public finances, the sick should not have to foot the bill for years of living beyond our means. We will increase NHS spending in real terms for each year of this Parliament. As today’s White Paper sets out, that money will be accompanied by a radical shift of power away from the centre and down to the front line. For the first time, NHS staff will have the responsibility and the resources to improve outcomes for patients, free from the shackles of central Government, and patients will be given more power over their care and treatment than ever before.

The White Paper shows that the NHS can become a truly world-class service that is easy to access, that treats people as individuals and that offers care that is safe and of the highest quality. We have published a revised operating framework for the NHS as a first step in delivering those priorities. The framework is putting in place a zero-tolerance approach to infections, setting out how we can move from process targets to evidence-based measures of quality, developing payments for performance geared to results and moving towards a service that empowers clinicians and makes them more accountable for achieving the best outcomes for their patients.

The NHS in Cornwall has made important strides in the past 12 months and I pay tribute to NHS staff across the whole county, who are already improving the care given to my hon. Friend’s constituents. For example, in 2008-09, the Care Quality Commission’s annual health check gave the Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS trust a “weak” designation for quality of services, but with the hard work and dedication of staff, it obtained registration

without conditions with the CQC for 2010-11. On 1 March, the Cornwall Partnership NHS trust became Cornwall's first foundation trust. It has consistently achieved good ratings from regulators and I know that its services are well regarded by patients and commissioners.

The PCT is working hard to move services closer to home for patients, with several services being brought back into the county, including those on surgery to widen blocked or narrowed coronary arteries, breast reconstruction, treatment for wet, age-related macular degeneration and services for weight management. In the past two years, the PCT has moved care closer to home for more than 19,000 people and it is committed to moving a further 10% of services out of district general hospitals and into the community. It will also work with the local authority to improve patient transport services in order to improve access for the constituents of my hon. Friend and of other hon. Members who are present.

The NHS in Cornwall is involved in some innovative pilot schemes. The whole systems demonstrator pilot is enabling more than 1,000 people to be cared for while remaining independent and in their own homes. That is the biggest pilot of its kind in the UK. The Newquay integrated care pilot is changing the way that people with dementia are cared for. A new purpose-built health centre has just opened in Truro alongside the two existing GP practices. It provides a wide range of services, including family planning, podiatry, physiotherapy, speech and language therapy and social care. The scheme is the result of collaboration between local GPs, members of the public, the local council and other stakeholders.

My hon. Friend mentioned the situation at the Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust. Although it received a "weak" designation in 2008-09, the CQC annual health check showed that significant improvements have enabled it to obtain registration without conditions with the CQC for 2010-11. After an independent review of management and governance, and recommendations reported in 2009, the strategic health authority carried out a six month review of the trust's progress, followed by monthly follow-ups until the end of the last financial year.

At that point, the trust was able to confirm that it had achieved all the recommendations. The PCT and the SHA are arranging a formal meeting with the Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust further to review the trust's performance against the recommendations. At its board meeting on the 30 June, the trust agreed the updated chairman's progress review action plan, which continues to be monitored through the trust's monthly chairman's meeting. Progress reports have been shared with the PCT, and clear progress is being made.

My colleague the hon. Member for St Ives (Andrew George) discussed the election of members to PCT boards—a proposal which, as he now knows, is somewhat past its sell-by date. As a result of discussions with the coalition, we have determined the right way forward. In addition to abolishing strategic health authorities—that was in his manifesto—the whole reform package in the White Paper on PCTs and the transfer of commissioning to GP practices makes his proposal redundant. The idea of locally elected PCT members will therefore not be pursued.

Andrew George: I am grateful to the Minister for his response. As he says, things have moved on in a few weeks on the commitment directly to elect PCT boards, but a vacuum has been left, and not just in Cornwall, because we must make sure that finances are adequate for future need and because the local community cannot be represented through the GP commissioning boards. It needs a role in the shaping of services.

Mr Burns: I am extremely grateful to my hon. colleague. As he reads the White Paper in conjunction with other documents that will flow from it in the next few weeks, he will come to understand that all the pieces are in place to deal with the concerns that he has expressed. We as a Government are committed to providing a strong local voice for patients through democratic participation. As he and my hon. Friends will appreciate, the nub of the White Paper announced today for Cornwall and for the rest of England is about putting patients at the heart of our reforms, so that their desires and health care needs drive the reformed NHS. No longer will the NHS be told from the top what has to be done throughout our local communities, both in Cornwall and elsewhere. It will be driven by a bottom-up, rather than a top-down, process. To meet that objective, PCT commissioning functions will be phased out and transferred to the NHS commissioning board.

My hon. Friend the Member for Truro and Falmouth asked about the time scale for these reforms. The time scale for phasing is between now and 2013. We propose to replace PCTs with an enhanced role for elected councillors and local authorities to boost local democratic engagement in the NHS. Given the way in which the whole system is to be held accountable, they will increase their responsibilities from their existing role in the public health sphere.

I now turn to my hon. Friend's point about information. If we are going to create a national health service that is driven by patients, for patients, they must have the information that qualifies them to make the decisions and the choices that are all part of our vision for a patient-led NHS. I can give her this commitment: information across the whole of the health sector will be made available to all patients and members of the public so that they will be able to access it and then make a judgment based on their health requirements as to their choices of consultants and hospitals. That informed decision making can be provided only by enhanced information for those people. I can assure her that that information will be made available so that they can make those decisions and choices.

My hon. Friend mentioned whistleblowing. As she will know, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is a strong supporter of holding the NHS to account when it fails or could do better to ensure that we have the finest health service that does not concentrate on processes, as it has for too long, but is driven by outcomes, which is the important thing that matters the most to our constituents. My right hon. Friend has already stated that he is going to strengthen and protect the position of whistleblowers, to use the old-fashioned phrase—I am not convinced it is the best one, but it is certainly the most obvious—so that people who see things that are wrong or things being done that should not be done have the protection and the confidence to be able to draw them to the attention of the authorities

[Mr Simon Burns]

so that we can right the wrongs and make the improvements without those individuals fearing for their jobs, future careers and commitment to the NHS. I hope that my hon. Friend is reassured by that.

My hon. Friend mentioned the inspection and regulation regime and the Care Quality Commission. Let me tell her, although she will certainly know the basic principles, that the role of the CQC as the regulator of all health care providers will be strengthened by a clear focus on essential levels of safety and quality. All providers of regulated health care and adult social care will be registered against essential levels of safety and quality, and the CQC has the power to take action against providers that do not meet these standards. The CQC will carry out targeted inspections of providers against the essential standards.

As my hon. Friend will be aware from the White Paper, GP consortiums will commission the majority of health services in place of PCTs, and the NHS commissioning board will authorise consortiums and hold them to account for their performance. The CQC will no longer have a role in assessing commissioning. On the involvement of patient and clinical experience of services in the regulation and inspection regime, instead of focusing on the measurement of processes or targets, the CQC now places the experiences of the people who use health and social care services at the very heart of its work.

The CQC actively seeks the views of people who use health and social care services when making assessments of the quality and safety of that care. When inspecting a care provider, it asks to see evidence of outcomes and evidence that patients experience effective, safe and

appropriate care. Rather than looking at policies, it speaks to people experiencing care, to their families and to staff to find out what the quality of care is like in practice. The CQC also actively seeks the views of clinicians, who play a crucial role in improving the quality of care. When there is a problem, it works with them to work out the best way to solve it and to improve care. Clinicians' expertise in service delivery and design is invaluable, as I am sure my hon. Friend will agree.

In addition, the CQC works in partnership with a range of professional regulators, such as the General Medical Council and the Nursing and Midwifery Council, to ensure that its assessments of a provider are informed by their views on clinical best practice. Integration with HealthWatch, as announced in today's White Paper, will give patients in Cornwall and throughout the country a greater public voice, providing a greater connection between their views and the actions of the regulator.

I reassure my hon. Friend, my colleague the hon. Member for St Ives and all other hon. Members from the great county of Cornwall that we are determined to improve and enhance the quality of care in the county and throughout the whole country. We want to ensure that the improvements are experienced by patients, because patients are at the heart of the new NHS that we envisage. Only by taking into account what they want and their patient experience within the NHS can we make the improvements necessary to ensure that we have a great NHS not just for the next five years but thereafter.

Question put and agreed to.

10.46 pm

House adjourned.

Written Ministerial Statements

Monday 12 July 2010

CABINET OFFICE

National School of Government

The Minister for the Cabinet Office and Paymaster General (Mr Francis Maude): The 2009-10 annual report and accounts for the National School of Government have been laid before Parliament today. The report has been placed in the Library of the House for the reference of Members and copies will be made available in the Vote Office.

EDUCATION

Children's Commissioner for England

The Secretary of State for Education (Michael Gove): I am today announcing that the Government have commissioned Dr John Dunford OBE, currently general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, to carry out an independent and consultative review of the office, role and functions of the Children's Commissioner for England. Dr Dunford has wide practical experience of the reality of children's lives. I have written to him today to set out the remit of this review and would like to take this opportunity to provide the House with further details.

The education, health and well-being of children are vitally important for our society. The Government are committed to the United Nations convention on the rights of the child (UNCRC) and believe it is vital that children and young people have a strong, independent advocate to champion their interests and views and to promote their rights.

The role of Children's Commissioner for England was created by the Children Act 2004 with a remit to promote awareness of the views and interests of children in England. I would like to acknowledge the work that the current commissioner, and her predecessor, have done to this end and make the voices of children and young people heard.

It is now over five years since the first Children's Commissioner for England took up office but the role and remit have not yet been reviewed. There is continued debate about the remit of the post: as compared to its counterparts in other countries and the devolved Administrations; its public profile; and the impact it has had.

The Government have committed, in our coalition agreement, to increase accountability and review the cost of quangos and, therefore, I agree with the broad consensus that it is now time to take stock of the office,

role and functions of the Children's Commissioner for England through a detailed and considered review. This will provide an opportunity for the Government to consider the views of a wide range of partners on how Government can best promote children's interests.

The review will take a wide-ranging and independent look at the office, role and function of the Children's Commissioner. Dr Dunford will determine how the review will be conducted but I have asked him to ensure maximum opportunities to consult are taken and to consider the broad spectrum of opinions on this issue including the views of children and young people. With this in mind, I understand that Dr Dunford will be launching a call for evidence and I am sure he will be keen to secure the opinion of parliamentarians.

In particular I have asked for the review to cover three key aspects:

- 1) The powers, remit and functions of the Children's Commissioner.
- 2) The relationship with other related functions supported by Government.
- 3) Value for Money.

A copy of my full remit letter to Dr Dunford is available in the House Library.

I have asked Dr Dunford to provide me with an update in mid-October and a full report by the end of November. I will then consider the recommendations and the implications for any further action by Government, including the need for any legislative change.

The current role and functions of the Office of the Children's Commissioner will of course continue during the period of this review.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Agriculture and Fisheries Council (June)

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Mrs Caroline Spelman): My hon. Friend the Minister of State and the Under-Secretary with responsibility for the natural environment and fisheries, my hon. Friend the Member for Newbury (Richard Benyon), represented the United Kingdom at the Agriculture and Fisheries Council in Luxembourg on 29 June. Richard Lochhead MSP also attended. This was the last Agriculture and Fisheries Council under the Spanish presidency.

On fisheries Commissioner Damanaki set out a fairly clear picture of the current state of fish stocks. The Commission had published its annual policy statement which set out the framework for determining what catch limits would be proposed for 2011, once the scientific advice was published. However, it proposed more strict catch limits for over-exploited stocks to reach the level of maximum sustainable yield (MSY) by 2015, in line with agreements at the 2002 Johannesburg World Sustainable Development Summit.

Most fishing member states commented. The UK stressed the following points (with a number of member states supporting each):

Achieving MSY should be done pragmatically given differences of scientific opinion, and the difficulty of establishing targets for single stocks in mixed fisheries;

Catch limits for stocks with insufficient data should be set as per last year, rather than reduced in line with catches as proposed;

Catch quotas (rather than current landing quotas) should be more widely used on a pilot basis in order to reduce discarded fish;

The quality and coverage of scientific data should be improved, including using industry input.

The Commission welcomed broad support on its approach, but remained firm on pleas for certain stocks; fisheries could not remain sustainable with current levels of fishing and numbers of vessels; changes needed to be made.

Damanaki also pressed the need for radical and fundamental reform of the common fisheries policy (negative economic outlook for most fleet segments; overcapacity driving down profitability leading to unsafe fishing practices, non-EU crew and leading to undue pressure on fishing stocks; negative social aspects; the amount of aid directed to the industry; low employment forecasts). A new regime should include a mix of individual transferable rights and effort management for limiting fishing opportunities and be operated on a much more regionalised basis.

The UK lead the support for this (against French, German and Polish defence of much of the current regime) emphasising the following points:

Simplified and decentralised decision-making with a more regionalised CFP;

Move away from rigid quota rules; rights for fishing should be transferable within a member state;

Support for the social and cultural aspects of fishing in coastal communities;

Reduce discarded fish;

Greater integration of fisheries with other marine policies, especially environmental;

No additional regulation of aquaculture at EU level, external fisheries policies to be consistent with internal ones.

There were two points raised under any other business—the Commission emphasising the importance of immediately submitting national programmes for take up of the European Fisheries Fund (EFF); and Ireland drawing attention to Iceland's recent declaration of a very large unilateral quota for mackerel in its waters (with the Faroes also threatening similar action). The UK stressed the vital importance of the mackerel stock to its industry being the most important to it economically. The present actions by Iceland and Faroe Islands were threatening the future sustainability of the stock. The Commission were encouraged (lead by the UK) to adopt a strong position to defend EU interests. The Commission undertook to talk to both countries.

Finally on fisheries, Ministers had an informal discussion on the future of the common market organisation of fisheries.

On agriculture, Council conclusions on the international competitiveness of the European agri-food model adopted as an A item without any comments.

Commissioners Ciolos (Agriculture) and Dalli (Health and Consumer Protection) made presentations on simplification and better regulation. This responded to ongoing pressure from the Council to reduce burdens

that affect the competitiveness of the sector, and recognising that these can originate from across the Commission. Attention was drawn to the work the Commission had already completed to simplify existing CAP regulation, but noted too that simplification would not halt there; they would adopt a further simplification package in October. The longer-term reform of the CAP would be a further opportunity for simplification.

Eighteen member states, including the UK, had submitted a political memorandum on CAP simplification. This called for continued simplification now and in CAP reform post-2013, a more risk-based approach to financial controls, to dispense with the use of flat-rate financial corrections, and to proceed in cases of financial irregularity with an eye to the real risk to Community funds. The UK also outlined the newly established UK task force assessing the burden of farm regulation, while drawing particular attention to the complexity, cost and disproportional nature of the Commission's financial control regime.

Next, the presidency sought confirmation of member states' voting intentions on the Commission's proposals to approve the placing on the market for food and feed use (but not cultivation) of five new varieties of genetically modified maize and to renew one existing authorisation. The six draft decisions were referred to the Council under the comitology rules having failed to attract a qualified majority in support when first tabled at the Regulatory Committee earlier this year. Since there was neither a qualified majority in support nor against in the Council, it fell to the Commission to adopt the decisions under its own competence.

Ciolos then introduced the dairy quarterly report which, like its two predecessors, continued to show strongly positive trends for all dairy commodities. The Commission flagged its intention to adopt a dairy package later in the year responding to the final report of the High Level Group on the dairy sector. The incoming Belgian presidency said it would debate the High Level Group report at the July Council.

There were three points raised under any other business. Greece urged the Commission to take action in respect of Argentina's apparent breach of its WTO commitments in blocking imports of Greek canned peaches. The Netherlands encouraged Ministers to attend a conference it would be hosting on 31 October to 5 November in The Hague on food security and climate change. Poland drew attention to the floods that had recently inundated parts of the country.

Agriculture and Fisheries Council (July)

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Mrs Caroline Spelman): My hon. Friend the Minister of State with responsibility for agriculture and food will represent the United Kingdom at the Agriculture and Fisheries Council in Brussels on 12 July.

This will be the first Agriculture and Fisheries Council under the Belgian presidency, and they will present their Work programme. Discussions will also take place on the following:

Report of the High Level Group on Milk;

Report on the German Alcohol Monopoly;

Proposal for a regulation amending the Single Common Market Organisation (CMO) regulation with regard to the aid granted in the framework of the German Alcohol Monopoly.

WORK AND PENSIONS**Ageing Well Programme**

The Minister of State, Department for Work and Pensions (Steve Webb): I am pleased to announce Ageing Well, a new programme designed to support local authorities to improve their services for older people. The key aim of the programme is to provide a better quality of life for older people through local services that are designed to meet their needs, and which recognise the huge contribution that people in later life make to their local communities. The programme consolidates current best practice from local authorities and the lessons learned from earlier pilot activities and will be delivered by

Local Government Improvement and Development. An essential aspect of the programme is to help authorities to improve efficiency while still delivering quality services.

Ageing Well recognises that local concerns need local solutions and will encourage authorities to take the lead to work in partnership with other local organisations to develop imaginative approaches to the issues faced by their particular communities. We want to help local authorities to use their resources effectively, to promote well-being in later life, to ensure that older people can live independently for longer, to engage older people in civic life and to tackle social isolation by recognising older people's potential. The programme is driven by this Government's view that older people in our society deserve every opportunity to age well, in communities that value their experience.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 12 July 2010

INDEPENDENT PARLIAMENTARY STANDARDS AUTHORITY COMMITTEE

Members' Staff: Training

John Mann: To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the Speaker's Committee for the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority how many hon. Members have had their staff trained by the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority in the operation of its systems. [7215]

Mr Charles Walker: As of 8 July 2010 approximately 400 Members' staff have been trained in the operation of online expenses system.

Members: Bank Services

Ann McKechin: To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the Speaker's Committee for the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority what the policy of the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority is on the disclosure of bank account details submitted to the Authority by hon. Members. [7207]

Mr Charles Walker: The Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA) does not propose to publish account details submitted by MPs, including the MP's own account details, or those of their staff. This includes the details of bank accounts, mortgage, insurance or utility account numbers, and account numbers provided on individual invoices.

In accordance with the requirements of the Parliamentary Standards Act 2009, IPSA launched a consultation on its publication proposals on 16 June 2010. The consultation closed on 7 July 2010 and IPSA's finalised policy will be published before Parliament's summer recess.

Members: Finance

John Mann: To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the Speaker's Committee for the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority how many hon. Members have (a) supplied and (b) not supplied the details required to use the online financial system operated by the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority. [7216]

Mr Charles Walker: As of 8 July 2010, 639 Members have provided the required details to receive the RSA token, which enables them to use the online expenses system. 485 Members have logged on to the system and registered their intent to claim.

Members: Security

Helen Jones: To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the Speaker's Committee for the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (1) what advice on the security implications of IPSA's publication proposals was obtained by IPSA before the launch of the consultation on the proposals; [7986]

(2) whether the security advice issued to hon. Members was taken into account by IPSA in drawing up its publication proposals for consultation. [7987]

Mr Charles Walker: The Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA) is aware of the security advice issued to hon. Members and takes the security concerns of MPs and their staff very seriously.

IPSA has met the Information Commissioner's Office and the Parliamentary Security Co-ordinator to discuss security issues, including the impact of our publication scheme. Following this advice, IPSA does not propose to publish MPs' sensitive personal data, or any information about the time of any journeys made. It stands prepared to respond to security concerns should they arise in any specific individual circumstances.

Members: Training

John Mann: To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the Speaker's Committee for the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority how many hon. Members have participated in training sessions offered by the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority. [7214]

Mr Charles Walker: As of 8 July 2010, 642 Members have completed the relevant training sessions offered by IPSA.

Members: Travel

John Mann: To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the Speaker's Committee for the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority how many hon. Members have (a) applied for and (b) received travel cards from the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority. [7213]

Mr Charles Walker: As of 8 July 2010, 640 MPs have ordered travel cards from IPSA by completing a Member's details form.

Of these, 182 Members have yet to collect their cards. The cards can be collected from the IPSA Documentation Centre at 1 Parliament street, which is open every day from 09.00 to 13.00 and 14.00-16.00, until 31 July 2010.

Telephone Services

Mr Winnick: To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the Speaker's Committee for the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority whether the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA) plans to publish a list of telephone numbers and names of relevant IPSA officials who may be contacted by hon. Members on all issues regarding their staffing, office and travel costs. [7027]

Mr Charles Walker: IPSA has established an information line for MPs to contact its Support Services Team, who will take queries regarding MPs' staffing, office and travel costs. The telephone number for the information line is 020 7811 6400. Any IPSA official on the information line will be able to assist Members with their queries and will have access to records of their previous questions. IPSA regards this as a more effective approach to providing advice than publishing individual telephone numbers.

DEFENCE

Afghanistan: Peacekeeping Operations

Mr Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what estimate he has made of the number of (a) injuries and (b) fatalities incurred by the Taliban attributable to the actions of British forces in the last 12 months. [7208]

Dr Fox: The Ministry of Defence and the International Security Assistance Force do not maintain an overall estimate of the number of insurgents killed in Afghanistan. To collect and verify such information is extremely difficult given the nature of the conflict, and the risks involved would outweigh the benefits of obtaining the information. There is also no reliable method to calculate the number of insurgents killed.

The long-term strategy for defeating the insurgency in Afghanistan is not as a purely military campaign but rather through a wide range of military and non-military activities. As such, the number of insurgents killed or injured during the campaign does not provide a useful measure of success.

Armed Forces: Vehicles

David Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many non-combat vehicles are rented by each of the armed services. [5864]

Peter Luff: The UK White Fleet contract accounts for approximately 90% of the Ministry of Defence (MOD) short-term hires made in the UK. The breakdown is as follows:

<i>Top level budget</i>	<i>Total number hires FY 2009-10</i>
Air Command	19,960
Chief Joint Operations	5,413
Defence Equipment & Support	50,534
Defence Estates	6,224
Land Forces	85,033
Navy Command	26,075
The Central TLB	25,769
Trading Funds	295
Total	219,302

The number of short-term hires through the British Forces Germany White Fleet contract was 17,527. In addition, short-term overseas hires booked through MOD's Defence Travel Cell for the financial year 2009-10 amounted to 4,787.

It is not possible to breakdown the numbers of short term hires on a per service basis, as bookings are made using civilian titles for security reasons.

Hires through Government Procurement Cards, MOD agencies such as the Defence Support Group, Met Office and the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory and overseas dependencies fall outside the scope of White Fleet contracts and have separate local arrangements. These details are not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Colombia: Military Aid

Lisa Nandy: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much has been budgeted for military aid to Colombia in (a) 2010-11 and (b) future years; and whether it is included in his current review of spending. [5209]

Nick Harvey: The only military aid we provide to Colombia is for the ongoing programme of counter-narcotics assistance. It would not be appropriate to provide details about this programme, as to do so would prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of the armed forces.

Departmental Speeches

Angela Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which (a) (i) civil servants and (ii) special advisers in his Department and (b) other individuals are employed to write speeches for each Minister in his Department. [7300]

Dr Fox: Two civil servants are employed to assist with speeches for Ministers across the Department.

Historical Enquiries Team

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he has made an assessment of the findings of the Historical Enquiries Team report on the death of William McGreaney; and if he will make a statement. [6804]

Dr Fox [holding answer 8 July 2010]: No. The Historical Enquiries Team is independent of Government and provides reports to the families, not Government. Consequently, I have not seen the full report.

Iraq: Peacekeeping Operations

Mr David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence with reference to the case of Amantullah Ali, a Pakistani National arrested by British troops in the Basra area in February 2004, what steps are being taken in line with the UK's responsibilities under international conventions to ensure his proper treatment. [5285]

Dr Fox: In answering this question I have assumed that the right hon. Member's question refers to the two Pakistani Lashkar-e-Taiba members who were captured by British forces in Baghdad in February 2004, transferred to US detention in accordance with normal practice at the time and then transferred to Afghanistan by the US.

The Ministry of Defence maintains an ongoing dialogue with US colleagues on a range of detention-related matters, including the two Pakistani individuals referred to. The most recent contact of this nature occurred in

May 2009. I can also confirm that the US provides access to the two individuals by the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Andrew Stephenson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent assessment he has made of plans for the future of Operation Telic; and if he will make a statement. [5937]

Dr Fox: Operation Telic has evolved through a number of separate phases since the start of operations in 2003. Initial high-intensity war fighting soon transitioned to counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism operations, and in 2009 there was a fundamental change of mission to training and mentoring. Planning for the future of Operation Telic is the subject of ongoing work but the partnership between the UK and Iraq will continue to be strengthened through co-operation in a range of areas including the economy, culture, commerce, education and defence. It is clearly in the UK's interest to continue to develop a strong bilateral relationship with Iraq and in support of this we will look to build on our long tradition of defence co-operation. The nature and timing of such co-operation will depend on the wishes and approval of the Iraqi Parliament.

Military Bases: Safety

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place a copy in the Library of the scoping report which was based on the Haddon-Cave Nimrod review and was presented to the Defence Environment and Safety Board at its meeting of 25 February 2010. [2653]

Dr Fox [*holding answer 16 June 2010*]: No. I am withholding the report as it relates to the development of Government policy.

Trident

Katy Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects the Investment Approvals Board to consider the report of the Initial Gate review for the Trident replacement programme; whether he plans to publish that report; and what opportunities hon. Members will have to scrutinise that report. [7751]

Dr Fox: We are currently planning for Initial Gate decision towards the end of 2010, following consideration by the Investment Approvals Board in the autumn. It is not normal for Parliament to be involved in Initial Gate decisions for procurement projects. I do, however, propose to update Parliament on progress after the Initial Gate decision through the publication of a report.

ELECTORAL COMMISSION COMMITTEE

Electoral Register

Kelvin Hopkins: To ask the hon. Member for South West Devon, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission whether the Electoral Commission is undertaking work together with the Office for National Statistics on increasing the accuracy of estimates of the number of (a) eligible voters in the UK and (b) the number of such people not on the electoral register. [7759]

Mr Streeter: The Electoral Commission informs me that it is currently working with the Office for National Statistics, the General Register Office for Scotland and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency to use 2011 Census data to assess the completeness and accuracy of the electoral registers in the UK.

The aim of this is to provide estimates of the number of eligible voters in the UK and the number of eligible voters not on an electoral register. However, this analysis may not be complete until 2014 because of the length of time taken to make census data available once the collection of information is complete.

WALES

Departmental Electronic Equipment

Graham Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much her Department spent on televisions in each year since 1997. [7515]

Mr David Jones: The Wales Office was established in July 1999. Three television sets were purchased between 2000 and 2002, although the costs are not recorded.

In 2006-07 the Office purchased two television sets at a total cost of £224.16.

Departmental ICT

Graham Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much her Department spent on information and communication technology in each year since 1997. [7346]

Mr David Jones: The Wales Office was established in July 1999. No records are held on expenditure on information and communication technology before 2005-06. Wales Office IT is provided under a contract set up by the Ministry of Justice, and the costs are set out as follows:

	£
2005-06	158,869
2006-07	184,618
2007-08	194,753
2008-09	113,595
2009-10	183,988

Departmental Lighting

Graham Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much her Department spent on light bulbs in each year since 1997. [7635]

Mr David Jones: The Wales Office was established in July 1999. From 1999 until 2004 the maintenance of its building in London was undertaken through contracts managed by the National Assembly for Wales, and since then this has been done through Ministry of Justice contracts. Charges made by the Ministry of Justice to the Wales Office do not split costs down to light bulbs. If these figures could be obtained, it would be at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Marketing

Graham Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much her Department spent on logo design in each year since 1997. [7491]

Mr David Jones: The Wales Office was established in July 1999. The only expenditure on logo design was in 2000-01 when £2,728 was spent designing the Wales Office logo.

Graham Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much her Department spent on website design in each year since 1997. [7616]

Mr David Jones: The Wales Office was established in July 1999. In 2007 £10,500 was spent to redesign the Office's English and Welsh websites.

There are no records of any earlier website design costs.

Departmental Official Cars

Mr Bain: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales which Ministers in her Department have used an allocated ministerial car to travel between the Department and the House of Commons on each day since 21 May 2010. [5557]

Mr David Jones: This information is not kept on record. All travel is undertaken in accordance with the Ministerial Code.

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much her Department has spent on the Government Car Service since the Government took office. [7953]

Mr David Jones: The Wales Office has spent £16,723 on the Government Car Service since the Government took office. My office has cancelled the car contracted for my use in London, thereby halving this Department's previous number of ministerial cars in London. We are currently looking at value for money options for the car used by myself and the Secretary of State in Wales.

Departmental Official Hospitality

Graham Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much her Department spent on hospitality in each year since 1997. [7453]

Mr David Jones: The Wales Office was established in July 1999. Records for hospitality go back to 2003-04 and the amounts spent are as follows:

	£
2003-04	4,565
2004-05	6,238
2005-06	8,528
2006-07	16,467
2007-08	12,052
2008-09	8,058
2009-10	1,945

Departmental Regulation

Mr Anderson: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales which of her Department's regulations are under review; and if she will make a statement. [7141]

Mr David Jones: The following regulations will be reviewed and updated:

The National Assembly for Wales (Disqualification) Order 2006

The National Assembly for Wales (Representation of the People) Order 2007

Departmental Security

Graham Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much her Department spent on security in each year since 1997. [7383]

Mr David Jones: The Wales Office was established in July 1999. The Wales Office building has since 2008 had 24 hour security owing to its position in Whitehall. Records prior to 2005-06 did not split costs in such a way as to detail the spend on security. The costs from 2005-06 are as follows:

	£
2005-06	49,082
2006-07	71,506
2007-08	85,021
2008-09	129,887
2009-10	123,859

Departmental Stationery

Graham Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much her Department spent on stationery in each year since 1997. [7472]

Mr David Jones: The Wales Office was established in July 1999. Records do not separate the cost of stationery from the cost of other office supplies, and this could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Training

Graham Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much her Department spent on employee awaydays in each year since 1997. [7327]

Mr David Jones: The Wales Office was established in July 1999. An away day was held in February 2003, but expenditure records for that time did not separate out this cost.

In 2006-07 an away day held in Swansea cost £9,362

In 2007-08 an away day held in London cost £15,109

In 2008-09 an away day held in Cardiff cost £8,672

Also in 2008-09 policy branch held a team event at a cost of £597.

Departmental Travel

Graham Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much her Department has spent on travel for its employees in each year since 1997. [7434]

Mr David Jones: The Wales Office was established in July 1999. The following amounts have been spent on travel for the Wales Office since July 1999:

	£
1999-2000	35,654
2000-01	86,000
2001-02	105,233
2002-03	125,526
2003-04	112,129
2004-05	112,877
2005-06	114,510
2006-07	103,312
2007-08	135,840
2008-09	150,755
2009-10	182,388

The Wales Office is based in London and Cardiff and staff need to travel between the offices regularly in the course of their duties.

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales which (a) Ministers and (b) officials in her Department have been driven by the Government Car Service since the Government took office; and how much each of these persons has received in expenses for use of taxis, buses and underground trains in that period. [7954]

Mr David Jones: Both myself and the Secretary of State have had use of cars provided by the Government Car Service since the Government took office. Neither of us has made any claims for taxis, buses or underground trains in that period.

Officials in the Wales Office do not use the Government Car Service.

Departmental Utilities

Graham Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much her Department spent on (a) electricity, (b) water, (c) heating and (d) telephone services in each year since 1997. [7597]

Mr David Jones: The Wales Office was established in July 1999. Records for utilities go back to 2005-06 and the amounts spent are as follows:

	Electricity	Water	Heating	Telephone
				£
2005-06	4,132	1,569	8,505	18,558
2006-07	5,054	991	15,586	44,868
2007-08	4,007	4,015	13,746	20,208
2008-09	7,416	2,887	6,305	71,237
2009-10	9,730	414	7,140	67,376

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Members: ICT

John Mann: To ask the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, representing the House of Commons Commission how many hon. Members have (a) requested and (b) declined computer equipment provided by PICT in the present Parliament. [7248]

Sir Stuart Bell: As of 8 July 2010, 301 Members had requested new ICT equipment from PICT. No Member has yet declined the ICT equipment that PICT has provided.

Plants

Barbara Keeley: To ask the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, representing the House of Commons Commission how much was spent on flowers and plants in the House of Commons in 2009-10; and how much is estimated to be spent in 2010-11. [6720]

Sir Stuart Bell: Expenditure on flowers and plants in the House of Commons in 2009-10 was £122,227 and estimated expenditure in 2010-11 is £115,939.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Apples

Andrew Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what quantity of (a) apples and (b) apple concentrates was imported to the UK in each of the last 10 years; and what quantity was consumed in each such year. [6210]

Mr Paice: The following table provides details of UK imports of apples as recorded in the Official Overseas Trade Statistics for the period 2000-09.

Information on UK imports of apple concentrates is not collected.

UK imports of apples, 2000-09

	Cider apples	Fresh apples, other than cider apples	Apples, fresh—total
			Tonnes
2000	8	473,729	473,737
2001	6	467,787	467,793
2002	33	448,433	448,466
2003	2,468	473,941	476,409
2004	1,161	523,753	524,915
2005	237	520,376	520,613
2006	129	537,924	538,052
2007	404	522,709	523,114
2008	273	477,718	477,992
2009 ¹	36	456,077	456,112

¹ 2009 data are subject to amendments.

Note:

Data prepared by Trade Statistics, Economics and Statistics Programme, DEFRA.

Source:

H M Revenue and Customs

The following table shows the quantity of apples purchased by UK households from 1999 to 2008. Figures from 2009 have not yet been published.

Information on the household consumption of apple concentrates during this time is not available, and we

have no estimate of the quantity of apples going into food manufacturing and catering.

Household purchase of fresh apples

	<i>Thousand tonnes</i>									
	1999	2000	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006	2007	2008
Weight (thousand tonnes)	536	575	538	520	516	525	545	548	554	514
g/person/week	174	187	175	172	171	173	179	180	178	162
Tonnes/person/year	0.009	0.010	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.008
Population (thousand)	'59,139	'59,139	59,139	57,990	58,142	58,313	58,473	58,603	59,737	60,816
Thousand tonnes/year	536	575	538	520	516	525	545	548	554	514

¹ Estimated.

Note:

The table covers purchases for household supplies by all UK households. National Food Survey estimates are adjusted to align with the Living Costs and Food Survey.

Source:

2001 Family Food Module of the Living Costs and Food Survey; prior to 2001 National Food Survey

Andrew Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what quantity of apples was produced in the UK in each of the last 10 years; and what quantity was consumed in each such year.
[6211]

Mr Paice: The following table shows the quantity of apples produced in the UK from 1999 to 2008. Figures for 2009 have not yet been published.

Apples home production marketed from 1999 to 2008

	<i>Thousand tonnes¹</i>									
	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
<i>Dessert Apples</i>										
Cox's Orange Pippin	76.5	48.6	61.0	41.4	34.5	46.6	60.1	64.0	39.2	50.8
Worcester Pearmain	3.6	3.6	2.6	2.5	2.0	2.6	2.6	2.3	1.8	1.9
Discovery	6.5	4.6	3.7	2.9	2.4	2.2	2.9	3.0	2.9	2.8
Early Season	2.9	1.2	1.3	1.0	0.9	1.7	1.9	2.3	2.2	2.0
Mid Season Desserts	8.4	7.8	7.0	7.1	6.8	7.3	7.8	7.7	7.4	6.7
Late Season Desserts	36.1	35.5	28.9	29.1	22.4	31.7	42.8	50.0	52.7	54.3
Total Dessert Apples	133.9	101.3	104.4	84.0	69.0	92.2	118.0	129.3	106.2	118.4
<i>Culinary Apples</i>										
Bramley's Seedling	109.4	105.1	105.4	94.0	73.3	76.6	98.5	109.9	135.3	123.0
Other Culinary	3.0	2.3	1.9	1.3	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6
Total Culinary Apples	112.4	107.5	107.4	95.3	74.9	78.2	100.1	111.5	136.9	124.5
Total Apples:	246.4	208.7	211.8	179.4	143.9	170.3	218.2	240.8	243.1	243.0

¹ 'Home Production Marketed' means the quantity of apples grown in the UK that made it to market. Any losses during the growing process are not accounted for in the table.

Source:

DEFRA publication: Basic Horticulture Statistics

The following table shows the quantity of apples purchased by UK households from 1999 to 2008. Figures from 2009 have not yet been published. A breakdown

estimate of the quantity of apples going into food manufacturing and catering is not available.

Household purchase of fresh apples

	<i>Thousand tonnes</i>									
	1999	2000	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006	2007	2008
Weight (thousand tonnes)	536	575	538	520	516	525	545	548	554	514
g/person/week	174	187	175	172	171	173	179	180	178	162
Tonnes/person/year	0.009	0.010	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.008
Population (thousand)	'59,139	'59,139	59,139	57,990	58,142	58,313	58,473	58,603	59,737	60,816
Thousand tonnes/year	536	575	538	520	516	525	545	548	554	514

¹ Estimated

Note:

The table covers purchases for household supplies by all UK households. National Food Survey estimates are adjusted to align with the Living Costs and Food Survey.

Source:

2001 Family Food Module of the Living Costs and Food Survey; prior to 2001 National Food Survey

Boilers: Biofuels

Graham Stringer: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will publish a full emissions profile for the use of B30K fuel in domestic boilers, including all air quality pollutants contained in the air quality strategy. [6808]

Richard Benyon: DEFRA does not hold any information on the emissions profile of the fuel B30K.

Butterflies

Mrs Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent discussions her Department has had with conservation groups on decreases in the population of butterflies. [7116]

Richard Benyon: Butterfly Conservation and the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology provide data on populations of butterflies that we published in "UK Biodiversity Indicators in Your Pocket 2010" on 20 May.

Officials are in regular contact with these organisations to ensure that the indicators of butterfly conservation trends that we publish are accurate and objective.

Officials from DEFRA and Natural England meet Wildlife and Countryside Link regularly—an umbrella body that brings together voluntary organisations in the UK, including Butterfly Conservation, to protect and enhance wildlife, landscape and the marine environment. Officials met Wildlife and Countryside Link earlier this year to discuss progress with commitments to halt biodiversity loss.

Departmental Official Cars

Mr Watson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many (a) civil servants and (b) special advisers in her Department are entitled to the use of (i) a car with a dedicated driver, (ii) a car from the Government car pool and (iii) a taxi ordered through a departmental account. [3205]

Richard Benyon: There are no civil servants or special advisers in the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs entitled to the use of a car with a dedicated driver nor are any entitled to use a car from the ministerial car pool.

Civil servants and special advisers can use a taxi when this is justified, for instance when no other method of public transport is available or when carrying heavy official papers, baggage or equipment. The Department has an account with the Government Car and Despatch Agency for the provision of such services when required.

Mr Bain: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which Ministers in her Department have used an allocated ministerial car to travel between the Department and the House of Commons on each day since 21 May 2010. [5545]

Richard Benyon: All travel is undertaken in accordance with the Ministerial Code.

Departmental Public Expenditure

Mr Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the written ministerial statement of 26 May 2010, *Official Report*, columns 2-3WS, on savings (2010-11), under what budgetary headings the £162 million of savings allocated to her Department will be made. [6834]

Richard Benyon: I would refer the right hon. Member to the information contained on the DEFRA website at the following link:

<http://ww2.defra.gov.uk/about/corporate-finances>

I quote an extract in answer to his question:

"These in-year efficiencies will include the following elements:

£49 million from Core DEFRA operational efficiencies

Core DEFRA admin—£12 million (5.5%);

IT—£17 million;

Estates—£19 million;

Shared services, knowledge management, performance—£1 million

£45 million equating to a 5% in-year cut in budgets of DEFRA's Arm's Length Bodies

£8 million from reducing funding for Regional Development Agencies

£7.5 million from a reduction in (un-used) grants to Local Authorities for contaminated land

£30 million savings in flood management while still maintaining expenditure at record levels

£23 million from reducing other low value spend:

£5 million from making better use of EU funding for Catchment Sensitive Farming

£9 million from the Rural Development Programme for England including from reducing agri-environment capital payments

£5 million from scaling back IT investment on the Whole Farm Approach

£4 million reflecting the decreasing prevalence of Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies disease in recent years."

Environment: Internet

Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether she plans (a) to maintain the public availability of the datasets stored on the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside website and (b) to continue to collect and make publicly available information on environmental schemes and designations in that format; and if she will make a statement. [7293]

Richard Benyon: DEFRA and the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) project remain committed to maintaining the public availability of the datasets that are currently available through the MAGIC website:

www.magic.gov.uk

The website is one of the sites that we plan to close as part of the transformational Government website rationalisation process, but I will ensure that the MAGIC service and datasets continue to be made available to the public.

Flood Control: EU Law

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects the EU Floods Directive 2007/60/EC on the assessment and management of flood risk to be implemented in the UK; and if she will make a statement. [7919]

Richard Benyon: The EU Floods Directive was transposed into law in England and Wales by the Flood Risk Regulations 2009, which came into force on 10 December 2009. The directive has also been transposed through separate legislation in Scotland and in Northern Ireland.

The first stage of the directive is now being implemented in England and Wales. The Environment Agency has issued guidance to lead local flood authorities on how to prepare preliminary assessment reports.

Work is now under way to determine an appropriate method for identifying areas of significant risk, for which flood maps and flood risk management plans will need to be prepared.

Water Supply: Hertfordshire

Mrs Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent assessment her Department has made of the levels of perfluorooctane sulphonate remaining in water supply areas of Hertfordshire as a result of the incident at Buncefield in December 2005. [7117]

Richard Benyon: The Environment Agency continues to monitor for the presence of perfluorooctane sulphonate (PFOS), as a consequence of the Buncefield explosion in December 2005. This monitoring showed a peak in concentrations of pollutants indicative of fire fighting foam and petrol during 2006. Since 2006 the concentrations have reduced but the Environment Agency's monitoring still shows these pollutants consistently throughout the chalk aquifer, with higher levels under the site itself.

The detection of PFOS in the aquifer has not resulted in any impact on drinking water quality. The quality of drinking water in England is regulated by the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 2000. The requirements of these regulations are enforced by the Drinking Water Inspectorate. Although standards are not specified for all chemical compounds in existence, the regulations do require that, in order to be considered "wholesome", drinking water must not contain any substance at a level which would constitute a potential danger to human health.

The Drinking Water Inspectorate has issued guidance on the levels of PFOS perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) that water companies should act on in order to fulfil their statutory obligations to ensure the safety of drinking water. This guidance was based on independent advice from the Health Protection Agency. Weekly monitoring by the water company of treated drinking water supplied to consumers has shown that detections of PFOS are significantly below trigger levels in place to protect public health.

Wildlife: Crime

Mr Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) if she will establish (a) a telephone line and (b) an email system for reporting of suspicious trade in animals and animal products by internet users; [7410]

(2) if she will initiate a campaign to raise the level of awareness of internet users of the regulation of trade in animals and animal products; and what steps she is taking to assist internet users to report suspicious trade; [7411]

(3) if she will bring forward proposals to increase the level of regulation of the internet wildlife trade. [7412]

Richard Benyon: Regulations are in place which make it an offence to display or offer for sale the most endangered species via any medium, including the internet. Nevertheless, the UK is working with the international community, and chairs a convention on international trade in endangered species (CITES) e-commerce group, to assess the best means of reducing or tackling such offences. As part of this process DEFRA will be considering introducing a code of conduct for internet operators to raise awareness of the legal situation, and in doing so take account of the experiences of other countries in drawing up such a code, including the means and merits of a reporting element.

Animal Health's wildlife licensing and registration service (WLRS) already has systems in place for the reporting of suspected illegal trade in CITES listed species and their parts and derivatives, including a telephone number and e-mail address. Suspected illegal trade in CITES and non-CITES listed species can also be reported to the police, or in the case of imports and exports to the HM Revenue and Customs confidential hot-line (which is shared with the UK Border Agency).

SCOTLAND

Departmental Speeches

Angela Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland which (a) (i) civil servants and (ii) special advisers in his Department and (b) other individuals are employed to write speeches for each Minister in his Department. [7394]

David Mundell: The Scotland Office has one civil servant who writes speeches for our Ministers. He also carries out other communications work.

Economic Situation: Scotland

Mr Jim Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the decision to raise the standard rate of value added tax (a) before and (b) since the Budget Statement; and what assessment has been made of the effect of that decision on the Scottish economy. [7859]

Michael Moore: I have had numerous discussions with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on a variety of subjects of importance to Scotland, both before and since the Budget. The VAT rise is part the Government's credible plan to tackle the largest deficit in peacetime history. Reducing this deficit that the Government inherited will support the recovery, creating the conditions needed for businesses to grow, which will benefit the Scottish economy.

Mr Jim Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what assessment (a) he and (b) economists in his Department have made of the impact on the cost of living for the poorest people in Scotland of the decision to raise the standard rate of value added tax. [7860]

Michael Moore: The decision to raise the standard rate of value added tax was part of a progressive Budget, and part of a credible plan to tackle the largest budget deficit in peacetime, which this Government inherited. The top fifth of families by expenditure will pay nearly nine times more value added tax than the bottom fifth. The Budget commits to keeping everyday essentials such as food and children's clothing free from VAT.

Papal Visit to Scotland

Mr Frank Roy: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he has had with (a) the Roman Catholic Church, (b) Ministerial colleagues and (c) the Scottish Executive on the Papal visit to Scotland in 2010. [7786]

Michael Moore: The right hon. Lord Patten of Barnes is leading on Government arrangements for the Papal visit. Lord Patten has been appointed as the Prime Minister's personal representative and will oversee the co-ordination of all elements for which the Government have responsibility.

Retail Trade: Scotland

Mr Jim Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what meetings he (a) had before and (b) has had since the Budget Statement with Scottish retailers on the effect on the retail industry in Scotland of the decision to raise the standard rate of value added tax. [7858]

Michael Moore: I am always willing to hear the representations of Scottish retailers, and the Scotland Office has engaged with Scottish retailers on their importance to the economy. In order to protect the economic recovery, the record budget deficit must be tackled, otherwise it could lead to higher interest rates, more business failures and sharper rises in unemployment.

VAT: Scotland

Mr Jim Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what assessment his Department has made of the impact of the decision to raise the standard rate of value added tax on the cost of living for (a) Scottish families, (b) pensioners in Scotland and (c) unemployed people in Scotland. [7861]

Michael Moore: The rise in VAT is unavoidable if this Government are to act to address years of debt and unsustainable spending. The Budget confirmed that VAT on everyday essentials such as food and children's clothing will remain zero rated. Overall the Budget is fair and progressive—all sections of society contribute to tackling the deficit, but the richest pay more than the poorest.

Mr Jim Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland which organisations he has met in Scotland to discuss the effects on Scotland of the decision to increase the standard rate of value added tax. [7862]

Michael Moore: I have met with numerous organisations to discuss a variety of issues. The Budget was discussed in a recent HM Treasury and Scotland Office seminar, with participants from Scottish business organisations, financial services, academia and the public sector. The VAT rise is unavoidable if this Government are to act to address years of debt and unsustainable spending. Failure to tackle the largest deficit in peacetime, which this Government inherited, could see higher interest rates and no real recovery.

Video Games

Ann McKechin: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what correspondence he had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on (a) budgetary matters and (b) Government support for the computer and video games industry in advance of the Budget. [6333]

Michael Moore: There has been no formal exchange of correspondence with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the computer and video games industry but I and my officials had discussions with Treasury counterparts on a range of issues ahead of the Budget.

I will speak with both the Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport and representatives from the industry in the near future, to discuss how the cuts to corporation tax to 24%, the rise to the employer national insurance threshold and other measures, announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his emergency Budget, will stimulate further growth and expansion of this sector.

Ann McKechin: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what meetings (a) he and (b) officials in his Department had with their Treasury counterparts to discuss (i) the Budget and (ii) support for the computer and video games industry before the Budget Statement of 22 June 2010. [6361]

Michael Moore: There was no specific meeting about the computer and video games industry. However, I and my officials held discussions with Treasury counterparts on a range of issues ahead of the Budget.

I will speak with both the Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport and representatives from the industry in the near future, to discuss how the cuts to corporation tax to 24%, the rise to the employer national insurance threshold and other measures, announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his emergency Budget, will stimulate further growth and expansion of this sector.

ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

BP: Gulf of Mexico

Mr Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change if he will hold discussions with BP to encourage the provision of training to volunteers to tackle the Gulf of Mexico oil spill. [7810]

Charles Hendry: I am in regular touch with BP about the Gulf of Mexico oil spill. I understand the company's partnership with local volunteer agencies provides help with mitigation activities in non-oil contaminated areas. Training is provided for all volunteers.

All oil-contaminated materials will be handled only by Qualified Community Responders and not by volunteers. This is paid work for which training is provided by BP.

More information can be found on the company's website:

<http://www.alabamagulfresponse.com/go/doc/3055/591911>

Departmental Lighting

Graham Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change how much (a) his Department and (b) its non-departmental public bodies spent on light bulbs in each year since 1997. [7627]

Gregory Barker: This information can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Marketing

Graham Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change how much his (a) Department and (b) its non-departmental public bodies spent on logo design in each year since its inception. [7483]

Gregory Barker: The Department spent £75,875 on logo design in 2008-09, £3,200 in 2009-10 and £0 in the current financial year. The Department does not store information on design costs incurred by its non-departmental public bodies and the cost of collating this would be disproportionate.

Departmental Official Cars

Mr Bain: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change which Ministers in his Department have used an allocated ministerial car to travel between the Department and the House of Commons on each day since 21 May 2010. [5544]

Gregory Barker: All travel is undertaken in accordance with the Ministerial Code

Departmental Training

Graham Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change how much (a) his Department and (b) its non-departmental public bodies spent on employee awaydays in each year since its inception. [7319]

Gregory Barker: This information can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Energy: Subsidies

Graham Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change how much (a) his Department and its predecessors and (b) its non-departmental public bodies spent on subsidies for gas production in each year since 1997. [6214]

Charles Hendry: No subsidies are paid for gas production in the UK.

Wind Power: Yorkshire and the Humber

Simon Reeve: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change how many wind farms have been built in each constituency in Yorkshire and the Humber in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [7857]

Charles Hendry: The Government do not hold information on renewable energy schemes by parliamentary constituency. The number of onshore wind farms, not including sites with less than two turbines, and not including sites with turbines under 10 kW, built in each district in Yorkshire and Humber in each of the last five years is as follows:

<i>District</i>	<i>2005</i>	<i>2006</i>	<i>2007</i>	<i>2008</i>	<i>2009</i>
Calderdale	1	—	—	—	—
City of Leeds	—	—	—	—	—
East Riding of Yorkshire	—	—	—	2	1
Harrogate	—	—	—	1	—
Kirklees	—	1	—	—	1
North Lincolnshire	—	—	—	—	1
Rotherham	—	—	—	—	1

The Government are committed to the development of wind energy in the UK. As an island nation we have outstanding wind resources and wind energy is an indigenous source of energy which is needed to meet our renewable energy and climate change goals. The wind industry can be a key player in creating the investment, exports and jobs we need to bring back economic prosperity, and the UK is already a world leader in offshore wind.

We also want communities and individuals to benefit from the increase in renewable energy, including wind power, and to own a stake in our collective low carbon future.

This is why we committed in the Coalition programme for government to encouraging more community-owned renewable energy and allowing communities that host renewable energy projects to keep the additional business rates they generate.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Departmental Speeches

Angela Smith: To ask the Attorney-General which (a) (i) civil servants and (ii) special advisers in the Law Officers' Departments and (b) other individuals are employed to write speeches for each Minister in those Departments. [7304]

The Solicitor-General: None of the Law Officers Departments employ a specialised speech-writer. Speeches when required are prepared by departmental staff in addition to their other duties.

The Attorney-General's Office does not employ any special advisers.

PRIME MINISTER

Official Residences

Pete Wishart: To ask the Prime Minister (1) what (a) refurbishment and (b) redecoration has been undertaken of residential properties in the gift of the Government since 6 May 2010; and at what cost; [6318]

(2) what residential properties in the gift of the Government have been allocated to Ministers; which Minister has been allocated each accommodation; and which grave and favour properties will remain empty. [6319]

The Prime Minister: I currently have the use of the flat above No. 10 Downing street but will be moving in to the residence above No. 11 Downing street when it has been refurbished. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr George Osborne) will have use of the flat above No. 10 Downing street from the summer. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary (Mr Hague) has been allocated the use of the residence at No. 1 Carlton Gardens. The flats at Admiralty House are currently unoccupied.

For costs for the refurbishment of the No. 11 Downing street flat I refer the hon. Member to the press briefing given by official spokesman on 24 May 2010. A copy of the transcript is available on the Number 10 website at:

<http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/press-briefings/2010/05/morning-press-briefing-from-monday-24-may-2010-50550>

No refurbishment or redecoration has taken place in the flat above No. 10 Downing street or the flats at Admiralty House. Costs associated with 1 Carlton Gardens are a matter for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Representation of Welsh interests

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Prime Minister whether he has had recent discussions with the Secretary of State for Wales on representation of Welsh interests on the (a) Social Justice Committee, (b) Economic Affairs Committee, (c) Coalition Committee, (d) European Affairs Committee and (e) National Security Council; and if he will make a statement. [7209]

The Prime Minister: I have regular discussions with the Secretary of State for Wales about issues which affect the people of Wales.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Arts: Brighton

Simon Kirby: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport if he will visit creative and digital industries in Brighton to discuss the development of those industries; and if he will make a statement. [7162]

Mr Vaizey: I will be visiting Brighton next week to attend the Develop Conference, which brings together the European video game developer community.

Video games are one of our most successful creative industries and I look forward to hearing about the latest developments in this sector.

I understand that many of Brighton's leading video game developers will be attending, and I hope to be able to meet some of them.

Camelot Group

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport if he will undertake an assessment of potential effects on levels of gambling of Camelot offering bill payment services through national lottery terminals. [7803]

John Penrose: The decision on whether to allow Camelot the national lottery operator to undertake any ancillary activity, including offering bill payment and mobile telephone top up facilities through national lottery terminals, is one for the National Lottery Commission (NLC).

The NLC is currently considering responses to its public consultation on the proposal from Camelot to offer commercial services. As part of their considerations, the NLC will take into account the potential effect on players.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport if he will require the National Lottery Commission to report to Parliament on the reasons for its decision on whether or not to allow Camelot to enter into the bill payment market when that decision is made. [7804]

John Penrose: The National Lottery Commission will publish a statement of reasons alongside its decision which will explain the reasons behind its decision. This document will be made available on the Commission's website:

www.natlotcomm.gov.uk

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport if he will estimate the number of lottery transactions required to be made to meet the projections in Camelot's proposal to contribute to good causes from lottery receipts; and if he will assess the effect of any resultant increase in transactions on the lottery (a) playing and (b) bill payment services at peak times. [7805]

John Penrose: The projections set out by Camelot in their proposal to offer bill payments and mobile top-ups do not include any uplift in national lottery sales. The higher contributions to good causes projected are based only on the expected bill payment and mobile top-up transactions.

The National Lottery Commission is considering as part of its assessment of Camelot's proposals to enter the bill payment and mobile top-up market, what the potential impact is on the core business of the national lottery. If the Commission were to give consent to Camelot's proposals, it would ensure that appropriate monitoring measures are in place to assess the effect of commercial services on ticket sales.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport whether his Department has been informed of whether Camelot and Post Office Ltd have made an agreement to provide subsidy for sub-postmasters should Camelot be successful in its application to enter into the bill payment and post office services market; and if he will make a statement. [7806]

John Penrose: The Department is not aware of any such plans.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport whether his Department has commissioned or evaluated research into which socio-economic groups are more likely to make bill payments and top-up mobile telephones using electronic bill payment services in local retail outlets. [7807]

John Penrose: The Department has made no such assessment. The National Lottery Commission is responsible for assessing the proposals from the National Lottery operator to offer services of this type.

Copyright: Music

Dr Thérèse Coffey: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport what recent representations he has received on extending the copyright term for music recordings; and if he will make a statement. [7266]

Mr Vaizey: Baroness Wilcox, the Minister for Intellectual Property in the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, and I have both received representations from the music industry (UK Music, BPI and PPL) on a number of occasions recently about progress in securing an agreement in Europe on this issue.

The Government have confirmed their support for this proposal, but it has not so far received the necessary support at EU level which would be required for it to become law.

Film: Finance

Mr Bradshaw: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport pursuant to the answer of 21 June 2010, *Official Report*, column 15W, on the British Film Institute: UK Film Council, when he expects to announce the outcome of his reassessment of Government support for film. [7988]

Mr Vaizey: I intend to announce details of the review soon.

Offices: Bassetlaw

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport if he will take steps to relocate officials working in his Department from central London to Bassetlaw. [6566]

John Penrose: There are currently no plans to relocate this Department's officials to Bassetlaw.

Olympic Games 2012: Construction

Zac Goldsmith: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport what the estimated gross construction cost is of (a) the 11 apartment blocks in the Olympic Village and (b) the Olympic Village. [6931]

Hugh Robertson: The gross cost for construction of the residential blocks of the Olympic village is currently estimated at £1,008 million as at 31 March 2010, including ground-floor retail units, underground parking, landscaping, games-time overlay (such as additional partitions and bathrooms) and post-games transformation costs.

The gross construction cost of the entire Olympic village is currently estimated at £1,090 million, including the community projects of the Chobham Academy, a polyclinic and multi-storey car park.

The forecast public sector funding contribution by the ODA towards the overall cost of the village (including sales and marketing costs which are not included in the figures above) is £687 million, as set out in the most recent quarterly economic report published in May 2010.

Olympic Games 2012: Dartford

Gareth Johnson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport how many businesses located in Dartford constituency have been awarded contracts for work on London 2012 Olympics projects. [6842]

Hugh Robertson: Information on businesses, registered in the Dartford constituency, that have directly supplied the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) is available in the business section of the London 2012 website under the heading ODA Suppliers, where my hon. Friend will be able to find suppliers listed by venue and sector:

www.london2012.com/business

Olympic Games 2012: East Midlands

Jessica Lee: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport what estimate he has made of the net financial effect on the east midlands of the London 2012 Olympics. [6662]

Hugh Robertson: I have not made a specific estimate of the net financial effect, from the 2012 games, on the east midlands. However, the east midlands stands to gain from the wide range of opportunities created by the 2012 games, through businesses winning games-related work, increased tourism and cultural celebrations.

Information on businesses in the east midlands that have directly supplied the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) is available in the business section of the London 2012 website under the heading ODA Suppliers, where you will be able to find suppliers listed by venue and sector:

www.london2012.com/business

Olympic Games 2012: Hertfordshire

Mrs Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport how many residents of (a) St Albans and (b) Hertfordshire are employed (i) by the London Organisational Committee of the Olympic Games, (ii) by the Olympic Delivery Authority and (iii) at the London 2012 Olympics site; what steps his Department is taking to increase employment opportunities created by the hosting of the London 2012 Olympics; and how many jobs in Hertfordshire he expects to be created by the London 2012 Olympics. [6887]

Hugh Robertson: The London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games Ltd (LOCOG) is a private company and so does not report its staff figures to my Department. Its annual report, which includes information about the numbers of staff it employs, is available at:

www.london2012.com

As at May 2010 the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) had 218 directly employed members of staff, of which one resided in St Albans and five in Hertfordshire.

The ODA publishes information on the Olympic park contractor workforce in its quarterly "Jobs, Futures, Skills" newsletter. This provides a breakdown of the work force resident in the host boroughs, London, and outside of London. The latest publication shows that at the end of March 2010 of a work force of 6,442, 41% reside outside of London. It is unable to provide a breakdown for local level outside of the host boroughs.

The ODA forecasts that 30,000 people will work on the Olympic park and village over the life of the construction programme. LOCOG estimates that during games-time it will require a work force of approximately 6,000 paid staff, up to 70,000 volunteers and 100,000 contracted staff. There has been no specific assessment of the numbers that will be employed from Hertfordshire.

The ODA and its partners have put a range of measures in place to help local people in particular access training and employment opportunities on the site. These include investing in training and apprenticeship opportunities. Vacancies are offered exclusively to the host borough employment brokerages and Jobcentre Plus offices in the area for a period of 48 hours. Vacancies unfilled after this time are advertised across London for a further 24 hours and after this are made available across the UK through the national Jobcentre Plus network. LOCOG will publish its employment and skills strategy later this year.

TRANSPORT

A3

Damian Hinds: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what projection he has made of the traffic levels on the A3 between Liphook and Petersfield following the opening of the Hindhead Tunnel; and what those traffic levels were on that stretch of road in each of the last five years. [6812]

Mike Penning: It is forecast that traffic levels on the A3 between Liphook and Petersfield following the opening of the Hindhead tunnel will be around 38,000 vehicles per average day.

By comparison the flow on the A3 in the five years between 2004 and 2009 remained consistent at 35,000 vehicles per average day.

The A3 Hindhead scheme, including a 1.2 mile tunnel under the Devils Punchbowl Site of Special Scientific Interest, started construction in January 2007 and is planned to open in early July 2011.

The section of A3 for which traffic flows have been requested lies to the south of the scheme.

The increase in traffic on scheme opening is largely due to drivers returning to the A3 from other routes used to avoid the congestion at the A3/A287 traffic lights in Hindhead.

The forecast includes a relatively small amount of traffic generated as a result of the journey time improvement and reliability delivered by the scheme. The reason this aspect of the increase is small, is due to network constraints through Guildford and at M25 J10.

Departmental Offices

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will take steps to relocate officials working in his Department from central London to Bassetlaw. [6554]

Norman Baker: The location of public sector activity and plans for the Government's estate will be considered alongside other public spending issues over the course of the spending review.

Departmental Official Cars

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what conditions apply to former Ministers with official cars using them to attend party political events; [5980]

(2) what the cost has been of providing official government cars to former Ministers since the general election. [5981]

Mike Penning: The use of official cars by former Ministers is exceptional and on the advice of the security authorities. Use of official cars by former Ministers continues to be governed by the principles set out in Section 10 of the Ministerial Code.

In line with successive administrations, the Government do not comment on security issues.

Freight: Carbon Emissions

Dr Whitehead: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the effect on levels of carbon dioxide emissions consequent on the transfer of a kilometre tonne of freight from road to rail transport. [7830]

Mike Penning: In April 2009 the Department for Transport published its mode shift benefit values, which came into effect on 1 April 2010 and will apply until 31 March 2015. These are designed to accurately reflect the costs to society of HGVs on the roads and the economic and environmental benefits—including carbon dioxide reductions—to be gained from shifting freight from road to rail or water.

Large Goods Vehicles: A1

Mr Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make an assessment of the merits of prohibiting heavy goods vehicles from travelling in the outside lane on the stretches of the A1 where the road is a dual carriageway. [5480]

Mike Penning [*holding answer 6 July 2010*]: The Highways Agency does consider and, following successful trials, has implemented restrictions on heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) using the overtaking lanes on motorways and trunk roads to ease congestion. Examples of this are on the M42 between J10 and 11, and the A14 in Northamptonshire.

Similarly, in May 2010 the Highways Agency made permanent restrictions on two sections on the A1(M) southbound in County Durham at junction 63 to north of junction 62 at Lumley Road Bridge, Great Lumley

and at junction 61 north of Coxhoe to north of junction 60 at Bishop Middleham. At these sections HGVs are restricted from using lane 2 (the right hand lane in the direction of travel) between 7.00 am and 7.00 pm, seven days a week.

The agency has also considered introducing overtaking restrictions for HGVs on other sections of the A1, including A1 south of the A57 at Markham Moor; A1 south of Grantham; A1 south of Stamford (between the A6121 and Carpenter's Lodge Roundabout); A1 junction 49 (junction of A1/A168) to start of A1(M) at junction 56; end of A1(M) at junction 65 to A1/A697 junction; B6345 overbridge at Felton, Northumberland to approximately one mile north of B1340 overbridge at Denwick, Northumberland; and the dual carriageway section near North Charlton, Northumberland. However, analysis has shown there to be either insufficient justification or an adverse impact on safety for traffic emerging from side roads at these locations thus discounting the introduction of HGV overtaking restrictions.

When considering whether to prohibit heavy goods vehicles from lane 2 on the A1 dual carriageway the Highways Agency considers whether:

- there is insufficient HGV traffic volume;
- there are frequent at-grade junctions that break the flow of HGVs naturally;
- the topography of the area is fairly flat;
- the gradient is only for short lengths.

Motorways: Closures

Mr Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will take steps to inform motorists who are not in the immediate vicinity of motorway closures that closures are taking place; and if he will make a statement. [3484]

Mike Penning [*holding answer 22 June 2010*]: The Highways Agency already takes a variety of steps to inform motorists about both closures and other events that might have an impact on their journey on the motorway and trunk road network.

For drivers who have already embarked on their journey, variable message signs (VMS) are used to inform them of any problems ahead. These can be used both in the immediate vicinity of the closure, to give drivers useful advice and information, and at a more strategic level, to suggest alternative routes that will take road users around the closure, and thus prevent them from excessive delays.

Where closures are planned as part of major works, advanced warning signs are used at the roadside to inform drivers, giving them the opportunity to plan their travel more effectively.

In addition to VMS, information relating to road conditions on the Highways Agency's network can be sought through a variety of media channels prior to starting any journey. Such channels include the Traffic England website, accessible at:

www.highways.gov.uk/traffic

a Highways Agency iPhone app, Traffic Radio (available on DAB) and various telephone lines. Finally, the Highways Agency's National Traffic Control Centre passes information on a continuous basis to media partners who use this in travel bulletins on TV and radio.

Railways: Scotland

Thomas Docherty: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent discussions he has had with Scottish Executive Ministers on funding from his Department's Railways for All Fund for improvements for access to railway stations in Scotland; and how much funding for such improvements will be provided in 2010-11. [7037]

Mrs Villiers: We have not discussed Railways for All funding with Scottish Executive Ministers, but officials meet regularly to discuss the programme. £390,000 has been allocated to Transport Scotland from the Department for Transport's Access for All Fund for Small Schemes in 2010-11. A decision on any further spending will be made once the comprehensive spending review has been carried out.

In addition, 13 stations in Scotland are receiving accessible step free routes under the main Access for All Fund which is delivered by Network Rail and funded by addition to the Regulatory Asset Base.

Railways: Standards

Mrs Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the figures for (a) punctuality and reliability and (b) passengers in excess numbers were for rail services on the St Albans to London route in each month since November 2009. [7115]

Mrs Villiers: The Department for Transport does not hold disaggregated performance data for St Albans to London. However the following table shows the public performance measure (PPM) for all First Capital Connect services since November 2009. The Period PPM column shows performance in the period itself, while the PPM MAA column shows the moving annual average for the previous 12 months. PPM combines figures for punctuality and reliability into a single performance measure.

<i>Period</i>	<i>Period PPM</i>	<i>% PPM MAA</i>
15 November to 12 December 2009	85.8	90.7
13 December to 9 January 2010	73.0	89.5
10 January to 6 February 2010	85.0	88.9
7 February to 6 March 2010	88.4	89.5
7 March to 31 March 2010	92.6	89.4
1 April to 1 May 2010	93.0	89.5
2 May to 29 May 2010	93.7	89.6

Period	Period PPM	% PPM MAA
30 May to 26 June 2010	90.4	89.3

Information relating to passengers in excess numbers for rail services on the St Albans to London route is not measured on the basis sought and is therefore not available. The information requested is currently published annually in aggregated form by the Office for Rail Regulation within its 'National Rail Trends Yearbook'. The latest published data relates to passenger journeys in 2008-09. Chapter 7 of the latest update of 'National Rail Trends' contains this data and is available on the Office of Rail Regulation website at:

<http://www.rail-reg.gov.uk/server/show/nav.2026>

Roads: Accidents

Simon Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many road traffic accidents have occurred in each police force area in the East of England since 1997. [7051]

Mike Penning: The number of reported personal injury road accidents in each police force area in the east of England Government office region since 1997 are shown in the following table:

Reported personal injury accidents in the east of England Government office region by police force area: 1997 to 2009

	Police force area								
	Metropolitan police ¹		Cambridgeshire	Norfolk	Suffolk	Bedfordshire	Hertfordshire ¹	Essex ¹	All police forces
County of Essex	County of Hertfordshire								
1997	447	741	3,492	2,703	2,224	2,198	4,097	6,439	22,341
1998	386	727	3,411	2,778	2,251	2,168	4,132	6,435	22,288
1999	388	722	3,161	2,769	2,298	2,000	3,995	6,455	21,788
2000	0	208	3,486	2,645	2,312	2,035	4,704	6,985	22,375
2001	0	0	3,503	2,789	2,356	1,983	4,518	6,773	21,922
2002	0	0	3,417	2,590	2,300	1,826	4,521	6,408	21,062
2003	0	0	3,408	2,618	2,341	1,639	4,247	6,182	20,435
2004	0	0	3,450	2,707	2,220	1,659	4,231	6,131	20,398
2005	0	0	3,384	2,653	2,237	1,700	3,954	5,595	19,523
2006	0	0	3,112	2,354	2,087	1,680	3,647	5,330	18,210
2007	0	0	2,888	2,411	2,076	1,740	3,587	5,004	17,706
2008	0	0	2,783	2,074	2,061	1,678	3,098	4,455	16,149
2009	0	0	2,668	1,962	1,947	1,574	2,791	4,232	15,174

¹ Until 2000 Metropolitan police patrolled some parts of Hertfordshire and Essex. From 2000 onwards these areas were patrolled by Hertfordshire and Essex police respectively.

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many people were injured in work-related road traffic accidents in each year from 1997 to 2009. [8021]

Mr Crausby: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many people were killed in work-related road traffic incidents in each year from 1997 to 2009. [8017]

Mike Penning: The following table shows the number of vehicle drivers/riders and pedestrians killed and injured in reported road accidents while travelling for work or involved in 'on the road work' in each year since 2005. It also shows the total number of casualties in road accidents involving a driver or rider travelling as part of work or a pedestrian injured in the course of 'on the road' work.

Reported vehicle drivers/riders and pedestrians injured at work, and all casualties in such accidents: GB 2005-09

	Casualties				
	Year of accident				
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
<i>Driver or rider travelling as part of work</i>					
Killed	168	152	158	132	95
Injured	20,843	22,617	22,107	19,969	18,296
Total	21,011	22,769	22,265	20,101	18,391

Reported vehicle drivers/riders and pedestrians injured at work, and all casualties in such accidents: GB 2005-09

	Casualties				
	Year of accident				
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
<i>Pedestrian injured at work</i>					
Killed	16	11	10	5	7
Injured	656	507	550	505	428
Total	672	518	560	510	435

All casualties in accidents involving a driver or rider travelling as part of work or a pedestrian injured at work¹

Killed	866	862	892	750	595
Injured	63,046	66,857	65,201	60,056	55,788
Total	63,912	67,719	66,093	60,806	56,383

¹ Includes drivers, riders and pedestrians at work as well as other casualties in accidents involving them.

Notes:

1. This information has only been collected since 2005.

2. Pedestrians injured in the course of 'on the road work' include workers involved in traffic control, postal work and other delivery services as well as those working on road maintenance, although this will only have been reported if it was immediately apparent to the reporting police officer.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Members: Allowances

Andrew Stephenson: To ask the Leader of the House how much was spent under the Communications Allowance in 2009-10. [6755]

Mr Heath: The provisional outturn figure for 2009-10 was £3,959,000. Communications Allowance was suspended by the Members' Estimate Committee with effect from 1 January 2010.

The Expenses Scheme for hon. Members is now the responsibility of the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority.

HEALTH

Bowel Cancer: Screening

Gordon Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what recent estimate he has made of the average cost of issuing a bowel cancer screening test; [7127]

(2) what recent estimate he has made of the average cost of issuing and analysing a returned bowel cancer screening test in England; [7128]

(3) how many people were diagnosed with bowel cancer as a direct result of taking part in the bowel cancer screening programme in each year since the implementation of that programme; [7129]

(4) what estimate he has made of the cost of the bowel cancer screening programme in each year since 2006; [7104]

(5) how many bowel cancer screening invitations were issued in each year since 2006; [7105]

(6) what criteria were used to determine the age of 60 as the threshold for the bowel cancer screening programme in England. [7645]

Mr Burstow: The national health service bowel cancer screening programme in England began by inviting people aged 60 to 69 to be screened because over 80% of bowel cancers are diagnosed in those aged over 60. Although the pilot on which the programme was based invited people aged 50 to 69, those in their 60s were more likely to complete a testing kit. There was also insufficient endoscopy capacity at the time to invite a wider age range. This decision was informed by a formal options appraisal undertaken in 2004 by the School for Health and Related Research (ScHARR) at the University of Sheffield. The programme is currently being extended to people aged 70 to their 75th birthday, and the review of the Cancer Reform Strategy will consider how best we can extend screening to people in their 50s.

The number of screening invitations issued in each year since 2006 is shown in the following table:

	<i>Invites issued</i>
2006	54,768
2007	740,009
2008	1,970,511
2009	2,467,821
2010 (up to April)	757,901

The number of cancers detected by the programme in each year since 2006 is shown in the following table:

	<i>Cancers detected</i>
2006	41
2007	562
2008	1,600
2009	2,216
2010 (up to April)	587

The cost of the programme in each year since 2006 is shown in the following table:

	<i>Funding (£ million)</i>
2006-07	10
2007-08	27.5
2008-09	55
2009-10	76

Funding for the programme will rise to around £120 million per year once the age extension to people aged 70 to their 75th birthday is fully implemented.

The average cost of issuing and analysing a bowel cancer testing kit is a local operational cost, which is not held centrally. The ScHARR 2004 options appraisal estimated that the cost of a faecal occult blood testing kit was £10 per person invited, comprising of the cost of two kits (to cover repeat tests and non-compliance), analysis of the kits and sending results letters. An additional £1.74 per person invited was estimated for administration costs.

Carers: Young People

Dr Wollaston: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent estimate he has made of the number of carers under the age of 18 (a) nationally, (b) in Devon and (c) in Totnes constituency. [6107]

Tim Loughton: I have been asked to reply.

There is no national data collected as to the number of young carers identified at local authority or constituency level.

The 2001 Census "snap-shot" indicated that 139,000 children and young people across England were offering some care. Of these, some 22,000 (16%) were reported to be caring for substantial periods of time—between 20 and 50 hours or more per week. These figures are likely to represent an under-estimate as caring roles resulting from parental substance misuse are not included.

The 2011 Census will provide more up to date national and local authority level data on the number of young carers.

Dr Wollaston: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he has made an estimate of the number of people under the age of 18 years who provided care for a parent with an alcohol-related condition in (a) 2007-08, (b) 2008-09 and (c) 2009-10. [6128]

Tim Loughton: I have been asked to reply.

There is no centrally collected national data as to the number of people under the age of 18 years providing care for a parent with an alcohol-related condition.

The 2001 Census day "snap-shot" indicated that some 139,000 children across England were offering some care to family, neighbours, or friends. Of these, some

22,000 (16%) were reported to be caring for substantial periods of time—between 20 and 50 hours or more per week. These figures are likely to represent an under-estimate as caring roles resulting from parental substance misuse are not included.

The National Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy, 2004, found that up to 1.3 million children live with parents who misuse alcohol.

CJD

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cases of (a) variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease and (b) sporadic Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease were diagnosed in humans in each of the last five years; and how many such cases were as a result of blood transfusions. [7793]

Anne Milton: Data on diagnosis are not held centrally for sporadic Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (sCJD). For variant CJD (vCJD) the number of diagnoses in each year was as follows:

2005: six cases;
2006: six cases;
2007: one case;
2008: one case; and
2009: three cases.

Of these cases, two cases diagnosed in 2006 were associated with blood transfusions in 1999 or earlier from donors who later went on to develop clinical vCJD.

Data on deaths supplied by the National CJD Surveillance Unit are shown in the following table:

Deaths from sporadic Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (sCJD) and variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD) in the UK 2005-09

Year of death	sCJD- blood transfusion associated		vCJD- blood transfusion associated	
	sCJD	vCJD	sCJD	vCJD
2005	66	0	5	0
2006	69	0	4	1
2007	63	0	4	1
2008	87	0	1	0
2009	78	0	3	0

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent research his Department has (a) commissioned and (b) undertaken on the incidence of (i) sporadic and (ii) variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease and the possibility of a link in cases of individuals with different genotypes. [7794]

Anne Milton: Together with the Scottish Government, the Department funds Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD) surveillance in the United Kingdom through the National CJD Surveillance Unit (NCJDSU) based in Edinburgh. The unit was set up in 1990.

All cases of definite or probable variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD), where the genotype is known, have been methionine homozygous at codon 129 of the *PRNP* gene. As reported in the NCJDSU's 17th annual report in 2008 the unit was referred an individual who met the clinical criteria in life for possible vCJD and who was heterozygous (methionine/valine) at codon 129 of the *PRNP* gene. As consent for a post-mortem

was not given in this case, the investigations which could have led to a definite or probable diagnosis could not take place.

CJD: Screening

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent assessment his Department has made of the consequences of Amorfix's decision to suspend development of its proposed blood test for variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD) after the latest versions of the test did not yield positive results; and if his Department will recognise that prion filtration is the only safe and effective method for protecting red blood cells from vCJD contamination. [7946]

Anne Milton: The Department recognises the difficulties in developing an effective blood test for the abnormal prion protein associated with variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD). The Department is aware of other companies, other than Amorfix, and academic institutions developing tests and will monitor progress.

The recommendation of the Advisory Committee on the Safety of Blood, Tissue and Organs (SaBTO) on the use of prion filtration remain under consideration by the Department, the clinical safety of prion filtered blood is still being assessed, and further studies of the efficacy of prion filters are in progress.

Since the theoretical risk of vCJD transmission through blood was first identified as a possibility in 1996, a series of precautionary measures to reduce the risk of vCJD transmission through the blood supply and products made by fractionating plasma, including:

From December 1997, blood components, plasma products or tissues obtained from any individual who later develops vCJD, have been withdrawn/recalled to prevent their use;

From October 1999, white blood cells (which may carry a risk of transmitting vCJD) have been reduced in all blood used for transfusion, a process known as leucodepletion or leucoreduction;

Following the report of the first possible case of transmission of vCJD by blood transfusion in December 2003, individuals who had themselves received a transfusion of blood components since January 1980 were excluded from donating blood. This took effect from April 2004; and

In July 2004, this exclusion criterion for blood donation was extended to include two new groups; (i) previously transfused platelet donors and (ii) donors who were unsure if they had previously had a blood transfusion. This now applies to donors who have been transfused anywhere in the world.

Clinical Physiologists: Regulation

Mr Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the effects of the Modernising Scientific Careers programme on the timetable for statutory regulation of clinical physiologists. [6766]

Anne Milton: Ministers are currently considering decisions about whether, and if so how, to regulate healthcare scientists, including clinical physiologists, within the context of the coalition Government's wider health strategy.

Departmental Consultants

Mr Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the budget is of (a) his Department and (b) the NHS for external consultancy advice in 2010-11. [5490]

Mr Simon Burns: Planned consultancy expenditure from the Department's administration budgets in 2010-11 is £1.8 million.

The Department's plans on programme spend for consultancy have not yet been determined but plans will be in line with the tighter spending controls announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 24 May.

The Department does not hold NHS budget information on external consultancy advice for 2010-11.

Departmental Electronic Equipment

Graham Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much (a) his Department and (b) its agencies and non-departmental public bodies spent on televisions in each year since 1997. [7509]

Mr Simon Burns: The information on the cost of televisions purchased is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Internet

Graham Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much (a) his Department and (b) its agencies and non-departmental public bodies spent on website design in each year since 1997. [7610]

Mr Simon Burns: The Department operates two main websites:

The Department of Health corporate website; and
NHS Choices

Design and layout costs are included within the overall costs of each website's managed service and cannot be separated for each year.

In February 2010 an additional £40,425 was spent on redesigning the home page of the Department's corporate website, in response to user testing and feedback.

Since 27 June 2007 the Department has reduced the total number of websites that it operates, from 196 to 71, to meet its obligations under Transformational Government. The Department will continue to reduce this number by the Cabinet Office deadline of July 2011.

Given the high number of websites that have been in existence since 1997, it is not possible to provide information on design costs for all of these, as this would incur disproportionate costs.

Design costs for websites belonging to agencies and non-department public bodies are also included within the overall costs of each organisation's managed service and cannot be separated for each year.

Departmental Offices

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will take steps to relocate officials working in his Department from central London to Bassetlaw. [6558]

Mr Simon Burns: The location of public sector activity and plans for the Government's estate will be considered alongside other public spending issues over the course of the spending review.

Departmental Official Cars

Ian Austin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his estimate is of the mileage travelled by each Minister in his Department in a Government car in (a) May and (b) June 2010. [8319]

Mr Simon Burns: This information is not recorded by the Department.

Departmental Public Expenditure

Yvette Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether equality impact assessments will be used in determining the areas of his Department's budget in respect of which spending will be reduced. [7817]

Mr Simon Burns: The Department will ensure the relevant equality considerations are taken into account when assessing policy options in the context of its departmental savings, in compliance with our obligations under the gender, race and disability duties set out in the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Race Relations Act 1976, and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

Departmental Speeches

Angela Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which (a) (i) civil servants and (ii) special advisers in his Department and (b) other individuals are employed to write speeches for each Minister in his Department. [7493]

Mr Simon Burns: The Department currently employs a team of four civil servants to write speeches for Ministers. None of these officials is a senior civil servant.

General Practitioners

Mr David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the number of occasions in which patients saw a GP other than their registered GP in the last 12 months; and if he will make a statement. [7775]

Mr Simon Burns: The Department does not hold information on the number of occasions in which patients see a general practitioner (GP) in another practice rather than their registered GP.

General Practitioners: Telephone Services

Harriett Baldwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information his Department holds on the number of GP practices which use 0870 and 0845 premium rate telephone numbers for booking appointments. [5834]

Mr Simon Burns: The information requested is not held centrally.

Health Professions: English Language

Dr Thérèse Coffey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will issue guidance on the level of competence in the English language expected from medical professionals, with particular reference to those responsible for delivering out-of-hours care. [6599]

Anne Milton: The Government are committed to ensuring that foreign healthcare professionals are not allowed to work in the national health service unless they have proven their competence and language skills. We are working closely with the General Medical Council and others to explore a number of options to ensure that all overseas doctors meet these stringent requirements.

The Department of Health issued guidance in February 2010 under “Delivering Quality in Primary Care: Medical Performers Lists”—a copy has been placed in the Library—which reminded primary care trusts that anyone they appoint to their medical performers list must be competent in English. Clearly, the precise requirements for individual posts will vary. We will be considering whether further guidance on this issue is necessary.

Health Services: Greater Manchester

Mr Crausby: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects to publish the results of the review of the Greater Manchester Making It Better Programme. [7844]

Mr Simon Burns: This is a matter for the local national health service and as such the information requested is not held centrally. Information on the cost of the Making it Better programme can be obtained from the Making it Better implementation team direct, through the North West Strategic Health Authority.

Health: Tobacco

Angie Bray: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the evidence on the impact of banning the retail display of tobacco products; and if he will make a statement. [6548]

Anne Milton: Discussions are taking place across Government to decide how best to tackle this issue in the context of our focus on public health and our priorities, given the challenges facing business competition and costs.

Leeds General Infirmary

Rachel Reeves: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions he has had with NHS organisations on the Cardiothoracic Surgery Centre at Leeds General Infirmary; what plans his Department has for the future of that centre; and if he will make a statement. [7545]

Mr Simon Burns: We have had no formal discussions with national health service organisations on the Cardiothoracic Surgery Centre at Leeds General Infirmary. However, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health visited the Leeds General Infirmary on 14 May 2010, and was given a tour of the hospital’s cardiology services. This Government have pledged that, in future, all service changes must be led by clinicians and patients, not driven from the top down. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health has outlined new, strengthened criteria that he expects decisions on NHS service changes to meet. According to this criteria, they must focus on improving patient outcomes, consider patient choice, have support from general practitioner commissioners and be based on sound clinical evidence.

Mental Health Services: Children

Luciana Berger: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of child and adolescent mental health services for children who require emergency mental health assessment and support; [6286]

(2) how he plans to ensure that tier 4 child and adolescent mental health services appropriate for children with autism are available to all children who require them. [6287]

Mr Burstow: The Department monitors the availability of 24 hour cover to meet the urgent mental health needs of children and young people through the Vital Signs Monitoring Return. The latest available figures, for the quarter ending 31 March 2010, show 139 primary care trusts (PCTs) with a comprehensive 24 hour cover service available throughout the PCT and 13 PCTs with plans and protocols in place, some services in place and some still to be developed so as to provide cover across the whole PCT. The Department is drawing on findings emerging from early visits of the National Support Team for child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) to inform local conversations about improving children’s emotional health and well-being across the country.

Appropriate tier 4 CAMHS should be available to all children who require them, including children with autism. We are committed to improving the quality of services to patients. We will establish an independent national health service board to allocate resources and provide commissioning guidelines and will ensure that there is a stronger voice for patients locally.

Mental Health Services: Ex-servicemen

Nick de Bois: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to ensure the provision of an appropriate level of healthcare for service veterans, with particular reference to mental health services. [6751]

Mr Simon Burns: The Government are committed to providing effective, through-life, health services for our service and ex-service personnel.

This important work is overseen by a Partnership Board involving senior staff from the Department and the Ministry of Defence and the health departments of the devolved Administrations.

We are currently undertaking community mental health pilots for ex-service personnel at six national health service trusts across the United Kingdom. The final pilot, in Scotland, is due to be completed in April 2011. From these pilots, best practice will be identified and provide input for planning future provision by the NHS of mental health services across the UK from 2011-12.

We have also made an additional £2 million available to allow the Department of Health to work with strategic partners, including Combat Stress, to further provide better services in primary, secondary and tertiary care.

The Prime Minister has asked the hon. Member for South West Wiltshire (Dr Murrison) to study the relationship between the NHS and armed forces personnel, with a focus on mental health.

NHS: Accountability

Mr Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent assessment he has made of the accountability of local NHS bodies to the public they serve; and whether he plans to improve such arrangements. [6383]

Mr Simon Burns: We have assessed the accountability of local national health service bodies to the public they serve and have concluded that arrangements need to be strengthened if we are to ensure the NHS is increasingly informed by and responsive to the views and feedback of patients and public. We plan to set out our proposals for improvement in the forthcoming White Paper.

NHS: Databases

Mr David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he has made an estimate of the number of occasions on which information relating to a patient has been requested by a doctor other than the doctor with whom the patient is registered in the last 12 months. [7776]

Mr Simon Burns: The Department does not this collect information centrally.

Mr David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many summary health care records have been added to his Department's database in each week of 2010. [7777]

Mr Simon Burns: The information is provided in the following table:

2010		Number of summary care records (SCR) created
Report week (Saturday to Friday)		
Start date	End date	
2 January	8 January	11,249
9 January	15 January	24,883
16 January	22 January	46,594
23 January	29 January	42,315
30 January	5 February	42,618
6 February	12 February	27,470
13 February	19 February	23,194
20 February	26 February	53,493
27 February	5 March	47,819
6 March	12 March	22,060
13 March	19 March	44,272
20 March	26 March	5,599
27 March	2 April	0
3 April	9 April	1,987
10 April	16 April	48,015
17 April	23 April	52,157
24 April	30 April	31,931
1 May	7 May	6,488
8 May	14 May	12,793
15 May	21 May	11,474
22 May	28 May	63,339
29 May	4 June	66,852
5 June	11 June	57,069
12 June	18 June	97,623
19 June	25 June	96,142
26 June	2 July	101,872
	Total	1,039,308

We believe the processes that are currently in place relating to the creation of summary care records need to be reviewed to ensure that both the information that patients receive, and the process by which they opt-out, are as clear and simple as possible.

We will work closely with relevant partner organisations to resolve these issues. Strategic health authorities have been informed that no further information letters should be sent out to patients about the SCR until after that review has concluded.

Mr David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many (a) GP and (b) out-of-hours surgeries have registered for the summary health care record scheme. [7778]

Mr Simon Burns: As at 2 July 2010, 323 general practitioner practices, and 37 out of hours service sites, were live to use summary care records (SCRs). Being 'live' refers to a health care setting starting to work with the SCR system, by creating and maintaining records for patients under their care, or by viewing a patient's SCR to aid delivery of care.

NHS: Drugs

Mr Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has for the future appraisal of drugs for the treatment of ultra orphan diseases. [7106]

Mr Simon Burns: In the great majority of cases the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) will continue to appraise important new drugs. However, for a small number of drugs for very small patient populations, where it is not appropriate for NICE to carry out an appraisal, it may be more appropriate for a drug to be considered by the Advisory Group for National Specialised Services as part of the arrangements for national specialised commissioning.

NHS: Internet

Mr Watson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will publish the KPMG report on the effectiveness of the NHS Choices and NHS Direct websites. [6919]

Mr Simon Burns: We are not able to publish the requested report as it is central to the formulation of Government policy. The KPMG report on NHS Choices and NHS Direct is informing the Department's information strategy.

Mr Watson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what websites have .nhs.uk domains. [6920]

Mr Simon Burns: As at 30 June 2010, there were 4,292 live websites with the .nhs.uk suffix within the English national health service web estate. A list of these has been placed in the Library.

NHS: VAT

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much value added tax was paid by the NHS in the most recent year for which figures are available. [7272]

Mr Simon Burns: The data are not held centrally.

Nurses: Pay

Mr Bain: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to retain nurses within the profession in light of the planned two-year public sector pay freeze. [7392]

Anne Milton: We will continue to monitor the position of the work force, including nurses, during the period of the pay freeze. We will look closely at the rates of vacant posts, leavers from the national health service and joiners to the NHS. Currently the position is strong, with the latest data showing that the vacancy rate for qualified nurses, midwives and health visitors stands at 0.7% (2,088 posts); the leavers rate at 6.5%; and the joiners rate at 7.5%.

Nurses: Training

Nicholas Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will undertake an investigation of the arrangements for training nurses for the purposes of raising the standard of nursing in NHS hospitals. [7083]

Anne Milton: The vast majority of our nurses provide excellent care, however ongoing education and training is vital to keeping standards high.

The Department has been working with the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) to develop an explicit set of statements which will outline what good nursing care looks like. This work will be ready in the autumn and will apply to the entire nursing workforce, including health care assistants.

We are determined to raise professional standards at every opportunity and to work with the Nursing and Midwifery Council and the RCN to achieve this.

The arrangement for the training of nurses is regularly reviewed.

Parkinson's Disease: Drugs

Mr Brine: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) whether his Department has received any representations on the availability of Sinemet in the last (a) week, (b) month and (c) two months; and if he will make a statement; [7176]

(2) whether his Department has had any recent discussions with Merck on the availability of Sinemet. [7177]

Mr Simon Burns: The Department has received representations from hon. Members (including the hon. Member's questions) and members of the public about the availability of Sinemet (co-careldopa) as follows:

Date received	Number
2010	
5 May to 4 June	3
5 June to 29 June	3
30 June to 6 July	5

Patients' Rights: EU Action

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether his Department plans to participate in the European Project for Assessing Patients' Rights. [7553]

Mr Simon Burns: I will reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Peterborough Primary Care Trust: Debts

Mr Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects to receive the report by the East of England Strategic Health Authority on the deficit accumulated by NHS Peterborough in the financial year 2009-10; and if he will make a statement. [7944]

Mr Simon Burns: The Department has not commissioned a report on the deficit accumulated by Peterborough primary care trust. However, the East of England strategic health authority does report to the Department on a monthly basis on the financial position of its national health service trusts.

Prescription Drugs

Mr Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he has made an estimate of the number of people in (a) England and (b) Gloucestershire who were given regular prescriptions for (i) sleeping tablets and (ii) anti-depressants in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [7773]

Mr Simon Burns: Information on the number of people receiving a medicine, and whether this is under repeat prescription arrangements, is not collected centrally. Information on the number of prescription items dispensed in the community in England and in Gloucestershire primary care trust (PCT) for the latest available financial years is shown in the following table:

	Thousand	
	Hypnotics ¹ (for insomnia)	Antidepressants ²
<i>England</i>		
2006-07	9,768.0	31,327.2
2007-08	9,889.9	33,967.5
2008-09	9,977.1	36,180.5
2009-10	10,123.2	39,736.1
<i>Gloucestershire PCT</i>		
2006-07 ³	136.8	370.9
2007-08	141.3	403.8
2008-09	143.2	433.5
2009-10	148.9	481.9

¹ As listed in British National Formulary section 4.1.1—hypnotics.

² As listed in British National Formulary section 4.3—antidepressants.

³ Includes predecessor organisations—Cheltenham and Tewkesbury PCT, West Gloucestershire PCT and Cotswold and Vale PCT.

Source:

Prescribing Analysis and Cost tool

Prescriptions: Fees and Charges

Mr Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make it his policy to exempt medication for cystic fibrosis from prescription charges. [6915]

Priti Patel: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he plans to change the current system of prescription charges. [7202]

Mr Simon Burns: Any decisions on future changes to the system of prescription charges and exemptions will be dependent on our future financial settlements.

Prion Diseases: Health Services

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) when he next expects his Department's Prion Working Group to meet to discuss the (a) progress of the Platelet Receptor Inhibition for Ischemic Syndrome Management trials and (b) implementation of the P-Capt filter; [7404]

(2) what recent assessment he has made of progress of the Platelet Receptor Inhibition for Ischemic Syndrome Management trials and the P-Capt filter; and when he expects those trials to be completed. [7405]

Anne Milton: The Prion Working Group reports to the UK Blood Services not to the Department. The Working Group will next meet on 2 September 2010, and updates on the P-Capt filter and the prion filtered red cells in surgery and multi-transfused patients (PRISM) trial both likely to be on the agenda. This PRISM trial, which is designed to investigate adverse events, especially those related to the development of antibodies to red blood cells following transfusion of filtered red cells, is unrelated to the Platelet Receptor Inhibition for Ischemic Syndrome Management study otherwise known as PRISM-PLUS.

The PRISM trial is expected to be completed by mid-2012. Animal studies of the efficacy of filters using a hamster model are due to be complete by mid-2012 and studies in sheep by mid-2014. The UK Health Department's independent expert Advisory Committee on the Safety of Blood, Tissues and Organs will review data from these studies as they become available.

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will take steps to implement the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on the Safety of Blood, Tissues and Organs for the introduction of prion filtration via the P-Capt Filter for blood destined for children born since 1 January 1996. [7792]

Anne Milton: The recommendations of the Advisory Committee on the Safety of Blood, Tissues and Organs on the use of prion filtration are under consideration by the Department.

Warfarin

Priti Patel: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will consider the merits of making warfarin treatments available for free on the NHS; and if he will make a statement; [7203]

(2) how many people were prescribed warfarin in the most recent 12 months for which figures are available; [7204]

(3) what estimate he has made of the annual cost to the public purse of providing warfarin for free on the NHS. [7205]

Mr Simon Burns: Information on the number of people receiving a medicine is not collected centrally. In 2009, around 8,234,900 prescription items for warfarin were dispensed in the community in England at a net ingredient cost to the national health service of around £18,608,200.¹

In addition, prescription charges paid at the point of dispensing for warfarin prescription items generated income of around £923,800² in 2009.

Any decisions on future changes to the system of prescription charges and exemptions will be dependent on our future financial settlements.

¹ Prescription Cost Analysis system.

² NHS Prescription Services Information System. Excludes items dispensed to patients holding a pre-payment certificate.

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Affordable Housing

Ann McKechnin: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government what estimate he has made of the number of surplus one and two bedroom properties in the social sector in (a) Glasgow North and (b) Ealing Central and Acton constituency. [6186]

Andrew Stunell: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Local authorities and registered social landlords in England and Scotland report information on the number of vacant dwellings owned. However, the Government do not consider vacant dwelling information an appropriate proxy measure of surplus housing. Also, this information is not reported for constituencies and is not reported by number of bedrooms.

Fiona Mactaggart: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government what estimate he has made of the number of surplus one and two bedroom properties in the social sector in (a) Slough, (b) Salisbury and (c) Scarborough and Whitby constituency. [6193]

Andrew Stunell: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Local authorities and registered social landlords in England report information on the number of vacant dwellings owned. However, the Government do not consider vacant dwelling information an appropriate proxy measure of surplus housing. Also, this information is not reported for constituencies and is not reported by number of bedrooms.

Affordable Housing Delivery Commission

Mr Slaughter: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government what his plans are for the future of the commission on affordable housing delivery chaired by Lord Best. [7749]

Andrew Stunell: The commission on the council role in new house-building was established jointly by the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Association. The commission expects to make its report to the Department and the Local Government Association later this year.

Affordable Housing: Ashton-in-Makerfield

Yvonne Fovargue: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government what estimate he has made of the number of surplus one and two bedroom properties in the social sector in Makerfield constituency. [6204]

Andrew Stunell: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Local authorities and registered social landlords in England report information on the number of vacant dwellings owned. However, the Government do not consider vacant dwelling information an appropriate proxy measure of surplus housing. Also, this information is not reported for constituencies and is not reported by number of bedrooms.

Affordable Housing: Bristol

Mrs Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government what estimate he has made of the number of surplus one and two bedroom properties in the social sector in Bristol North West constituency. [7787]

Andrew Stunell: The number of surplus properties in the social sector is not collected centrally. Local authorities and registered social landlords in England report information on the number of vacant dwellings owned. However, the Government do not consider vacant dwelling information an appropriate proxy measure of surplus housing. Also, this information is not reported for constituencies and is not reported by number of bedrooms.

Affordable Housing: Greater Manchester

Kate Green: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government what estimate he has made of the number of surplus one and two bedroom properties in the social sector in Stretford and Urmston constituency. [5845]

Andrew Stunell: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Local authorities and registered social landlords in England report information on the number of vacant dwellings owned. However, the Government do not consider vacant dwelling information an appropriate proxy measure of surplus housing. Also, this information is not reported for constituencies and is not reported by number of bedrooms.

Affordable Housing: Houghton-le-Spring

Bridget Phillipson: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government what estimate he has made of the number of surplus one and two bedroom properties in the social sector in Houghton and Sunderland South constituency. [6082]

Andrew Stunell: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Local authorities and registered social landlords in England report information on the number of vacant dwellings owned. However, the Government do not consider vacant dwelling information an appropriate proxy measure of surplus housing. Also, this information is not reported for constituencies and is not reported by number of bedrooms.

Affordable Housing: Standards

John Healey: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government pursuant to the answer of 24 June 2010, *Official Report*, column 312W, what estimate he has made of the number of (a) local authority and (b) housing association properties in each local authority remaining to be refurbished under the Decent Homes programme on 31 March (i) 2010, (ii) 2011 and (iii) 2012. [7818]

Grant Shapps: I have put the information requested for local authorities in the Library of the House. The Tenant Services Authority has made projections nationally up to March 2011 but has not done so up to March 2012 at local authority level because such projections would be inaccurate. The Regulatory Statistical Return from housing associations does not collect projections of numbers of non decent homes. These figures would have been lower had funding reductions of £150 million not been made to the Decent Homes programme in July 2009.

Affordable Housing: Worsley

Barbara Keeley: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government what estimate he has made of the number of surplus one and two bedroom properties in the social sector in Worsley and Eccles South constituency. [6081]

Andrew Stunell: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Local authorities and registered social landlords in England report information on the number of vacant dwellings owned. However, the Government do not consider vacant dwelling information an appropriate proxy measure of surplus housing. Also, this information is not reported for constituencies and is not reported by number of bedrooms.

Council Housing: Construction

Jim Fitzpatrick: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government whether the £2.6 million funding previously agreed for new council homes in the London borough of Tower Hamlets is subject to the Government's review of public spending. [5835]

Andrew Stunell: The Homes and Communities Agency entered into a Local Authority New Build Grant Agreement with the London borough of Tower Hamlets in February 2010. It is contractually committed to support delivery of 26 new council homes in Tower Hamlets, and is therefore not subject to the Government's review of public spending.

Jim Fitzpatrick: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government whether Homes and Communities Agency previously agreed funding for the Bow Cross, Leopold and Holland estates in the London borough of Tower Hamlets is subject to the Government's review of public spending. [5836]

Andrew Stunell: The Government are committed to reducing the United Kingdom's budget deficit. It has led us to identify savings across Government, starting with the £6 billion of immediate savings this year that we announced on 24 May. Bow Cross and Leopold are part of the Kickstart projects that were successful at the due diligence process under round 2 of Kickstart and still subject to approval. The Holland Estates is a National Affordable Housing programme project. Bids for this project received in January are still being appraised. A review of these and other outstanding projects will be undertaken by the HCA, once the final funding position for 2010-11 is clear.

Jim Fitzpatrick: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government whether the Government plans to bring forward a third round of proposals for funding for new council homes. [5837]

Andrew Stunell: We have no plans to continue a funding programme exclusively for the provision of new council houses. Local authorities are however free to bid for support from the National Affordable Housing Programme once all the funds available in the current Local Authority New Build programme have been allocated. The Government are committed to reviewing the unfair Housing Revenue Account, including its implications for council housebuilding.

Departmental Human Resources

Graham Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government how much his Department has spent on human resources in each year since 1997. [5105]

Robert Neill: Communities and Local Government was formed in 2006 and we do not have access to records about expenditure by its predecessor organisations before this date.

The following table shows the total budget expenditure by our human resources function in the financial years since 2005-06.

The administration budget shows the cost of running the HR function. The corporate budget represents expenditure managed by HR on behalf of the wider Department. Corporate non-pay includes the Department's learning and development and occupational health costs.

		£		
<i>Financial year</i>		<i>Administration</i>	<i>Corporate</i>	<i>Total</i>
2005-06	Total	1,602,602	5,566,700	7,169,303
	Pay	1,626,448	1,546,323	3,172,771
	Non-pay	126,582	4,020,377	4,146,958
	Income	-150,427		-150,427
2006-07	Total	2,378,404	4,225,127	6,603,531

		£		
<i>Financial year</i>		<i>Administration</i>	<i>Corporate</i>	<i>Total</i>
	Pay	2,355,863	1,793,183	4,149,046
	Non-pay	165,843	2,495,751	2,661,594
	Income	-143,302	-63,807	-207,109
2007-08	Total	3,400,389	4,550,372	7,950,762
	Pay	3,187,463	1,514,208	4,701,672
	Non-pay	473,064	3,077,791	3,550,854
	Income	-260,138	-41,627	-301,764
2008-09	Total	3,103,938	6,449,033	9,552,971
	Pay	3,176,369	3,175,810	6,352,179
	Non-pay	114,862	3,310,906	3,425,768
	Income	-187,293	-37,683	-224,976
2009-10	Total	4,111,553	7,159,180	11,270,734
	Pay	3,848,760	3,171,692	7,020,452
	Non-pay	426,577	3,917,727	4,344,304
	Income	-163,784	69,762	-94,023

Departmental NDPBs

Mr Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government what the address is of the head office of each non-departmental public body for which his Department is responsible. [5724]

Robert Neill: Head office addresses for each of the Department's bodies can be found in the Communities and Local Government Annual Report 2009, which is located on our website.

Since this report was published there have been the following changes:

The addition of the Infrastructure Planning Commission, located at Temple Quay House, Temple Quay, Bristol, BS1 6PN.

The addition of National Tenant Voice, located at c/o Government Office North West, 14th Floor, City Tower, Piccadilly Plaza, Manchester M1 4BE.

Departmental Offices

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government if he will take steps to relocate officials working in his Department from central London to Bassetlaw. [6567]

Robert Neill: The location of public sector activity and plans for the Government's estate will be considered alongside other public spending issues over the course of the spending review.

Departmental Public Expenditure

Mr Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government pursuant to the written ministerial statement of 26 May 2010, *Official Report*, columns 2-3WS, on savings (2010-11), under what budgetary headings the £780 million of savings allocated to his Department will be made. [6822]

Grant Shapps: As a result of decisions by the previous Administration, in June 2010 the Office for Budget Responsibility forecast public sector net borrowing in 2010-11 would hit £149 billion—contributing to their

forecast £1.3 trillion of public debt by 2014. To help reduce the public debt, the Department for Communities and Local Government will make savings of £780 million in 2010-11, from the following budget lines.

<i>Programmes 2010-11</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Savings (£000)</i>
<i>Cutting waste - CLG, Quangos and lower priority programmes</i>		
		90,421
Running costs - CLG	Efficiency Savings from 2010-11 budgets	26,954
Running costs - Regional Development Agencies	Efficiency Savings from 2010-11 budgets	17,000
<i>Running costs - Quangos</i>		
PINS	Efficiency Savings from 2010-11 budgets	6,000
Thames Gateway - Direct	Efficiency Savings from 2010-11 budgets—UDC contingency	500
Thames Gateway - London UDC	Efficiency Savings from 2010-11 budgets	600
Thames Gateway - Thurrock UDC	Efficiency Savings from 2010-11 budgets	600
National Tenant Voice	Efficiency Savings from 2010-11 budgets	79
Building Research Advisory Committee	Efficiency Savings from 2010-11 budgets	2
National Housing and Planning Advice Unit	Efficiency Savings from 2010-11 budgets	215
Tenant Services Authority	Efficiency Savings from 2010-11 budgets	2,835
Homes and Communities Agency	Efficiency Savings from 2010-11 budgets	8,831
Infrastructure Planning Commission	Efficiency Savings from 2010-11 budgets	735
West Northants Development Corporation	Efficiency Savings from 2010-11 budgets	1,000
Community Development Foundation	Efficiency Savings from 2010-11 budgets	167
Leasehold Advisory Service	Efficiency Savings from 2010-11 budgets	158
FireBuy	Efficiency Savings from 2010-11 budgets	137
Residential Property Tribunal Service	Efficiency Savings from 2010-11 budgets	1,187
<i>Lower priority programmes</i>		
Fire - New Dimensions Programme	Procurement Saving	5,000
Crosscutting Cohesion and Extremism Projects	Unallocated funding	3,100
Thames Gateway	Unallocated funding	500
Cohesion and Faith Programme (non LG element)	Unallocated funding	3,235
Prevent Programme (non ABG element)	Unallocated funding	6,586
Unallocated funding	Unallocated funding	5,000
<i>Regional Development Agencies</i>		
		186,000
Programme Costs - Regional Development Agencies	Savings in line with plans to restructure regional tier	186,000
<i>Housing Programmes</i>		
		150,000
National Affordable Housing Programme	Funding announced but not yet allocated	100,000
Kickstart	Funding announced but not yet allocated	50,000
<i>Grants to Local Government</i>		
		353,587
<i>Area Based Grant</i>		
Supporting People - Administration Element	Funding allocated	30,000
-Working Neighbourhood Fund	Funding allocated	45,000
Local Enterprise Growth Initiative	Funding allocated	17,500
Prevent	Funding allocated	7,000
Cohesion	Funding allocated	4,000
<i>Non-Area Based Grant Programmes</i>		
Housing Market Renewal	Funding allocated	50,000
- Gypsy and Traveller Site Grant	Funding announced but not yet allocated	30,000
Housing and Planning Delivery Grant	Funding announced but not yet allocated	146,000
- Connecting Communities	Funding announced but not yet allocated	19,087
Other Cohesion Funding	Funding announced but not yet allocated	5,000
<i>Totals Savings</i>		
		780,008

Mr Denham: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government pursuant to the written ministerial statement of 5 July 2010, *Official Report*, columns 1-2WS, on public spending control, which programmes will no longer be funded as a result of the end year flexibility claim from his Department for £220 million. [6840]

Grant Shapps: I refer the right hon. Member to the answer I gave on 8 July 2010, *Official Report*, column 394W, to the right hon. Member for Wentworth and Dearne (John Healey).

Mr Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government pursuant to the written ministerial statement of 5 July 2010, *Official Report*, columns 1-2WS, on public spending control, what the breakdown by (a) budget area and (b) local authority area is of the £220 million reduction in expenditure to be made from his Department. [7033]

Grant Shapps: The Government remain strongly committed to reducing the United Kingdom's budget deficit and the announcement by the Chief Secretary on the 5 July confirmed that the Department has agreed to a £220 million reduction in its claim for End Year Flexibility this year. We have therefore been able to confirm £390 million of End Year Flexibility this year, alongside the £170 million announced on 24 May, for the provision of new social housing and other housing priorities.

This guarantee of £560 million of funding will enable the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) to meet all existing contractual commitments and will be able to progress some of those programmes that have been paused while the funding position was under review. The HCA's regional offices will be assessing which other schemes can be progressed. Moreover, given public sector borrowing in 2010-11 was forecast to hit £167 billion, such levels of spending on "borrowed money" was unsustainable—contributing to the forecast £1.4 trillion of public debt by 2014.

Departmental Sponsorship

Andrew Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government what costs his Department incurred in connection with its sponsorship of the (a) Environmental Innovation in Waste Collection Achievement of the Year award and (b) Reducing Health Inequalities Achievement of the Year award at the Municipal Journal Awards 2010 in respect of (i) sponsorship, (ii) publicity and (iii) costs incurred in (A) travel, (B) accommodation and (C) subsistence payments for Ministers, staff and guests of his Department at the awards ceremony. [6423]

Robert Neill: The Environmental Innovation in Waste Collection Achievement of the Year award was a commitment of the previous Government and was jointly sponsored with DEFRA. The only charge to the Department was £11,744.13 including VAT which was paid to the Hemming Group Ltd. The Department incurred no travel, accommodation or subsistence for Ministers staff or guests. The judging of the awards and the criteria used do not reflect the priorities of the new Government.

Departmental Temporary Employment

Mr Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government how many temporary staff are employed by (a) his Department and (b) its agencies and non-departmental public bodies. [5501]

Robert Neill: Communities and Local Government has recently contributed to a cross-Government work force management information collection exercise, details of which can be found at:

http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/newsroom/news_releases/2010/100618-non-payroll.aspx

This provides a comprehensive summary of staffing data, including contingent work force information, for the Department, its agencies and non-departmental public bodies.

East of England Development Agency: Internet

Robert Halfon: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government how much the East of England Development Agency spent on the www.erebusonline.org.uk website in each year since its establishment; and what estimate he has made of the number of unique visitors received by this website in each such year. [7167]

Mr Prisk: I have been asked to reply.

I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave on 6 July 2010, *Official Report*, column 236W.

Empty Property: Greater London

Zac Goldsmith: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government how many long-term empty dwellings there are in the (a) Richmond-upon-Thames and (b) Kingston local authority area. [6926]

Robert Neill: As at 5 October 2009, the number of long-term empty domestic dwellings in Richmond upon Thames was 452 and 1,228 in Kingston.

These data are taken from the council tax base (CTB) form completed annually in the autumn by all billing authorities in England and returned to Communities and Local Government.

Housing

Mr Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government what estimate he has made of the average annual projected change in the number of households in England between 2006 and 2031 on the basis of (a) the principal population and (b) a zero net migration projection. [7772]

Andrew Stunell: 2006-based household projections under the principal population projection and the zero net migration population variant are published on the CLG website in Live Table 416 at

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingstatistics/housingstatisticsby/householdestimates/livetables-households/>

The ONS have subsequently produced 2008-based population projections, which include lower projected levels of net international migration. CLG expect to publish 2008-based household projections by the end of this year.

Housing: Asbestos

Angela Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government what estimate he has made of the number of homes in (a) Penistone and Stockbridge constituency and (b) Yorkshire and the Humber which contain asbestos. [6397]

Andrew Stunell: The information is not available from my Department. The presence of asbestos in the home is one of 29 potential hazards assessed through the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). Local authorities are required to provide information each year through their Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix on their assessment of the number of homes with any category 1 rated hazards present in each tenure. However this reporting requirement is not specific to individual hazards. The English Housing Survey also provides national estimates of the presence of 26 of the 29 hazards, but as a non-intrusive survey rather than detailed HHSRS inspection, this does not cover the presence of asbestos.

Housing: Bristol

Kerry McCarthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government what estimate he has made of the number of surplus one and two bedroom properties in the social sector in Bristol East constituency. [7494]

Andrew Stunell: The number of surplus properties in the social sector is not collected centrally.

Local authorities and registered social landlords in England report information on the number of vacant dwellings owned. However, the Government do not consider vacant dwelling information an appropriate proxy measure of surplus housing. Also, this information is not reported for constituencies and is not reported by number of bedrooms.

Housing: Construction

Lorely Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government how many new homes were built in the west midlands in each year from 1980 to 1999. [7040]

Andrew Stunell: The following table shows the number of new homes built in the west midlands in each year from 1980-81 to 1999-2000.

<i>House building completions in the west midlands</i>	
<i>Financial year</i>	<i>Completions</i>
1980-81	22,220
1981-82	15,910
1982-83	15,420
1983-84	17,800
1984-85	18,950
1985-86	16,130
1986-87	17,400
1987-88	18,660
1988-89	17,820
1989-90	15,050
1990-91	16,700
1991-92	15,610
1992-93	16,260
1993-94	14,800
1994-95	17,220
1995-96	14,790

House building completions in the west midlands

<i>Financial year</i>	<i>Completions</i>
1996-97	14,280
1997-98	13,390
1998-99	14,250
1999-2000	15,380

Source:

New build completions from P2 monthly and quarterly returns submitted by local authorities and the National House-Building Council to CLG.

Mr Umunna: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (1) when he expects the results of the regional review of funding for round two Kickstart projects to be published; [7819]

(2) what factors he plans to take into account in determining the outcome of the regional review of funding for round two Kickstart projects; [7820]

(3) whether he has made provision for public consultation under the regional review of funding for round two Kickstart projects. [7821]

Grant Shapps: The regional review of funding will build on the Homes and Communities Agency's (HCA) original assessment with the aim to maximise affordable housing and achieve best value for money, alongside local priorities and within the funding available. No public consultation will be undertaken during the regional review of funding for these projects. All individual schemes would have been through community consultation during the planning process. When originally approving these projects, HCA staff worked with the relevant local authorities to ensure that the schemes complemented local priorities. The objective is to give interested parties clarity as quickly as possible.

John Healey: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government which (a) Kickstart and (b) local authority new build projects which were placed on hold by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) in their statement of 25 May 2010 have now reached legal completion and will be funded following the HCA's statement of 6 July 2010. [7849]

Grant Shapps: The Homes and Communities Agency's regional teams are currently undertaking evaluation of all projects funding that had been put on hold under Kickstart Round Two and local authority new build. Determination will be based on available resources with the aim to maximise affordable housing and achieve best value for money alongside local priorities, with completion of reviews as soon as possible.

Housing: Regeneration

John Healey: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government how he plans to allocate the reduction to the 2010-11 Housing Market Renewal budget among the 11 pathfinder projects. [7947]

Grant Shapps: A letter to HMR Pathfinder Chairs, dated 10 June 2010, set out the Government's proposed approach to the allocation of the 2010-11 HMR budget. A copy of the letter has been placed in the Library of the House.

Local Government: Publicity

Mr Spencer: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government what steps he plans to take to prevent local authorities from publishing their own newspapers. [7690]

Robert Neill: We intend to implement the commitment in "The Coalition: our programme for government" to impose tougher rules to stop unfair competition by local authority newspapers by revising the statutory Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity. Before making such revisions, statute requires us to consult representatives of local government and any local authority with whom consultation appears desirable, which we intend to do as soon as practicable.

Mayors

Mr Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government what plans he has for the future (a) number and (b) powers of elected mayors. [7113]

Mr Betts: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government when he expects to announce the date on which each planned city referendum on elected mayors is to take place. [7245]

Robert Neill: I refer the hon. Members to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Nottingham East (Chris Leslie) on 9 June 2010, *Official Report*, column 174W.

Mortgages: Government Assistance

John Healey: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government what estimate he has made of the number of people who have received support from the Mortgage Help website and telephone advice line in the last (a) three, (b) six and (c) 12 months. [7943]

Grant Shapps: From the launch of the website on 7 September 2009 to 8 July 2010 there were 164,657 absolute unique visitors to:

<http://mortgagehelp.direct.gov.uk>

In the last six months, there were 89,435 visitors and in the last three months, 12,315 visitors.

Households are also able to access advice from a range of telephone advice line services promoted on the MortgageHelp website, including National Debtline, the Consumer Credit Counselling Service and Shelter.

National Policy Statements

Zac Goldsmith: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government what national policy statements are under development by his Department. [6925]

Robert Neill: My Department holds policy responsibility for planning and is therefore co-ordinating the Government's work on National Policy Statements but the sectors covered by national policy statements fall in other departmental areas of responsibility. The Department for Transport, the Department of Energy and Climate Change and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs are responsible for developing national policy statements for their major infrastructure sectors.

Non-domestic Rates

Jonathan Reynolds: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government what recent assessment he has made of the merits of reviewing the thresholds for small business rate relief. [6995]

Robert Neill: The small business rate relief thresholds are set to target genuinely small businesses while ensuring that the costs are kept to a reasonable level for those businesses which pay for the scheme. The thresholds were updated from 1 April 2010 in line with the general movement of rateable values at revaluation. In addition, we are doubling the level of small business rate relief in England for one year, from 1 October 2010.

Ordnance Survey

Mr Mark Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government when he expects to announce his decision on the Ordnance Survey's Public Task. [6402]

Robert Neill: The Government are continuing to think carefully about the Ordnance Survey's public task and will inform the House when a decision is made.

Mr Mark Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government what account he plans to take of the recommendations of the Advisory Panel on Public Sector Information on the regulation of Ordnance Survey in its response to the consultation on the future of Ordnance Survey. [6403]

Robert Neill: The response to the consultation on "Policy options for geographic information from Ordnance Survey" received from the Advisory Panel on Public Sector Information has been carefully analysed and continues to be considered. Officials from CLG have met with the chair of the Advisory Panel on Public Sector Information a number of times to discuss the issues covered by the consultation.

Private Rented Housing

Mr Slaughter: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government what plans his Department has for the development of (a) local lettings agencies and (b) the implementation of the recommendations of the Rugg review of private rented sector housing. [7748]

Andrew Stunell: On 10 June, my right hon. Friend the Minister for Housing and Local Government announced that the coalition Government did not intend to implement the regulatory proposals which emerged from the Rugg review. We continue to work on other issues highlighted by the review, including how local authorities can best engage with the private rented sector.

Mr Slaughter: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government pursuant to the answer of 12 January 2010, *Official Report*, column 894W, on private rented housing, what further meetings of his Department's task and finish groups have been held since 12 May 2010. [7932]

Andrew Stunell: The task and finish groups were established as part of the consultation exercise on the previous Administration's response to the Rugg review. No meetings of the task and finish groups have, therefore, been held since 12 May 2010.

Social Rented Housing: Argyll and Bute

Gloria De Piero: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government what estimate he has made of the number of surplus one and two bedroom properties in the social sector in (a) Ashfield, (b) Argyll and Bute and (c) Na h-Eileanan an Iar constituency. [6636]

Andrew Stunell: The number of surplus properties in the social sector is not collected centrally.

Local authorities and registered social landlords in England and Scotland report information on the number of vacant dwellings owned. However, the Government do not consider vacant dwelling information an appropriate proxy measure of surplus housing. Also, this information is not reported for constituencies and is not reported by number of bedrooms.

Social Rented Housing: Birmingham

Jack Dromey: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government what estimate he has made of the number of surplus one and two bedroom properties in the social sector in Birmingham, Erdington constituency. [6947]

Andrew Stunell: The number of surplus properties in the social sector is not collected centrally.

Local authorities and registered social landlords in England report information on the number of vacant dwellings owned. However, the Government do not consider vacant dwelling information an appropriate proxy measure of surplus housing. Also, this information is not reported for constituencies and is not reported by number of bedrooms.

Social Rented Housing: Lambeth

Mr Umunna: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government pursuant to the answer of 8 June 2010, *Official Report*, column 136W, on social rented housing: Lambeth, what eligibility criteria will apply to proposals for Decent Homes programme funding for arms-length management organisations once the outcome of the review is known. [6718]

Andrew Stunell: The criteria for the allocation of funding for ALMOs, including Lambeth, in future years will be dependent on the overall funding available to the Decent Homes programme, following the outcome of the comprehensive spending review.

Social Rented Housing: Lewisham

Heidi Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government what estimate he has made of the number of surplus one and two bedroom properties in the social sector in Lewisham constituency. [6597]

Andrew Stunell: The number of surplus properties in the social sector is not collected centrally.

Local authorities and registered social landlords in England report information on the number of vacant dwellings owned. However, the Government do not consider vacant dwelling information an appropriate proxy measure of surplus housing. Also, this information is not reported for constituencies and is not reported by number of bedrooms.

Social Rented Housing: Peterborough

Mr Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government how much funding has been allocated by the Homes and Communities Agency to social housing providers for each project in Peterborough in 2010-11; and if he will make a statement. [7249]

Grant Shapps: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer on funding that I gave to the hon. Member for Wigan (Lisa Nandy) on 5 July 2010, *Official Report*, columns 84-85W.

The Homes and Communities Agency has spent over £1 million in grant on new affordable housing schemes between April and the end of June 2010-11 in Peterborough. This funding can relate to starts on site or completions which may be from schemes starting on site in previous years.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Bangladesh: Overseas Aid

Mr Swayne: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will review the level of assistance provided by his Department to Bangladesh for education in the light of that country's levels of defence expenditure; and if he will make a statement. [7028]

Mr Duncan: The Government of Bangladesh's defence spending is relatively low, budgeted at 1.2% of gross domestic product for 2010-11 compared to the 2.4% of GDP allocated to its education budget for the same period.

The UK supports Bangladesh to reduce poverty and provide basic services, including health and education, because overall, Bangladesh's resources are very low relative to the investment needed. The UK's investment helped improve teaching training for 400,000 primary teachers in 2009 alone, improving the quality of education for millions of Bangladeshi children. This funding is supplementing Government investment, not substituting for it.

The Secretary of State for International Development has commissioned a review of the Department for International Development's (DFID's) aid programmes to determine how we can achieve better value for money for the taxpayer and accelerate progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. Future support to Bangladesh, including education, will be determined as part of this review.

China

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent assessment he has made of the value for money of his Department's work in China. [6624]

Mr O'Brien: The Secretary of State for International Development announced on 3 June that the bilateral development programme to China would end as soon as is practical. We want to work with them as partners, not as donors and recipients. My right hon. Friend will inform the House when any further decision is made regarding the closure of the programme.

Departmental Manpower

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many governance advisers are employed by his Department (a) in total and (b) in developing countries; and how many of these have (i) a degree in political science, politics or public policy and (ii) experience as an elected politician in national or local government. [6276]

Mr Andrew Mitchell: The Department for International Development (DFID) currently employs 96 governance advisers, 65 of whom work in developing countries. 44% of the total number of governance advisers work in fragile and conflict-affected states.

All governance advisers are expected to have a post-graduate degree in the relevant subject area such as political science, economics or public administration or comparable post-graduate or professional qualifications and must demonstrate extensive proven experience of working effectively on governance issues in practice. Experience as an elected politician in national or local government is not required for governance advisers.

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many economics advisers are employed by his Department (a) in total and (b) in developing countries; and how many of them have a degree in economics. [6277]

Mr Andrew Mitchell: There are currently (a) 110 economic advisers working in the Department for International Development (DFID), and (b) 52 of these are working in developing countries. All DFID economic advisers have a degree in economics.

Departmental Official Cars

Mr Bain: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development which Ministers in his Department have used an allocated Ministerial car to travel between the Department and the House of Commons on each day since 21 May 2010. [5551]

Mr Duncan: Neither the Department for International Development (DFID) nor the Government Cars Service (GCS) hold a central record of ministerial travel between DFID and the House of Commons. This information cannot be provided without incurring disproportionate cost. All travel by Ministers is undertaken in accordance with the Ministerial Code

DFID has given notice to GCS that we are terminating our contracts for allocated ministerial cars and drivers for the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State and myself and intend to use the new Government car pool for ministerial travel purposes as soon as this is in place.

Departmental Reorganisation

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will take steps to relocate officials working in his Department from central London to Bassetlaw. [6556]

Mr Duncan: No.

Departmental Training

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what training has been provided for Ministers in his Department since the formation of the present administration; and at what cost. [6428]

Mr Duncan: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Member for Horsham (Mr Maude) to the hon. Member for West Bromwich East (Mr Watson) on 3 June 2010, *Official Report*, column 52W. The National School of Government is funded through its Core Learning Programme to deliver induction and other training to Ministers, and there is no separate charge to Departments.

Along with Ministers from other Government Departments, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State and I attended the 'Induction Workshop for New Ministers' run by the National School of Government.

Developing Countries: Infant Mortality

Mr Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will estimate the number of children who died up to the age of seven in least developed countries in the latest period for which figures are available, whose deaths would not have occurred if medical facilities available in the UK had been available; and if he will make a statement. [7030]

Mr O'Brien: The Department for International Development (DFID) relies on the United Nations for data on international health. Under-five mortality data are collected rather than under-seven, as these data are required to measure progress on the child health Millennium Development Goal (MDG).

According to the United Nations Children Fund's State of the World's Children Report 2010, the under-five mortality rate in the UK is six deaths per thousand which equates to approximately 4,000 deaths. The comparable under-five mortality rate for the least developed countries is 129 deaths per thousand which equates to just over 3.5 million deaths.

Guinea: Overseas Aid

Mr Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will hold discussions with the new government in Guinea on provision of aid to that country. [7907]

Mr O'Brien: The Department for International Development (DFID) has no bilateral programme in Guinea and has no current plans to hold discussions with the Guinean Government on provision of aid. DFID does provide multilateral contributions to Guinea, primarily through the United Nations and World Bank. In 2008-09, total UK multilateral contributions to Guinea were around £1.7 million.

The UK Government have instigated a full review of all DFID multilateral and bilateral spending.

International Assistance: Health Services

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will take steps to seek to achieve Millennium Development Goals (MDG) 4 and 5 prior to the MDG Summit in September. [7554]

Mr O'Brien: At the Muskoka summit the UK secured commitment by the G8 countries and others to save an extra 1.4 million lives of mothers and children, backed up by commitments of \$7.3 billion of additional finance over the next five years.

The next step is to catalyse the wider international community in decisive action. In September at the MDG summit, the UN Secretary-General will launch a Joint Action Plan for Women and Children's Health. The UK Government will press world leaders to attend the summit and make new commitments to this plan to further reduce deaths of mothers, babies and children.

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will extend his Department's maternal health strategy to include children for the purposes of achieving Millennium Development Goals 4 and 5. [7555]

Mr O'Brien: The Department of International Development is developing a new Business Plan on Reproductive, Maternal and Newborn Health. It seeks to increase women's ability to choose when and how often they have a child and increase the survival of women and babies during pregnancy and childbirth. This is intended to have a significant positive impact on families, economies and societies as well the health and empowerment of women themselves.

Nearly 40% of deaths of children under-five occur in the first month of life. Preventing unintended pregnancies and ensuring pregnancy and child birth is safe for all women make a vital contribution to child health.

There is absolutely no intention to move away from our support to child health. This was demonstrated by the Prime Minister's recent commitments made at the G8 for women and children's health. There are numerous ways in which DFID demonstrates its commitment to child health. For example, we are increasing the number of children under-five who are immunized against childhood diseases, backed by £150 million over 10 years to the GAVI Alliance. We work to tackle under nutrition which contributes to one third of child deaths as well as one fifth of maternal deaths. We are increasing our support to the prevention and treatment of malaria. Some 90% of deaths to malaria are in children and malaria is the cause of one in five child deaths in Africa.

Palestinians: International Assistance

Mr Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps his Department is taking to help reduce Gaza's dependence on food aid; and if he will make a statement. [6955]

Mr Andrew Mitchell: The UK welcomes Israel's decision on 5 July to allow all goods into Gaza, except those on a prohibited list.

Enabling a greater range and volume of foodstuffs to enter Gaza, including raw materials for agriculture and food industries, should lessen Gaza's dependence on food aid by spurring local production and making food more affordable.

For this to happen, we are pushing all parties, including the Palestinian Authority, UN agencies, and international NGOs, to ensure that there is sufficient coordination and prioritisation of humanitarian and commercial goods entering Gaza, to best meet the needs of the population. We will also press the Government of Israel to ensure they deliver on their commitments.

Photographs

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much his Department has spent on official photographs of Ministers since the formation of the present administration. [6429]

Mr Duncan: Zero.

UN Millennium Development Goals: Meetings

Ann McKechin: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions he has had with ministerial colleagues on progress in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in advance of the Millennium Development Goals Review Summit in September 2010. [6735]

Mr O'Brien: The Secretary of State for International Development has discussed progress on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in advance of the Millennium Development Goals Summit in September 2010 with a range of ministerial colleagues including the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary and Chancellor. The Secretary of State, Minister of State and I also hold regular meetings. The UK is fully committed to securing an ambitious action orientated outcome from the MDG Summit.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

Afghanistan

David Miliband: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he met opposition leader Abdullah on his recent visit to Afghanistan. [7874]

Mr Hague: I did not have the opportunity to meet Dr Abdullah Abdullah during my visit to Kabul on 22-23 May 2010, but I look forward to meeting him on a future occasion.

Anti-Semitism

Mr Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Government plan to take to (a) monitor and (b) seek to reduce levels of anti-Semitism overseas; and if he will make a statement. [5517]

Mr Jeremy Browne: Combating all forms of racism, including anti-Semitism, remains an important part of the Government's human rights agenda. We condemn all instances of violence and discrimination against individuals and groups because of their race, faith or belief. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office's overseas missions have a responsibility to monitor and raise human rights in their host countries and routinely raise our concerns with host governments. Where possible our embassies take action on individual cases where persecution or discrimination has occurred and lobby for changes in discriminatory practices and laws. The Government also support the All Party Parliamentary Group against anti-Semitism and their work on tackling anti-Semitism across Europe and encourages MEPs to get involved in tackling anti-Semitism in their own countries. We will continue to promote these issues within the EU, the UN, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe and other multilateral fora.

Anti-Semitism: International Cooperation

Mr Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress his Department has made in implementing the provisions of the final declaration of the London Conference on Combating anti-Semitism, with particular reference to (a) establishing an international taskforce of internet specialists to measure anti-Semitism online and propose international responses and (b) exposing and isolating (i) governments and (ii) politicians engaging in anti-Semitism; and if he will make a statement. [5434]

Mr Jeremy Browne: The implementation of the provisions of the London Conference on Combating anti-Semitism falls within the remit of the cross-Government working group to tackle anti-Semitism which is made up of officials from across Whitehall and the chief executives of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the Jewish Leadership Council and the Community Security Trust. The working group is currently ensuring that the provisions within the declaration are taken forward and they plan to report back on progress at the second Inter-parliamentary Coalition for Combating Anti-Semitism (ICCA) Conference in Ottawa in November 2010.

Mr Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his policy is on implementation of the provisions of the final declaration of the London Conference on Combating anti-Semitism; what recent representations he has received on this issue; and if he will make a statement. [5435]

Mr Jeremy Browne: We welcome the London Declaration on Combating anti-Semitism that was adopted in February 2009 and its important recommendations. We are committed to combating all forms of racism, including

anti-Semitism. The implementation of the provisions of the London Conference on Combating anti-Semitism falls within the remit of the cross-Government working group to tackle anti-Semitism which is made up of officials from across Whitehall and the chief executives of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the Jewish Leadership Council and the Community Security Trust. We look forward to the second Inter-parliamentary Coalition for Combating Anti-Semitism (ICCA) Conference in Ottawa in November 2010 as an opportunity for all participants to assess the progress that has been made.

British Nationality: Prisoners

Priti Patel: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many UK citizens were serving prison sentences in (a) each other EU member state and (b) each non-EU state in each year since 1997. [7526]

Mr Jeremy Browne: The following table shows a snapshot of British nationals in detention by country taken in March of each year from 2005. Figures were not collated centrally prior to 2005.

<i>March 2010</i>	
	<i>Number of British national prisoners</i>
Afghanistan	6
Albania	3
Algeria	1
Antigua	5
Argentina	12
Australia	287
Austria	4
Azerbaijan	1
Bahrain	2
Barbados	13
Belgium	12
Bolivia	2
Brazil	37
Bulgaria	1
Cambodia	8
Canada	34
Chile	1
China	26
Colombia	4
Congo (Democratic Republic)	1
Costa Rica	3
Croatia	1
Cyprus	11
Czech Republic	1
Denmark	3
Dominica	1
Dominican Republic	14
Ecuador	10
Egypt	24
Estonia	2
Ethiopia	6
Fiji	1
Finland	1
France	133
Gambia	2

March 2010

Number of British national prisoners

Germany	124
Ghana	5
Greece	16
Grenada	6
Guatemala	2
Guyana	8
Hungary	1
India	14
Indonesia	11
Iran	2
Iraq	2
Ireland	101
Israel	1
Italy	35
Jamaica	65
Japan	29
Kenya	2
Korea (South)	1
Kuwait	11
Laos	1
Latvia	1
Lebanon	1
Luxembourg	3
Malaysia	2
Malta	9
Mexico	1
Mongolia	1
Montenegro	1
Morocco	11
Namibia	1
Nepal	1
Netherlands	33
New Zealand	7
Norway	34
Oman	5
Pakistan	27
Panama	10
Papua New Guinea	1
Peru	34
Philippines	19
Poland	3
Portugal	25
Qatar	4
Romania	4
Saudi Arabia	3
Senegal	3
Serbia	3
Sierra Leone	1
Singapore	4
Slovakia	1
Slovenia	2
South Africa	15
Spain	346
Sri Lanka	4
St Lucia	4
St Kitts	1
Sweden	24
Switzerland	9
Syria	6
Taiwan	18

March 2010

Number of British national prisoners

Tanzania	1
Thailand	90
Trinidad and Tobago	14
Tunisia	3
Turkey	24
United Arab emirates	55
USA	652
Uzbekistan	1
Venezuela	14
Vietnam	2
Yemen	1
Total	2,649

Priti Patel: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate he has made of the number of UK citizens serving prison sentences in (a) each other EU member state and (b) non-EU states for convictions which may be unsafe; and if he will make a statement. [7527]

Mr Jeremy Browne: We do not centrally collate statistics in cases where there are allegations of fair trial concerns.

If appropriate, we will consider approaching the local authorities if a prisoner is not treated in line with internationally-accepted standards. This may include if a trial does not follow internationally-recognised standards for a fair trial.

Central Asia

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when a Minister next plans to make a visit to Central Asia. [6622]

Mr Lidington: I will visit Kazakhstan on 16-17 July for the informal meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. While there I expect to have a bilateral discussions with ministerial colleagues from the region and beyond.

College of Europe: Scholarships

Zac Goldsmith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many scholarships to the College of Europe his Department funds. [6635]

Mr Lidington: None. The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills will be providing financial support for up to 11 eligible students to study at the College of Europe in 2010-11.

Colombia: Trade Unions

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of the safety of trade unionists in Colombia; and if he will make a statement. [5022]

Mr Jeremy Browne: The safety of trade unionists in Colombia remains of great concern to us. Our embassy in Colombia continues to visit those who are under

threat and we make representation to the Colombian authorities in cases of violence or intimidation against trade unionists. We are also working with the UN on a research initiative to help improve trade union human rights protection and the development of positive labour relations.

Departmental Written Questions

Mr Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will place in the Library a copy of the internal background note relating to each parliamentary question for (a) ordinary written answer and (b) written answer on a named day tabled by the hon. Member for Southend West and answered by his Department since June 2009.

[7262]

Mr Lidington: In line with the practice of successive Governments, it is not normal practice to routinely publish internal advice to Ministers.

Embassies: Buildings

Chris Bryant: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 7 June 2010, *Official Report*, columns 23-24W, on departmental public expenditure, which assets from his Department's overseas estates he intends to sell; and what estimate he has made of the likely contribution to the public purse of such a sale.

[2108]

Alistair Burt: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is planning to sell at least £25 million of assets in Financial Year 2010-11. We have identified 61 properties potentially surplus to requirements. The timing of any sales will suit operational requirements and in some cases will be dependent on a replacement property being secured either on lease terms or as purchases where this represents an overall capital gain and represents value for money.

Of those 61, the following properties are currently either under offer or have been sold and are expected to generate £11.4 million in capital receipts. A schedule of properties sold or under offer is as following:

Schedule of properties sold or under offer

	<i>Property</i>
Dar es Salaam	House + four flats
Ibadan	Amenity property
Nairobi	House
Colombo	Office compound
Kuala Lumpur	House
Seoul	Three houses
The Hague	Two houses
Brussels	House
Oporto	Office
Berlin	House
Dublin	House
Palma	Office
Portimao	Office
Copenhagen	House

EU Law: Fines

Philip Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what total sum in financial corrections has been levied against the UK over the past 10 years for failing to implement European community legislation; what sum is currently outstanding; and what sum was subsequently written off. [6243]

Mr Lidington: Article 260 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union allows the European Court of Justice to fine member states for failing to implement European Community Legislation.

No fines have ever been levied against the UK by way of Article 260 proceedings.

Chris Heaton-Harris: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in which cases since 2001 the Council of Ministers meetings have decided to amend financial corrections levied by the Commission against member states. [6302]

Mr Lidington: The position in relation to infraction fines imposed under article 260 of the treaty on the functioning of the European Union (TFEU) depends on the nature of the infraction.

Where the infraction is for non-notification of transposition of a directive, then the Commission may specify in its application to the Court, a level of fine to be paid by a member state, but the final decision rests with the Court and the Court may not impose a fine which exceeds the amount specified by the Commission.

In relation to other infractions, when it applies to Court the Commission must specify a level of fine to be paid by a member state, but the final decision rests with the Court.

The Council of Ministers is not involved in this process.

European External Action Service

Mr Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he plans to bring forward proposals for the accountability of the European External Action Service to Parliament; and if he will make a statement. [5419]

Mr Lidington: As a service, the European External Actions Service (EEAS) will be accountable to both the European Parliament and the Member States in the Council in their roles as budgetary authority. In so far as it acts in the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) areas, the EEAS will be accountable, through the High Representative, to the Council. In so far as it acts in areas of EU policy, it will be accountable to the Commission (as a collegiate body), the European Parliament and the Council, in accordance with their respective competences and roles.

Parliament is able to scrutinise Decisions taken in Council, some of which will mandate the High Representative, and hold the Government to account through, for example, ministerial evidence sessions and debates on the floor of the House.

Ghana: Official Visits

Mr Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will extend an invitation to the President of Ghana to visit the United Kingdom. [7408]

Mr Bellingham: We are keen to look into all ways to further develop our bilateral relationship with Ghana and other partners in Africa. Visits are an integral part of that.

The President of Ghana's successful Guest of Government visit to the UK in 2009 strengthened our excellent bilateral relationship. This Government have quickly reinforced that success with the Vice-President of Ghana's visit to the UK from 6 to 8 July 2010. We will look at the possibility of a further visit at a future date.

Indonesia: Human Rights

Mr Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if the Government will support the request to the UN by the Republic of Vanuatu for the International Court of Justice to provide an advisory opinion on the legality of the agreement between the Republic of Indonesia and the Kingdom of the Netherlands affecting the civil rights of the people of West Papua. [7920]

Mr Jeremy Browne: The UK supports the territorial integrity of Indonesia. We do not support calls to ask the International Court of Justice for an advisory opinion on whether the New York Agreement was contrary to the UN Charter or the UN General Assembly Resolution 1514. The UN General Assembly took note of the "New York Agreement" between Indonesia and the Netherlands in Resolution 1752. This has been the policy of successive Governments and remains unchanged by the Government.

We will continue to monitor the situation, raise human rights concerns at both official and ministerial level, encourage the Indonesian authorities to address these concerns, and advocate meaningful devolution, appropriate security measures and greater transparency in Papua.

Israel: Passports

Nicholas Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has made to the government of Israel about the misuse of British passports. [7406]

Mr Jeremy Browne: We cannot accept the fraudulent misuse of British passports. The Serious Organised Crime Agency report into the misuse of British passports pointed to Israeli involvement. In March my hon. Friend the Member for North East Bedfordshire (Alistair Burt) welcomed the previous Government's request for formal assurance that in the future the state of Israel would never be party to the misuse of British passports. We continue to seek these assurances from the Government of Israel.

Middle East: Armed Conflict

Mr Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent reports he has received of Qassam rockets being fired from Gaza into southern Israel; whether he has had discussions with the government of Israel on that matter since his appointment; and if he will make a statement. [7070]

Alistair Burt: The UK is aware of sporadic rocket fire from Gaza into southern Israel and we have urged all militants to refrain from such attacks. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary underlined this in his statement of 2 June 2010.

We are in regular dialogue with the Israeli Government particularly on matters pertaining to the peace process and we continue to urge all parties not to change any facts on the ground which might undermine the peace process. Both the Foreign Secretary and I reiterated this to the House on 6 July 2010.

Mr Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has received recent reports of the vandalism of a UN summer camp for children in the Gaza Strip; and if he will make a statement. [7071]

Alistair Burt: According to the UN on 28 June, a group of masked gunmen entered a UN summer games camp. This is the second such attack against a UN summer camp in a month.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon condemned the incident and called on the local authorities in Gaza to combat any incitement against UN operations and ensure the safety of UN personnel and programmes, which serve the most vulnerable in Gaza.

Mr Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent reports he has received on the number of (a) rockets and (b) mortar bombs launched into Israeli territory from (i) Lebanon and (ii) Gaza since 1 January 2010; what reports he has received of the number of persons (A) killed, (B) seriously injured and (C) slightly injured; and if he will make a statement. [7288]

Alistair Burt: Since 4 January 2010 we have received reports of 263 rockets launched into Israeli territory, with one fatality in March. We condemn unequivocally the indiscriminate rocket attacks launched from Gaza.

Mr Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he (a) has taken and (b) plans to take at the United Nations in respect of the reported Qassam rockets fired from Gaza into southern Israel during June 2010; and if he will make a statement. [7289]

Alistair Burt: We are extremely concerned by sporadic rocket attacks against southern Israel. As my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary made clear in his statement to the House on 2 June 2010 it is important for Hamas to take immediate and concrete steps towards the Quartet principles.

A number of issues related to the middle east are discussed on a monthly basis at the UN. The UK will continue to push for the full implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1860 which aims to prevent the illicit trafficking of arms into Gaza. We will continue giving our full support to the UN Sanctions Committee in pursuing and investigating sanctions violations.

Nepal: Religious Freedom

Mr Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has had discussions with the Government of Nepal on religious freedoms in that country under its new constitution; and if he will make a statement. [7558]

Mr Jeremy Browne: We have concerns about the impact of some of the draft proposals for inclusion in the new Nepalese constitution. It is important that the new constitution protects religious freedoms in a manner consistent with Nepal's international commitments. We already have a dialogue with the Government of Nepal and political parties where we stress the importance of ensuring that the new constitution is fully in line with the obligations of international human rights treaties, including on religious freedoms. We have also raised the matter with the chair of the Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles Committee, responsible for drafting the relevant constitutional provisions religious freedom, with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and with the National Human Rights Commission, among others. We will continue this dialogue.

Nigeria: Foreign Relations

Mr Umunna: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the President of Nigeria since the President's swearing-in. [7024]

Mr Bellingham: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has not yet had any discussions with His Excellency President Goodluck Jonathan of Nigeria. However, my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister spoke to the President on 28 May 2010 and they also met at the G8/G20 meeting in Toronto on 26 June 2010. Our bilateral relationship with Nigeria is important and we enjoy a close dialogue across a range of priorities.

Palestinians: International Assistance

Mr Slaughter: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what support the Government has provided to British citizens who were aboard the Gaza Freedom Flotilla since they returned to the UK. [6713]

Alistair Burt: I invited those British nationals involved to meet me on 17 June 2010. 16 of them attended and I was able to listen to their experiences and set out what we were able to do. Consular officials have also spoken to many of those involved.

I have set out in PQ numbers 6785, 6787 and 6716 what we have done to assist the individuals in clarifying the whereabouts of, and retrieving, their possessions and the missing passports. The UK has spent significant time and resources assisting British nationals in this case, including exceptional assistance beyond our normal policy, in view of the specific circumstances.

Mr Slaughter: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what reports he has received on the Israeli government's willingness to grant consular access to British citizens detained on the Gaza Freedom Flotilla. [6715]

Alistair Burt: My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister told the House on 2 June 2010 that he was disappointed and dissatisfied with the Israeli response to the consular situation. He criticised their preparedness and the chaotic nature of the Israeli organisation. The Heads of EU missions in Israel have written jointly to the Israelis expressing their unhappiness at the consular provisions for a planned operation.

Mr Slaughter: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to the Israeli government that evidence be taken in public from British citizens who were aboard the Gaza Freedom Flotilla in any inquiry into the matter. [6716]

Alistair Burt: The Israeli authorities have yet to set out the exact details on how the inquiry will be conducted. Broadly, the Commission's mandate states that it may request any individual or entity, whether Israeli (other than military personnel) or foreign, to testify before it or to provide information to it by other means, on matters which the Commission believes to be relevant to its proceedings.

As my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary underlined in his statement on 21 June 2010 it is important that the Commission provide a full, credible, impartial and independent investigation that the international community can respect.

When I met with the returnees on 17 June I made it clear that we believe the inquiry should have access to the testimony of the British nationals involved. I have raised this issue with the Israeli ambassador.

Mr Slaughter: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps were taken by the UK Embassy in Israel to contact the next of kin of British nationals detained on board the Gaza Freedom Flotilla. [6785]

Alistair Burt: We had contact with a large number of family and friends before we were able to gain consular access to the British nationals who were detained, and provided them with as much information as we were able to on what was happening to reassure them. The Data Protection Act limits what we can discuss about an individual until we have received their consent.

UK consular staff visited the detained British nationals in Be'er Sheva Prison and saw most of them. From those they met they took contact details of the next of kin they wanted us to contact. Consular staff in London and on the ground telephoned those for whom we were given details. Consular staff offered phone facilities for the British nationals to call their next of kin when they arrived in Istanbul after being deported from Israel.

Mr Slaughter: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether his Department has estimated the value of possessions confiscated from British citizens on board the Gaza Freedom Flotilla by the Israeli authorities which have not yet been returned. [6786]

Alistair Burt: We have made no such estimate. We have set out clearly what we have and will be doing to assist those whose possessions are still missing, and made clear to the returnees what next steps they might consider.

Mr Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress has been made in his Department's work with its international counterparts to secure progress towards peace, security and a higher quality of life for both Palestinians and Israelis. [6952]

Alistair Burt: We support a two-state solution created by negotiation and confidence-building on both sides, rather than the creation of facts on the ground that are intended ultimately to change the shape of such a solution.

We welcome the commitment shown by both the Israelis and the Palestinians towards proximity talks. We seek to buttress the diplomatic initiative of President Obama's Administration and the proximity talks currently underway and will be strong supporters of those building the institutions of a future Palestinian state, while actively exploring with our European partners the scope for further EU action in this area, building on the foundation of December's Foreign Affairs Council conclusions.

Mr Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps his Department has taken to encourage Israel to allow Palestinians to travel to hospitals outside Palestinian-controlled territory. [6953]

Alistair Burt: The UK is in regular contact with the Israeli and Palestinian Governments and our international allies regarding the current humanitarian situation in Gaza and the wider issues relating to the peace process. Together with the EU and the Quartet we have called on Israel to ease restrictions on movement and access in the territories. It is essential that there be unfettered access to the Palestinian territories to meet the humanitarian needs of the Palestinian people. This includes facilitating access to medical care outside of the Palestinian territories.

Mr Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress has been made in efforts to lift the Gaza blockade to allow the import of construction materials. [6954]

Alistair Burt: We welcome Israel's decision to move from a list of 120 permitted goods to a list of specific prohibited items. This step shows that it is possible to lift the pressure on ordinary Gazans without compromising the security of ordinary Israelis. All parties must now work together urgently to deliver real change on the ground. This will mean building capacity at the crossings, getting vital reconstruction projects up and running and ensuring that Gazans can export as well as import goods.

My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary underlined the importance in his statement of 5 July 2010 and I also reiterated this in the House on 6 July 2010, *Official Report*, column 159.

Mr Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the government of Israel on the blockade on Gaza since the agreement to substitute the list of allowed items for the list of banned items. [7058]

Alistair Burt: We are in regular contact and dialogue with the Israeli Government, on a number of matters related to the Middle East Peace Process—this includes the current humanitarian situation in Gaza.

We have made clear that the situation in Gaza is a tragedy and unsustainable. Together with the EU and Quartet, we have called on Israel to ease restrictions on access and enable a return to economic normality. I therefore welcomed Israel's decision to move from a list of 120 permitted goods to a list of specific prohibited items. As I said to the House on 6 July 2010 the pressure that has been exerted on Israel in recent times by the EU, the UK, the US and the Quartet for a relaxation on the restrictions in Gaza has had an effect.

It is now imperative that all parties work together urgently to deliver real change on the ground.

Mr Slaughter: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the implications for the security of British citizens detained following the raid on the Gaza Freedom Flotilla of the confiscation of their passports by the Israeli authorities. [7081]

Alistair Burt: All passports which were confiscated by the Israeli authorities were cancelled as soon as the British nationals in question were issued with temporary travel documents. I can further confirm that we have now received all three missing passports and they are being returned to their owners.

Russia: Extradition

Mr MacShane: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has made any recent representations to the Russian authorities on the extradition of Andrei Lugovoi. [6483]

Mr Lidington: We are committed to seeking justice in the Litvinenko case. This was a crime which took place in the UK and involved a British citizen. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister raised the death of Alexander Litvinenko at his meeting with President Medvedev on 25 June.

United Nations: Climate Change

Zac Goldsmith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the merits of establishing a UN body to adjudicate on climate change disputes. [6634]

Mr Bellingham: The UK is committed to working for an ambitious climate change deal through the UN that will give confidence that global action is sufficient to keep temperature rise within two degrees centigrade. There are a number of proposals, such as the establishment of a new World Trade Organisation style organisation, for helping to ensure the enforcement of such a deal. Like others we are currently giving them due consideration

within the UN negotiation and have not yet come to a settled view on which would be most effective. In coming to a conclusion with partners in the negotiation, it will be necessary to balance the need for a meaningful compliance mechanism with the importance of the deal being negotiable and acceptable so as to include all the major emitters.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Children: Maintenance

Natascha Engel: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much in child maintenance arrears is owed in each constituency. [4756]

Maria Miller: The Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission is responsible for the child maintenance system. I have asked the Child Maintenance Commissioner to write to the hon. Member with the information requested and arrange for a copy of the table to be placed in the Library. I have seen the response.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission, the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Child Maintenance Commissioner.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will publish a table showing the amount of child maintenance arrears owed in each constituency. [4756]

The table, which has been placed in the Library, shows the amount of child maintenance arrears owed by non-resident parents as of March 2010, for cases administered on the Agency's computer systems, based on the parliamentary constituency of the non-resident parent.

It is not possible to allocate arrears on cases managed off the Agency's Computer System among constituencies so the figures will not sum to the total reported in the Quarterly Summary of Statistics published in March 2010.

I hope you find this answer helpful.

Disability Living Allowance: Dartford

Gareth Johnson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people were in receipt of disability living allowance in Dartford constituency in each of the last five years. [6843]

Maria Miller: Recipients of disability living allowance in the parliamentary constituency of Dartford.

<i>As at November each year</i>	<i>Total</i>
2009	3,960
2008	3,720
2007	3,530
2006	3,340
2005	3,200

Notes:

1. Case load figures are rounded to the nearest 10. Some additional disclosure control has also been applied.

2. Parliamentary constituencies used are for the Westminster Parliament for May 2005.

3. Figures show the number of people in receipt of an allowance, and exclude people with entitlement where the payment has been suspended for example if they are in hospital.

4. This information is published on our website at <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/tabtool.asp>

Source:

DWP Information Directorate: Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study 100% data.

Future Jobs Fund: Greater London

Rushanara Ali: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much funding has been allocated from the Future Jobs Fund to each London borough in the last 12 months. [6658]

Chris Grayling: The information requested is not available at borough level. However, in the London region, we have allocated £46.3 million.

Future Jobs Fund: Tower Hamlets

Rushanara Ali: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many jobs in the (a) public, (b) private and (c) third sector have been created by the Future Jobs Fund in Tower Hamlets in the last 12 months. [6657]

Chris Grayling: The information requested is not available at borough level. The most recent official statistics, covering the period October 2009 to January 2010, show that there were 840 recorded future jobs fund starts in London.

Homelessness

Mr Slaughter: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much his Department has spent on specialist support for homeless people to return them to work in the last five years; and how much is planned to be spent in 2010-11. [5127]

Chris Grayling: The information available is as follows. It should also be noted that homeless people are also helped by mainstream employment provision such as Flexible New Deal:

(1) *The London Homeless Partnership*¹

		£
Expenditure	2007-08	426,000
	2008-09	433,000
	2009-10	434,000
Planned	2010-11	438,000

(2) *The St Mungo's Single Homelessness Enterprise Invest to Save Project*²

		£
Expenditure	2007-08	84,000
	2008-09	187,000
	2009-10	201,000
Planned	2010-11	97,000

(3) *progress2work-LinkUp*

This programme helps people who are homeless, and also people for whom drug or alcohol misuse, or an offending background is a barrier to work. Figures on how much of the funding for this programme is spent on homeless customers are not available.

¹ The amounts shown are staff costs only. Other costs could be provided only at disproportionate cost. Information prior to 2007-08 is not available.

² This is a three-year project that ends in September 2010.

Housing Benefit

Helen Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the (a) number of private sector tenants whose local housing allowance will be reduced and (b) average per week reduction in the level of local housing allowance paid to each for each broad rental market area in each year from 2011-12 to 2014-15. [4814]

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his estimate is of the number of private sector tenants in West Lancashire constituency whose local housing allowance will be reduced from its current level in each year from 2011-12 to 2014-15; and what his estimate is of the average amount of reduction for such a tenant in each of those years. [5589]

Kate Green: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his estimate is of the number of private sector tenants in Stretford and Urmston constituency whose local housing allowance will be reduced from its current level in each year from 2011-12 to 2014-15; and what his estimate is of the average reduction in each of those years. [5862]

Yvonne Fovargue: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his estimate is of the number of private sector tenants in Makerfield constituency whose local housing allowance will be reduced from its current level in each year from 2011-12 to 2014-15; and what his estimate is for the average reduction in each of those years. [6052]

Bridget Phillipson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his estimate is of the number of private sector tenants in Houghton and Sunderland South constituency whose local housing allowance will be reduced from its current level in each year from 2011-12 to 2014-15; and what his estimate is of the average reduction in each of those years. [6058]

Barbara Keeley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his estimate is of the number of private sector tenants in Worsley and Eccles South constituency whose local housing allowance will be reduced from its current level in each year from 2011-12 to 2014-15; and what his estimate is of the average reduction in each of those years. [6093]

Ann McKechin: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his estimate is of the number of private sector tenants in (a) Glasgow North and (b) Ealing Central and Acton constituency whose local housing allowance will be reduced from its current level in each year from 2011-12 to 2014-15; and what his estimate is of the average weekly reduction in each of those years. [6150]

Fiona Mactaggart: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his estimate is of the number of private sector tenants in (a) Slough, (b) Salisbury and (c) Scarborough and Whitby constituency whose local housing allowance will be reduced from its current level in each year from 2011-12 to 2014-15; and what his estimate is of the average reduction in each of those years. [6188]

Heidi Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his estimate is of the number of private sector tenants in Lewisham East constituency whose housing benefit allowance will be reduced from its current level in each year from 2011-12 to 2014-15; and what his estimate is of the average amount of reduction for such a tenant in each of those years. [6592]

Gloria De Piero: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his estimate is of the number of private sector tenants in (a) Ashfield, (b) Argyll and Bute and (c) Na h-Eileanan an Iar constituency whose local housing allowance will be reduced from its current level in each year from 2011-12 to 2014-15; and what his estimate is of the average reduction in each of those years. [6649]

Ann Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his estimate is of the number of private sector tenants whose local housing allowance will be reduced from its current level in each year from 2011-12 to 2014-15; and what his estimate is of the average reduction among such tenants in each of those years. [6784]

Jack Dromey: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his estimate is of the number of private sector tenants in Birmingham, Erdington constituency whose local housing allowance will be reduced from its current level in each year from 2011-12 to 2014-15; and what his estimate is of the average amount of reduction for such a tenant in each of those years. [6944]

Steve Webb: We will publish an impact assessment for the housing benefit changes that will affect the calculation of local housing allowance rates on 23 July 2010.

Helen Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether he has made a recent estimate of the number of (a) pensioners, (b) people of working age who are (i) employed and (ii) unemployed, (c) social sector tenants and (d) private sector tenants who are in receipt of housing benefit in (A) Bishop Auckland and (B) Blackpool North and Cleveleys constituency. [5181]

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his estimate is of the number of (a) pensioners, (b) people of working age in work, (c) people of working age and unemployed, (d) social sector tenants and (e) private sector tenants receiving housing benefit in West Lancashire constituency. [5630]

Kate Green: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his estimate is of the number of (a) pensioners, (b) people of working age in work, (c) people of working age who are unemployed, (d) social sector tenants and (e) private sector tenants receiving housing benefit in Stretford and Urmston constituency. [5854]

Fiona Mactaggart: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the number of (a) pensioners, (b) persons of working age in work, (c) persons of working age who are unemployed, (d) social sector tenants and (e) private sector tenants on housing benefit in (i) Slough, (ii) Salisbury and (iii) Scarborough and Whitby constituency. [6005]

Bridget Phillipson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the number of (a) pensioners, (b) persons of working age in work, (c) persons of working age and unemployed, (d) social sector tenants and (e) private sector tenants in receipt of housing benefit in Houghton and Sunderland South constituency. [6016]

Barbara Keeley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the number of (a) pensioners, (b) people of working age in work, (c) people of working age who are unemployed, (d) social sector tenants and (e) private sector tenants receiving housing benefit in Worsley and Eccles South constituency. [6090]

Ann McKeichin: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the number of (a) pensioners, (b) people of working age in work, (c) people of working age who are unemployed, (d) social sector tenants and (e) private sector tenants receiving housing benefit in (i) Glasgow North and (ii) Ealing Central and Acton constituency. [6146]

Heidi Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the number of (a) pensioners, (b) persons of working age in work, (c) persons of working age who are unemployed, (d) social sector tenants and (e) private sector tenants in receipt of housing benefit in Lewisham East constituency. [6586]

Gloria De Piero: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the number of (a) pensioners, (b) persons of working age in work, (c) persons of working age and unemployed, (d) social sector tenants and (e) private sector tenants in receipt of housing benefit in (i) Ashfield, (ii) Argyll and Bute and (iii) Na h-Eileanan an Iar constituency. [6651]

Ann Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the number of (a) pensioners, (b) persons of working age in work, (c) persons of working age and unemployed, (d) social sector tenants and (e) private sector tenants in receipt of housing benefit in Cynon Valley constituency. [6780]

Jack Dromey: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the number of (a) pensioners, (b) persons of working age in work, (c) persons of working age and unemployed, (d) social sector tenants and (e) private sector tenants in receipt of housing benefit in Birmingham Erdington constituency. [6939]

Susan Elan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the number of (a) pensioners, (b) people of working age who are (i) in work and (ii) unemployed, (c) social sector tenants and (d) private sector tenants in receipt of housing benefit in Clwyd South constituency. [7003]

Catherine McKinnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the number of (a) pensioners, (b) persons of working age in work, (c) persons of working age and unemployed,

(d) social sector tenants and (e) private sector tenants in receipt of housing benefit in Newcastle upon Tyne North constituency. [7034]

Fiona O'Donnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what recent estimate he has made of the number of (a) pensioners, (b) people of working age who are (i) employed and (ii) unemployed, (c) social sector tenants and (d) private sector tenants in East Lothian constituency. [7180]

Kerry McCarthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what recent estimate he has made of the number of (a) pensioners, (b) people of working age who are (i) employed and (ii) unemployed, (c) social sector tenants and (d) private sector tenants in receipt of housing benefit in Bristol East constituency. [7242]

Mrs Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the number of (a) pensioners, (b) people of working age in work, (c) people of working age and unemployed, (d) social sector tenants and (e) private sector tenants in receipt of housing benefit in Bristol North West constituency. [7790]

Steve Webb: The information is not available at the constituency level.

The available information on housing benefit recipients is published at:

http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/hb_ctb/hbctb_release_jun10.xls

An exercise is being undertaken to add other geographical areas to the housing benefit data: this will include parliamentary constituencies. It is hoped this exercise will be completed by early 2011.

Helen Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in receipt of housing benefit were paying rent at or below the 30th percentile in their local area at the latest date for which information is available. [6320]

Steve Webb: We are currently updating our estimate of how many people in receipt of housing benefit were paying rent at or below the 30th percentile in their local area, so as to use the latest housing benefit and market evidence data. Following quality assurance, this updated estimate will be included in the impact assessment of the housing benefit changes that will affect the calculation of local housing allowance rates. The Department will publish this on 23 July 2010.

Heidi Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his estimate is of the number of non-dependants living in households where the main occupier is in receipt of housing benefit in Lewisham East constituency. [6589]

Gloria De Piero: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the number of non-dependants living in households where the main occupier is in receipt of housing benefit in (a) Ashfield, (b) Argyll and Bute and (c) Na h-Eileanan an Iar constituency. [6647]

Ann Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his estimate is of the number of non-dependants living in households where the main occupier is in receipt of housing benefit in Cynon Valley constituency. [6783]

Jack Dromey: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his estimate is of the number of non-dependants living in households where the main occupier is in receipt of housing benefit in Birmingham Erdington constituency. [6940]

Steve Webb: The information is not available.

Mr Lammy: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what representations he received from the Mayor of London on proposed changes to housing benefit (a) before and (b) after 22 June 2010. [6674]

Steve Webb: The Department has not received any representations from the Mayor of London in connection with the changes to housing benefit that were announced in the Emergency Budget.

Mr Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate the number of private tenants who may not be able to afford their rents as a result of the reduction in housing benefit; and if he will make a statement. [7029]

Steve Webb: We will publish an impact assessment for the housing benefit changes that will affect the calculation of local housing allowance rates on 23 July 2010.

Catherine McKinnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the number of non-dependants living in households where the main occupier is in receipt of housing benefit in Newcastle upon Tyne North constituency. [7035]

Fiona O'Donnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what recent estimate he has made of the number of non-dependents living in households where the main occupier is in receipt of housing benefit in East Lothian constituency. [7183]

Kerry McCarthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what recent estimate he has made of the number of non-dependants in households where the main occupier is in receipt of housing benefit in Bristol East constituency. [7239]

Steve Webb: The information is not available.

Dr Huppert: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps his Department has taken to assess the effects of calculations based on broad market rental areas (BMRAs) on (a) Blackpool, (b) Cambridge and (c) other areas; what estimate he has made of the effect on the level of local housing allowance payments of the operation of BMRAs in those areas; and if he will adjust the BMRA for those areas to take account of the variation in rent levels within each BMRA. [7782]

Steve Webb: Local housing allowance (LHA) rates for all broad rental market areas in England, Scotland and Wales are published by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) on their website:

www.voa.gov.uk

The VOA has also published on their website indicative LHA rates at the 30th percentile based on data used to produce the June 2010 rates in England.

The Scottish Government have published indicative LHA rates at the 30th percentile based on data used to produce the July 2010 LHA rates in Scotland. These are available on the Scottish Government website:

www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/Housing/PrivateRenting/rent-registration-service-setting-lha/Figures/LHAJULY2010

This will be updated each month until LHA rates are set at the 30th percentile from October 2011.

Indicative LHA rates at the 30th percentile for broad rental market areas in Wales are not as yet published but are given in the following table. The rates are based on July 2010 data.

We will consider how best to set housing benefit areas in future as part of our longer term reform plans.

30th Percentile calculation—Wales

£

Broad Rental Market Area	Shared 1 bedroom	1 bedroom	2 bedroom	3 bedroom	4 bedroom
Blaenau	45.00	64.62	76.92	86.54	107.31
Brecon and Radnor	50.00	65.00	87.00	103.85	115.38
Bridgend	49.00	77.31	98.08	105.00	150.00
Caerphilly	54.00	71.54	92.31	100.00	138.46
Cardiff	54.23	98.08	126.92	144.23	184.62
Carmarthen	51.00	70.00	87.69	99.23	115.38
Ceredigion	63.50	80.77	98.08	110.00	126.92
Flint	55.00	75.00	103.85	121.15	155.77
Merthyr Cynon	45.00	65.00	80.00	87.69	110.00
Monmouth	56.54	86.54	114.23	132.69	173.08
Newport	50.00	76.15	103.85	115.38	150.00
North Clwyd	60.00	75.00	97.00	115.38	148.85
North Powys	50.00	60.00	80.77	92.31	126.92
North West Wales	50.00	65.00	85.38	98.08	121.15
NPT	54.00	75.00	87.69	98.08	114.23

30th Percentile calculation—Wales

£

Broad Rental Market Area	Shared 1 bedroom	1 bedroom	2 bedroom	3 bedroom	4 bedroom
Pembroke	54.00	77.54	92.31	115.38	150.00
South Gwynedd	50.00	60.00	73.85	83.08	80.00
Swansea	51.92	85.00	103.85	110.00	155.77
Taff Rhondda	45.00	62.00	84.23	90.00	126.92
Torfaen	60.00	80.77	92.31	110.77	132.69
Vale of Glamorgan	51.92	93.75	115.38	126.92	173.08
Wrexham	55.00	69.23	98.08	115.38	150.00

Note:

The rates are based on July 2010 data.

Source:

Rent Officers Wales

Ms Buck: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 5 July 2010 to the hon. Member for Edinburgh North and Leith, *Official Report*, column 95W, on housing benefit, how many households receive maximum housing allowance of £104,000 annually. [7851]

Steve Webb: In June 2010 the highest local housing allowance rate was £2,000 a week which would be equivalent to 'receiving £104,000 a year in housing benefit' assuming the individual remains in receipt of the same level of benefit for 52 continuous weeks.

Information on housing benefit awards in June 2010 will be available in September 2010. The latest information the Department holds is for March 2010, when the highest local housing allowance rate was £1,800, and shows that there were some customers who received this rate.

The highest local housing allowance rate can vary each month and customers' awards will reflect the rate at the time of their claim. At March 2010 there were fewer than 100 customers receiving a housing benefit award based on the highest local housing allowance rate at the time their award was calculated.

Incapacity Benefit: Medical Examinations

Kevin Brennan: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 15 June 2010, *Official Report*, columns 364-5W, on incapacity benefit, whether further audit of a medical report subject to targeted or random audit ceases at the discovery of the first failure of contractual compliance; and if he will make a statement. [7816]

Chris Grayling: The whole report is audited and does not cease at the identification of a serious error.

Jobseeker's Allowance

Ann Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many lone parents are in receipt of jobseeker's allowance in Cynon Valley constituency. [6777]

Chris Grayling: In April 2010 there were 80 lone parents claiming jobseeker's allowance in Cynon Valley. The figure has been rounded to the nearest five.

Gloria De Piero: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the number of lone parents in receipt of jobseeker's allowance (a) Ashfield, (b) Argyll and Bute and (c) Na h-Eileanan an Iar constituency. [6646]

Chris Grayling: In April 2010 there were 115 lone parents claiming jobseeker's allowance in Ashfield, 55 in Argyll and Bute, and 10 in Na h-Eileanan an Iar.

The figures have been rounded to the nearest five.

Mary Creagh: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many lone parents are in receipt of jobseeker's allowance in Wakefield constituency. [6773]

Chris Grayling: In April 2010 there were 120 lone parents claiming jobseeker's allowance in Wakefield.

The figure has been rounded to the nearest five.

Jack Dromey: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many lone parents are in receipt of jobseeker's allowance in Birmingham Erdington constituency. [6938]

Chris Grayling: In April 2010 there were 160 lone parents claiming jobseeker's allowance in Birmingham Erdington.

The figure has been rounded to the nearest five.

Fiona O'Donnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what recent estimate he has made of the number of lone parents in receipt of jobseeker's allowance in East Lothian constituency. [7190]

Chris Grayling: In April 2010 there were 75 lone parents claiming jobseeker's allowance in East Lothian.

The figure has been rounded to the nearest five.

Kerry McCarthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what recent estimate he has made of the number of lone parents in receipt of jobseeker's allowance in Bristol East constituency. [7237]

Chris Grayling: In April 2010 there were 55 lone parents claiming jobseeker's allowance in Bristol East.

The figure has been rounded to the nearest five.

Jobseeker's Allowance: Greater London

Glenda Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many lone parents are in receipt of jobseeker's allowance in (a) Hampstead and Kilburn constituency and (b) the London Borough of (i) Camden and (ii) Brent. [6551]

Chris Grayling: In April 2010 there were 170 lone parents claiming jobseeker's allowance in Hampstead and Kilburn, 345 in Camden, and 475 in Brent.

The figures have been rounded to the nearest five.

Jobseeker's Allowance: Lewisham

Heidi Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his estimate is of the number of lone parents in receipt of jobseeker's allowance in Lewisham East constituency. [6593]

Chris Grayling: In April 2010 there were 205 lone parents claiming jobseeker's allowance in Lewisham East.

The figure has been rounded to the nearest five.

Lone Parents: Bishop Auckland

Helen Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether he has made a recent estimate of the number of lone parents in (a) Bishop Auckland and (b) Blackpool North and Cleveleys constituency. [5233]

Maria Miller: In 2008, there were estimated to be 2,200 lone parents in Bishop Auckland, and 2,900 lone parents in Blackpool North and Cleveleys. These figures have been rounded to the nearest 100. The estimates are based on the Household Annual Population Survey (HAPS). The latest available wave for the HAPS is 2008. It is important to note that as with any sample survey estimates from the HAPS are subject to a margin of uncertainty as different samples give different results. At the constituency level the group in question is very specific and the estimates are based on very small sample sizes. Therefore, the margin of uncertainty is very large for these estimates and the figures are deemed unreliable and would not be used by the Department for Work and Pensions for practical purposes.

Lone Parents: Greater Manchester

Kate Green: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many lone parents there are in Stretford and Urmston constituency. [5853]

Maria Miller: In 2008, there were estimated to be 3,100 lone parents in Stretford and Urmston. This figure has been rounded to the nearest 100. The estimate is based on the Household Annual Population Survey (HAPS). The latest available wave for the HAPS is 2008. In 2008 parliamentary constituency boundaries were different. The information given reflects the population in the current boundaries as closely as possible. It is important to note that as with any sample survey, estimates from the HAPS are subject to a margin of uncertainty as different samples give different results. At the constituency level the group in question is very specific and the estimate is based on very small sample

sizes. Therefore, the margin of uncertainty is very large for this estimate and the figure is deemed unreliable and would not be used by the Department for Work and Pensions for practical purposes.

Lone Parents: Houghton-le-Spring

Bridget Phillipson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many lone parents there are in Houghton and Sunderland South constituency. [5899]

Maria Miller: In 2008, there were estimated to be 3,300 lone parents in Houghton and Sunderland South. This figure has been rounded to the nearest 100. The estimate is based on the Household Annual Population Survey (HAPS). The latest available wave for the HAPS is 2008. In 2008 parliamentary constituency boundaries were different. The information given reflects the population in the current boundaries as closely as possible. It is important to note that as with any sample survey, estimates from the HAPS are subject to a margin of uncertainty as different samples give different results. At the constituency level the group in question is very specific and the estimate is based on very small sample sizes. Therefore, the margin of uncertainty is very large for this estimate and the figure is deemed unreliable and would not be used by the Department for Work and Pensions for practical purposes.

Lone Parents: Hull

Diana R. Johnson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many lone parents there are in Kingston upon Hull North constituency. [6529]

Maria Miller: In 2008, there were estimated to be 3,800 lone parents in Kingston upon Hull North. This figure has been rounded to the nearest 100. The estimate is based on the Household Annual Population Survey (HAPS). The latest available wave for the HAPS is 2008. In 2008 parliamentary constituency boundaries were different. The information given reflects the population in the current boundaries as closely as possible. It is important to note that as with any sample survey, estimates from the HAPS are subject to a margin of uncertainty as different samples give different results. At the constituency level the group in question is very specific and the estimate is based on very small sample sizes. Therefore, the margin of uncertainty is very large for this estimate and the figure is deemed unreliable and would not be used by the Department for Work and Pensions for practical purposes.

Medical Examinations

Kevin Brennan: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 15 June 2010, *Official Report*, columns 364-5W, what the differences are between the medical service standards referred to and the contractual standards of the agreement between his Department and the medical services contractor. [7815]

Chris Grayling: There are no differences between Medical Services standards and the contractual standards. Medical Services standards are specified in the contract between Atos Healthcare and the Department for Work and Pensions.

Pension Protection Fund

Jonathan Edwards: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the deficit was of the Pension Protection Fund on the latest date for which figures are available. [6764]

Steve Webb: The last audited figure, published in the Pension Protection Fund's 2008-09 Annual Report and Accounts (page 16), reported that it had a funding ratio of 88%, with a deficit of £1,230 million.

At the time of publication, in November 2009, the PPF said

"The lack of big claims and improvements in the investment markets since March mean we estimate that, by the end of September, our deficit had fallen back below the £1 billion mark and our funding ratio had returned to more than 90%".

The Pension Protection Fund's 2009-10 Annual Report and Accounts will be presented to Parliament later this year.

Pensioners

Mary Creagh: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners receive (a) the basic state pension and (b) pension credit in Wakefield constituency. [6771]

Steve Webb: The information available is in the following table.

<i>Parliamentary constituency: Wakefield</i>	
	<i>Number</i>
State Pension recipients	17,110
Pension credit individual beneficiaries	5,600
Pension credit household recipients	4,540

Notes:

1. Caseload figures are rounded to the nearest 10.
2. State Pension figures are for the total state pension caseload. Around 1% of State Pension recipients are not in receipt of the basic State Pension, but are receiving additional State Pension only or graduated retirement benefit only.
3. Basic State Pension only figures are not available by current 2010 parliamentary constituencies.
4. Pension credit household recipients are those people who claim pension credit either for themselves or on behalf of themselves and a partner. Individual beneficiaries are the number of claimants in addition to the number of partners for whom they are claiming.
5. Parliamentary constituencies are for the Westminster Parliament of May 2010.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study 100% data as at November 2009

Ann Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners receive (a) the basic state pension and (b) pension credit in Cynon Valley constituency. [6776]

Steve Webb: The information available is in the following table.

<i>Parliamentary constituency: Cynon Valley</i>	
	<i>Number</i>
State Pension recipients	13,790
Pension credit individual beneficiaries	5,510

Parliamentary constituency: Cynon Valley

	<i>Number</i>
Pension credit household recipients	4,390

Notes:

1. Caseload figures are rounded to the nearest 10.
2. State Pension figures are for the total state pension caseload. Around 1% of State Pension recipients are not in receipt of the basic State Pension, but are receiving additional State Pension only or graduated retirement benefit only.
3. Basic State Pension only figures are not available by current 2010 parliamentary constituencies.
4. Pension credit household recipients are those people who claim pension credit either for themselves or on behalf of themselves and a partner. Individual beneficiaries are the number of claimants in addition to the number of partners for whom they are claiming.
5. Parliamentary constituencies are for the Westminster Parliament of May 2010.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study 100% data as at November 2009

Jack Dromey: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners receive (a) the basic state pension and (b) pension credit in Birmingham, Erdington constituency. [6946]

Steve Webb: The information available is in the table.

	<i>Birmingham, Erdington parliamentary constituency</i>
State pension recipients	15,200
Pension credit individual beneficiaries	8,040
Pension credit household recipients	6,700

Notes:

1. Caseload figures are rounded to the nearest 10.
2. State pension figures are for the total state pension caseload. Around 1% of state pension recipients are not in receipt of the basic state pension, but are receiving additional state pension only or graduated retirement benefit only.
3. Basic state pension only figures are not available by current 2010 parliamentary constituencies.
4. Pension credit household recipients are those people who claim pension credit either for themselves or on behalf of themselves and a partner. Individual beneficiaries are the number of claimants in addition to the number of partners for whom they are claiming.
5. Parliamentary constituencies are for the Westminster Parliament of May 2010.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study 100% data as at November 2009.

Fiona O'Donnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners receive (a) the basic state pension and (b) pension credit. [7188]

Steve Webb: The information available is in the table.

	<i>East Lothian parliamentary constituency</i>	<i>Great Britain</i>
State pension recipients	20,070	11,312,340
Pension credit individual beneficiaries	5,390	3,353,830

	<i>East Lothian parliamentary constituency</i>	<i>Great Britain</i>
Pension credit household recipients	4,500	2,739,860

Notes:

1. Case load figures are rounded to the nearest 10.
2. State pension figures are for the total state pension case load. Around 1% of state pension recipients are not in receipt of the basic state pension, but are receiving additional state pension only or graduated retirement benefit only.
3. Basic state pension only figures are not available by current 2010 parliamentary constituencies.
4. Pension credit household recipients are those people who claim pension credit either for themselves or on behalf of themselves and a partner. Individual beneficiaries are the number of claimants in addition to the number of partners for whom they are claiming.
5. Parliamentary constituencies are for the Westminster Parliament of May 2010.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study 100% data as at November 2009

Pensioners: Bristol

Kerry McCarthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners in Bristol East constituency receive (a) the basic state pension and (b) pension credit. [7235]

Steve Webb: The information available is in the table.

	<i>Bristol East parliamentary constituency</i>
State pension recipients	16,110
Pension credit individual beneficiaries	5,240
Pension credit household recipients	4,360

Notes:

1. Case load figures are rounded to the nearest 10.
2. State pension figures are for the total state pension case load. Around 1% of state pension recipients are not in receipt of the basic state pension, but are receiving additional state pension only or graduated retirement benefit only.
3. Basic state pension only figures are not available by current 2010 parliamentary constituencies.
4. Pension credit household recipients are those people who claim pension credit either for themselves or on behalf of themselves and a partner. Individual beneficiaries are the number of claimants in addition to the number of partners for whom they are claiming.
5. Parliamentary constituencies are for the Westminster Parliament of May 2010.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study 100% data as at November 2009

Pensions: Public Sector

Mr Watson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he expects his Department's review into public sector pensions to (a) commence and (b) be completed; what remuneration will be provided to Mr John Hutton for undertaking the review; what secretarial support he will be provided with; and if he will make a statement. [5771]

Danny Alexander: I have been asked to reply.

The Independent Public Service Pensions Commission was launched on 20 June. Details of the terms of reference and initial call for evidence can be found on the Treasury website under Independent Reviews at:

http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/indreview_johnhutton_pensions.htm

The Independent Commission is due to report in time for Budget 2011.

It has been agreed that John Hutton will be paid £4,000 per month for a minimum of three days per week while conducting the review which is expected to last for a nine-month period and travel and subsistence expenses will be paid in line with Treasury policy. The team to support the commission's work is not yet fully established, but John Hutton does have access to a business support manager to assist with secretarial duties.

Rents

Heidi Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his estimate is of the level of (a) 50th percentile rents in 2010-11 and (b) 30th percentile rents in 2011-12 for (i) one, (ii) two, (iii) three, (iv) four and (v) five bedroom properties in Lewisham East constituency. [6587]

Glenda Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his estimate is of the level of (a) 50th percentile rents in 2010-11 and (b) 30th percentile rents in 2011-12 for (i) one, (ii) two, (iii) three, (iv) four and (v) five bedroom properties in Hampstead and Kilburn constituency. [6552]

Mr Gauke: I have been asked to reply.

I refer the hon. Members to the answer given to the hon. Member for West Lancashire (Rosie Cooper) on 6 July 2010, *Official Report*, columns 184-85W.

Social Security Benefits

Gloria De Piero: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people were in receipt of (a) disability living allowance, (b) incapacity benefit and (c) employment and support allowance in (i) Ashfield, (ii) Argyll and Bute and (iii) Na h-Eileanan an Iar constituency on the most recent date for which figures are available. [6645]

Chris Grayling: The information is provided as follows:

Employment support allowance claimants, incapacity benefit/severe disablement allowance, and disability living allowance: November 2009

	<i>Parliamentary constituency</i>		
	<i>Ashfield</i>	<i>Argyll and Bute</i>	<i>Na h-Eileanan an Iar</i>
ESA	900	620	160
IB/SDA	5,100	3,260	1,060
DLA	7,030	4,670	1,370

Notes:

1. Incapacity benefit was replaced by employment support allowance (ESA) from October 2008.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest 10, some additional disclosure has been applied.
3. Case load for DLA show the number of people in receipt of an allowance, and exclude people with entitlement where the payment has been suspended, for example if they are in hospital.
4. Constituencies used are for the Westminster Parliament of May 2010.
5. IB/SDA 'Claimants' include people in receipt of benefit and also those who fail the contributions conditions but receive a national insurance credit, ie 'credits only cases'.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study 100% data.

Social Security Benefits: Disability

Brandon Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in Great Yarmouth constituency are in receipt of (a) incapacity benefit, (b) employment support allowance and (c) disability living allowance. [6169]

Chris Grayling: The information is provided as follows:

Employment support allowance claimants, incapacity benefit/severe disablement allowance, and disability living allowance: November 2009

	Great Yarmouth parliamentary constituency
ESA	710
IB/SDA	4,460
DLA	6,260

Notes:

1. Incapacity benefit was replaced by employment support allowance (ESA) from October 2008.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest 10, some additional disclosure has been applied.
3. Caseload for DLA show the number of people in receipt of an allowance, and exclude people with entitlement where the payment has been suspended, for example if they are in hospital.
4. Constituencies used are for the Westminster Parliament of May 2010.
5. IB/SDA 'Claimants' include people in receipt of benefit and also those who fail the contributions conditions but receive a National Insurance Credit, i.e. 'credits only cases'

Source:

DWP Information Directorate 100% Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study

Ann Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people are in receipt of (a) disability living allowance and (b) employment support allowance in Cynon Valley constituency. [6770]

Chris Grayling: The information is as follows:

Disability living allowance and employment support allowance claimants in Cynon Valley parliamentary constituency, November 2009

	Cynon Valley parliamentary constituency
DLA	7,740
ESA	930

Estimated level of overpayment due to fraud and error: 2005-06 to 2009-10

	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	Percentage 2009-10 ¹
Disability living allowance ³	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9
Pension credit ²	4.7	5.3	5.1	5.1	4.4
Housing benefit ²	5.5	5.1	4.6	4.9	4.4
Carer's allowance ³	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5

¹ The 2009-10 figure is a preliminary estimate

² For housing benefit and pension Credit the fraud and error estimates are obtained from continuous measurement exercises.

³ Disability living allowance (DLA) and carer's allowance (CA) are estimated from "one off" exercises covering a financial year, called National Benefit Reviews. DLA was last measured for 2004-05 and CA was last measured in 1996-97.

Source:

Fraud and Error in the Benefit System: October 2008 to September 2009

Attendance allowance, maternity grant, cold weather payment, council tax benefit, employment and support

Disability living allowance and employment support allowance claimants in Cynon Valley parliamentary constituency, November 2009

Cynon Valley parliamentary constituency

Notes:

1. Incapacity benefit was replaced by employment support allowance (ESA) from October 2008.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest 10, some additional disclosure has been applied.
3. Caseload for DLA show the number of people in receipt of an allowance, and exclude people with entitlement where the payment has been suspended, for example if they are in hospital.
4. Constituencies used are for the Westminster Parliament of May 2010.
5. IB/SDA "Claimants" include people in receipt of benefit and also those who fail the contributions conditions but receive a national insurance credit, i.e. "credits only cases".

Source:

DWP Information Directorate 100% WPLS.

Mike Crockart: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what plans he has for the future of the Independent Living Fund. [7077]

Maria Miller: We will be considering the future position of the Independent Living Fund in the context of the spending review and our commitment to review the role and spending of all non-departmental public bodies.

Mike Crockart: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether all Independent Living Fund funding approved before the change to the eligibility criteria will be disbursed. [7078]

Maria Miller: The priority of the Independent Living Fund is to support people who are already users of the fund. The Independent Living Fund will be able to honour its commitments to all existing users and to proceed with all the cases where it has already made an offer of new funding.

Social Security Benefits: Overpayments

Dr Whiteford: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate has been made of the level of overpayment of (a) disability living allowance, (b) attendance allowance, (c) child maintenance, (d) maternity grant, (e) pension credit, (f) cold weather payment, (g) housing benefit, (h) council tax benefit, (i) employment and support allowance, (j) carer's allowance and (k) bereavement benefits in each of the last five years. [6332]

Steve Webb: National Statistics estimating the level of fraud and error in the benefit system are published every six months covering a rolling 12-month period.

The percentage levels of overpayment in each of the past five years, for the benefits which are measured, are set out in the following table.

allowance and bereavement benefits are all unreviewed benefits. The rate of fraud and error on unreviewed

benefits is estimated in a broad fashion, but the figures are not published separately. Where suitable proxies exist, percentage-of-expenditure results from reviewed benefits that are similar are used. Where such proxies are not available, the average of all measured benefits is used.

Child maintenance in Great Britain is the responsibility of the Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission. The Commission is a Crown non-departmental public body.

TREASURY

Energy: Subsidies

Zac Goldsmith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) which official in his Department is responsible for global energy subsidy reform policy; [6631]

(2) what steps he plans to take to implement the recommendations of the Joint Report of the International Energy Authority, the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the World Bank on implementation of the G20 decision to reform energy subsidies. [6633]

Justine Greening: At the G20 summit in Pittsburgh Leaders asked a number of international organisations to provide a joint report including analysis of the scope of energy subsidies and suggestions for the implementation of their commitment to phase out and rationalise inefficient fossil fuel subsidies, while providing targeted support for the poorest.

At the recent G20 summit in Toronto Leaders noted with appreciation the joint report provided by the international organisations. They also encouraged continued and full implementation of country-specific strategies to rationalise and phase out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies that encourage wasteful consumption, taking into account vulnerable groups and their development needs.

Work by HM Treasury on global energy subsidies is led from within its International and Finance Directorate. Tom Scholar, the Second Permanent Secretary, is responsible for this directorate.

Bank Levy

Mr Umunna: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate his Department has made of the effect on the amount of corporation tax revenue to the Exchequer from the financial services sector which will result from the reduction in the corporation tax rate from 2011-12 to 2014-15 announced in the June 2010 Budget. [7910]

Mr Gauke: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the right hon. Member for Holborn and St Pancras (Frank Dobson) on 1 July 2010, *Official Report*, columns 610-11W.

Business: Government Assistance

Mr Jim Cunningham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps he is taking to increase access to finance for small and medium-sized enterprises. [7102]

Mr Gauke: The Chancellor announced immediate steps to increase access to finance for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the Emergency Budget. This included:

an extension to the Enterprise Finance Guarantee, which was increased by £200 million for this year to support additional lending for SMEs of up to £700 million until 31 March 2011; a commitment to the Growth Capital Fund, which will provide growth capital in the range of £2 million to £10 million to growing SMEs; and

the launch of a new Enterprise Capital Fund, which will provide £37.5 million in equity finance to SMEs with high growth potential.

Small and medium-sized enterprises will also benefit from other announcements in the Budget, including the reduction in the corporation tax rate for smaller companies to 20%.

To underscore the Government's commitment to ensuring that all viable businesses have access to the finance they need over the long term, the Budget also announced the publication of a Green Paper on business finance. This will consider the broad range of finance options facing businesses of different sizes and invite views on priorities and future approaches to enhancing businesses' access to appropriate sources of finance.

Child Tax Credit

Liz Kendall: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many households with annual incomes of over (a) £15,000 and (b) £30,000 in (i) England, (ii) Leicester and (iii) Leicester West constituency are in receipt of child tax credits. [7096]

Mr Gauke: Analysis of the number of households with incomes over £15,000 and £30,000 in England, Leicester and Leicester West constituency is shown in the following table. This information is based on provisional information of families receiving tax credits as at April 2010.

	Number of families by household income	
	£15,000 to £30,000	Over £30,000
England	1,369,055	1,547,800
Leicester	9,035	4,955
Leicester West	2,145	2,045

Further details about the snapshot data used for this analysis can be found in the HMRC snapshot publication "Child and Working Tax Credits. Geographical Analysis, April 2010". This is available at:

<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/cwtc-geog-stats.htm>

Climate Change Levy

Zac Goldsmith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to reform the Climate Change Levy to provide a price floor for carbon. [7384]

Justine Greening: As announced in the Budget, the Government will publish proposals in the autumn to reform the climate change levy to provide more certainty and support to the carbon price. Subject to that consultation, the Government will bring forward relevant legislation in Finance Bill 2011.

Departmental Buildings

John Mann: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many buildings his Department occupies in (a) London and (b) the UK. [6854]

Justine Greening: HM Treasury occupies two buildings in the UK, one of which is in London.

Departmental Equality

Philip Davies: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much his Department has spent (a) in total and (b) on staff costs on promoting equality and diversity in each of the last three years for which figures are available; and how many people are employed by his Department for this purpose. [5918]

Justine Greening: The information covering the Treasury Group work managing diversity and equality obligations is set out in the following table. The figures include funding for reasonable adjustments for employees with disabilities as required by the Disability Discrimination Act.

	£
2007-08	59,543.82
2008-09	75,665.15
2009-10	107,199.32

In addition, one full-time equivalent member of Treasury staff is employed to work explicitly on equality and diversity issues.

The Treasury's Single Equality Scheme is available online at:

http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/about_equality.htm

and sets out how the Department will meet the requirements of the equality duties in its policy formulation and as an employer.

Employment

Mr Bain: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will publish each assessment made by his Department of the effects of implementation of the proposals in his Budget Statement on (a) public sector employment and (b) private sector employment in the UK in (i) 2010-11, (ii) 2011-12, (iii) 2012-13, (iv) 2013-14, (v) 2014-15 and (vi) 2015-16; and if he will make a statement; [5677]

(2) what estimate his Department has made of the effects of the proposals in the June 2010 Budget on the number of jobs in the (a) public and (b) private sector in each financial year from 2010-11 to 2015-16; and if he will make a statement. [6205]

Danny Alexander: To continue with the previous fiscal plans would put the recovery at risk. By acting now, the Government have reduced the risk of adverse market conditions, which would mean higher interest rates for all, stifling recovery and making the challenges ahead even harder.

The OBR released further information on its employment forecast on 30 June 2010. The OBR forecasts show that total employment is expected to rise by 1.3 million by 2015-16.

The OBR forecast release can be found on the following webpage:

<http://budgetresponsibility.independent.gov.uk/publications.html>

Equitable Life Assurance Society: Compensation

Sajid Javid: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the written ministerial statement of 26 May 2010, *Official Report*, columns 51-2WS, on Equitable Life, what progress he has made on his plans to make fair and transparent payments to Equitable Life policyholders through an independently designed payment scheme; and if he will make a statement. [5171]

Alun Cairns: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what timetable has been set for making payments to former Equitable Life policy holders; and when he expects the first such payment to be made. [6753]

Mr Hoban: Later this month, the Government will provide a detailed update on the steps towards implementing an independently designed payments scheme. This will be alongside Sir John Chadwick's report on relative losses suffered by Equitable Life policyholders as a consequence of the findings of maladministration and injustice made by the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman.

European Parliament: Finance

Mr Clappison: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the appropriateness of the (a) size of the budget of the European Parliament in (i) 2010 and (ii) 2011 and (b) the annual (A) nominal and (B) percentage change in the size of the budget in each of the last five years; what proportion of the budget heading 5 (administration) of the European Union budget is accounted for by the European Parliament budget; and if he will take steps in the Council of Ministers to reduce the costs of the European Parliament. [7942]

Justine Greening: The UK contribution faces upward pressure due to the 2005 abatement giveaway worth around €2 billion per annum by 2012.

Each year, the European Parliament (EP) budget accounts for around 20% of Heading 5 (administration) of the EU budget. The following table contains detailed data on the EP budget.

The European Parliament budget in 2010 represented just under a fifth of total spend under Heading 5. At a time when European voters are experiencing the effects of tough fiscal consolidation measures, the European Parliament needs to ensure that it is delivering maximum value for money for every euro it receives.

The UK was one of only a few member states to reject an amendment to the 2010 EU budget, increasing the European Parliament's budget this year by 9.4 million euros.

The EP budget for 2011 has not yet been agreed, so it is not possible to give data on the EP budget for that year. However, the Government believe that the proposal in the Commission's draft budget for 2011 of €8,255 million spend on administration overall is too high and must be reduced. The Government are arguing that payments in

the 2011 EU budget should remain at cash levels equivalent to the 2010 budget. Further, we will continue to engage with counterparts across the EU to build support where

possible to end the wasteful dual sitting of the European Parliament in Strasbourg and Brussels.

	2010	% change	2009 ¹	% change	2008	% change	2007	% change	2006	% change	2005	% change
European Parliament	1,616	5.7	1,530	5.3	1,453	3.9	1,398	5.7	1,322	4.6	1,264	5.0
Heading 5 (admin.)	7,898	—	7,695	—	7,279	—	6,978	—	6,604	—	6,351	—
EP as a proportion of H5	20.46	—	19.88	—	19.96	—	20.03	—	20.02	—	19.90	—

€ million

¹ European Parliament numbers from 2005-07 are source: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/budget/www/index-en.htm>

Gift Aid

Dr Huppert: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the effects on (a) charities and (b) Exchequer revenue of allowing gift aid arrangements to apply in full to donations made by higher rate tax payers. [7780]

Justine Greening: HM Revenue and Customs estimate that £1,007 million in Gift Aid repayments and transitional relief were made to charities in 2009-10. Higher rate relief, available to donors who are higher rate income tax payers, on Gift Aid donations to charities totalled £310 million in 2009-10.

Independent research commissioned by HMRC in 2009 suggested that approximately 80% of all higher rate relief available on donations is claimed.

Insolvency: Football

John Mann: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much has been written off in tax revenue by the Exchequer in cases where Football Association football clubs have gone into administration in each of the last three years. [7890]

Mr Gauke: The information is not readily available centrally and could be produced only at disproportionate cost.

Loans: Sheffield Forgemasters

Mr Betts: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has made an estimate of the effect on gross domestic product of withdrawing the £80 million loan from Sheffield Forgemasters. [6374]

Danny Alexander: HM Treasury does not normally hold the detailed information required to provide an estimate of the effect of such projects on gross domestic product.

Mr Betts: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has made an estimate on the effect on the balance of payments of withdrawing the £80 million loan to Sheffield Forgemasters. [6376]

Danny Alexander: HM Treasury does not hold the detailed information required to provide an estimate of the net effect of such projects on the balance of payments.

Office for Budget Responsibility: Public Appointments

Mr Blunkett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer who will undertake the responsibilities for the Office of Budget Responsibility discharged by Sir Alan Budd until a successor is appointed; and if he will make a statement. [7864]

Justine Greening: Sir Alan Budd is stepping down as chair of the Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR) when his contract expires on 13 August 2010. Geoffrey Dicks and Graham Parker will continue to serve as interim members of the Budget Responsibility Committee until a permanent chair of the OBR has been appointed and they will be discharging the OBR's responsibilities.

Pregnant Women: Grants

Gloria De Piero: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many health in pregnancy grants were made to people in (a) Ashfield, (b) Argyll and Bute and (c) Na h-Eileanan an Iar constituency in 2009-10. [6642]

Mr Gauke: This information is available only at disproportionate cost.

Jon Trickett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment has been made of the effects on (a) expectant mothers and (b) the welfare of newborn children of the abolition of the health in pregnancy grant. [6665]

Justine Greening: The Health in Pregnancy Grant will be available to all pregnant women until 1 January 2011 and therefore women who were pregnant at the time of the Budget announcement will receive this payment.

The Government's priority is to make sure that the measures they takes are fair. Therefore they have significantly increased the child element of child tax credits to ensure that the impact of the measures taken within the Emergency Budget will not have a measurable impact on child poverty rates within the next two years.

Public Expenditure

Mr Byrne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the annual (a) capital, (b) non-cash resource and (c) near cash resource departmental underspend of each Government department in fiscal year 2009-10. [6811]

Danny Alexander: Provisional outturn of departmental capital, near-cash resource and non-cash resource expenditure against final DEL provision for the financial year 2009-10 will be reported in the forthcoming Public Expenditure Provisional Outturn White Paper (PEOWP).

Yvette Cooper: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether equality impact assessments will be used in determining the areas of his Department's budget in respect of which spending will be reduced. [7097]

Justine Greening: The Treasury will ensure the relevant equality considerations are taken in to account in the context of its own departmental budget in compliance with our obligations under the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Race Relations Act 1976, and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

Public Expenditure: Wales

Alun Cairns: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the written ministerial statement of 5 July 2010, *Official Report*, columns 1-2WS, on public spending control, what assessment he has made of the implications for Wales of the savings announced. [7080]

Danny Alexander: The changes announced on 5 July 2010, *Official Report*, columns 1-2WS, do not have any additional impact on the savings announced for Wales.

Jonathan Edwards: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer with reference to footnote 1 of Table 9.2 of the Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses, July 2010, how much the (a) end year flexibility and (b) reserve claims are for Wales. [7939]

Danny Alexander: End year flexibility drawdown for Wales totalled £331.3 million in 2009-10. The Welsh Assembly Government did not have any reserve claims in 2009-10 although they drew capital expenditure of £90.7 million forward from 2010-11.

Public Finance

Mr Weir: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what projects of each department have been included in the review of major spending projects approved by the previous administration between 1 January 2010 and the general election; and how much was planned to be spent under each. [6304]

Danny Alexander: On 17 June I announced the outcome of a review of 217 projects that had been approved by the previous Government between 1 January 2010 and the general election. 12 projects were cancelled as they did not demonstrate value for money, were unaffordable or did not reflect the Government's priorities, and a further 12 projects were suspended as more detailed work is needed as part of the spending review process.

Details of projects cancelled or suspended, including the spending that had been approved for each project, have been deposited with the Libraries of the House of Commons and the House of Lords (deposit number DEP2010 1320)¹. A comprehensive list of all the remaining projects neither cancelled nor suspended has also been deposited with Parliaments Libraries (deposit number DEP2010 1327)².

¹ Paper laid in the Libraries of the House of Commons and House of Lords listing projects cancelled or suspended can be found at

<http://www.parliament.uk/deposits/depositedpapers/2010/DEP2010-1320.doc>

² Paper laid in the Libraries of the House of Commons and House of Lords listing projects neither cancelled nor suspended can be found at

<http://www.parliament.uk/deposits/depositedpapers/2010/DEP2010-1327.doc>

Public Sector: Pensions

Helen Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what remuneration will be provided to Mr John Hutton for conducting the review of public sector pensions. [4288]

Danny Alexander: The Independent Public Service Pensions Commission was launched on 20 June. Details of the terms of reference and initial call for evidence can be found on the Treasury website under Independent Reviews at:

http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/indreview_johnhutton_pensions.htm

The Independent Commission is due to report in time for Budget 2011.

It has been agreed that John Hutton will be paid £4,000 per month for a minimum of three days per week while conducting the review which is expected to last for a nine-month period and travel and subsistence expenses will be paid in line with Treasury policy. The team to support the commission's work is not yet fully established, but John Hutton does have access to a business support manager to assist with secretarial duties.

Rents

Ann McKeichin: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his estimate is of the level of (a) 50th percentile rents in 2010-11 and (b) 30th percentile rents in 2011-12 for (i) one, (ii) two, (iii) three, (iv) four and (v) five bedroom properties in (A) Glasgow North and (B) Ealing Central and Acton constituency. [6145]

Gloria De Piero: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his estimate is of the level of (a) 50th percentile rents in 2010-11 and (b) 30th percentile rent in 2011-12 for (i) one, (ii) two, (iii) three, (iv) four and (v) five bedroom properties in (A) Ashfield, (B) Argyll and Bute and (C) Na h-Eileanan an Iar constituency. [6640]

Mr Gauke: I refer the hon. Members to the answer given to the hon. Member for Bishop Auckland (Helen Goodman) on 6 July 2010, *Official Report*, column 184-5W.

The Glasgow North, Argyll and Bute, and Na h-Eileanan an Iar constituencies are a matter for the devolved Administration.

Jack Dromey: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the level of (a) 50th percentile rents in 2010-11 and (b) 30th percentile rents for (i), one, (ii), two, (iii) three, (iv) four and (v) five bedroom properties in Birmingham Erdington constituency in 2011-12. [6934]

Kerry McCarthy: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the (a) 50th percentile rent in 2010-11 and (b) 30th percentile rents in 2011-12 for properties of (i) one, (ii) two, (iii) three, (iv) four and (v) five bedrooms in Bristol East constituency. [7241]

Mr Gauke: I refer the hon. Members to the answer given to the hon. Member for West Lancashire (Rosie Cooper) on 6 July 2010, *Official Report*, columns 184-85W.

Revenue and Customs: Northern Ireland

Mr Dodds: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what premises at each location in Northern Ireland are (a) owned and (b) leased by HM Revenue and Customs. [7171]

Mr Gauke: The majority of HM Revenue and Customs' (HMRC) premises in Northern Ireland, along with the rest of its estate, were included in the 2001 Strategic Transfer of the Estate to the Private Sector (STEPS) outsourcing deal with Mapeley. HMRC occupies these premises under the terms of the contract with Mapeley rather than by the terms of a traditional lease. HMRC also occupies premises in Northern Ireland by way of sharing arrangements with other Government Departments and holds two premises by way of a traditional lease.

HMRC Revenue and Customs (HMRC) retains ownership of one property in Northern Ireland, Custom House in Belfast. However as part of the STEPS deal, Mapeley have been granted a long lease of the property, and HMRC now occupies the premises under the terms of the STEPS contract and not as the freehold owner.

Details of HMRC's holdings of premises at each location in Northern Ireland are given in the following table.

<i>Location</i>	<i>Premises name</i>	<i>HMRC holding</i>
Antrim	Crown Buildings	Government sharing arrangement
Ballymena	Kilpatrick House	Mapeley, STEPS contract
Banbridge	Bridgewater House	Leased
Belfast	Windsor House	Government sharing arrangement
Belfast	Carne House	Mapeley, STEPS contract
Belfast	Beaufort House	Mapeley, STEPS contract
Belfast	Scрабо Street, car park	Mapeley, STEPS contract
Belfast	Harbour Office, Spaces 1-57	Mapeley, STEPS contract
Belfast	Custom House	Owned/Mapeley, STEPS contract
Belfast	Dorchester House	Mapeley, STEPS contract
Belfast	Millennium House	Leased
Coleraine	Fern House	Mapeley, STEPS contract
Craigavon	Marlborough House	Government sharing arrangement
Enniskillen	Abbey House	Mapeley, STEPS contract

<i>Location</i>	<i>Premises name</i>	<i>HMRC holding</i>
Lisburn	Moira House	Mapeley, STEPS contract
Londonderry	Foyle House	Mapeley, STEPS contract
Newry	Custom House	Mapeley, STEPS contract
Newry	Downshire House	Mapeley, STEPS contract
Omagh	Crown Buildings	Government sharing arrangement

Self-Employed Contributions: Fraud

Mr David Hamilton: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his most recent estimate is of the loss of revenue to the Exchequer from people falsely claiming to be self-employed (a) in total and (b) in the construction industry in the latest period for which figures are available. [6606]

Mr Gauke: The loss of revenue to the Exchequer from people falsely claiming to be self-employed is not known. However information is available from the Construction Industry Scheme for individuals working in the construction industry. The loss of revenue to the Exchequer for people falsely claiming to be self-employed in the construction industry is estimated to be around £350 million using 2009-10 tax and national insurance rates.

Tax Avoidance

Andrew George: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what definition of the terms (a) tax avoidance and (b) tax efficiency his Department uses. [7667]

Mr Gauke: The Government have not published a definition of avoidance. However it is widely understood to entail taking a view of the tax treatment of a transaction that is tenable but has tax consequences that were not intended by the legislature. This does not prevent taxpayers organising their affairs in an efficient manner, consistent with the intentions of the legislation. Tackling tax avoidance is essential and we make every effort to do so.

The Government consider the economic efficiency of tax measures as part of the tax policy-making process.

Andrew George: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps he plans to take (a) to reduce the levels of tax avoidance and (b) to close tax loopholes. [7668]

Mr Gauke: The Government are committed to tackling tax avoidance and will continue to take necessary steps to protect the Exchequer and maintain fairness in the tax system.

The Emergency Budget set out the Government's intention to build in sustainable defences against avoidance opportunities when undertaking policy reform and by reviewing areas of the tax system in which repeated changes have been necessary to close loopholes.

Chapter 2 of Budget document also announced a number of specific measures to counter tax avoidance.

Taxation

Andrew George: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the additional tax the Exchequer will recover from all individuals with incomes (a) below the personal allowance threshold set in the Budget, (b) above the personal allowance level but below the 40 per cent. tax threshold, (c) above the 40 per cent. threshold but below the 50 per cent. threshold and (d) above the 50 per cent. threshold as a result of (i) the proposed rise in the rate of value added tax and (ii) other tax measures in each year from 2010-11 to 2014-15. [6922]

Mr Gauke: The Government have provided analysis of Budget measures to be in place by 2012-13 in Annex A of the Red Book and the total yield for each measure is provided in Table 2.1. The combined impacts of tax, tax credits and benefit changes have been assessed by household expenditure and income as set out in Annex A of the Red Book. Analysis of VAT at an individual level could be misleading as although goods and services are purchased by an individual they may be utilised by other individuals within the household. The Government therefore believe that analysis at a household level is the most appropriate. It is not possible to provide the total additional tax paid by individuals in the different income tax bands of all other tax measures.

Taxation: Banks

Mr Umunna: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what statistical forecast his Department has made of the effect on revenues to the Exchequer of the bank levy announced in the June 2010 Budget. [7909]

Mr Hoban: The estimated impact on the Exchequer of the bank levy and the analysis underpinning these estimates are set out in the following Budget 2010 document:

http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/junebudget_costings.pdf

Taxation: Environment Protection

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the proportion of the revenue to accrue to the Exchequer attributable to green taxes in 2011-12 as a result of the proposals in the Budget of (a) March and (b) June 2010. [6407]

Justine Greening: The total percentage of revenue raised by environment taxes, as a proportion of all taxes in the March 2010 Budget, was 0.4%. The total percentage of revenue raised by environment taxes, as a proportion of all taxes in the June 2010 Budget, was also 0.4%.

Landfill tax, aggregates levy, climate change levy have been included in this estimate. EU Emissions Trading Scheme revenues have also been included as the receipts have been provisionally scored as tax revenues in the Budget, and the policy objective is primarily environmental.

The Government are committed to playing their part in moving to a low carbon economy. This transition will change the shape of industry, growth and jobs. The recent Budget announced the Government's:

intention to consult in the autumn on changes to climate change levy in order to support the carbon price;

commitment to make proposals post-spending review to create a Green Investment Bank; and

confirmed plans to legislate in this parliamentary session to create a Green Deal for home energy efficiency.

Taxation: Gaming Machines

Philip Davies: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he plans to announce the results of his Department's consultation on the replacement of amusement machine licence duty by a gross profit tax regime for gaming machines. [6754]

Justine Greening: The consultation on whether to move the taxation of gaming machines from the current system of Amusement Machine Licence Duty and VAT, to a gross profits tax, ended in October 2009.

This has raised a number of issues, which are under discussion with gambling stakeholders.

Taxation: Self-Assessment

Mr Laurence Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how long on average it takes to obtain a tax return form following an initial request; what steps he is taking to reduce that time; and if he will make a statement. [7557]

Mr Gauke: The majority of self assessment tax returns and 'Notice to Complete a Tax Return' (SA316) are automatically issued in April each year. Paper tax returns generated at other times take an average of one week to reach the customer. Self assessment tax returns along with supplementary pages and guidance are available on the HM Revenue and Customs website.

The majority of self assessment tax returns are filed electronically.

Taxation: Sheffield Forgemasters

Mr Betts: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has made an estimate of the effect on tax revenues of withdrawing the £80 million loan to Sheffield Forgemasters. [6375]

Danny Alexander: Neither HM Treasury nor HM Revenue and Customs hold the detailed information required to provide an estimate of the effect of such projects on all tax revenues.

Indirect effects of spending measures on tax revenues are not usually accounted for in Budget scorecard costings and the public finances only include such impacts if they are substantial and certain enough to affect the macroeconomic forecasts.

VAT: Charities

Ian Lucas: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many registered charities are registered for value added tax in (a) Wrexham, (b) Wales and (c) the UK. [7827]

Mr Gauke: This information is not available.

HM Revenue and Customs does not categorise separately VAT registrations belonging to charities.

VAT: Fuel Poverty

Tom Blenkinsop: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the effects on those living in fuel poverty of the increase in the standard rate of value added tax; and if he will make a statement. [7746]

Mr Gauke: There was no change in the budget to the rate of VAT on domestic fuel and power, which continues to be 5%.

Analysis of the impact of indirect taxes, of which the increase in the standard rate of VAT is the most significant change, is provided in Annex A of the Red Book on both an income decile and expenditure decile basis.

Welfare State: Reform

Dr Pugh: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the net full-year effect on the Exchequer is of changes to social security benefits announced in the June 2010 Budget. [7677]

Mr Gauke: Table 2.1 of the June 2010 Budget provides a breakdown of the direct fiscal impacts of the social security policy decisions, and Table C14 shows the combined net direct and indirect effects of all the Budget policy decisions on the social security forecast, together with other forecasting changes since the pre-Budget forecast. Chapter C also sets out the Office for Budget Responsibility's approach to forecasting the indirect economic and fiscal impacts of the Budget policy decisions.

Welfare Tax Credits

Ann Clwyd: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many households in receipt of tax credits have an annual income of over £30,000 in Cynon Valley constituency. [6775]

Mary Creagh: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many households in receipt of tax credits have an annual income of over £30,000 in Wakefield constituency. [6774]

Jack Dromey: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many households in receipt of tax credits have an annual income of over £30,000 in Birmingham Erdington constituency. [6935]

Mr Gauke: Analysis of the number of households with incomes over £30,000 in the aforementioned constituencies is shown in the following table. This information is based on provisional information of families receiving tax credits as at April 2010.

<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Number of households with income over £30,000</i>
Birmingham Erdington	1,925
Cynon Valley	1,365
Wakefield	2,750

Further details about the snapshot data used for this analysis can be found in the HMRC snapshot publication "Child and Working Tax Credits. Geographical Analysis, April 2010". This is available at:

<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/cwtc-geog-stats.htm>

Mr Jim Cunningham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many households in Coventry South and in receipt of tax credits have an annual income of over £30,000. [7101]

Susan Elan Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many households in receipt of tax credits in Clwyd South constituency have an income of over £30,000. [6992]

Mark Lancaster: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many households in Milton Keynes North constituency in receipt of tax credits have an annual income of over £30,000. [7065]

Kerry McCarthy: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many households in receipt of tax credits in Bristol East constituency have an income of over £30,000. [7234]

Fiona O'Donnell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many households in receipt of tax credits in East Lothian constituency have an income of over £30,000. [7186]

Mr Gauke: Analysis of the number of households with incomes over £30,000 in the aforementioned constituencies is shown in the following table. This information is based on provisional information of families receiving tax credits as at April 2010.

<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Number of households with income over £30,000</i>
Bristol East	2,640
Clwyd South	2,110
Coventry South	3,365
East Lothian	3,080
North East Milton Keynes	2,330

Further details about the snapshot data used for this analysis can be found in the HMRC snapshot publication "Child and Working Tax Credits. Geographical Analysis, April 2010". This is available at:

<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/cwtc-geog-stats.htm>

Ms Buck: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage of households in each UK region are in receipt of tax credits and have an annual income above £30,000. [7743]

Mr Gauke: The information requested is in the following table:

<i>UK region</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
England	25
Northern Ireland	21
Scotland	26
Wales	22
UK average	25

This analysis is based on provisional information on families receiving tax credits as at April 2010. Further details about these data can be found in the HMRC snapshot publication "Child and Working Tax Credits. Geographical Analysis, April 2010". This is available at:

<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/cwtc-geog-stats.htm>

Welfare Tax Credits: Birmingham

Jack Dromey: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people in Birmingham Erdington constituency are in receipt of (a) disability living allowance and (b) incapacity benefit. [6936]

Maria Miller: I have been asked to reply. The information is in the following table.

Disability living allowance and incapacity benefit/severe disablement allowance claimants: November 2009. Parliamentary constituency Birmingham, Erdington

	Number
Disability living allowance	7,320
Incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance	5,420

Notes:

1. Incapacity benefit was replaced by employment support allowance (ESA) from October 2008.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest 10, some additional disclosure has been applied.
3. Caseload for DLA show the number of people in receipt of an allowance, and exclude people with entitlement where the payment has been suspended, for example if they are in hospital.
4. Constituencies used are for the Westminster Parliament of May 2010.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate 100 percent WPLS

Welfare Tax Credits: Greater London

Ms Buck: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many households in receipt of tax credits in each London constituency have an annual income above £30,000. [7742]

Mr Gauke: This information is published in the HMRC publication 'Household Income distribution of Tax Credits families by Westminster Constituency—April 2010'.

A copy has been placed in the Library of the House and will be published on HMRC's website shortly.

Working Tax Credit

Mr Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what effect the changes to the tax credits announced in the June 2010 Budget will have on the childcare element of the working tax credit. [7062]

Mr Gauke: No changes to the child care element of the working tax credit were made at the June Budget 2010.

The reforms that were made at June Budget 2010 do not have a direct impact on the child care element of the working tax credit. The size and nature of the changes to tax credit awards following the reforms will be the same for households of equivalent income and size whether they are claiming the child care element of the working tax credit or not.

Working Tax Credit: Birmingham

Jack Dromey: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many families in Birmingham Erdington constituency in the annual income band of (a) £10,000 to £20,000, (b) £21,000 to £30,000, (c) £31,000 to £40,000, (d)

£41,000 to £50,000, (e) £51,000 to £60,000 and (f) £60,000 or more are in receipt of tax credits. [6933]

Mr Gauke: The information requested is shown in the following table. This information is based on provisional information of families receiving tax credits as at April 2010.

Families in receipt of tax credits by income band in the Birmingham Erdington constituency

Household income	Number
£10,000-£20,000	4,730
£20,000-£30,000	2,765
£30,000-£40,000	1,840
£40,000-£50,000	635
50,000-£60,000	265
Over £60,000	155

Further details about the data used for this analysis can be found in the HMRC snapshot publication "Child and Working Tax Credits. Geographical Analysis, April 2010". This is available at:

<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/cwtc-geog-stats.htm>

HOME DEPARTMENT

Counter-terrorism: Birmingham

Mr Godsiff: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) whether the (a) automatic number plate recognition and (b) CCTV equipment installed in Sparkbrook, Moseley, King's Heath and Washwood Heath under Project Champion had the facility for (i) facial recognition and (ii) monitoring of conversations; [3858]

(2) what the location is of each (a) automatic number plate recognition and (b) CCTV device installed in (i) Sparkbrook, (ii) Moseley, (iii) King's Heath and (iv) Washwood Heath for the purposes of Project Champion; and whether each such device was located with the purpose of monitoring a specific individual or individuals. [3859]

James Brokenshire: The equipment under Project Champion, whether ANPR or CCTV, does not have either facial recognition or audio monitoring facilities.

The locations of the cameras installed under Project Champion are provided in maps (marked with stars) of Hall Green and Washwood Heath constituencies which have been placed in the Libraries of the House. It should be noted that there are a number of locations starred on the map where there are multiple cameras in the same place.

ANPR provides a tactical option to disrupt, deter and detect criminal activity and, by doing so, helps to increase public confidence in the police. The technology automatically reads vehicle registration marks (VRMs) allowing these details to be compared against database records. Therefore, ANPR does not "track" every journey but relies on intelligence-led policing and flags VRMs which are linked to criminality and allows the police to focus on those engaged in unlawful activity; law-abiding road users go unhindered by ANPR technology.

ANPR systems are used by the police, government agencies and commercial companies including petrol forecourts, shopping centres and car parks. The system design and intended use of Project Champion ANPR capability is consistent with policy, practice and guidance from ACPO, NPJA and extensive evaluation studies including former Police Standards Unit work on behalf of Home Office.

With regard to CCTV, I am advised that no device was located with the purpose of monitoring a specific individual or individuals. The system design and intended use of Project Champion CCTV capability is consistent with existing force policy, including advice contained in the CCTV Privacy Masking Guide issued by the British Security Industry Association.

It is important to note that on 5 July 2010 West Midlands police announced that a number of cameras installed under Project Champion would be removed, and that the West Midlands Counter Terrorism Unit would no longer have any involvement with the scheme. This follows an earlier announcement in June that the activation of the cameras would be suspended, pending a full public consultation later this summer.

This Government will never compromise the safety and security of the British public but neither will we sacrifice their civil liberties for their security. The Government sees a need to re-examine the balance between liberty and security and, as part of this broader agenda, is looking closely at the regulatory framework for both CCTV and automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) systems. Work is currently under way with a view to bringing forward proposals as soon as possible.

Dorset Police: Promotion

Mr Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if she will take steps to prevent Dorset constabulary promoting police officers shortly before their due retirement date. [6019]

Nick Herbert [*holding answer 5 July 2010*]: For promotions below chief officer level the decision as to which officers are promoted rests with the chief officer of the individual police force concerned. To support this decision, each police force is responsible for developing and implementing a fair and equitable promotion process that clearly identifies the best candidates available for the force to promote into its leadership positions.

The National Policing Improvement Agency (NPJA) oversees the national processes in place to identify police officers who have the skills required to be good leaders at the rank of sergeant and inspector. The Senior Police National Assessment Centre is the promotion process to assistant chief constable, and police authorities appoint chief officers.

Police officers nearing the end of their service are eligible to apply for, and if successful, be selected for promotion. To do otherwise could disadvantage the individual and potentially deprive the service of a person of quality. Such a decision may also breach age discrimination legislation.

The Home Secretary has announced a full review of the remuneration and conditions of service for police officers and staff.

Entry Clearances: Overseas Students

Laura Sandys: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many pages of guidance the UK Border Agency has issued to licensed sponsors in the last 24 months; [5120]

(2) how many institutions have had their licences revoked since the roll-out of tier 4 of the points-based immigration system; and how many of these were (a) Highly Trusted Sponsors, (b) accredited by the British Council and (c) inspected by Ofsted. [5121]

Damian Green: In the last two years the UK Border Agency has issued 1,501 pages of guidance to licensed sponsors covering tiers 2, 4 and 5. This will include reissue of guidance on specific tiers. At present the tier 2 and 5 guidance stands at 83 pages and the tier 4 guidance at 70 pages.

As at 30 June 2010, 47 sponsors have had their tier 4 licence revoked since 31 March 2009. Of these none held a Highly Trusted Sponsor licence, five were accredited by the British Council and none was inspected by Ofsted.

Laura Sandys: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many illegal migrants identified in the last 12 months, who initially entered the UK through the student visa system, had been sponsored by Highly Trusted Sponsors. [5123]

Damian Green: The number of illegal migrants identified in the last 12 months, who initially entered through the student visa system and who are now being sponsored by a Highly Trusted Sponsor is nil. The Highly Trusted Sponsor scheme came into force on 6 April 2010.

Immigration Controls: English Language

Fiona Mactaggart: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps the UK Border Agency plans to take to publicise the new English language requirement for those making immigration applications as spouses and partners. [4799]

Damian Green: On 9 June 2010, *Official Report*, column 11WS, my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary announced a new language requirement for those seeking entry to the UK as either a spouse or civil partner, fiancé(e) or proposed civil partner, unmarried partner or same sex partner of a British citizen or someone who is present and settled in the UK.

The announcement on 9 June received extensive publicity both in the UK and overseas. Information about the new policy for those making immigration applications is currently available on the UK Border Agency website. A further publicity campaign is planned.

Police: Demonstrations

Rushanara Ali: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidance her Department issues to local police forces on the policing of marches and demonstrations by (a) the English Defence League and (b) the British National Party; and if she will make a statement. [4882]

James Brokenshire [*holding answer 1 July 2010*]: The Home Office has not issued guidance as the policing of marches and demonstrations is an operational matter for chief officers. The police have a range of powers to deal with any criminal activity that takes place at a demonstration. The police are committed to using their powers to ensure local communities and property are protected and I understand that a number of individuals have been arrested and charged at previous demonstrations. Local police forces do work closely with local community leaders in planning the policing of such demonstrations, and ACPO have provided good practice advice for these events.

BUSINESS, INNOVATION AND SKILLS

Business: Billing

Mr Binley: To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills what steps he has taken to reduce the number of late payments to small businesses. [7014]

Mr Prisk: UK payment data as reported by Experian show that the time taken for payments to suppliers across the economy in May 2010 was 0.5 days faster than the level recorded in May 2008. This welcome improvement has been underpinned by action to drive down public sector payment times, to encourage and promote best practice in the private sector and to improve access for businesses to best practice on managing cash flow.

The public sector is now paying suppliers faster than ever before. For the private sector, Experian calculate that Prompt Payment Code signatories now represent over 60% of UK supply chain value and there have been over 165,000 downloads of the Managing Cash Flow guides:

<http://www.creditmanagement.org.uk/bisguides.htm>

Experian analysis of invoices submitted to four FTSE100 companies showed that many invoices were submitted deficient or late or both. We also know that over half of UK business transactions are not covered by pre-agreed payment terms and that nine out of ten suppliers fail to credit check their customers regularly. Supporting UK business to better manage cash flow and customer relationships can therefore make a huge impact upon payment times and we are working with the UK's leading finance and business representative organisations to improve awareness.

Business: Females

Esther McVey: To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills what recent assessment his Department has made of the effect on the economy of increasing the number of women setting up businesses. [6816]

Mr Prisk: Estimates based on the latest available data indicate that an increase in the number of majority women-led businesses by 100,000 would lead to an additional £7 billion of annual output in the economy.

Business: Government Assistance

Mr Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills how many businesses in (a) Coatbridge, Chryston and Bellshill constituency, (b) North Lanarkshire local authority area and (c) Scotland have participated in the Working Capital Scheme since its inception. [7165]

Mr Prisk: I refer the right hon. Member to the answer I gave to the right hon. Member for Stirling (Mrs McGuire) on 30 June 2010, *Official Report*, column 564W.

Copyright

Adam Afriye: To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills whether he plans to bring forward legislation to provide for (a) an orphan works exception, (b) a format shifting exception and (c) extended collective licensing. [5090]

Mr Davey: The Government are considering, but have not yet reached a view, on what further work is needed on copyright, and the form such work would take.

Copyright Tribunal

Mr Mark Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills with reference to the Second Special Report of the Science and Technology Committee, Session 2007-08, HC 637, when he plans to complete the proposed reforms to the Copyright Tribunal. [6404]

Mr Davey: The Government note the significant changes which have been made to the Copyright Tribunal since the Select Committee report was published. These include the introduction of new rules of procedure; the appointment of lay members with commercial experience; and a new secretariat. The Government hope that these changes, which were welcomed by users, will make the tribunal a more accessible, cheaper and faster forum in which to resolve disputes.

Departmental Public Expenditure

Mr Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills pursuant to the written ministerial statement of 5 July 2010, *Official Report*, columns 1-2WS, on public spending control, what the breakdown by (a) budget area and (b) local authority area is of the £265 million reduction in expenditure to be made from his Department. [7031]

Mr Davey: BIS expects to make savings of £265 million from the following programmes in financial year 2010-11.

<i>Programme</i>		<i>Savings (£ million)</i>
Working Capital Scheme	¹ EYF	¹ 65.00
Trade Credit Insurance	¹ —	¹ —
Sheffield Forgemasters	¹ —	¹ —
Automotive Assistance Package	Reserve claim	200.00
Total		265.00

¹ Indicates a brace.

The Department has made no assessment of how these savings are broken down at a local authority or regional level. The nature of the programmes affected renders any such assessment impractical.

Mr Bain: To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills pursuant to the written ministerial statement of 5 July 2010, *Official Report*, columns 1-2WS, on public spending control, under which budgetary headings he expects his Department to make savings of £265 million in fiscal year 2010-11. [7519]

Mr Davey: BIS expects to make savings of £265 million from the following programmes in financial year 2010-11: Sheffield Forgemasters; the Automotive Assistance Programme; Working Capital Scheme and Trade Credit Insurance.

Departmental Reorganisation

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills if he will take steps to relocate officials working in his Department from central London to Bassetlaw. [6569]

Mr Davey: The location of public sector activity and plans for the Government's estate will be considered alongside other public spending issues over the course of the spending review.

EU Law

Philip Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills if he will estimate the cost to his Department of compliance with regulations arising from EU obligations in the last 12 months. [6869]

Mr Davey: Like any employer, the Department has to act in accordance with a wide variety of regulation, ranging from for instance health and safety law to employment law. However, it is not standard accounting practice to distinguish regulatory compliance costs from overall running costs, whether of EU origin or domestic.

There is therefore no pre-existing breakdown of the costs imposed on it by EU regulations upon which the Department can draw to produce an estimate of such compliance. To produce such an estimate would be a major undertaking, and would involve disproportionate expenditure. By way of comparison, the administrative burdens measurement exercise, which provided an indicative estimate of administrative burdens across the UK economy, cost in excess of £10 million to undertake.

Flexible Working

Naomi Long: To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills what steps have been taken to extend the right to request flexible working to all employees; what progress has been made on plans for the proposed consultation with businesses on this issue; and what timetable is planned for implementation of the proposal. [7906]

Mr Davey: I intend to consult on my plans to extend to the right to request flexible working to all employees later in the year.

The result of this consultation will inform the timetable for implementation going forward. I shall of course work closely with colleagues in Northern Ireland as my plans develop.

Post Codes: Databases

Dr Huppert: To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills what cost-benefit analysis his Department has undertaken in respect of providing free public access to the Post Code Address File. [7783]

Mr Davey: None. The PAF is owned and maintained by Royal Mail who are responsible for the costs involved in maintaining the data. Royal Mail is a business operating at arm's length from Government and competing with private sector postal operators. It is therefore appropriate for Royal Mail to be compensated for the use of the PAF data by third parties.

Post Offices

Dr Thérèse Coffey: To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills if he will undertake a review of the performance of Post Office Ltd in delivering outreach services for the purposes of increasing its effectiveness, with particular reference to services in Wangford in Suffolk. [7261]

Mr Davey: I have asked David Smith, the managing director of Post Office Ltd, to respond directly to my hon. Friend and a copy of his reply will be placed in the Libraries of the House.

Stephen Gilbert: To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills which of the services offered in a post office branch are not offered by a post office essentials service. [7767]

Mr Davey: I have asked David Smith, the Managing Director of Post Office Ltd, to respond directly to the hon. Member and a copy of his reply will be placed in the House Libraries.

Post Offices: Public Consultation

Angie Bray: To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills (1) whether Post Office Ltd is required to publish all responses from public consultations on (a) services, (b) closures, (c) premises moves and (d) other changes; and if he will make a statement; [7290]

(2) if he will make it his policy that Post Office Ltd should not start preparatory work on a premises move which is subject to an ongoing public consultation. [7291]

Mr Davey: I have asked David Smith, the Managing Director of Post Office Ltd, to respond directly to my hon. Friend and a copy of his reply will be placed in the Libraries of the House.

Public Houses

Priti Patel: To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills what information his Department holds on the number of pubs which are linked to pub companies; what recent assessment he has made of the level of competitiveness of such pubs; and if he will make a statement. [6731]

Mr Davey: This Department does not collect information on the ownership of pubs. Such information is available in commercially produced reports. This Department has not made any recent assessments into the level of competitiveness within the sector. However, the Business, Innovation and Skills Select Committee and the Office of Fair Trading have recently looked into a range of competition issues impacting on the sector.

Research and Development Tax Credit

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills what the monetary value was of tax incentives provided for research and development in each year from 2005-06 to 2009-10; what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of such incentives; and if he will make a statement. [6462]

Mr Gauke: I have been asked to reply.

The numbers and costs of R and D tax credit claims are published as National Statistics on the HMRC website at:

http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/corporate_tax/randdtcmenu.htm

The most recent figures, published on 18 December 2009, cover financial years up to 2007-08. Figures for 2008-09 are scheduled to be published in October 2010; those for 2009-10 are not available.

As part of the plans for corporate tax reform, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced at the Emergency Budget that the Government will consult with business in autumn 2010 to review the taxation of intellectual property, the support R and D tax credits provide for innovation and the proposals of the Dyson review.

Science: Higher Education

Esther McVey: To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills what assessment his Department has made of the infrastructure capacity of local colleges to enable them to deliver the practical component of applied science programmes for students of external university degree programmes. [6898]

Mr Hayes: Universities are responsible for the facilities and delivery of all their higher education courses including those delivered in a further education college. However, where the college is directly funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) it is also eligible for capital funding from that source.

HE courses delivered in FE colleges are subject to external scrutiny by the Quality Assurance Agency acting on behalf of HEFCE to ensure they meet the appropriate academic standards and that there is accountability for public funds.

Further education capital investment is managed by the Skills Funding Agency who will assess all Skills Funding Agency projects to ensure proposed projects fit the educational case on which the projects intend to support.

EDUCATION

School League Tables

19. **Tony Baldry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education what steps his Department is taking to change arrangements for school league tables; and if he will make a statement. [6974]

Mr Gibb: We will reform the annual school performance tables to ensure that a sharper and more authoritative set of data will be available to all parents in the future. We want the tables to demonstrate the standards that schools are achieving and the progress that pupils of all abilities are making. As part of our commitment to transparency, we will also publish a much wider range of data that the Department currently holds on schools.

School Discipline

20. **Jason McCartney:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education what plans he has to improve standards of discipline in schools. [6975]

Mr Gibb: It is this Government's intention to give heads and teachers the powers they need to ensure discipline in the classroom and promote good behaviour. In a statement to the House on 7 July 2010, *Official Report*, columns 11-12WS, I announced that we will take steps to strengthen teachers' powers to search pupils; issue shorter and clearer guidance on the use of force; and remove the requirement to give 24 hours written notice when giving pupils detentions. We will also give teachers the strongest possible protection from false accusations.

Children of Armed Forces Personnel

21. **Caroline Dinanage:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education whether he plans to improve access to school places for children of armed forces personnel; and if he will make a statement. [6976]

Michael Gove: The Government recognise the enormous contribution made by the armed forces, and are determined to support them. Fair access to school places is regulated by a statutory School Admissions Code, which already provides some priority for services children. I will consider whether the code needs to be amended and make an announcement in due course.

Free Schools

22. **Graham Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education how many proposals for free schools his Department has received from groups in (a) Weaver Vale constituency, (b) the Halton Borough Council area and (c) the Cheshire West and Chester Unitary Authority area. [6977]

Mr Gibb: As of 7 July the Department for Education had not received any proposals to establish free schools from groups in the Weaver Vale constituency, Halton borough council area or in the Cheshire west and Chester unitary authority area. I understand that the New Schools Network has received several hundred inquiries of which 38 have already let to formal proposals.

Philip Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Education whether people may establish free schools in the form of grammar schools. [456]

Mr Gibb: Current grammar schools are eligible for conversion to academies.

Jessica Lee: To ask the Secretary of State for Education what conditions the New Schools Network will be obliged to meet in assessing applications for the construction of new Free Schools. [5202]

Mr Gibb: The New Schools Network are providing advice and support to proposers interested in setting up Free Schools, on behalf of the Department. The role of the New Schools Network is to help interested groups develop their ideas and prepare to submit their proposal form, not to assess applications.

The Department will assess proposal forms and consider whether they have the potential to lead to an acceptable business case and plan for the new school, which Ministers may approve. The decision which Ministers take will be based on the criteria published at:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/freeschools/frequently-asked-questions#r1>

Jessica Lee: To ask the Secretary of State for Education what estimate he has made of the likely number of successful applications for free school status to be processed by the end of 2010. [5206]

Mr Gibb: We have made no estimate of the likely number of successful applications for Free Schools that will be processed by the end of 2010. This will depend on the number of groups who come forward with proposals to set up new schools and how many of these groups successfully complete the rigorous application and approval process.

Academies Bill

23. **Toby Perkins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education what representations he has received on the provisions of the Academies Bill. [6978]

Mr Gibb: We have received a number of representations relating to the provisions contained within the Academies Bill. These have included teacher representative organisations, the Special Education Consortium, the Church of England and the Catholic Education Service.

Alongside these representations we have also had approaches from individual Peers and members of this House.

John Healey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education how many of his Department's officials are working on the Academies Bill. [5028]

Michael Gove: A dedicated Bill team of five officials with support from a lead Bill lawyer are currently working on the Academies Bill. In addition, a number of other colleagues (policy officials, legal advisers and private office staff) spend some of their time working on the Bill alongside other responsibilities.

Academy Status

24. **Henry Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education how many expressions of interest in academy status his Department has received from schools in (a) Crawley constituency, (b) the West Sussex local education authority area and (c) England. [6979]

Mr Gibb: So far one expression of interest in academy status has been received from a school in Crawley constituency. Ten expressions of interest in academy status have been received from schools in West Sussex. A total of 1,836 expressions of interest have been received from schools in England.

Teach First Programme

25. **Caroline Flint:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education what recent estimate he has made of the number of participants in the Teach First programme who have stayed in the teaching profession after completing the programme. [6980]

Mr Gibb: The most recent figures up to 2007 show that 416 Teach First participants remain in teaching in the UK after completing the programme. This represents 49% of all Teach First participants since 2003. Of the 416 that have remained in teaching, 240 are now in leadership positions within schools.

ContactPoint

Mr Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Education From what (a) local and (b) national data sources information was collected for the ContactPoint database. [6957]

Tim Loughton: The basic information on ContactPoint was drawn from a number of national sources, including the General Register Office, the Department for Education's Schools Census, the child benefit database and the NHS Personal Demographics Service. In addition local authorities and national partners had begun to add information from a range of local sources, including social care systems.

Academies

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for Education what his policy is on the application of the National Curriculum in (a) English, (b) mathematics, (c) science and (d) ICT to teaching in academy schools; and what steps he plans to take on curriculum freedoms in academy schools. [1206]

Mr Gibb: Academies are not required to follow the National Curriculum. Academies will still be required to provide a broad and balanced curriculum.

Vernon Coaker: To ask the Secretary of State for Education which (a) secondary, (b) primary and (c) special schools have applied to become academies under his recent proposals. [3582]

Mr Gibb [*holding answer 21 June 2010*]: We have released this information at:

www.education.gov.uk/academies

This list will be updated regularly.

Stephen Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Education how many schools in England are academies; and how many such schools offer sixth form provision. [4019]

Mr Gibb: There are currently 203 academies open; 174 of these academies offer sixth form provision.

Academies: Food

Mr Anderson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education if he will bring forward proposals to ensure that academy schools meet the same requirements as other schools in respect of the (a) provision of school meals and other food in schools and (b) teaching about food and nutrition. [4719]

Mr Gibb: The freedom and autonomy enjoyed by Academies is crucial to enabling them to drive up standards.

We believe that Academies should have the freedom to respond to parental demand and provide a high standard of food and an appropriate curriculum that best meets the needs of their pupils. We will require Academies to provide free school meals for pupils who are entitled to them in the same way as for maintained schools.

Academies: Tamworth

Christopher Pincher: To ask the Secretary of State for Education which schools in Tamworth constituency are applying for academy status. [2875]

Mr Gibb: No schools in Tamworth have yet applied. The lists of schools that have expressed an interest in conversion to academy status have been published on the Department for Education website.

Academies: Wigan

Lisa Nandy: To ask the Secretary of State for Education what his policy is on the allocation of funding to local education authorities where no school applies for academy status. [1755]

Mr Gibb: Local authorities currently receive funding for maintained schools through the dedicated schools grant, which is calculated using a guaranteed unit of funding (GUF) for each pupil in a local authority. The funding is distributed to schools using a local formula on which the local authority's Schools Forum is consulted.

The Government have committed to changes to the funding system through the introduction of a pupil premium for disadvantaged pupils. We are reviewing if

changes need to be made to the current funding system and we expect to be launching a consultation on school funding in the summer.

Care Proceedings

Justin Tomlinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education (1) how much local authorities spent on residential assessments in care proceedings in the last 12 months for which figures are available; [5763]

(2) how much local authorities spent on psychiatrists' and psychologists' fees in care proceedings in the last 12 months for which figures are available; [5764]

(3) how much was incurred in costs by local authority legal departments in representing the authority in care proceedings in the last 12 months for which figures are available; [5768]

(4) how much was spent by local authorities on fostering children subject to care proceedings in the last 12 months for which figures are available. [5769]

Tim Loughton: Information about how much local authorities spend on residential assessments, psychiatrists' and psychologists' fees and legal representation in care proceedings and on fostering children subject to care proceedings is not collected centrally.

Justin Tomlinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education how much was spent by the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service on the provision of guardians in care proceedings in each of the last five years; and what proportion of its budget this represents in each such year. [5770]

Tim Loughton: The Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service's (CAFCASS's) funded expenditure for each year was:

	<i>Expenditure (£ million)</i>
2009-10	132.449
2008-09	120.627
2007-08	108.550
2006-07	106.087
2005-06	98.613

These figures comprise CAFCASS's grant in aid funding from the Department for Education and additional funding from the Department for specific activities. In this spending review period (2008-11), this additional funding has been for Contact Point and Family Contact Services.

CAFCASS's allocated programme resource budget for 2010-11 is £138.2 million (including a one-off allocation of £10 million for service improvement). This excludes additional funding from the Department for specific activities.

How CAFCASS spend their allocated budget each year is an operational matter for CAFCASS. The chief executive of CAFCASS, Anthony Douglas, will respond by letter to the hon. Member and a copy of his response will be placed in the Libraries.

Letter from Anthony Douglas, dated July 2010:

I am writing to you in response to Parliamentary Question that you tabled recently:

PQ005770: To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much was spent by the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service on the provision of guardians in care proceedings in each of the last five years; and what proportion of its budget this represents in each such year.

Cafcass does not collect specific figures relating to how much is spent on the provisions of guardians in care proceedings. Cafcass practitioners work in both public and private law proceedings. Cafcass also utilises the services of approximately 300 self employed contractors, most of which, work as children's guardians in care cases.

Please note, there has been a significant increase in the past 18 months in care applications by local authorities and the total expenditure of Cafcass has also increased over the last 5 years, this is reflected in the table below.

	Public law care requests	Total expenditure of Cafcass (£ million)
2009/10	8,684	132.449
2008/09	6,496	120.627
2007/08	6,241	108.550
2006/07	6,786	106.087
2005/06	6,613	98.613

Children: Carers

Laura Sandys: To ask the Secretary of State for Education in how many households in South Thanet constituency a child under the age of 18 years fulfils the role of a carer for a disabled parent. [2686]

Tim Loughton: There is no central collection of local or national data on the number of children under the age of 18-years-old who provide care for a disabled parent.

However, a 2004 study of 6,178 young carers (Chris Dearden and Saul Becker) found that half (50%) of those young people providing care were doing so for someone with a disability. The same research indicates that over two-thirds (70%) of young carers are caring for an adult.

Children: Databases

Mr Watson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education if he will place in the Library a copy of each representation he has received from (a) local authorities and (b) children's organisations on his Department's decision to end the ContactPoint database. [1938]

Tim Loughton: We have confirmed with local authorities and other partners our firm intention to end the ContactPoint database as soon as is practicable. Both coalition partners' manifestos included a clear commitment to scrap ContactPoint, to fulfil a longstanding policy commitment, discussed with a wide range of interested organisations in recent years. We have consistently opposed a database, which contains details about all children in England, accessed by hundreds of thousands of people and we signalled our opposition in debates on the original legislation in the 2004 Children Act.

The Department has received no representations from local authorities or children's organisations on this Government's decision. We will however continue to engage with and draw on the views of a wide range of

organisations as we consider the scope for a more proportionate approach to protecting children most in need.

Mr Watson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education how much his Department spent on first quarter grant payments to local authorities in respect of the ContactPoint database in June 2010; and if he will make a statement. [1939]

Tim Loughton: We have confirmed with local authorities and other partners our firm intention to end the ContactPoint database as soon as is practicable. Both coalition partners' manifestos included a clear commitment to scrap ContactPoint, to fulfil a longstanding policy commitment. We are considering the scope for a more proportionate approach to protecting children most in need.

In the interim, while ContactPoint remains in limited operation, my Department has provided guidance on what local authorities and partners should do to ensure the safe and legal operation. The Department has paid local authorities £3.75 million to cover costs of operating ContactPoint during the period April to June 2010. We are considering the extent of grant funding beyond this period, and more detailed plans on the way forward will be announced later in the summer.

Departmental Catering

Graham Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Education how much his Department spent on catering in each year from 1997 to 2009. [4854]

Tim Loughton: The information requested is not separately identified within the Department's published resource accounts. Detailed records on catering expenditure are not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Conferences

Robert Halfon: To ask the Secretary of State for Education what estimate he has made of the expenditure by his Department and its predecessors on (a) organising and (b) attending conferences in each year since 1997. [5939]

Tim Loughton: The information requested is not separately identified within the Department's published resource accounts. Detailed records on the costs of organising and attending conferences are not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Furniture

Chris Skidmore: To ask the Secretary of State for Education how much was spent on (a) refreshments and (b) furnishings in his private office in each year from 2005 to 2010. [5623]

Tim Loughton: The information requested on refreshments is not held centrally and can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

The amount spent on furnishings in the Secretary of State's private office in each year from 2005 to 2010 by the previous Government is as follows:

	£
2005-06	Nil
2006-07	21,039.10
2007-08	1496.26
2008-09	5232.32
2010-11	Nil
Total (inc VAT)	27,767.68

All spending is made in accordance with the principles set out in 'Managing Public Money' and the Treasury Handbook on Regularity and Propriety.

Departmental Postal Services

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Education how much his Department spent on postage in 2009. [3341]

Tim Loughton: In the period January-December 2009, the predecessor to the Department for Education, the Department for Children, Schools and Families, spent a total of £160,882 on postage directly and through its distribution partner.

Departmental Public Expenditure

Gordon Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Education how many of his Department's contracts with its suppliers are under review as a result of the recently announced reductions in public expenditure; and what the monetary value is of all such contracts which are under review. [3636]

Tim Loughton: We are in the process of identifying contracts for review from which savings can be made through renegotiation or termination. The total value of all those contracts or the potential savings will not be known until the scale of the activity is determined.

Following this preparatory work a project plan will be produced detailing the potential costs and benefits along with a schedule of activity.

Lisa Nandy: To ask the Secretary of State for Education whether he plans to analyse the distributional effect of the options for reductions in his Department's expenditure. [5213]

Tim Loughton: The Government set out in their document 'Spending Review Framework' that it will "look closely at the effects of its decisions on different groups in society, especially the least well off, and on different regions." (2.4, page 7)

Further information will be available at the spending review.

Departmental Travel

Mr Watson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education what the (a) name and (b) version is of each computer software package used by his Department to calculate its expenditure on travel. [3877]

Tim Loughton: To calculate its expenditure on travel, the Department for Education (DfE) uses a set of software packages provided to it by the Department for Work and Pensions as part of the shared services agreement between the two Departments.

The main software package used is the Oracle Resource Management system version 11.5.10, which itself uses two underpinning software systems (Discoverer and Discoverer Plus system versions 10G) to calculate and produce financial reports to budget holders and senior management on travel expenditure. These reports can also optionally be downloaded locally and converted into spreadsheet format using Microsoft Excel version 2003 which is installed on every computer.

Education Maintenance Allowance

Angela Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education what plans he has to publish the report of the cross-government review of financial support for 16 to 18 year olds commissioned by his Department's predecessor; and if he will make a statement. [5453]

Mr Gibb: The Department has published the Barriers to Participation in Education and Training research which was commissioned to inform the review on the Department's website on 24 June 2010. We have no plans to publish anything further. The evidence collected will inform the comprehensive spending review in the autumn.

Education: Finance

Simon Reeve: To ask the Secretary of State for Education what discussions he has had on education funding with the F40 group since his appointment; and if he will make a statement. [3328]

Mr Gibb: I have not had any formal discussions with the F40 group since being appointed Minister for Schools, though I have met them in the past and spoke at their conference in Church House last November.

I am aware that the F40 group represents the local authorities who received the lowest per pupil funding under the present funding system. This Government have already committed to changes to the funding system through the introduction of a pupil premium for disadvantaged children. As well as the premium, any changes to the funding system will need to support our policy objective of raising standards and closing the attainment gap between those from the richest and poorest in society. We expect to be launching a consultation on school funding in the summer.

Mr Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Education what the consultancy budget is for (a) his Department and (b) the education service in 2010-11. [5502]

Tim Loughton: The Department's budget for consultancy in 2010-11 is £54.5 million. This amount was allocated prior to the recent reductions in the budget of the Department and the forthcoming spending review may result in further changes being made.

Separate figures for educational services beyond the immediate Department are not available.

Mrs Hodgson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education what plans he has for a further phase of the Children, Young People and Families Grant programme to fund work by the third sector to improve educational outcomes. [6468]

Tim Loughton: Decisions on the policy and funding priorities for the Department for Education including the future of the Children, Young People and Families Grant programme are still under consideration. As soon as we are in a position to provide clarity to organisations, we will, of course, make a formal announcement.

Education: Public Appointments

Lisa Nandy: To ask the Secretary of State for Education how many people are employed as (a) regional advisers on 14 to 19 education and (b) support staff to 14 to 19 regional advisers. [4082]

Michael Gove: There are currently 11 14-19 regional advisers; one per English Government office region, a 14-19 rurality adviser and a 14-19 gender equalities adviser.

Regional advisers do not have support staff, but work closely with Government offices and a number of regional and local partners.

My letter to the right hon. Member for Morley and Outwood (Ed Balls) of 7 June stated that the role of 14-19 advisers would not continue from September.

Foster Care

Mr Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Education if he will take steps to enable foster carers to continue to care for those who have been in foster care after they reach the age of 18; and if he will make a statement. [5506]

Tim Loughton: The Government are currently funding a programme of Staying Put 18+ pilots which support young people to stay with their foster carers up until the age of 21 so that they can make a more gradual transition into adulthood. The pilot is being evaluated by the University of Loughborough and we will use the evaluation evidence to help spread best practice among all local authorities.

Free School Meals

Lisa Nandy: To ask the Secretary of State for Education what proportion of pupils in (a) primary and (b) secondary schools rated (i) outstanding and (ii) other than outstanding by Ofsted are eligible for free school meals. [4522]

Mr Gibb: This is a matter for Ofsted. HM Chief Inspector, Christine Gilbert has written to the hon. Member and a copy of her reply has been placed in the Libraries.

Letter from Christine Gilbert, dated 25 June 2010:

Your recent parliamentary question has been passed to me, as Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, for response.

The latest period for which published figures about maintained school section 5 inspection outcomes are available is the spring term of 2009/10. This answer, therefore, takes into account those

schools which were open on 21 April 2010 and had received an inspection on or before 31 March 2010. This period spans two different school inspection frameworks, the first covering September 2005 to August 2009 and the second from September 2009 onwards.

Information about the number of pupils on roll and the number of pupils eligible for free school meals in each school has been taken from the Department for Education's 2009 January School Census. The number on roll at each school has been adjusted, in line with Department for Education National Statistics, to remove part time pupils aged under five and any students aged 16 or over at the start of the academic year as they are not able to claim free school meals regardless of their economic circumstances. Information on which schools were open on 21 April 2010 has been taken from the Department for Education's Edubase system.

In this answer the term 'secondary school' is used to cover maintained secondary schools including middle deemed secondary schools, academies and city technology colleges.

On 31 March 2010 there were 22,249 schools open and eligible for a section 5 inspection in England. Two hundred and fifty-eight open schools which have not yet been inspected by Ofsted are excluded from this analysis, as are maintained nursery schools, special schools and pupil referral units. This leaves a pool of 16,904 primary schools and 3,189 secondary schools to contribute to this answer.

Of those primary schools judged outstanding during their most recent inspection, 12.8% of pupils were recorded as eligible for free school meals. Of those primary schools that were judged good, satisfactory or inadequate during their latest inspection, 17.8% of pupils were recorded as eligible for free school meals.

Of those secondary schools judged outstanding during their most recent inspection, 11.4% of pupils were recorded as eligible for free school meals. Of those secondary schools that were judged good, satisfactory or inadequate during their latest inspection, 14.7% of pupils were recorded as eligible for free school meals.

A copy of this reply has been sent to Nick Gibb MP, Minister of State for Schools, and will be placed in the library of both Houses.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Education what plans he has for the future (a) eligibility for and (b) funding available for the provision of free school meals. [4865]

Mr Gibb: All pupils who meet the current eligibility criteria will continue to receive free school meals. There are no current plans to extend free school meal eligibility or increase free school meal funding. We will look again at the case for any extension in the light of evidence from pilots of extended eligibility in Durham, Newham and Wolverhampton which are running until July 2011.

Frank Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education on which date he informed the Secretary of State for Health of the proposed decision not to extend entitlements to free school meals. [5165]

Mr Gibb [holding answer 1 July 2010]: The Secretary of State for Health was informed of the decision not to take forward the previous Administration's significantly under-funded and unaffordable plan to extend eligibility to free school meals on 7 June. All children who are currently eligible for free school meals will continue to be eligible and we are continuing to support three pilots which are exploring the costs and benefits of extending eligibility. We shall review the case for any extension when we have that evidence.

Free School Meals: North East

Tom Blenkinsop: To ask the Secretary of State for Education what the average cost per pupil of providing free school meals in the North East for (a) primary school children and (b) secondary school children was in the latest period for which figures are available. [1963]

Mr Gibb: This information is not held by the Department. It is for each local authority to decide what they charge for a school meal, based, for example, on the local cost of food, catering services, fuel costs and whether, and if so how much, they subsidise school meals. From this local authorities then decide how much cost they can apportion to a free school meal.

However, the School Food Trust's latest survey of school food take up shows that the average school lunch prices in 2009 were £1.77 in the LA-catered primary sector and £1.88 in the LA-catered secondary sector.

Further Education

Angela Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education which Minister in his Department has responsibility for (a) sixth form colleges and (b) 14 to 19 year olds in further education colleges. [5454]

Mr Gibb: I am Minister responsible for sixth form colleges and 14 to 19-year-olds in further education colleges.

GCSE: Leicester

Liz Kendall: To ask the Secretary of State for Education what proportion of pupils from each ethnic background gained five GCSEs at grades A* to C in Leicester local authority area in each of the last five years. [3531]

Mr Gibb: The information required is given in the following table:

Percentage of pupils achieving five or more grades A-C at GCSE including equivalents in selected years*

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
White	35	38	41	43	53
Mixed	45	50	48	53	63
Asian	59	61	66	69	76
Black	40	43	44	51	66
Chinese	57	67	² —	89	100
All pupils-	46	48	52	55	65

¹ Includes pupils for whom ethnicity was not obtained or refused, or could not be determined.

² Indicates that the figure was suppressed in order to protect pupil confidentiality as fewer than 10 pupils sat exams.

Source:

National Pupil Database

Iraq

Mr Anderson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education what the budget is of each current project in Iraq funded by his Department; and if he will make a statement. [4783]

Tim Loughton: The Department for Education funds no projects in Iraq.

Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education

Mr Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education (1) whether he plans to publish the Sex and Relationships Education Guidance to Schools, issued for consultation in January 2010; and if he will make a statement; [5432]

(2) what assessment he has made of the compatibility of his proposals for sex and relationship education with proposed guidance from the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence on sex and relationships education within personal, social, health and economic education; and if he will make a statement. [5433]

Mr Gibb: We are currently considering our approach to sex and relationships education and, in particular, how we take forward our manifesto commitment to ensure that the school curriculum includes teaching young people about sexual consent. Schools will need some guidance to support them in this, but it is too soon to say whether it will cover all of the issues that were included in the guidance that was published for consultation in January 2010, or the draft guidance published recently by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE).

Schools are required by law to 'have regard to' guidance issued by the Secretary of State. At present, that duty applies to the SRE guidance published in 2000.

Mr Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education what files his Department holds on (a) sexual and reproductive health education and (b) personal, social and health education; and if he will make a statement. [5437]

Mr Gibb: Policy on abortion and sexual and reproductive health is a matter for my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Public Health. In the case of Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education the Department maintains records in the normal way.

Pupils: Disadvantaged

Glenda Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education which (a) primary and (b) secondary schools in Hampstead and Kilburn constituency will not receive the pupil premium. [3617]

Mr Gibb: The Government are committed to the introduction of a pupil premium for disadvantaged children, and we will bring forward our proposals in due course.

Pupils: Heart Diseases

Andrew Percy: To ask the Secretary of State for Education how many incidents of sudden cardiac arrest involving pupils on school property there were in each of the last five years; and how many such incidents resulted in death. [3919]

Mr Gibb: The Department does not collect this data.

Pupils: Per Capita Costs

Mr Ivan Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education how much per pupil funding was allocated to Bury Metropolitan Borough Council for (a)

primary, (b) secondary and (c) special schools in each year from 1996-97 to 2010-11. [5951]

Mr Gibb: Per pupil revenue funding figures for primary school pupils in Bury (ages three to 10) are shown in the following table. These figures are in real terms and are based on financial years.

<i>Real terms revenue funding per pupil (£)—SSA/EFS plus grants</i>									
	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Bury local authority	2,390	2,570	2,760	2,990	3,170	3,250	3,490	3,620	3,830

Notes:

1. Price Base: real terms at 2008-09 prices, based on GDP deflators as at 31 March 2010.
2. Figures reflect relevant sub-blocks of Standard Spending Assessment/Education Formula Spending (EFS) settlements and exclude the pensions transfer to EFS.
3. Total funding also includes all revenue grants in DfES Departmental Expenditure Limits relevant to pupils aged three to 10 and exclude Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs) and grants not allocated at LA level. For those authorities in receipt of advance of grant under the transitional support arrangements for 2004-05, advance grant funding is included in the year of payment (2004-05). There will be a consequential reduction in DfES grant for these LAs in future years (either 2006-07 and 2007-08 or 2006-07 to 2008-09, depending on the terms on which the advance was given to the LA).
4. The pupil numbers used to convert £ million figures to £ per pupil are those underlying the EFS settlement calculations.
5. Rounding: Figures are rounded to the nearest £10.

Per pupil revenue funding figures for secondary school pupils in Bury (ages 11 to 15) are shown in the following table. These figures are in real terms and are based on financial years.

<i>Real terms revenue funding per pupil (£)—SSA/ EFS plus grants</i>									
	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Bury local authority	3,350	3,450	3,560	3,840	4,020	4,140	4,280	4,540	4,730

Notes:

1. Price Base: real terms at 2008-09 prices, based on GDP deflators as at 31 March 2010.
2. Figures reflect relevant sub-blocks of Standard Spending Assessment/Education Formula Spending (EFS) settlements and exclude the pensions transfer to EFS.
3. Total funding also includes all revenue grants in DfES Departmental Expenditure Limits relevant to pupils aged 11 to 15 and exclude Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs) and grants not allocated at LA level. For those authorities in receipt of advance of grant under the transitional support arrangements for 2004-05, advance grant funding is included in the year of payment (2004-05). There will be a consequential reduction in DfES grant for these LAs in future years (either 2006-07 and 2007-08 or 2006-07 to 2008-09, depending on the terms on which the advance was given to the LA).
4. The pupil numbers used to convert £ million figures to £ per pupil are those underlying the EFS settlement calculations.
5. Rounding: Figures are rounded to the nearest £10.

Figures for special schools are not available on a comparable basis.

Figures prior to 1997-98 are not available on a comparable basis.

Since 2006-07, the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) has been the main source of school funding, and this does not allow a primary/secondary split of the figures. These figures are not comparable with those for earlier

years because the introduction of the DSG in 2006-07 fundamentally changed how local authorities are funded.

Per pupil unit of funding figures for 2005-06 to 2009-10 for Bury local authority are provided as follows. Finalised figures for 2010-11 are not yet available. The figures shown are for all funded pupils aged three to 19 and are in real terms:

<i>Real terms funding per pupil (£)—DSG plus grants pupils aged three to 19</i>					
	2005-06 ¹	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Bury local authority	4,140	4,240	4,390	4,430	4,560

¹ Baseline.

Notes:

1. This covers funding through the Dedicated Schools Grant, School Standards Grant, School Standards Grant (Personalisation) and Standards Fund as well as funding from the Learning and Skills Council; it excludes grants which are not allocated at LA level.
2. Price Base: real terms at 2008-09 prices, based on GDP deflators as at 31 March 2010.
3. These figures are for all funded pupils aged three to 19.
4. Figures have been rounded to the nearest £10.

Mr Ivan Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education what grants his Department made to Bury Metropolitan borough council for schools outside the per pupil funding formula for each year from 1996-97 to 2010-11. [5952]

formula funding allocated through the local government finance system up to 2005-2006, and Dedicated Schools Grant since 2006-07.

Pupils: Sikhs

Mr Gibb: Tables have been placed in the Libraries, setting out the grants allocated to Bury Metropolitan borough council for schools for each year since 1996-1997. These grants were allocated in addition to per pupil

Mr Hanson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education pursuant to the answer of 28 June 2010, *Official Report*, column 428W, on pupils: Sikhs, by what date he plans to have completed consideration of the law and agreed practice on carrying kirpans in schools. [5747]

Mr Gibb: Cross-Government discussions with the Sikh community continue; these are expected to continue until after the summer recess, with decisions taken in the autumn.

Schools: Discipline

Meg Munn: To ask the Secretary of State for Education what evidence his Department has assessed on the effects of no notice detentions on discipline in school. [5079]

Mr Gibb [holding answer 1 July 2010]: We will be consulting with many organisations in the development of discipline policy. The introduction of no notice detentions would not remove the requirement for schools to act reasonably when making the necessary arrangements for detentions.

Meg Munn: To ask the Secretary of State for Education what discussions he has had with organisations representing children who are carers on no notice detentions. [5089]

Mr Gibb [holding answer 1 July 2010]: We will be consulting with many organisations in the development of discipline policy. The introduction of no notice detentions would not remove the requirement for schools to act reasonably when making the necessary arrangements for detentions.

Schools: Erewash

Jessica Lee: To ask the Secretary of State for Education what recent representations he has received from (a) headteachers, (b) parents and (c) charities in the borough of Erewash in favour of greater autonomy for schools. [5207]

Mr Gibb: The Department has received two registrations of interest from schools wanting further information on converting to academies—The Long Eaton School and Kirk Hallam Technology College. A list of all outstanding and non-outstanding schools that have registered an interest in converting to academy status was published on the Department's website at:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/academies/schools-registering-interest>

on 25 June. No other recent representations have been received from the borough of Erewash.

Schools: Finance

Frank Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education what his policy is on limiting (a) the number of schools to receive grants, (b) the amount of such grant and (c) the terms of each grant he has the power to award to schools. [5167]

Mr Gibb [holding answer 1 July 2010]: We have no plans to limit the number of schools that can receive grants. Decisions about which grant will be available to schools in the future will be taken as part of the next spending review process in the autumn.

Frank Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education what estimate he has made of the total

reserves held by schools in England; and what reserves were held by such schools in each financial year since 1985-86. [5168]

Mr Gibb [holding answer 1 July 2010]: Local authority maintained schools in England had a total net revenue balance of £1.78 billion for the financial year 2008-09. The Government started to collect data on revenue balances from 1999-2000, when the figure was £741 million. The 1999-2000 figure does not include maintained nursery schools; these data were first collected in 2003-04. There are no relevant data for the years before 1999-2000.

This information, along with breakdowns of surpluses and deficits at England, local authority and school level from 1999-2000 to present are currently available on the section 251 website at:

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/strategy/financeandfunding/informationforlocalauthorities/section52/schoolbalances/s52sb/>

Schools: Leeds

Mr Mudie: To ask the Secretary of State for Education what recent discussion she has had with representatives of Leeds Local Authority on the future of Parklands Girls School in Leeds. [5561]

Mr Gibb: The Secretary of State has had no recent discussions with representatives of Leeds local authority on the future of Parklands Girls School in Leeds. However, officials have had discussions with Education Leeds about the school in question and are awaiting a decision from Leeds city council about the future of Parklands Girls School following its publication of a statutory proposal on 16 April 2010 to close Parklands Girls School on 31 August 2011 and replace it with an academy opening on 1 September 2011.

Schools: Management

Glenda Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education what estimate he has made of the number of teaching posts there will be in free schools. [4806]

Mr Gibb: The number of teaching posts in free schools will depend on the number of groups who come forward with proposals to set up new schools, how many of these groups successfully complete the rigorous application and approval process and the staffing structures and size of the new schools.

Glenda Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education who will be responsible for the provision of services to pupils with special educational needs in free schools; and if he will make a statement. [4807]

Mr Gibb: Like academies, the funding agreement contract will include provisions which require the school to have regard to the SEN Code of Practice and use best endeavours to meet any guidance on exclusions. Where a school fails to meet its SEN funding agreement obligations, the Secretary of State has the role of ensuring that those obligations are met. Disability discrimination legislation will also apply to free schools to prevent discrimination against disabled pupils and, as with other schools, free schools will have to make reasonable adjustments to prevent such discrimination.

Schools: Sports

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Education what mechanisms are in place to prevent the sale or redevelopment of school sports facilities other than playing fields. [4001]

Mr Gibb [*holding answer 29 June 2010*]: The legislation that protects school playing fields, under section 77 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, extends to all of a school's outdoor areas. No school or local authority in England can dispose or change the use of a school playing field or any part of a school playing field without the Secretary of State's consent. The legislation defines playing fields as land in the open air which is provided for the purposes of physical education or recreation, and includes playgrounds, hard games courts, social areas etc as well as grassed playing fields.

Schools: Standards

Ian Austin: To ask the Secretary of State for Education what plans he has for the future of the Black Country Challenge programme; and if he will make a statement. [1513]

Mr Gibb: The Department has not taken any decisions on the Black Country Challenge programme.

Schools: Transport

Stephen Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Education what his Department's budget is for 16 to 19 (a) school and (b) transport for 2010-11. [4020]

Mr Gibb: No specific funding is provided by central Government to fund post-16 transport. Local authority statutory responsibilities for transport in relation to post-16 students are funded through revenue support grant and through income generated by councils, including council tax. Formula grant is not hypothecated to a particular service. Local authorities are free to use the funding in line with the wishes of their electorate to meet local needs while taking into account their statutory responsibilities.

The Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) has also provided £12 million in 2010-11 (and in each of the previous four years) through the transport partnership fund to support the development of local innovative and sustainable transport projects.

Science: GCE A-level

Stephen Mosley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education if he will take steps to encourage an increase in the number of students studying scientific subjects at A Level. [6036]

Mr Gibb: The Government recognise that more needs to be done to inspire greater numbers of young people to study science subjects at A level. The quality of teaching in schools will be a key factor in this and we have already made it clear we will seek to attract more science and maths graduates into teaching. We will also be looking at what more can be done to support this in our pursuit of a fairer education system including reform of curriculum and qualifications.

Sixth Form Colleges: Inspections

Nic Dakin: To ask the Secretary of State for Education what his policy is on the frequency of Ofsted inspections of sixth form colleges graded outstanding; and if he will make a statement. [4519]

Mr Gibb: We want to give all outstanding schools and colleges freedom from bureaucracy. The Government are therefore working to remove the requirement for outstanding sixth form colleges to be subject to the routine cycle of Ofsted inspections, unless their performance drops.

Sixth Form Education

Nic Dakin: To ask the Secretary of State for Education how many secondary schools graded as outstanding by Ofsted do not have a sixth form. [4518]

Mr Gibb: As of May 2010 there were 626 secondary schools that were graded as outstanding by Ofsted in their most recent inspection. Of these, 191 schools do not have a sixth form.

Sixth Form Education: Tamworth

Christopher Pincher: To ask the Secretary of State for Education whether each school in Tamworth constituency which has applied for academy status will be able to retain a sixth form if successful. [4120]

Mr Gibb: The plans for a new academy in Tamworth to open from September 2010 and for this academy to include an 860 place post-16 centre from September 2011 are well advanced. The post-16 centre would replace several school sixth forms and forms part of Staffordshire's cross-Tamworth proposals for secondary and post-16 education. We would want to consider how any application for academy status from other schools with sixth forms in Tamworth would impact on the new Tamworth Academy.

Special Educational Needs

Mrs Hodgson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education if he will take steps to improve the standard of training of teachers in respect of pupils with special educational needs. [2799]

Tim Loughton: The Government are committed to raising the status of the teaching profession and to moving to a high quality system of teacher recruitment and training.

I am reviewing existing policies and programmes to make sure that they support our commitment to high quality teacher training including in respect of pupils with special educational needs.

Teachers are able to increase their awareness of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) through information available to them about children with SEN as a result of the SEN Information Act 2008. The second report, following this Act, will be published in October 2010 and brings together information about children with SEN in one place.

Teachers: Hartlepool

Mr Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Education what the teacher to pupil ratio was in each school in Hartlepool constituency in each of the last five years.

[5411]

Mr Gibb: The following table provides the within school pupil:teacher ratio (PTR) in each local authority maintained school in the Hartlepool constituency in each January from 2005 to 2009, the latest year for which information is available.

Pupil:teacher ratios (PTR)^{1,2} in local authority maintained nursery, primary, secondary and special schools³—Each January 2005 to 2009: Coverage: Hartlepool parliamentary constituency

LAESTAB No.	School name	Pupil teacher ratio				
		2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
<i>Nursery</i>						
8051013	Seaton Carew Nursery School	10.0	8.9	11.6	12.9	14.3
<i>Primary</i>						
8052001	Hart Primary School	18.0	19.6	17.7	17.5	18.2
8052090	Brougham Primary School	22.5	24.5	19.8	18.2	18.7
8052126	Golden Flatts Primary School	22.3	19.5	20.1	18.5	16.6
8052127	Jesmond Road Primary School	18.4	22.5	20.3	23.4	19.7
8052151	Eldon Grove Primary School	23.9	23.2	22.3	18.8	19.4
8052153	Lynnfield Primary School	22.2	22.3	21.8	21.8	19.7
8052156	Stranton Primary School	22.6	20.4	18.5	17.4	18.1
8052181	Ward Jackson Primary School	15.3	19.0	23.5	14.1	13.7
8052182	Owton Manor Primary School	17.7	16.7	16.5	15.4	15.0
8052187	Fens Primary School	26.1	24.2	23.2	23.6	24.2
8052189	Kingsley Primary School	21.8	24.0	22.1	20.5	18.6
8052211	St Helen's Primary School	19.6	22.6	20.3	20.2	21.5
8052215	West View Primary School	20.7	22.7	20.0	18.1	19.0
8052236	Throston Primary School	21.8	21.5	25.0	20.5	21.4
8052237	West Park Primary School	24.6	22.7	23.5	22.9	24.2
8052238	Clavering Primary School	22.6	22.6	19.6	21.8	20.6
8052310	Barnard Grove Primary School	23.2	21.0	21.5	19.4	21.7
8052341	Rift House Primary School	18.4	19.8	18.5	19.6	19.9
8052342	Rossmere Primary School	22.2	19.5	24.7	27.5	19.1
8052364	Grange Primary School	19.0	16.8	15.8	18.0	18.5
8053003	Elwick Hall CofE Primary School	19.9	22.5	24.7	25.1	20.2
8053006	Greatham CofE Primary School	19.5	19.5	19.6	20.5	19.3
8053320	St Aidan's CofE Memorial Primary School	25.2	23.1	21.3	20.9	27.3
8053321	Sacred Heart RC Primary School	26.8	25.3	23.8	25.2	22.3
8053322	St Cuthbert's RC Primary School	25.4	25.7	27.4	23.1	25.1
8053323	St Joseph's RC Primary School	26.8	24.4	20.7	18.6	18.5
8053324	St Teresa's RC Primary School	22.9	21.0	21.6	22.5	23.1
8053328	St Bega's RC Primary School	23.8	21.1	18.1	19.9	20.5
8053329	St John Vianney RC Primary School	23.0	20.9	20.6	20.4	22.1
8053330	Holy Trinity Church of England (Aided) Primary School	27.8	24.4	25.0	24.4	24.6
<i>Secondary</i>						
8054000	St Hild's Church of England Voluntary Aided School	14.7	14.7	15.7	17.3	15.9
8054130	Brierton Community School (A Specialist Sports College)	16.7	18.1	18.3	16.1	13.0
8054131	Dyke House Comprehensive School	15.3	15.7	17.5	16.7	15.7
8054133	High Tunstall College of Science	17.3	17.1	19.2	15.0	17.9
8054134	Manor College of Technology	16.4	15.6	16.0	15.1	15.9
8054603	The English Martyrs School and Sixth Form College	15.5	15.6	15.5	15.6	14.8
<i>Special</i>						
8057026	Catcote School	5.9	6.0	5.3	6.7	7.4
8057027	Springwell School	7.1	5.4	5.8	4.9	5.0

¹ For statistical purposes only, pupils who do not attend both morning and afternoon at least five days a week are regarded as part-time. Each part-time pupil is treated as 0.5 full-time equivalent (FTE).

² The within-school PTR is calculated by dividing the total FTE number of pupils on roll in schools by the total FTE number of qualified teachers regularly employed in schools.

³ There are no city technology colleges or academies in Hartlepool constituency.

Source:

School Census

Teachers: Retirement

Mr Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Education what his policy is on raising the retirement age for secondary school teachers. [5640]

Mr Gibb: Under the provisions of the Teachers' Pension Scheme, the normal pension age (that is the age at which pension benefits can be accessed without any actuarial reduction) is 65 for those who joined the scheme on or after 1 January 2007; and 60 for those who were members of the scheme prior to that date. The point at which a teacher retires—which can be after or before the normal pension age—is, however, a matter for the individual to determine in discussion with their employer.

The Government have set up an Independent Commission under the Chairmanship of Lord Hutton to conduct a fundamental structural review of public service pension provision, to ensure these provisions are sustainable and affordable in the long-term. Any future changes that may be made to the provisions of the Teachers' Pension Scheme will be informed by the outcome of this review.

Teachers: Training

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Education what recent progress has been made on the Training and Development Agency for Schools' review of the qualified teacher status standards. [1386]

Mr Gibb: The Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) review of Qualified Teacher Status standards was put on hold due to the general election.

We are currently undertaking a review of all of our policies and as soon as we are able to provide more information, we will, of course, make a formal announcement.

Written Questions: Government Responses

Mr Watson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education when he plans to answer Question (a) 1938 and (b) 1939, on the ContactPoint database, tabled on 8 June 2010. [6279]

Tim Loughton: I replied to the hon. Member's questions today.

John Healey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education when he plans to provide a substantive answer to question 3825, on departmental public expenditure, tabled on 17 June 2010. [7941]

Tim Loughton: A response will be issued to the right hon. Member shortly.

Young People: Bradford

Mr Ward: To ask the Secretary of State for Education what his latest estimate is of the funding his Department will provide for Bradford's MyPlace project, Culture Fusion over the lifetime of the project; and if he will make a statement. [6106]

Tim Loughton: The Bradford Myplace project was awarded a grant of £5,000,000 by BIG on behalf of the then Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) in March 2009. The Department for Education (DFE) has not yet made a decision on the future of Myplace funding. However, the Government are committed to a full comprehensive spending review in the autumn and DFE Ministers are currently considering their spending priorities.

Young People: Unemployment

Jack Dromey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education what assessment he has made of the likely effects on levels of (a) employment and (b) deprivation in (i) Birmingham Erdington constituency and (ii) the Birmingham local authority area of recent reductions in area-based grant allocations to local authorities, including allocations to the Working Neighbourhoods Fund. [6917]

Robert Neill: I have been asked to reply.

Tackling the UK's record deficit is the Government's top priority, and we believe that it is right that local authorities make a contribution to the efficiency savings of £6.2 billion in 2010-11. We have adopted a fair approach to the reductions in grants and funding streams and have limited the amount councils lose. The impact on the area of reductions in grants this year will be for the local authority to decide. We have ensured that councils, including Birmingham, are able to deliver essential frontline services by making no changes to the £29 billion they receive through Formula Grant and by increasing flexibility for local spending decisions through removing restrictions on how they spend their money.

Youth Services: Bristol

Kerry McCarthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Education (1) what representations his Department has received from the National Lottery on grants to the My Place project in Bristol for the purchase and refurbishment of a building; [4992]

(2) when he plans to decide on the approval of funding for the My Place project in Bristol. [5055]

Tim Loughton: The Department for Education has not yet made a decision on My Place funding. The Big Lottery Fund have therefore deferred their confirmation of in-principle My Place grants until a decision is made. The Government are committed to a full comprehensive spending review in the autumn and Ministers will shortly be considering their spending priorities.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Constituencies

Mr Blunkett: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidance he plans to issue to the Boundary Commission on whether the whole of a local authority ward should fall within a single parliamentary constituency; and if he will make a statement. [7088]

Mr Harper: As my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister announced on 5 July 2010, *Official Report*, column 24W, a Bill will be introduced before the summer recess to implement the coalition agreement commitment to make provision for the creation of fewer and more equal sized constituencies. The independent Boundary Commissions will draw those constituency boundaries. Detailed provisions will be included in the Bill and Parliament will have the opportunity to debate it in full.

Constituencies: Sheffield

Mr Betts: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister by what mechanism Sheffield constituencies will be drawn to ensure that all are within five per cent. of a target quota of registered electors without (a) crossing local authority ward boundaries and (b) first reviewing local authority ward boundaries. [7244]

Mr Harper: As my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister announced on 5 July 2010, *Official Report*, column 24W, a Bill will be introduced before the summer recess to implement the coalition agreement commitment to make provision for the creation of fewer and more equal sized constituencies. The independent Boundary Commissions will draw those constituency boundaries. Detailed provisions will be included in the Bill and Parliament will have the opportunity to debate it in full.

Diamond Jubilee 2012

Rehman Chishti: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when the Government plan to announce the launch of the UK-wide competition for towns to bid for city status as part of the national celebrations for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee; what the timescale will be for applications; how many towns will be awarded city status in (a) England, (b) Wales, (c) Scotland and (d) Northern Ireland; and what criteria will be used to determine the successful towns. [6303]

Mr Harper: An announcement will be made in due course which gives further details of the national competition for city status. It would be inappropriate to give further details at this stage in the planning process.

Elections: Registration

Mr Blunkett: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he plans to take to seek to ensure 100% electoral registration; and if he will make a statement. [7026]

Mr Harper: The Government will be considering what steps can be taken to improve registration rates in the context of the implementation of Individual Electoral Registration in Great Britain.

The Electoral Commission Report, "The completeness and accuracy of electoral registers in Great Britain", published in March 2010, reported that the registration rate in the United Kingdom was 91-92% (based on figures from 2000). The report also found that: "there was a decline in registration levels from the late 1990s to 2006. The same evidence base suggests that the registers have stabilised since 2006, although it is likely that the completeness of the registers has declined since the last national estimate in 2000."

The report also says the process of estimating registration rates is an "imprecise science" and says that "All current

approaches to estimating the completeness and accuracy of the electoral registers at a national level are imperfect", but that "The completeness of Great Britain's electoral registers remains broadly similar to the levels achieved in comparative countries."

Mr David Hamilton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the total registered electorate in (a) England, (b) Scotland, (c) Wales and (d) Northern Ireland on 5 May 2011; and what estimate he has made of the proportion of that electorate expected to vote in local elections held on that date. [7210]

Mr Harper: The Government have not made such estimates.

Electoral Systems: Referendums

Helen Jones: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he plans to announce the proposed date for a referendum on the alternative vote; and if he will make a statement. [5984]

Mr Harper: As my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister announced to the House on 5 July 2010, *Official Report*, columns 23-25, the Government intend that the referendum will be held on 5 May 2011. Further details and legislation will follow in due course.

Helen Jones: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the result of a referendum on the alternative vote is to be binding under his proposals for such a referendum. [5985]

Mr Harper: As my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister announced to the House on 5 July 2010, *Official Report*, columns 23-25, the Government intend that the referendum will be held on 5 May 2011. Further details and legislation will follow in due course. As indicated in that statement, the Bill will make explicit provision for the boundary commissions to report on more equally sized constituencies and for the process to be completed by the end of 2013. In the event of a vote in favour of the alternative vote in the referendum, the 2015 general election will be held on the new electoral system and according to the new boundaries.

JUSTICE

Ammanford Magistrates Court

Jonathan Edwards: To ask the Secretary of State for Justice what estimate has been made of the savings which will accrue to his Department as a result of the closure of Ammanford magistrates court. [6760]

Mr Djanogly: The 2009-10 operating cost of Ammanford magistrates court was £110,392. The closure of Ammanford court house would also remove the need for HMCS investment in backlog maintenance of around £45,000.

An initial impact assessment has been produced for the consultations on proposals for provision of court services across the HMCS estate. This can be found on the Ministry of Justice website at:

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/consultations/consultations.htm>

The impacts, costs and benefits of any court closures will be considered more fully during the consultation phase and a full impact assessment will be produced alongside the consultation responses.

I must stress that no decision has yet been taken to close Ammanford magistrates court and I encourage responses to the public consultation that is ongoing and which closes on 15 September.

Annual Reports

Mr Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Justice what the cost to his Department and its non-departmental public bodies was of printing annual reports in (a) 2008, (b) 2009 and (c) 2010. [7646]

Total printing costs per year

	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	£
Ministry of Justice	7,925	7,430		0
Her Majesty's Court Service	5,492	11,253		0
Tribunals Service	7,320	7,985		0
Office of the Public Guardian	6,565	n/a		0
National Offender Management Service	9,835	8,129		0

n/a = not applicable, print in-house, not able to identify specific recharge

Ministry of Justice does not centrally collect information on the cost of all annual reports published by all non-departmental bodies and it could be given only at disproportionate cost. This would involve contacting a large number of agencies associated with the department. Retrieving of the data would involve searching their individual records.

Asbestos: Compensation

Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Justice whether he plans to provide compensation for people who were exposed to asbestos and have developed asbestos-related diseases on the same basis as was planned by the previous administration. [7016]

Mr Djanogly: I can confirm that we will be proceeding with the implementation of the previously announced limited extra-statutory scheme to provide one-off payments of £5,000 to individuals who had begun, but not resolved, a legal claim for compensation for pleural plaques at the time of the House of Lords judgment. The detailed arrangements for the extra-statutory scheme, including details of the precise qualifying criteria, are still in the process of being finalised and we hope that the scheme will be in a position to start accepting claims as soon as possible.

Courts

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Justice what the unused courtroom capacity in (a) Retford, (b) Worksop, (c) Mansfield and (d) Sheffield magistrates court was in 2009. [6611]

Mr Djanogly: Annual reports and accounts, like all House of Commons papers, are produced and published according to long-established and sophisticated parliamentary procedures, with adherence to strict rules regarding the laying and subsequent publication of the completed document. The printing cost of the annual reports for MoJ HQ and its executive agencies are shown in the following table.

HM Treasury cancelled the mandatory round of full Spring Departmental Report publication for 2010. With an advertising and marketing freeze in place, the printing of the department's annual reports has been put on hold.

Mr Djanogly: The utilised and unutilised courtroom capacity at each of these courts is shown in the following table.

Courtroom capacity April 2009 to March 2010

	Utilised	Percentage Unutilised
Retford	29.5	70.5
Worksop	48.8	51.2
Mansfield	49.6	50.4
Sheffield	69.4	30.6

Note:

The working assumption is that a courtroom is available 25 hours per week (five hours per weekday). These data come from an internal management system, are subject to our minimal levels of quality assurance and are based on the data currently available.

Courtroom utilisation is the time a courtroom is used, against the hours that a courtroom is available for use. Utilisation rates currently average 64% across the magistrates courts. The Government's aim is to increase utilisation of courtroom time to at least 80%.

Courts: Attendance

Mike Wood: To ask the Secretary of State for Justice what his most recent estimate is of the average cost to HM Courts Service of each non-attendance at court by a (a) defendant and (b) witness. [6759]

Mr Djanogly: We have no estimate of the average cost to HM Courts Service of non-attendance of defendants and witnesses at court. Courts manage their business in order to minimise the impact of non attendance by defendants and witnesses.

Details of ineffective or cracked trials where defendants or witnesses do not attend are set out in the following table.

Non-attendance of defendants and witnesses in criminal trials recorded in the magistrates courts, January 2010 to March 2010, England and Wales

	Number/percentage
Number of recorded trials where the defendant is absent	1,750

Non-attendance of defendants and witnesses in criminal trials recorded in the magistrates courts, January 2010 to March 2010, England and Wales

Number/percentage

Percentage of the trials listed where the defendant is absent	5
Number of recorded trials where the witness is absent	1,811
Percentage of the cases where the witness is absent	5
Total number of trials	47,587

Notes:

- The figures correspond to trials only and exclude all non-attendance when trials did not occur.
- The reasons for ineffective trial due to defendant being absent include the following reasons:
 Defendant absent—did not proceed in absence (judicial discretion)
 Defendant ill or otherwise unfit to proceed
 Defendant not produced by PECS
 Defendant absent—unable to proceed as defendant not notified of place and time of hearing
- Witnesses are defined as both professional, police and other witnesses for both the defence and prosecution.

Departmental Buildings

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Justice how many buildings his Department occupies in (a) London and (b) the UK. [6851]

Mr Djanogly: The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) records indicate that it has a total of 2,090 occupations within properties in the United Kingdom. Of these 278 are in London. The MoJ estate includes ownership and use of (or shared use of) a range of buildings, including prisons, approved premises, probation offices (both administrative and operational), Crown, county and magistrates' courts.

These figures have been drawn from administrative data systems. Although care is taken when processing and analysing the returns, the detail collected is subject to the inaccuracies inherent in any large scale recording system.

Departmental Human Resources

Graham Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Justice how much his Department has spent on human resources in each year since 1997. [5103]

Mr Kenneth Clarke: My Department spent £100.9 million in 2008-09 and £88.6 million in 2009-10 on human resources. The amount spent for the years 1997-2007 (prior to the establishment of the Ministry) could not be provided without incurring disproportionate cost.

Departmental Official Cars

Mr Watson: To ask the Secretary of State for Justice how many (a) civil servants and (b) special advisers in his Department are entitled to the use of (i) a car with a dedicated driver, (ii) a car from the Government car pool and (iii) a taxi ordered through a departmental account. [3199]

Mr Blunt: There are no civil servants or special advisers in the Ministry of Justice entitled to the use of a car with a dedicated driver nor are any entitled to use a car from the ministerial car pool.

MoJ staff, including Ministers and the Department's two special advisers have access to the use of a taxi ordered through departmental taxi accounts or to a car ordered through the Government Car and Despatch Agency, both the taxi account and the car and despatch agency may be used only in exceptional circumstances which may include:

by the time you cease work either public transport is not available for your journey from work to home or it would not be reasonable to expect you to use public transport heavy baggage has to be transported for work-related reasons.

Departmental Reorganisation

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Justice if he will take steps to relocate officials working in his Department from central London to Bassetlaw. [6555]

Mr Kenneth Clarke: The location of public sector activity and plans for the Government's estate will be considered alongside other public spending issues over the course of the spending review.

Departmental Training

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for Justice what training has been provided for Ministers in his Department since the formation of the present administration; and at what cost. [6450]

Mr Kenneth Clarke: Since the formation of the present administration, three Ministers in my Department have completed an 'Induction Workshop for New Ministers' run by the National School of Government. The National School of Government is funded through its core learning programme to deliver induction and other training to Ministers. There was no separate charge to my Department.

In addition, one Minister is currently completing a National School of Government 'Finance in Government Workshop', at a total cost to my Department of £1,000.

No other training has been provided for Ministers.

First Offenders: Custodial Treatment

Gordon Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Justice how many people were (a) convicted of first offences and (b) given a custodial sentence of six months or less for a first offence in each year since 2005. [7537]

Mr Blunt: Figures for the total number of people who were convicted of their first offence (including indictable, triable-either-way and summary offences) and given a custodial sentence of six months or less for a first offence in each year since 2005 are presented in the following table.

Number of people convicted in England and Wales courts for their first offence and sentenced to immediate custody of six months or less for their first offence

	Number of people who were convicted for their first offences	Number of people who were given a custodial sentence of six months or less for their first offence
2005	102,439	3,310
2006	100,208	2,922
2007	98,065	3,054
2008	91,935	2,987

Other information on trends in sentencing can be found in "Sentencing Statistics 2008" which was published on 28 January 2010 and can be found at:

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/sentencingannual.htm>

The figures have been drawn from the police's administrative IT system, the police national computer, which, as with any large scale recording system, is subject to possible errors with data entry and processing. The figures are provisional and subject to change as more information is recorded by the police.

Magistrates

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Justice for how many hours magistrates sat in (a) Worksop and (b) Retford in each of the last 10 years. [6612]

Mr Djanogly: The information requested is provided in the following table:

	Hours sat in the magistrates courts			
	Criminal	Civil	Other	Total
<i>2007-08</i>				
Retford	767	72	0	839
Worksop	1,137	116	8	1,261
<i>2008-09</i>				
Retford	644.35	101.9	0	746.25
Worksop	1,054.4	133.2	0	118.76
<i>2009-10</i>				

Location	Trials	Effective	Effective trial rate (percentage)	Cracked	Cracked trial rate (percentage)	Ineffective trials	Ineffective trial rate (percentage)
Retford	94	31	33.0	39	41.5	24	25.5
Worksop	179	58	32.4	71	39.7	50	27.9

Notes:

1. A cracked trial is where on the trial date, the defendant offers acceptable pleas or the prosecution offers no evidence. An ineffective trial is where a trial cannot progress on the trial date due to an error or omission by one or more of the organisations or individuals involved. A further hearing or new trial date will be arranged.

2. These data come from an internal management system, are subject to our minimal levels of quality assurance and are based on the data currently available.

Magistrates Courts: Closures

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Justice what assessment he has made of the effect on the travelling time of (a) magistrates, (b) police and (c) lawyers attending courts of the closure of Retford and Worksop magistrates courts. [6610]

Mr Djanogly: An initial impact assessment has been produced for the consultation on proposals for the

Hours sat in the magistrates courts

	Criminal	Civil	Other	Total
Retford	599.71	131.7	0	731.41
Worksop	973.8	236.1	0	1,209.9

Note:

Court level data are not available centrally pre April 2007. These data come from an internal management system, are subject to our minimal levels of quality assurance and are based on the data currently available.

Magistrates Courts

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Justice how many cases were heard at (a) Retford and (b) Worksop magistrates court in each of the last 10 years. [6614]

Mr Djanogly: Information on completed cases is only available centrally at local justice area level for the last three years only. Information on completed cases in the Worksop and Retford local justice area over the last three years is provided in the following table.

Period	Civil and family	Criminal	Means inquiries	Grand total
2007-08	264	5,942	1,084	7,290
2008-09	180	5,145	735	6,060
2009-10	202	4,229	272	4,703

Note:

The data exclude Right to Representation Orders. The data come from an internal management system, are subject to our minimal levels of quality assurance and are based on the data currently available.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Justice how many cases were adjourned on the day of the case being heard in (a) Retford and (b) Worksop magistrates court in 2009. [6613]

Mr Djanogly: It is not possible to provide information on the number of cases adjourned on the day of the case being heard. Information on the number of effective, ineffective and cracked trials at each of these courts in 2009-10 is shown in the following table.

provision of court services in the east midlands. The consultation paper and the initial impact assessment can be found on the Ministry of Justice website at:

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-cp08-10.htm>

The initial impact assessment states there may be a travel cost impact on users of magistrates and county courts and that fewer courts could increase journey times and costs for court users such as victims, witnesses, general public, businesses, solicitors, barristers, police

and NOMS—both probation services and prisoner transfers. However, consolidation of the court estate both in terms of function as well as location could mean that some court users will make fewer trips to court, e.g. CPS officers and solicitors may have to travel to fewer courts, and so lessening the overall impact. Fewer courts may also reduce the need for duty solicitors, decreasing costs incurred by the Legal Services Commission.

The impacts, costs and benefits of court closures will be considered more fully during the consultation phase and a full impact assessment will be produced alongside the consultation responses.

Magistrates Courts: Nottinghamshire

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Justice how many cases he estimates will be heard in magistrates courts in Nottinghamshire in each of the next three years. [6609]

Mr Djanogly: Public consultations on the delivery of courts services in England and Wales were announced on 23 June. These proposals include the closure of a number of magistrates and county courts, five of which are in the Nottinghamshire area. Decisions on case transfer will not be made until after the Lord Chancellor makes decisions on which of these courts ought to be closed and when. Such decisions will need to take into account court workload across all of the east midlands area, No estimate has therefore been made of the number of cases likely to be heard in magistrates courts in Nottinghamshire over the next three years.

Should any court be closed, a full implementation plan will be produced to ensure the smooth transfer of work.

Offenders: Deportation

Dr Thérèse Coffey: To ask the Secretary of State for Justice what recent discussions he has had with ministerial colleagues on the deportation of foreign national prisoners. [6602]

Mr Kenneth Clarke: I have held general discussions about the deportation of foreign national prisoners with the Home Secretary and other ministerial colleagues. I am keen to continue to develop with ministerial colleagues plans to reduce the burden of foreign national offenders in the criminal justice system.

Offensive Weapons: Prosecutions

Gareth Johnson: To ask the Secretary of State for Justice how many people have been prosecuted for carrying an offensive weapon or bladed article in Dartford constituency in each of the last five years. [6845]

Mr Blunt: The number of persons proceeded against at magistrates courts and found guilty at all courts in the Kent police force area for possession of offensive weapons or having an article with a blade or point in a public place, 2004 to 2008 (latest available), is given in the following table.

Court proceedings data are not available at parliamentary constituency level.

Data for 2009 are planned for publication on 21 October 2010.

Persons proceeded against at magistrates courts in the Kent police force area for offences of possession of offensive weapons and having an article with a blade or point¹, 2004-08^{2,3}

	Number
2004	191
2005	189
2006	187
2007	161
2008	289

¹ Includes offences under the following statutes: Prevention of Crime Act 1953—section 1 Criminal Justice Act 1988—section 139(2) as added by Offensive Weapons Act 1996—section 4(1) Criminal Justice Act 1988—section 139 Criminal Justice Act 1988—section 139A(1) as added by Offensive Weapons Act 1996—section 4(1).

² The figures given relate to persons for whom these offences were the principal offence for which they were dealt with. When a defendant has been found guilty of two or more offences, the offence selected is the one 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.

Source:

Justice Statistics Analytical Services—Ministry of Justice.

Prisoners

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Justice how many persons currently imprisoned gave addresses in Bassetlaw constituency in court at the time of the trial for the offence for which they were convicted. [6608]

Mr Blunt: Information held on prisoners does not record home addresses provided on arrival or discharge from courts but does include an address provided on first reception in to prison.

As of 14 May 2010, based on this information there were 87 prisoners serving a custodial sentence and three prisoners who were convicted awaiting sentence that have an address in the Bassetlaw constituency area. These figures include both male and female prisoners and young offenders and juveniles.

Prisons

David T. C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Justice what the average cost to the public purse of a place in a prison at category (a) A, (b) B, (c) C and (d) D was in the last 12 months for which figures are available. [6390]

Mr Blunt: The four categories A to D are security categories related to individual prisoners and prison costs are not analysed by these categories. Prison costs are classified by the main function of the prison which does not entirely correspond with the four security categories. The following table provides the following average costs per place for 2008-09 (the last year for which figures are available).

Category	Total average cost per place £
Male dispersal	70,000
Male category B	38,000
Male category C	38,000

Total average cost per place

Category	£
Male local	50,000
Open	32,000
Semi open	37,000
Male closed YOI (15-21)	48,000
Male YOI Young people	58,000
Male open YOI	42,000
Female closed	52,000
Female local	53,000
Cluster	40,000

Note:

Figures to nearest £1,000

The average costs given above include expenditure on public and private prisons (as recorded in the National Offender Management Service Agency Annual Report and Accounts 2008-09), increased by an apportionment of relevant costs borne centrally and in the regions by NOMS. This involves some estimation. The figures do not include the cost of prisoners held in police or court cells under Operation Safeguard, nor expenditure met by other Government Departments (e.g. Health and Education). The prisoner escort service costs are included.

Cost per place is based on the Certified Normal Accommodation (CNA) at the prisons in these functions.

Prisons: Population

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Justice how many people he expects will be in prison in each of the next three years. [6607]

Mr Blunt: The Ministry of Justice produces annual projections of the prison population in England and Wales, most recently in August 2009. These project the prison population under three different scenarios (high, medium and low), based on different assumptions about future sentencing trends. The projected populations in the next three years (at the end of June) are in the following table. Although the published prison population projections did not anticipate the change in March 2010, the figures provided here incorporate the impact of the ending of End of Custody Licence (ECL).

Projected prison population (end of June figures)

	High	Medium	Low
2011	89,800	88,100	86,100
2012	91,400	88,900	86,100
2013	92,300	88,800	85,200

Stop and Search of persons under s1 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, and other legislation, by self defined ethnicity, 2008-09

	Ethnicity	West Midlands	England and Wales
White	White British	12,460	691,849
	White Irish	121	8,489
	Other White	284	64,933
Black or Black British	Black African	438	50,246
	Black Caribbean	2,504	75,721
	Other Black	665	42,799
Asian or Asian British	Bangladeshi	524	19,309
	Indian	1,566	22,888
	Pakistani	4,832	31,273

Sentencing: Knives

Dr Thérèse Coffey: To ask the Secretary of State for Justice what recent representations he has received on compulsory prison sentences for convictions relating to knife crime; and if he will make a statement. [6598]

Mr Blunt: No such representations have been received. But we will be looking at sentencing for knife crime as part of the comprehensive assessment of sentencing policy to ensure that it is effective in deterring crime, protecting the public, punishing offenders and cutting re-offending.

Shoplifting

Gareth Johnson: To ask the Secretary of State for Justice what plans he has for the future of penalty notices for offences related to shoplifting. [7012]

Mr Blunt: We will be considering our approach to all out of court disposals, including fixed penalty notices for shoplifting, as part of the sentencing assessment.

Under our programme for government for the next five years, we will conduct a full assessment of sentencing policy to ensure that it is effective in deterring crime, protecting the public, obtaining justice for victims and cutting reoffending.

Stop And Search: Ethnic Groups

Valerie Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Justice how many stops and searches of individuals from each ethnic background, have been conducted in Walsall South constituency in the last 12 months for which figures are available. [7020]

Mr Blunt: Data are not available at constituency level. However, the accompanying tables show the number of Stop and Searches (section 1, 60 and 44) in 2008-09 for the West Midlands police force area. Statutory powers exist under section 1 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE), for a police officer to search a person or vehicle without first making an arrest. Other police powers not under PACE include Stops and Searches in anticipation of violence (under section 60 of Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994) and searches of pedestrians, vehicles and occupants (under sections 44(1) and 44(2) of the Terrorism Act 2000).

Stop and Search of persons under s1 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, and other legislation, by self defined ethnicity, 2008-09

	<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>West Midlands</i>	<i>England and Wales</i>
	Other Asian	524	26,589
Mixed	Mixed African	59	3,128
	Mixed Asian	160	3,203
	Mixed Caribbean	872	16,477
	Other Mixed	155	9,187
Chinese or other	Chinese	68	3,356
	Other	155	11,256
	Not Stated	2,285	62,060
	Total	27,672	1,142,763

Stop and Search of persons or vehicles under section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, by self-defined ethnicity, 2008-09

	<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>West Midlands</i>	<i>England and Wales</i>
White	White British	181	53,078
	White Irish	2	889
	Other White	13	9,684
Black or Black British	Black African	66	17,681
	Black Caribbean	160	19,099
	Other Black	32	10,647
Asian or Asian British	Bangladeshi	64	6,585
	Indian	74	3,455
	Pakistani	250	4,903
	Other Asian	37	6,353
Mixed	Mixed African	18	701
	Mixed Asian	4	406
	Mixed Caribbean	39	2,978
	Other Mixed	24	1,654
Chinese or other	Chinese	4	345
	Other	7	1,631
	Not Stated	56	9,866
	Total	1,031	149,955

Stop and Search of pedestrians and vehicles and occupants under section 44 of the Terrorism Act 2000, by self-defined ethnicity, 2008-09

	<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>West Midlands</i>	<i>England and Wales</i>
White	White British	0	73,206
	White Irish	0	2,201
	Other White	0	41,966
Black or Black British	Black African	0	10,151
	Black Caribbean	0	6,776
	Other Black	0	5,123
Asian or Asian British	Bangladeshi	0	5,247
	Indian	0	9,781
	Pakistani	0	5,694
	Other Asian	0	10,054

Stop and Search of pedestrians and vehicles and occupants under section 44 of the Terrorism Act 2000, by self-defined ethnicity, 2008-09

	Ethnicity	West Midlands	England and Wales
Mixed	Mixed African	0	526
	Mixed Asian	0	811
	Mixed Caribbean	0	960
	Other Mixed	0	2,210
Chinese or other	Chinese	0	3,141
	Other	0	5,590
	Not Stated	0	13,571
	Total	0	197,008

Note:

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.

Source:

Criminal Justice Reform Analytical Services (CJR—AS)

Surcharges

Graham Stringer: To ask the Secretary of State for Justice who the beneficiaries have been of the victim surcharge since it was introduced. [6654]

Mr Blunt: The following table shows how funding was committed from Victim Surcharge receipts each year from 2007-08 to 2009-10. Any shortfall has been met from savings in other areas of the Ministry of Justice.

Recipient	Department	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Independent Domestic Violence Adviser Services	Ministry of Justice	3 million	2.6 million	2.6 million
Witness Care Units	Crown Prosecution Service	3 million	2.6 million	2.6 million
Victim Support Plus	Ministry of Justice	5.7 million	7 million	6.2 million
Victims Fund ¹	Ministry of Justice and the Home Office	² 1.75 million	³ 1.75 million	⁴ 1,770,474
Grand total	—	13.45 million	13.95 million	13,170,474

¹ The Victims Fund provides funding for voluntary organisations supporting victims of sexual violence, murder/manslaughter and hate crime. For 2009-10 this was combined with £1 million funding from the Government Equalities Office. The fund is allocated annually via competitive tender.

² £1.25 million Sexual violence, £250,000 Hate Crime and £250,000 Homicide.

³ £1.25 million Sexual violence, £250,000 Hate Crime and £250,000 Homicide.

⁴ £1.25 million Sexual violence, £250,000 Hate Crime and £270,474 Homicide.

Trespass

Sajid Javid: To ask the Secretary of State for Justice if he will bring forward plans to create a new criminal offence of intentional trespass to enable people occupying property without the landowner's permission to be removed without the need for a court order. [6862]

Mr Blunt: The Government are considering how the law might be strengthened, not least around intentional trespass but, as yet, no firm decisions have been made. Any change to the law in this area would need to be considered against other commitments in the coalition agreement, and we would need to investigate fully the public service resource implications of any change, taking account of the current financial situation.

Mr Hurd: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the UK Statistics Authority. I have asked the authority to reply.

Letter from Stephen Penneck, dated July 2010:

As Director General for the Office for National Statistics, I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking how many people aged between 50 and 59 years were diagnosed with bowel cancer in each year since 2001. [7103]

The latest available figures for newly diagnosed cases of bowel cancer (incidence) are for the year 2007. Please note that these numbers may not be the same as the number of people diagnosed with cancer, because one person may be diagnosed with more than one cancer.

Table 1 provides the number of newly diagnosed cases of bowel cancer in England for persons aged between 50 and 59 years, in each year from 2001 to 2007.

Table 1. Registrations of newly diagnosed cases of bowel cancer¹, persons aged between 50 and 59 years, England², 2001 to 2007³

	Number
2001	3,334
2002	3,297
2003	3,273
2004	3,393
2005	3,539
2006	3,485

CABINET OFFICE**Bowel Cancer**

Gordon Banks: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many people aged between 50 and 59 years were diagnosed with bowel cancer in each year since 2001. [7103]

Table 1. Registrations of newly diagnosed cases of bowel cancer¹, persons aged between 50 and 59 years, England², 2001 to 2007³

	Number
2007	3,321

¹ Bowel cancer is another name for colorectal cancer. Both are coded as C18-C20 in the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10).

² Based on boundaries as of 2010.

³ Newly diagnosed cases registered in each calendar year.

Departmental Buildings

Graham Evans: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how much (a) his Department and (b) its agency and non-departmental public bodies spent on office refurbishment in each year since 1997. [7352]

Mr Maude: The information requested could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Conferences

Robert Halfon: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what estimate he has made of the expenditure of his Department on (a) organisation of and (b) attendance at conferences in each year since 1997. [6123]

Mr Maude: The information requested could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Directors

Mr Carswell: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what assessment he has made of the implications for departmental accountability to select committees of the House of the introduction of non-executive directors to the enhanced boards of Government departments. [6409]

Mr Maude: The appointment of non-executive directors does not affect the established lines of accountability to Parliament. Ministers remain accountable to Parliament for the decisions and actions of their Departments. Permanent secretaries continue to have a personal responsibility to the Public Accounts Committee for the propriety and regularity of the public finances for which he or she is responsible.

Mr Carswell: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what changes the Government's lead non-executive director plans to make to the enhanced role of non-executive directors on departmental boards; and on what statutory basis. [6412]

Mr Maude: The role of non-executive directors on departmental boards is set out in the enhanced departmental boards protocol, which has been published on the Cabinet Office website:

http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/newsroom/news_releases/2010/100630-browne/protocol.aspx

Copies have been placed in the Library of the House. There is no statutory basis for this role.

Departmental Equality

Philip Davies: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how much his Department has spent (a) in total and (b) on staff costs on promoting equality and diversity in each of the last three years for which

figures are available; and how many people are employed by his Department for this purpose. [5914]

Mr Maude: The Cabinet Office employs 3.4 FTE staff to ensure compliance with all relevant equality legislation, provide advice on employment policy and promote equality and diversity across the civil service and within the Department. Of this, a small central team of 2.6 FTE staff are responsible for working with other Government Departments to promote diversity and equality in employment in the civil service; 0.8 FTE staff are responsible for diversity and equality issues within the Cabinet Office.

Departmental ICT

Graham Evans: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how much (a) his Department and (b) its agency and non-departmental public bodies spent on information and communication technology in each year since 1997. [7333]

Mr Maude: The information requested could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Internet

Graham Evans: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how much (a) his Department and (b) its agency and non-departmental public bodies spent on website design in each year since 1997. [7603]

Mr Maude: The information requested could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Marketing

Graham Evans: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how much his (a) Department and (b) its agency and non-departmental public bodies spent on logo design in each year since 1997. [7478]

Mr Maude: The information requested could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Official Cars

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how much his Department has spent on the Government Car Service since the Government took office. [7994]

Mr Maude: Details of expenditure in 2010-11 will only be available when the Department's resource accounts are fully audited and laid before Parliament. This is expected to be before the 2011 summer recess.

Departmental Reorganisation

John Mann: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if he will take steps to relocate officials working in his Department from central London to Bassetlaw. [6568]

Mr Maude: There are no plans in place to relocate Cabinet Office staff to Bassetlaw.

Departmental Security

Graham Evans: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how much (a) his Department and (b) its agency and non-departmental public bodies spent on security in each year since 1997. [7370]

Mr Maude: The information requested could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Utilities

Graham Evans: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how much (a) his Department and (b) its agency and non-departmental public bodies spent on (i) electricity, (ii) water, (iii) heating and (iv) telephone services in each year since 1997. [7584]

Mr Maude: The information requested could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Written Questions

Mr Watson: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what factors determine the allocation of questions for written answer to each Minister in his Department. [6356]

Mr Maude: The List of Ministerial Responsibilities published on 1 July 2010, *Official Report*, column 47WS, sets out the responsibilities of Ministers within the Cabinet Office.

Electoral Register

Yvette Cooper: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what steps he is taking to encourage (a) young people and (b) people from black and minority ethnic groups to enrol on the electoral register. [7099]

Mr Harper: Under Section 9 of the Representation of the People Act 1983, Electoral Registration Officers have a duty to maintain a register of parliamentary electors and a register of local government electors. They also have a duty to encourage participation by electors in the democratic process and to target under-registered groups in their local authority area.

The Electoral Commission promotes public awareness of registration and produces research and reports on electoral registration issues. The commission ran a campaign before the general election which was targeted at under-registered groups including:

- Young people aged 16-24
- Recent home movers
- People living in privately rented accommodation
- Certain black and minority ethnic groups
- Students.

The Government are considering what further steps could be taken to boost registration rates in the context of the implementation of Individual Electoral Registration in Great Britain.

Intestacy

Mr Knight: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office in what percentage of deaths the deceased died intestate in each of the last three years. [6535]

Mr Djanogly: I have been asked to reply.

Figures are not kept on the number of people who die with or without leaving a will in England and Wales. However, figures are published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) on the number of deaths registered each year in England and Wales and by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) on the number of grants of representation issued each year in the estates of deceased persons where there is no will. A grant is the court's authority issued to the deceased's personal representatives to administer the estate. All those covered by the MoJ figures have died intestate, but there may be more people who have died intestate but no grant of representation is issued. The figures are set out in the following table.

	<i>Death registered in England and Wales (Mortality statistics: Deaths registered for 2007 and 2008. Figures for 2009 provided by ONS)</i>	<i>Grants issued where there is no will (Judicial and Courts Statistics for 2007 and 2008. Figures for 2009 as before)</i>	<i>Intestate estates (minimum) (percentage)</i>
2007	504,052	76,693	15
2008	509,090	52,510	10
2009	491,348	42,696	9

OGC Buying Solutions: Official Hospitality

Andrew Griffiths: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what costs OGC Buying Solutions incurred in (a) sponsoring the procurement covered at the local Government Chronicle Awards 2010, (b) providing publicity for such sponsorship and (c) providing travel, accommodation or subsistence payments to persons attending the awards ceremony. [5958]

Mr Maude: This event was held under the last government. The costs incurred by Buying Solutions for sponsorship of the Local Government Chronicle Awards were £21,000; publicity was included in this overall cost.

Travel, accommodation and subsistence payments to persons attending the awards ceremony amounted to £722.69.

Buying Solutions is now subject to the same marketing and advertising freeze as the rest of Whitehall and no new sponsorship contracts will be signed this year.

Payment-by-Results

Mr Watson: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office when he plans to publish the terms of the Central Office of Information's consultation on payment-by-results; and if he will make a statement. [6337]

Mr Hurd: I have asked the chief executive of the Central Office of Information to write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Mark Lund, dated 12 July 2010:

As Chief Executive of the Central Office of Information (COI), I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question 6337 regarding the terms of the Central Office of Information's consultation on payment-by-results.

A copy of the terms of the consultation on payment-by-results will be published when it has been completed.

ORAL ANSWERS

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