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UK Parliament > Hansard > ... > Commons Chamber > Oral Answers to Questions > Prime Minister > Engagements

## Engagements

### Volume 659: debated on Wednesday 1 May 2019

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#### John Lamont >

(Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk) (Con)

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Q1. If she will list her official engagements for Wednesday 1 May. (910625 (Unique identification number ))

#### The Prime Minister >

(Mrs Theresa May)

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I am sure that Members across the whole House are always pleased when young people take an interest in and attend the proceedings of this Chamber, as those from Fitzwaryn School are doing today.

I am sure that Members across the House will also want to join me in sending my best wishes to the Parliamentary Secretary, Cabinet Office, my hon. Friend the Member for Norwich North (Chloe Smith), and her husband Sandy, following the birth of their daughter Rosamund. I also congratulate everyone who took part in the London marathon on Sunday, including Members of this House, parliamentary staff and Lobby journalists. I would particularly like to congratulate my Parliamentary Private Secretary, my hon. Friend the Member for West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine (Andrew Bowie), who completed the marathon with the fastest time of any Member of Parliament—*[Interruption.]* Just for those who are suggesting otherwise—no, I was not chasing him at the time.

This morning, I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in this House, I shall have further such meetings later today.

#### John Lamont >

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I associate myself with the Prime Minister's comments, and I promise to train much harder for next year.

On this day in 1707, Scotland and England came together to form the United Kingdom. Does the Prime Minister agree that this Union has served our country well? Most people in Scotland agree with that. Does she further agree that, rather than obsessing over independence, Nicola Sturgeon should get on with her day job and end her neglect of Scotland's NHS, schools and economy?

#### The Prime Minister >

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First of all, I congratulate my hon. Friend on running the London marathon and on all the money he raised for Marie Curie on his run. I also thank him for highlighting this anniversary. I am sure that all Members across the House will want to join me in marking it. He is absolutely right to say that under the Scottish National party in government in Scotland, we are seeing public services getting worse because the SNP is focusing on holding another independence referendum. As my hon. Friend says, it is time the SNP stopped ignoring those millions of Scots who do not want another independence referendum and got on with the day job of focusing on the issues that matter to people, such as schools and the economy.

**Jeremy Corbyn >**

(Islington North) (Lab)

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I join the Prime Minister in congratulating all those who ran the London marathon. I think that the shadow Health Secretary getting a personal best shows just how fit the Labour Health team is.

I should like to take this opportunity to wish the House and people across the country a very happy May Day on International Workers Day.

Tomorrow, many people across England will go to the polls to vote in local elections. For many of them, the Government have delivered nothing but failure. On her first day in office, the Prime Minister promised to fight against the “burning” social “injustices” that plague our society. Yesterday, an independent Government body confirmed that inequality was entrenched in our society from birth to work. Will the Prime Minister now admit that her Government have completely failed to take action to tackle the burning injustices?

**The Prime Minister >**[Share](#)

I am sorry that the right hon. Gentleman did not take the opportunity to welcome the anniversary of the Union between Scotland and England. I have to say that I think this is the first time that he has not welcomed or congratulated a union in this House.

The right hon. Gentleman asked about social mobility, so I remind him that Dame Martina of the Social Mobility Commission said yesterday in relation to the report that she sensed that there is a “real commitment” in Government to try to make a difference in this area. I want everyone to have the opportunity to reach their potential whatever their background, and that is why we are improving education, helping to create higher-paid jobs and boosting home ownership. What would the right hon. Gentleman’s party offer young people? Failed policies, broken promises and piles of debt—just a millstone around their neck.

**Jeremy Corbyn >**[Share](#)

The reality is that social mobility is going backwards and things are getting worse under this Government. I will give an example: life expectancy in Britain is falling for the first time since 1945. Where does the Prime Minister think this Government have gone wrong when we have reached the point where people now expect to live shorter lives than others did in the past?

**The Prime Minister >**[Share](#)

It is not the case that people now expect to live shorter lives than in the past. We have been ensuring that we provide for people at every stage of their lives. For young people in particular, we are ensuring that they have the opportunities to lead full and healthy lives into the future. That is why all the actions we are taking across the board are ensuring that there are jobs for people, ensuring that those jobs are better, ensuring that people are encouraged to get into the workplace, and ensuring that we provide for them not just through the welfare system but with our long-term plan for the national health service. At every stage of life, we are ensuring that we as Conservatives are improving people’s lives. In so many of those areas, the right hon. Gentleman has done nothing but vote against the policies that this Conservative Government have produced.

**Jeremy Corbyn >**[Share](#)

Life expectancy has fallen by six months, and infant mortality is up and rising. This month, we also learned that a record 1.6 million food parcels were given out last year alone. Under this Government, things are getting worse. Does the Prime Minister agree with the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions that this Government’s policies have meant that, in one of the richest countries on earth, food banks are now handing 14 million meals a year to people, some of whom are in work, who simply do not have enough to eat?

**The Prime Minister >**[Share](#)

The best route out of poverty for people—*[Interruption.]*

**Mr Speaker >**[Share](#)

Order. The House must calm itself. We are at an early stage. The question has been put, and the answer from the Prime Minister must be heard.

**The Prime Minister >**[Share](#)

The best route out of poverty for people is to be in the workplace. We want to ensure that more, better-paid jobs are being created for people in this country, and that is what we are seeing under this Government. Record numbers of people are in employment, real wages are rising for the first time in a decade, and this Government are taking decisions that are helping people to keep more money in their pockets. Tax cuts for 32 million people, an increase in the national living wage, and a freeze in fuel duty have all been of major benefit to people, and what did the right hon. Gentleman do? He voted against fuel duty freezes and tax cuts over a dozen times.

**Jeremy Corbyn >**[Share](#)

Many of those people receiving food parcels, the number of which has increased by 600,000 in four years, are actually in work, and that is down to their low wages. Indeed, wages have been frozen for many over the past 10 years. Even the Prime Minister's own Secretary of State admitted that universal credit has caused people to rely on food banks.

The number of older people now not getting the care they desperately need has risen to 1.4 million. Think about that—1.4 million people in need of social care. Things are getting worse. Does the Prime Minister agree with Labour's plan to fund social care properly or with her former deputy, who wants to tax the over-50s and take away their benefits?

**The Prime Minister >**[Share](#)

As I have said on a number of occasions in this House, we agree that we need to ensure there is a sustainable, long-term future for social care, and we will be bringing forward proposals in relation to that. We have given councils access to nearly £4 billion more for adult social care this year, which means a 9% increase, in real terms, in funding for adult social care between 2015-16 and 2019-20. But it is not just about the funding that goes into social care—*[Interruption.]* Lots of Labour Members are saying, yes it is. Actually, no, it is about ensuring that best practice is seen across local authorities and NHS trusts. That is why this is not just about funding for social care and local authorities. It is also about our long-term plan for the national health service—the biggest cash boost in the national health service's history—stability for the NHS, improving social care and providing for people in their old age.

**Jeremy Corbyn >**[Share](#)

The Prime Minister seems to have her head in the sand. The reality is that £7 billion has been cut from adult social care since 2010. The system is teetering on the brink of collapse as care companies go into administration, and the stress on the residents of those homes and their families is unbelievable. We need a serious strategy that ensures people get the social care they need when they need it.

Under this Government, things are getting worse on our streets, too. Violent crime is up by 19%, robberies are up by 18%, knife crime is at the highest level on record and 2.3 million criminal investigations have closed because the police were unable to identify a suspect—I believe because they have insufficient staff to do it.

Does the Prime Minister accept there is a violent crime epidemic that has arisen on her watch and is tearing our communities and our families apart? It has to be addressed by investment in our communities.

#### The Prime Minister >

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May I first say to the right hon. Gentleman—he made a reference to care companies at the beginning of his question, with a suggestion that this is a worrying time for all those who are in provision provided by those care companies—that, of course, it is a concerning time for them, for their families and for the employees of the company concerned? I think he was referring to Four Seasons. The Care Quality Commission is absolutely clear that there is no risk of service disruption at this time, and there should never be a gap in care for an individual. The Care Act 2014, introduced by the Conservatives in government, places a duty on local authorities to intervene to protect individuals where their provider is unable to carry on their care because of business failure.

The right hon. Gentleman went on to talk about the issue of crime. First, we see from the crime survey that, overall, crime is down by a third. He quotes the figures from police-recorded crime. He has previously been hauled up by, I think, the UK Statistics Authority for failing to quote the crime survey and for only quoting police-recorded crime. He talks about more money being available to the police and there is around £1 billion more money available to the police this year. Police and crime commissioners plan to recruit 3,000 more police officers. But, to tackle knife crime and serious violence—yes, we are concerned about it, which is why we brought forward the serious violence strategy—we also need to deal with drug crime, turn young people away from violence and ensure that the police and others have the powers to do their job.

I have to say to the right hon. Gentleman that I will take no lectures on this from somebody who voted against more money for the police and voted against tougher laws on knife crime, because that is not helping the police or our citizens.

#### Jeremy Corbyn >

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If the Prime Minister does not believe me, perhaps she will believe her own Home Secretary. He said in March:

“Serious violence is on the rise. Communities are being torn apart and families are losing their children.”—[*Official Report*, 4 March 2019; Vol. 655, c. 667.]

Twenty-one thousand fewer police officers is a pretty obvious connection: there is likely to be a rise in crime and disorder as a result.

Under this Government, things in this country are getting worse. Their cuts and incompetence have left communities struggling and pushed public services into crisis. They have cut council budgets by 50%, poverty is up, waiting times are up and violent crime is up, all under a Government who seem to care more about pushing their very damaging austerity agenda than tackling the burning social injustices. Ahead of tomorrow's elections in England, can the Prime Minister explain why, from social care to crime and from life expectancy to poverty, things are getting worse under her Government?

#### The Prime Minister >

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We have seen the biggest cash boost to the NHS in its history under this Conservative Government, more people in work than ever before and more children in good and outstanding schools getting opportunities for their futures. And what do we see from Conservative councils up and down the country? Conservative councils give better services, they recycle more, they fix more potholes and they charge lower taxes. A vote for Labour is a vote for mismanagement, worse services and higher taxes. It is Conservative councils that give better services and charge you less.

#### Kevin Hollinrake >

(Thirsk and Malton) (Con)

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Q3. Would the Prime Minister confirm her support for Transport for the North's strategic transport plan, which will help to create an additional 850,000 jobs and £100 billion of economic growth by 2050 by connecting the key cities of the north through Northern Powerhouse Rail and improving key trunk roads, such as the A64, which runs through the beautiful and economically stifled constituency of Thirsk and Malton? (910627 (Unique identification number))

#### The Prime Minister >

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I agree with my hon. Friend about the importance of Transport for the North. We are giving the great towns, cities and counties of the north more say over transport investment through Transport for the North, enabling the north to speak with one voice on its vision for transport over the next 30 years. It has made significant progress in finalising its strategic transport plan, and I welcome that. We are committed to reversing decades of underinvestment in northern transport, and we will have invested a record £13 billion in the region by 2020.

In regard to the A64, I understand that Highways England has undertaken considerable work on the performance on the A64. That will inform decisions that it will take on strategic road investments in the next period, between 2020 and 2025, as part of the second road investment strategy. I am sure that Highways England will have heard my hon. Friend's passionate plea for his constituency.

#### Ian Blackford >

(Ross, Skye and Lochaber) (SNP)

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Scotland's First Minister has pledged to match free EU student fees through to 2021. Will the Prime Minister follow that example, or is she determined to build a bigger hostile environment?

#### The Prime Minister >

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We have made clear the position for EU students in this year, and we will make the announcements in good time for students in future years. I think I am right in saying that the Scottish Government have actually said that EU students can have free tuition up to 2024, but English students will have to pay.

#### Ian Blackford >

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Quite remarkable, because it is the Tories who have introduced fees for English students. When it comes to leaving the EU, the Prime Minister's vision is blinded by ideology. In a no-deal scenario, her Government intend to curb EU student visas to three years. Scottish university courses are generally for four years. The Scottish Government and Scottish universities have asked repeatedly for this simple change to be made to reflect our circumstances. Will the Prime Minister confirm today that her Government will extend visas to four years to allow for Scottish university students, or will she once again completely ignore the wishes and interest of Scotland, as she has done right through this whole shambolic Brexit process?

#### The Prime Minister >

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I understand that the situation is not quite as problematic for those students as the right hon. Gentleman sets out, given the ability to convert visas. He started off his question by saying that the Government should not be driven by ideology. This is from the SNP! If the SNP is worried about students in Scottish universities, it needs to ensure that it spends more time improving the quality of education in Scotland and less time obsessing about independence.

#### Paul Masterton >

(East Renfrewshire) (Con)

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Q4. A number of faith leaders and individuals across East Renfrewshire, particularly from the Catholic community, have raised concerns about recent changes to the immigration rules for preachers coming to the UK on short-term supply placements. The new tier 2 visa is double the cost, making it unaffordable for many parishes. Given the huge benefits that congregations and wider communities derive from these placements, can the Prime Minister look again to make sure that we are not putting up unnecessary barriers to continuing these long-standing and very positive opportunities? (910628 (Unique identification number ))

**The Prime Minister** >

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I agree with my hon. Friend in his recognition of the valuable part that ministers of religion from all faiths play in their local communities. We want to continue to be able to welcome those who want to come to the UK in accordance with our immigration rules. I understand that, as part of its extensive programme of engagement around the future borders and immigration system, the Home Office will talk to representatives of a range of faiths and community groups, and those discussions will include the future visa arrangements for ministers of religion.

**Dr Paul Williams** >

(Stockton South) (Lab)

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Q2. Last week, in a public meeting in Stockton South, I heard a community that is fed up with rising levels of crime and antisocial behaviour. I heard about a lady in her 90s who is terrified in her own home. Residents in another part of my constituency have taken to carrying out their own street patrols. Cleveland police, my local force, have to contend with the fourth highest crime rate in the country, but have lost 500 officers because of cuts. My constituents have asked me to come here to ask the Prime Minister to look again at the funding needs of Cleveland police—will she do so? (910626 (Unique identification number ))

**The Prime Minister** >

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First, I congratulate the hon. Gentleman, who I understand was another of the London marathon runners on Sunday.

We are making more money available to local police forces, and around the country a number of police and crime commissioners are recruiting more police officers, but dealing with crime and antisocial behaviour is not just about policing. It is about how we ensure that we turn young people away from such behaviour and away from violence. That involves a wider range of activities, which is why, together with the Home Secretary and other Secretaries of State, I held the summit on serious violence and knife crime last month. That brought together people from all organisations—from community organisations and charities, as well as police forces and others—to ensure that we can tackle what is a whole-of-Government and whole-of-society issue.

**Charlie Elphicke** >

(Dover) (Con)

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Q8. In 2017, my constituent **GRO-A** tragically took her own life. She had her whole life ahead of her but suffered from post-natal depression. Her son will now grow up never knowing his mother. Many mothers who return to work suffer mental health challenges while seeking to juggle the demands of work and parenting. Today is World Maternal Mental Health Day. Does the Prime Minister agree that we need to do more to support the mental health of parents and mothers when they return to work? Will she back Rebecca's family's campaign for more specialist mother and baby mental healthcare units in Kent and throughout the country as a whole? (910633 (Unique identification number ))

**The Prime Minister** >

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I thank my hon. Friend for raising a very important issue. I send our condolences to his constituent's family, particularly that young son who will grow up without his mother. The issue of post-natal depression and people returning to work and balancing childcare and work responsibilities is important. We are looking into a new returners programme to help those who are returning to the

workplace. My hon. Friend the Minister for Mental Health is doing some good work on the whole question of mental health provision, particularly for mothers with young babies. It is right for my hon. Friend to have raised this area of concern, which the Government are looking at in a number of ways. We will aim to ensure that nobody else suffers in the way that his constituent and her family did.

#### Deidre Brock >

(Edinburgh North and Leith) (SNP)

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Q5. The Prime Minister will not be surprised to learn that I would like her finally to spill the beans on Cambridge Analytica and AggregateIQ visiting Downing Street. For more than a year now, I have been asking why these shadowy organisations were invited into the heart of her Government, and she has been refusing to answer. When I write to her, a junior Minister responds and says there is nothing to reveal—most recently they said that no meetings took place—but I now have a written answer from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office saying that Ministers and officials had a series of meetings with Cambridge Analytica. Will the Prime Minister finally come clean? Which of her Ministers, special advisers and officials have met AIQ or Cambridge Analytica; where and when did those meetings take place; and what was their purpose? (910629 (Unique identification number ))

#### The Prime Minister >

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The hon. Lady has consistently stood up and asked me about meetings that took place in No. 10 and she has had answers about meetings that took place in No. 10. My hon. Friend the Minister for the Constitution has written to her about this matter. We routinely publish information about Ministers' and senior officials' meetings with external organisations, and the correct information has been published in the transparency returns for my meetings. She might like to know that the UK Government actually publish far more transparency data than the Scottish Government.

#### David T. C. Davies >

(Monmouth) (Con)

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Q13. I have told the Financial Conduct Authority that one of the companies on its approved register owes millions of pounds, including money to the FCA itself. In the light of the collapse of another FCA-approved company a few weeks ago, leaving thousands without their life savings, will the Prime Minister find out what exactly the FCA actually does to regulate the companies on its approved register? (910638 (Unique identification number ))

#### The Prime Minister >

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My hon. Friend raises an important issue and I am very happy to write to him with more detail in relation to the actions of the Financial Conduct Authority as it looks at those companies on its approved list. I think that it would be more helpful to him if I were able to give him a more detailed reply in writing.

#### Marion Fellows >

(Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)

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Q6. May I be lucky enough to be one of the 27% who get their question answered by this Prime Minister? Payday loans disproportionately affect the vulnerable and the Motherwell postcode has the largest payday loans per head in Scotland. As this Government's universal credit system is forcing people to turn to these high-interest lenders, will she halt the roll-out of universal credit and take action on the vultures in these companies who prey on the most desperate in our society? (910630 (Unique identification number ))

#### The Prime Minister >

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On the issue of universal credit, this Government have changed the way it operates in rolling it out. We have ensured that somebody moving on to universal credit can get 100% advance payment where that is necessary for them. May I also remind the hon. Lady that the Scottish Government now have extra powers in relation to welfare, which, so far, they have been reluctant to use?

#### Mr Edward Vaizey >

(Wantage) (Con)

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May I thank you, Mr Speaker, for asking Fitzwaryn School in my constituency to Parliament today? It is an excellent school with excellent pupils and outstanding teachers. Will the Prime Minister join me in congratulating the Education Secretary on allocating £6 billion to high-needs schools, an increase of £142 million on the year before, and will she continue to focus relentlessly on the needs of schools such as these, particularly in rural areas, and the need for more sixth form places in high-needs schools?

#### The Prime Minister >

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I join my right hon. Friend in congratulating the Education Secretary on the action that he is taking, on the attention that he is giving in ensuring that that funding is available across the school sector and that those schools where there are particular needs are able to be supported properly, and on recognising, as we have done, the particular needs of schools in rural areas.

#### Mr Jim Cunningham >

(Coventry South) (Lab)

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Q7. During the general election, the Prime Minister gave a manifesto commitment to retain free TV licences and bus passes. Does she still stand by that? (910632 (Unique identification number ))

#### The Prime Minister >

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We do stand by the commitments that we made. Of course, we are changing the arrangements for the TV licences—that is going to the BBC—but there is no reason why the BBC, with the money available to it, is not able to continue that.

#### Dame Cheryl Gillan >

(Chesham and Amersham) (Con)

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Will the Prime Minister welcome the first ever training session in the House of Commons on understanding autism, which is being held today and for which 59 colleagues have signed up? Each of us has around 1,000 people in our constituency who are on the autistic spectrum, so it is vital that Members of Parliament understand what life can be like for people with autism and that they can provide their constituents with even better services with that understanding.

#### The Prime Minister >

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I thank my right hon. Friend for raising that matter. She has raised the issue with me in the past, when I think I welcomed the suggestion to have these courses available to Members of Parliament. It is very important and I congratulate the 59 Members who have signed up for the course today. It is important that we are all able to provide that support and to understand rather better for those who come to our surgeries and whom we meet in our constituencies the challenges that they face.

#### Mr Stephen Hepburn >

(Jarrow) (Lab)



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Q9. Will the Prime Minister commit herself here and now to fly the flag and to build the three Royal Navy supply ships in British yards, including on the Tyne, by reversing the unpatriotic decision to put this out to international tender? (910634 (Unique identification number ))

**The Prime Minister** >

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As the hon. Gentleman knows, we have taken shipbuilding in the United Kingdom incredibly seriously by publishing a shipbuilding strategy, which aims to ensure that we can enhance the capabilities of shipbuilding yards. Individual decisions are taken in relation to Royal Navy ships, but it is important that we have an overall strategy to encourage shipbuilding around the country.

**Mrs Pauline Latham** >  
(Mid Derbyshire) (Con)

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My terminally ill constituent **GRO-A** started the Dying to Work campaign to create security in the workplace for people who have been given a terminal diagnosis. As of this week, over 1 million employees are covered by the voluntary charter. Is it not now time that the Government took this issue on and addressed the anomaly in the law?

**The Prime Minister** >

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I thank my hon. Friend for raising this issue and championing the campaign; I know that she has met Ministers to discuss it. We all agree that terminally ill people should not have to worry about their job, which is why the Dying to Work charter is so important and such a good example of supporting terminally ill workers. I am pleased to hear that the number of employees covered by the charter has now reached the 1 million mark. Employers are making commitments to their employees by signing the charter—that they will not be dismissed and that their families' financial security will not be put at risk. I will ask a Minister to write to my hon. Friend about the related aspects of the disabilities Act and about looking at the issue in relation to legislation.

**Teresa Pearce** >  
(Erith and Thamesmead) (Lab)

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**GRO-C**

**The Prime Minister** >

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I recognise the hon. Lady's concern about the case she has raised. I will ask Ministers in the Ministry of Justice and the Foreign Office to look at the issue and get back to her on it. When these PTAs are signed, we expect that they will do the job that they are intended to in enabling prisoner transfers, but I will ask that the relevant Minister write to the hon. Lady on her specific case.

**Tom Tugendhat** >  
(Tonbridge and Malling) (Con)

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Apart from an extraordinary leak, which I will not go into, the decision being discussed in many parts of the world is the possibility that we will be nesting a dragon in the critical national infrastructure of the UK by allowing Huawei to build the cyber-network that will power 5G. This decision is frankly extraordinary, given the advice of the National Security Agency in the United States and the Australian Signals Directorate. Could the Prime Minister explain why she feels that ignoring two of our closest intelligence allies and putting in danger a 70-year intelligence-sharing relationship that has underpinned the security of the UK is worth it for Chinese commercial gain?

**The Prime Minister** >

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We are committed to taking decisions, supported by a hard-headed, technically-informed assessment of the risk. We discuss security issues very closely with our allies. We have put in place a review of the 5G supply chain to ensure that we have a secure and resilient roll-out of 5G, and the decisions of that review will be announced in due course. Our priorities for the future of telecommunications are stronger cyber-security practices, greater resilience in telecoms networks and diversity in the market, and those priorities drive our thinking.

**Sir Mark Hendrick** >

(Preston) (Lab/Co-op)

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Q11. Three weeks ago in this Chamber, I informed the Prime Minister that nearly 8,000 children in Preston are living in poverty—a significant amount of which is due to the roll-out of universal credit last year. In her response, the Prime Minister used the hackneyed phrase that families where both parents are in work are “five times less likely” to be in poverty. That is not an answer; it is a misleading statistic. Both parents working is not a guarantee that the family will not be living in poverty because of low pay. And what if only one parent is working, or it is a one-parent family? The Prime Minister knows that universal credit is not working for thousands of people in my constituency and millions of people up and down the country, and I believe the truth is that she does not care. (910636 (Unique identification number ))

**The Prime Minister** >

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The reference I made to the impact of poverty on children living in a household where both parents are working is a correct one—that is a fact. What is also the case is that there are more people now receiving the full benefit to which they are entitled as a result of universal credit being introduced. We see disabled people in the household actually having access to more funding as a result of universal credit. Universal credit is ensuring that people not only get encouraged into the workplace, but when they are in the workplace they are able to keep more of the money that they earn. This is in direct contrast to a legacy system from Labour that meant that over a million people—1.4 million people—were left on benefits for nearly a decade.

**Johnny Mercer** >

(Plymouth, Moor View) (Con)

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On the way up here this week, I received a telephone call from **GRO-C** **GRO-C** is 77 years old and he lives near **GRO-C**. He has just been charged with attempted murder from an incident in Northern Ireland 42 years ago. **GRO-C** is not alone; we have Soldier B and we have Soldier F. What is happening is in direct contradiction to what the Prime Minister herself personally promised on our conference stage two years ago. Could she inform people like **GRO-C** of exactly what she has done, and what she is doing, to end this process, which is abhorrent to so many people in this country?

**Mr Speaker** >

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Order. I absolutely respect the sincerity and public-spiritedness of the hon. Gentleman, but in general terms it is not desirable to refer to sub judice cases, and therefore I know the Prime Minister will want to take into account that consideration in her response. But the hon. Gentleman has said what he has said and the Prime Minister will say what she wants to say.

## The Prime Minister >

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Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I say to my hon. Friend that we have been clear that the current system for dealing with the legacy of Northern Ireland's past is not working well for anyone. As I have said before in this House, around 3,500 people were killed in the troubles. The vast majority were murdered by terrorists. Many of these cases require further investigation, including the deaths of hundreds of members of the security forces. The system to investigate the past does need to change to provide better outcomes for victims and survivors of the troubles, but also to ensure that our armed forces and police officers are not unfairly treated. That is why, across Government, we are continuing to work on proposals on how best to move forward, but the Ministry of Defence is also looking at the wider issue of what more can be done to ensure that service personnel are not unfairly pursued through the courts in relation to service overseas, including considering legislation.

## David Linden >

(Glasgow East) (SNP)

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Q12. Frustratingly, this is now the third Prime Minister's questions in which I have raised the plight of fellow parents of premature and sick babies. Last time, the Prime Minister told the House that the Government were undertaking "a short, focused internal review of provision for parents of premature, sick and multiple babies to obtain an understanding of the barriers to participating in the labour market."—[*Official Report, 20 February 2019; Vol. 654, c. 1467.*] So when will the Government publish the findings of that review and finally take action for us? (910637 (Unique identification number ))

## The Prime Minister >

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First, may I congratulate the hon. Gentleman, because I understand that he was another of the Members who ran the marathon on Sunday? I understand that he did it in support of Glasgow Girls football club and raised money for that very good cause.

Officials in the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy are undertaking a short, focused internal review of provision for parents of premature, sick and multiple babies. They are looking at the issues that the hon. Gentleman raised—at the barriers to returning to work and staying in work that some parents can face. They have been working with organisations such as Bliss, The Smallest Things and Tamba to better understand the issues for parents. I am sure that a Minister will be happy to meet him in due course when these conclusions are reached.

## Jeremy Lefroy >

(Stafford) (Con)

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**GRO-C** has now been in prison in Tehran for more than three years, deprived of the presence of her family. Will the Prime Minister join me in assuring her, and all those who are unjustly imprisoned overseas, as the hon. Member for Erith and Thamesmead (Teresa Pearce) mentioned earlier, that they are not forgotten in this House? Will my right hon. Friend update the House on what measures are being taken to ensure that Nazanin can come home as soon as possible, and, in the meantime, get the medical treatment she so desperately needs?

## The Prime Minister >

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Let me first give the general reassurance that my hon. Friend asked for that these cases are not forgotten—that they continue to be worked on by Ministers and officials. **GRO-C**'s case and others, in relation to Iran, I raise whenever I see President Rouhani. I raise these issues and the Foreign Secretary raises them with his opposite numbers. We are constantly raising these issues, but we are also ensuring that, in terms of our presence in Iran, people are working with the Iranian authorities as far as possible to ensure that the

necessary medical assistance is provided to **GRO-C** and indeed that others are supported in the way that they need to be. I can assure my hon. Friend that these cases are not forgotten. We continue to work on them and continue to raise them regularly with the Iranian authorities.

#### Liz McInnes >

(Heywood and Middleton) (Lab)

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Q14. I know that the Prime Minister understands the importance of women attending their cervical smear tests, and I am sure she is aware that, because of a recent public health campaign, our cervical smear laboratories are overwhelmed. Would she care to comment on the recent tendering process for cytology services in England, which will see the number of laboratories reduced from 46 to nine? (910639 (Unique identification number))

#### The Prime Minister >

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The question is, what capability—what capacity—will there be for the cases to be properly dealt with? The Department of Health and Social Care and those who are undertaking this are well aware of the requirement in terms of numbers. Like the hon. Lady, I welcome the public health campaign on cervical smears. This is very important. I want to see more women going to have their smear, because it can save their lives.

#### Maggie Throup >

(Erewash) (Con)

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While Arsenal may be chasing a Champions League spot, Ilkeston Town are celebrating their promotion to the Evo-Stik League division one east. Will my right hon. Friend outline what the Government are doing to support grassroots football, which is so vital to our communities, and will she join me in congratulating the Robins and wish them every success next season?

#### The Prime Minister >

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First, I congratulate Ilkeston Town on their promotion, and I wish the Robins all the best for the next season. That is a good example of how grassroots football can benefit local communities, and it is important that we are putting more money in. Over four years, almost £100 million of public money is being used to help build and upgrade artificial and grass pitches, encourage greater participation and enhance coaching programmes. That includes creating new and improving existing community football facilities through the Football Foundation. We are committed to playing our part in improving and strengthening grassroots football in this country, and the Robins are playing their part in showing the benefit that has for local communities.

#### Sir Vince Cable >

(Twickenham) (LD)

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Does the Prime Minister accept that the growing warnings about a climate emergency require a fresh approach to highly polluting but rapidly growing sectors such as aviation? In particular, should not the control of carbon emissions and air quality take precedence over the expansion ambitions of the commercial owners of Heathrow?

#### The Prime Minister >

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Of course, we take issues around emissions, and climate change generally, incredibly seriously. We have consistently said that climate change is one of the greatest challenges that the world faces. That is why I am proud of this Government's record on dealing with climate change. Since 2010, we have been decarbonising our economy faster than any other G20 economy. We are at the



leading edge of industrialised nations in dealing with these issues, and we will continue to do so.

**Sir David Amess >**

(Southend West) (Con)

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Will my right hon. Friend join me in congratulating the Music Man Project for people with learning difficulties on their triumphant performance at the Albert Hall, as well as the news that they will now go to Broadway? I am glad that a number of colleagues were present. Is that not yet another reason that Southend should become a city?

**The Prime Minister >**[Share](#)

First, I am happy to join my hon. Friend in congratulating the Music Man Project on their performance and wishing them all the best for their trip to Broadway. Opportunities like that are very important for musicians with disabilities, and they are paving the way and showing the excellent work that can be done, and the enjoyment and excitement that those musicians can get through those performances. I do not think that my hon. Friend has asked me a single question in the House that has not mentioned Southend becoming a city.

**Sir David Amess >**[Share](#)

Let's do it!

**The Prime Minister >**[Share](#)

I think we might need more than B&Q, if my hon. Friend gets the reference. He has been campaigning resolutely, and I am sure he will diligently continue to do so on behalf of his constituents.

**Diana Johnson >**

(Kingston upon Hull North) (Lab)

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Yesterday saw the first harrowing testimonies of those who were **infected** in the **infected NHS blood scandal**. Since the Prime Minister announced the public inquiry in July 2017, one victim has died every four days. Delay is not acceptable. In the Republic of Ireland, it was accepted that it was known that there were risks, and in the 1990s it paid full **compensation**. Why can we not do the same in the United Kingdom?

**The Prime Minister >**[Share](#)

First, may I commend the hon. Lady for the work that she has done with others in this House to ensure that that inquiry is taking place? It is of course an independent inquiry. We are ensuring that the inquiry is provided with all the resources that it needs—that the chairman of the inquiry requires and identifies as being needed for that inquiry. She is absolutely right that this is something that should have taken place earlier and, as she said, there are those who have died since the start of the campaign to ensure that this inquiry could be held. It is important that we get to the bottom of this issue, and that is why we are ensuring that the inquiry is not only independent, but does have the resources it needs.