



## Daily Report

Thursday, 23 April 2020

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 23 April 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (05:26 P.M., 23 April 2020). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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**Notes:**

Questions marked thus [R] indicate that a relevant interest has been declared.

Questions with identification numbers of **900000 or greater** indicate that the question was originally tabled as an oral question and has since been unstarred.

## ANSWERS

### BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

#### ■ Business Improvement Districts: Coronavirus

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[34390]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to provide financial support to Business Improvement Districts that have waived their levy to support local businesses during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

Given the significant role that Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) play in town centre management and regeneration, they will have a significant role in the recovery phase.

The emergency Coronavirus Act enables BIDs to delay ballots between now and 31 December 2020, extending the BID arrangements until 31 March 2021. This will allow businesses to focus on recovery from economic shock before deciding whether to participate in BID arrangements for the following five-year period.

This will support BIDs approaching their ballot in the next few months, allowing them to reprioritise their work and support the communities during this critical time. It is a proportionate response which balances the need to address the immediate crisis while also ensuring businesses are not denied the right to vote in these ballots for an extended period.

We are exploring ways we can support BIDs directly, and businesses can also benefit from the substantial package of support announced by my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer.

#### ■ Hygiene and Protective Clothing: Shops

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[35011]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of installing (a) hand sanitiser dispensers at the entrances of essential shops and (b) protective gloves, masks and cleaning products at checkouts to limit the spread of covid-19.

**Paul Scully:**

Public Health England have issued guidance for employers and businesses to support them in reducing the effects of Covid-19, which is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/guidance-for-employers-and-businesses-on-coronavirus-covid-19>

The Government welcomes efforts by retailers to reduce the spread of Covid-19 through the implementation of this advice.

**Retail Trade: Food****Alexander Stafford:**[\[34420\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the covid-19 outbreak, what steps his Department is taking to support small food retailers to (a) maintain hygiene in stores and (b) protect staff from the transmission of that disease.

**Paul Scully:**

We must support people at work to do the right thing during the COVID-19 outbreak so they can stay safe. We regularly speak to industry stakeholders, including the British Retail Consortium and supermarket CEOs, to ensure they are well prepared and up to date with the latest guidance from Public Health England.

**Alexander Stafford:**[\[34421\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the Government has plans to close (a) corner shops and (b) other small food retailers during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Paul Scully:**

The Government has been clear that food retail, including supermarkets, convenience stores, corner shops, and food markets, will remain open.

**DEFENCE****Porton Down: Animal Experiments****Kenny MacAskill:**[\[35052\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to reduce the severity of experiments conducted on live animals at the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory, Porton Down.

**Kenny MacAskill:**[\[35053\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many live animal procedures conducted at Defence Science and Technology Laboratory, Porton Down were classified as severe in 2018.

**Kenny MacAskill:**[\[35054\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of removing the female marmosets from litters in the breeding programme for that animal at the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory, Porton Down, and re-homing them to animal sanctuaries.

**Kenny MacAskill:**[\[35055\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will end all severe experiments on live animals at the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory, Porton Down by 2022.

**Kenny MacAskill:**[\[35056\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether any projects involving the use of live animals in scientific procedures at the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory, Porton Down, received grants from foreign governments in the latest period for which figures are available.

**Jeremy Quin:**

Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) is committed to reducing the number of animal experiments and is proactive in developing alternatives. The “three Rs” of ‘reduce’ (the number of animals used), ‘refine’ (animal procedures) and ‘replace’ (animal experiments with non-animal alternatives) are integral to its research programme.

Dstl currently uses non-animal physical models, computer models and in-vitro methods. For example, computer models are being used to model pressure waves in the head from the impact of blunt projectiles. Dstl scientists have developed invertebrate animal models using wax moth larvae that are used to screen novel antibiotics, and a replacement for animals in the form of a mechanical rig that represents the human chest and is used to assess protective equipment worn by the military.

For the period 2018, a total of 586 regulated procedures were classified as severe based on the actual severity experienced by the animals.

The welfare of marmosets in the Dstl breeding programme is under constant review by veterinary staff, independent inspectors and the Dstl Animal Welfare Ethical Review Body.

While adult marmosets can live for a period of time in compatible same-sex social groups, the normal long term social group for mature adult marmosets is a male-female pairing. Removing female marmosets and rehoming them is not, therefore, a suitable strategy for the breeding programme, for the scientific research programme, or in the interests of optimal animal welfare.

Dstl is committed to refining regulated procedures to reduce the overall number of severe procedures in animals. A procedure is retrospectively classed as “severe” if animals experience severe illness or die. As Dstl uses animals in experiments to develop new vaccines, therapies and treatments to protect against severe illness and death in humans, some severe procedures are still required. This is part of ensuring that the procedures provide a valid model of the human disease.

No projects involving the use of live animals in scientific procedures at Dstl received grants during the latest period (2019). Where Dstl works with foreign governments, this is on a contract not grant basis, ensuring that the specifics of the work to be done are clearly stated, along with the associated legal obligations on both parties.

**FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE****■ Afghanistan: Sikhs****Seema Malhotra:**[\[37686\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what diplomatic steps his Department has taken to support Sikh minorities in Afghanistan following the attack on a Sikh temple in Kabul on 25 March 2020.

**Nigel Adams:**

We strongly condemn the attack on a Sikh Gurdwara in Kabul on 25 March. Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister of State for South Asia with responsibility for human rights and Her Majesty's Ambassador to Kabul have both condemned the attack. The UK continues to urge the Government of Afghanistan to ensure the rights of all ethnic and religious groups are protected, in line with the Afghan constitution.

At the Universal Periodic Review of Afghanistan at the UN Human Rights Council in 2019, the UK recommended that the Afghan Government establish an independent mechanism to strengthen security protection for all religious and ethnic minorities.

We will continue to engage with organisations and individuals which represent the Afghan Sikh and Hindu community, in Afghanistan and the UK. This helps us to maintain a full understanding of the challenges faced by their communities.

**■ China: Animals****Margaret Ferrier:**[\[37722\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Chinese counterpart on the regulation of wet markets.

**Nigel Adams:**

Wet markets exist all around the world. All wet markets should follow best practice on hygiene and safety to avoid health issues, whether in China or elsewhere and that should include safe sourcing of animal and other products. On 24 February 2020 China's National People's Congress passed a law banning the trade and consumption of wildlife for food. We welcome this decision and urge China to ensure it is enforced effectively. We have been in regular contact with the Chinese authorities since the onset of the COVID-19 outbreak, including a phone conversation between the Foreign Secretary and Foreign Minister Wang-Yi on 20 March. The UK remains at the forefront of international efforts to regulate global trade in wild animals and is spending £36m (2014-2021) on countering the Illegal Wildlife Trade.

**■ Hong Kong: Politics and Government****Afzal Khan:**[\[37960\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his Chinese counterparts on reports that statements made by the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special

Administrative Region and the Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office of the State Council have breached Article 22 of the Hong Kong Basic Law.

**Nigel Adams:**

The Foreign Secretary has not, to date, made representations to the Chinese authorities about the recent comments by the Central Government Liaison Office but officials have expressed concerns on this specific issue to the Chinese authorities in Hong Kong. The British Government remains clear that Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy, as provided for in the Sino British Joint Declaration and Basic Law, must be fully respected.

■ **Indonesia: Gender Recognition**

**Stephen Kinnock:**

[\[37700\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his Indonesian counterpart on (a) protecting the human rights of the trans community in that country and (b) the murder of the trans woman, known as Mira, in Jakarta.

**Nigel Adams:**

We closely monitor events in Indonesia that involve the LGBT community through our Embassy in Jakarta, including the death of an Indonesia national called Mira. We understand suspects have been arrested and that the investigation is ongoing. The UK continues to advocate for minority rights, including lobbying to ensure that any changes to the Indonesian penal code do not discriminate against minority groups. The UK also held a workshop in December 2019 which supported media reporting on LGBT rights.

**HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**

■ **Coronavirus: Dental Services**

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[32175\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions the Department has had with the General Dental Council on the provision of treatments during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jo Churchill:**

On 25 March the National Health Service released guidance on the provision of dental treatments.

All routine, non-urgent dental care including orthodontics should be stopped and deferred until advised otherwise.

All practices should establish (independently or by collaboration with others) a remote urgent care service, providing telephone triage for their patients with urgent needs during usual working hours, and whenever possible.

If the patient's condition cannot be managed by these means, then they will need to be referred to the appropriate part of their Local Urgent Dental Care system.

Further information can be found at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/03/issue-3-preparedness-letter-for-primary-dental-care-25-march-2020.pdf>

Ministers and senior officials hold weekly stakeholder meetings at which the British Dental Association and Chief Dental Officer are present.

## ■ **Coronavirus: Visual impairment**

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[32176]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions his Department has had with the General Optical Council on the (a) attendance and (b) treatment of patients during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Department and NHS England and Improvement have had discussions with the General Optical Council (GOC) on COVID-19 issues that affect optometry. As an independent regulator, advice to its registrants on professional responsibilities, is a matter for the GOC. GOC guidance, so far, to its registrants on COVID-19 is available at the following link:

[https://www.optical.org/en/news\\_publications/Publications/joint-statement-and-guidance-on-coronavirus-covid19.cfm](https://www.optical.org/en/news_publications/Publications/joint-statement-and-guidance-on-coronavirus-covid19.cfm)

The organisation and provision of National Health Service commissioned optical services during the pandemic is a matter for NHS England and NHS Improvement working with the Department. NHS England and NHS Improvement have now published guidance on the provision of out of hospital optometry services, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/04/C0127-optical-letter-1-april-2020.pdf>