



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 7 May 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:43 P.M., 07 May 2020). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

## CONTENTS

<b>ANSWERS</b>	<b>4</b>	■ South Africa: Coronavirus	12
BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY	4	■ Sudan: Coronavirus	13
■ Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme: Northern Ireland	4	HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	13
DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT	5	■ Cancer: Coronavirus	13
■ Broadband	5	■ Cancer: Medical Treatments	14
■ Broadband: Coronavirus	5	■ Cancer: Screening	15
EDUCATION	5	■ Care Homes: Protective Clothing	15
■ Children: Coronavirus	5	■ Coronavirus: Allied Health Professions	16
■ Employment: Coronavirus	7	■ Coronavirus: Aviation	17
■ Further Education: Finance	7	■ Coronavirus: Cancer	17
■ Offences against Children	8	■ Coronavirus: Death Certificates	17
■ Students: Coronavirus	8	■ Coronavirus: Disadvantaged	18
■ Students: Housing	9	■ Coronavirus: Disease Control	19
■ Universities: Coronavirus	10	■ Coronavirus: Disinformation	21
FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE	10	■ Coronavirus: Drugs	22
■ British Nationals Abroad: Coronavirus	10	■ Coronavirus: Ethnic Groups	22
■ British Overseas Territories: Coronavirus	11	■ Coronavirus: Local Government	23
■ Saudi Arabia: Capital Punishment	11	■ Coronavirus: Pharmacy	23
■ Saudi Arabia: Security	12	■ Coronavirus: Protective Clothing	24
		■ Coronavirus: Screening	26
		■ Eating Disorders: Coronavirus	28

■ Eating Disorders: Health Services	28	■ Family Proceedings: Coronavirus	48
■ Foetal Alcohol Syndrome: Children in Care	29	■ Parents: Coronavirus	49
■ Health Services: Coronavirus	29	■ Prison Accommodation: Technology	49
■ Hospitals: Coronavirus	29	■ Prisoners' Release: Wales	50
■ Hospitals: Protective Clothing	30	■ Prisoners: Coronavirus	50
■ Immigrants: Coronavirus	31	■ Prisons: Education	51
■ Influenza: Vaccination	31	TRANSPORT	51
■ NHS	31	■ Airports: Coronavirus	51
■ NHS: Computer Software	32	■ Aviation: Coronavirus	52
■ NHS: Coronavirus	37	■ British Airways: Coronavirus	53
■ NHS: Protective Clothing	38	■ British Airways: Redundancy	53
■ NHSX: Computer Software	39	■ Flybe: Coronavirus	54
■ Northwick Park Hospital: Coronavirus	39	■ Tourism: Coronavirus	54
■ Ovarian Cancer: Diagnosis	40	WALES	55
■ Palliative Care: Protective Clothing	40	■ Economic Situation: Wales	55
■ Pharmacy: Coronavirus	40	■ UK Shared Prosperity Fund: Wales	55
■ Protective Clothing: Barnet	41	WOMEN AND EQUALITIES	55
HOME OFFICE	41	■ Disability: Coronavirus	55
■ Animal Experiments: Animal Welfare	41	WORK AND PENSIONS	56
■ Crime: Coronavirus	42	■ Department for Work and Pensions: Coroners	56
■ Cybercrime: Coronavirus	43	■ Pension Credit: Females	56
■ Extradition: USA	43	■ Social Security Benefits: Coronavirus	56
■ Julian Assange	46	■ Social Security Benefits: Medical Examinations	57
HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT	46	■ Universal Credit	58
■ Housing: Domestic Abuse	46	■ Vacancies: Internet	59
JUSTICE	47		
■ Courts: Video Conferencing	47		

**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

#### ■ Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme: Northern Ireland

**Carla Lockhart:**

**[41618]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many businesses have (a) applied to and (b) been approved for funding from the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme in Northern Ireland; and what steps he is taking to ensure banks are showing flexibility to applicants in need of support.

**Paul Scully:**

As of 6 May, in total over £5.5 billion worth of loans have been issued under the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) to 33,812 businesses.

Lenders have received 62,674 completed applications.

We are working with the British Business Bank, HM Treasury and the lenders on regular and transparent data publication going forward and to ensure that companies receive the full benefits from the support being provided.

The Business Secretary continues to work with banks and other finance providers to help SMEs access the finance they need and has discussed with these organisations the alternative forms of support for businesses that they are offering. The Government welcomed the statement by UK Finance on behalf of the financial sector which announced that banks, building societies and credit card providers are committed to supporting their business customers in continuing to trade.

The Government has responded to feedback to ensure that companies feel the full benefits of available support through the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) by:

- Extending the scheme so that all viable small businesses affected by Covid-19;
- Removing previous restrictions on the following groups to enable them to access the CBILS, subject to other eligibility criteria being met: Employer, professional, religious or political membership organisations and trade unions;
- Removing the ability for lenders to ask for personal guarantees for loans under £250,000, and reducing the personal guarantee for loans over £250,000 to 20% of the outstanding balance after recoveries;
- Introducing technical changes to ensure that applications will be processed faster;
- Removing the forward-looking viability test; and
- Removing the per lender portfolio cap.

**DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT****Broadband****Chi Onwurah:**[\[40602\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what proportion of deployed (a) full fibre and (b) 5G networks include the involvement of a vendor designated as high-risk.

**Matt Warman:**

The Telecoms Supply Chain Review report (published July 2019) set out estimates of Huawei's market share in the UK. The Review estimated Huawei's presence in the 4G mobile access network market at c.35% and 45% in the full fibre (FTTP) fixed access market.

**Broadband: Coronavirus****Angela Crawley:**[\[43062\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 27 April 2020 to Question 38620 on access to superfast broadband, what measures to support connectivity for vulnerable customers he has agreed with telecommunication providers.

**Matt Warman:**

In response to Covid-19, my Department has agreed a package of measures with the UK's major fixed and mobile providers to support and protect vulnerable consumers, and those who may become vulnerable, with their connectivity needs. This package came into effect on 29 March 2020.

Providers have committed to supporting their customers facing difficulties in paying their bills, removing data caps on all current fixed broadband packages, and giving customers new and generous offers on mobile and landline services (such as data boosts at low prices and free landline calls).

Additionally, providers have committed to giving those who are vulnerable, or have been asked to self-isolate, alternative methods of communication if their fixed broadband services cannot be repaired in the event of faults.

**EDUCATION****Children: Coronavirus****Alexander Stafford:**[\[41203\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that vulnerable children are (a) identified and (b) supported while school attendance rates are low during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Alexander Stafford:**

[41204]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that local authorities, schools and charities work together to identify and support vulnerable children during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Alexander Stafford:**

[41205]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans his Department has to increase the number of vulnerable children attending school while lockdown measures in response to the covid-19 outbreak are in place.

**Alexander Stafford:**

[41206]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans his Department has to increase the number of vulnerable children attending school during lockdown measures imposed in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

**Vicky Ford:**

Our latest guidance on supporting vulnerable children is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-schools-and-other-educational-settings>.

Identifying and supporting vulnerable children is a top priority for the government.

Attending school is a strong protective factor for many vulnerable children and young people. This is why educational establishments remain open for these children. We are closely monitoring the attendance of vulnerable children and encouraging attendance where that would be in their best interests. My right Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education has written to all education settings and Directors of Children's Services in England to encourage attendance for these children. Around 58,000 vulnerable children were attending an educational setting in the week ending 1 May, compared to about 50,000 the previous week.

The Secretary of State for Education has also stressed the need for schools, local authorities and social workers to maintain contact and supporting services for vulnerable children and young people throughout this period. Officials from the Department for Education (DfE) and re-deployed Ofsted inspection teams are working with local authorities directly to ensure the systems and processes for maintaining contact with vulnerable children are robust in every local authority in England. DfE has issued detailed guidance explaining how education providers can support vulnerable children, including to monitor and encourage attendance.

Where vulnerable children and young people are not attending a nursery, school or further education setting, we have asked local authorities and educational settings to ensure every vulnerable child knows that their setting is there to support them and that systems are in place to keep in touch with those children who are unable to attend.

The government is providing an additional £3.2 billion for local authorities to manage pressure arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, including within children's social care.

The government has also announced £750 million in funding to support frontline charities during the pandemic, including those supporting vulnerable children. We are meeting regularly with the leading children's charities to ensure they are able to continue to deliver frontline services. We are also continuing to support Childline and have provided an additional £1.6 million to the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children for them to expand and promote their adult helpline, so more adults will be able to raise concerns and seek advice about the safety and wellbeing of any child that they are worried about.

These are rapidly developing circumstances; we continue to keep the situation under review and will keep Parliament updated accordingly.

### ■ **Employment: Coronavirus**

**Simon Baynes:**

**[41190]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education what steps his Department plans to take to ensure that employers and employees have the skills they need after the covid-19 outbreak.

**Gillian Keegan:**

The further education (FE) sector is vital to providing the highly skilled workforce that we need to support economic recovery following the Covid-19 outbreak.

We have therefore provided an extensive range of support to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 and retain capacity within the FE sector. This is in addition to the series of wider measures to support employers and employees set out by my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on 3 April.

Our latest guidance on Covid-19 for the FE sector and all other educational settings is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-schools-and-other-educational-settings>.

### ■ **Further Education: Finance**

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[41108]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure the financial sustainability of Colleges for Further Education (a) during and (b) after the covid-19 lockdown.

**Gillian Keegan:**

We have provided an extensive range of support to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the further education (FE) sector. This is in addition to the series of wider measures to support employers and employees set out by my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on 3 April.

The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) will continue to pay grant-funded providers their scheduled monthly payments for the remainder of the year. Allocations for 2020/21 have been confirmed and payments will be made as scheduled.

We have also confirmed that FE providers can access the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (furlough scheme) for staff who are not grant-funded.

On 24 April, we opened the ESFA Provider Relief Scheme to training providers with contracts for services that were procured as a service under the Public Contract Regulations (2015).

Our latest guidance on Covid-19 for the FE sector and all other educational settings is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-schools-and-other-educational-settings>.

This support is designed to retain capacity within the FE sector, which is vital to providing the highly skilled workforce that we need to support economic recovery following the COVID-19 outbreak. We are working closely with the sector to look at post-lockdown impacts and challenges on the sector.

ESFA regional teams are available to answer queries from colleges and the Further Education Commissioner and his team are providing expert advice to college leaders. Further support is available from the department's pool of National Leaders of Governance.

## ■ Offences against Children

**Stephen Timms:**

**[39455]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of local authority Serious Case Reviews into child deaths have involved families with no recourse to public funds in each of the last five years.

**Vicky Ford:**

The information requested is not held by the Department for Education. The Department for Education does not undertake internal analysis of serious case reviews but commissions an expert analysis of the main themes from serious case reviews on a biennial or triennial basis. The most recently published document is 'Complexity and challenge: a triennial analysis of serious case reviews 2014 to 2017', which can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/analysis-of-serious-case-reviews-2014-to-2017>.

## ■ Students: Coronavirus

**Ian Paisley:**

**[40617]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to protect students from being charged for accommodation costs whilst they are at home as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Michelle Donelan:**

As both my right hon. Friends, the Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer have made clear, the government will do whatever it takes to support people affected by COVID-19.

The government encourages universities and private hall providers to be fair in their decisions about rent charges for this period. A number of universities and large companies have waived rents for the summer term or released students early from their contracts.

Students will continue to receive scheduled payments of loans towards their living costs for the remainder of the current, 2019/20, academic year. Students who are tenants with individual private landlords are entitled to support if they are impacted by COVID-19, such as repayable rent reductions or postponements.

Accommodation providers should not instruct students to return home. If any accommodation provider did formally instruct a student to leave the property then it would be unacceptable to continue to charge student rents.

If a student thinks their accommodation provider is treating them unfairly, they can raise a complaint under the accommodation codes of practice as long as their provider is a code member. The codes can be found at: <https://www.thesac.org.uk/> ; <https://www.unipol.org.uk/the-code/how-to-complain> and: <https://www.rla.org.uk/about/nrla-code-of-practice.shtml>.

## ■ Students: Housing

**Rosie Duffield:**

**[35031]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will provide financial support to universities to establish hardship funds for students residing in (a) private rented and (b) university accommodation.

**Michelle Donelan:**

*[Holding answer 21 April 2020]:* Many higher education providers will have hardship funds to support students in times of need, including emergencies. The expectation is that where any student requires additional support, providers will support them through their own hardship funds. In addition, students will continue to receive payments of maintenance loans for the remainder of the current academic year.

Students with a part time employment contract should speak to their employer about the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme which has been set up to help pay staff wages and keep people in employment. HMRC are working urgently to get the scheme up and running and we expect the first grants to be paid within weeks.

Universities are being asked to provide accommodation for those who cannot travel home or have no alternative residence, and to offer a range of other support services to students, including catering, cleaning, student mental health and welfare. Students should stay put where possible, though we appreciate that many will have already returned to be with their families at this difficult time.

While it is for universities and private halls providers to make their own decisions about charging rents to absent students, we would encourage them to consider the fairness of doing so. A number of universities and private providers have already

waived rents for the summer term and it is encouraging to see students' interests being considered in this way.

It is also important to stress that accommodation providers should not have instructed any student to leave. If any accommodation provider did formally instruct a student to leave the property then it would be unacceptable to continue to charge student rents.

We asked providers to prioritise mental health services, and adapt delivery to means other than face-to-face, and these services are likely to be an important source of support for students during this period of isolation.

We will continue working together with providers to understand any further financial impacts on the sector, and consider how we can best support it.

### ■ Universities: Coronavirus

**Rosie Duffield:** [34395]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will take steps to ensure that universities allow students to terminate their accommodation contracts early without incurring financial penalties during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Michelle Donelan:**

We expect universities to communicate clearly with residential students on rents for this period and administer accommodation provision in a fair manner. I have written to all vice-chancellors informing them of this expectation. This letter is available here: [https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/1eb027c9-9e36-4841-849b-57b5ed334cbb/minister-donelan-letter\\_260320.pdf](https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/1eb027c9-9e36-4841-849b-57b5ed334cbb/minister-donelan-letter_260320.pdf).

Accommodation providers should not instruct students to return home. If any accommodation provider did formally instruct a student to leave the property then it would be unacceptable to continue to charge student rents.

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

### ■ British Nationals Abroad: Coronavirus

**Amy Callaghan:** [42195]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent estimate he has made of the number of UK citizens stranded abroad due to the covid-19 pandemic; and where those citizens are located.

**James Cleverly:**

The welfare of British nationals remains our top priority, and we remain committed to ensuring that British travellers around the globe are able to return home. Since the outbreak in Wuhan, we estimate that over 1.3 million people have returned to the UK via commercial routes - the majority supported by our work with airlines and foreign governments to keep vital routes open. We have now brought back more than 25,000 people on 123 flights organised by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office from 24 different countries and territories.

We are aware that the number of British nationals remaining overseas is now in the low tens of thousands and our effort is focused on supporting their return as quickly and safely as possible. Over the next week we will return thousands more British nationals on charter flights from India, Nigeria, Argentina, Bangladesh, Colombia, Guyana, Honduras, Ghana, Pakistan, Nigeria, and New Zealand.

**Suzanne Webb:**

[\[42208\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to support British nationals overseas whose visas have expired during the lockdown period; and what recent discussions his Department has had with its overseas counterparts on ensuring that those British nationals are not unfairly sanctioned by those states.

**James Cleverly:**

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has lobbied countries across the globe to ensure that British nationals who are waiting to be repatriated are not regarded as over-stayers and will not suffer any immigration penalties. We advise British nationals who are in this position to contact the relevant immigration authority in the country in which they are located. In a number of countries, including Thailand and Indonesia, we have provided British national travellers with expiring visas with letters and information notes from the Consulate to support their visa extension requests.

#### ■ **British Overseas Territories: Coronavirus**

**Andrea Jenkyns:**

[\[42119\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to help prevent the spread of covid-19 in the UK Overseas Territories.

**Wendy Morton:**

We will always stand by the Overseas Territories. A range of government departments, led by DFID and the FCO, are supporting the Overseas Territories to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic. Support includes essential medical supply, public health advice, security and access support, and financial aid to mitigate the economic impacts in the most vulnerable territories.

#### ■ **Saudi Arabia: Capital Punishment**

**Alyn Smith:**

[\[42185\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make representations to his Saudi Arabian counterpart on the (a) application of the Royal Decree announced 26 April 2020 to (i) Ali al Nimr, (ii) Dawood al Marhoon, (iii) Abdullah Hasan al-Zaher and (iv) all other child defendants facing the death penalty and (b) subsequent commutation of their death sentences.

**James Cleverly:**

*[Holding answer 6 May 2020]:* We welcome the decision by Saudi Arabia to end the use of the death penalty as a discretionary punishment for minors, including those under the age of 18 at the time of the alleged crime.

We remain concerned about the cases of Ali al Nimr, Dawood al Marhoon and Abdullah Hasan al-Zaher, and continue to follow them closely.

The Saudi authorities understand our position that we oppose the death penalty in all circumstances and especially in cases that involve child defendants. This position is in line with the minimum standards set out in the 2008 EU Guidelines on the Death Penalty; the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; and, the Arab Charter on Human Rights.

The former Minister for the Middle East and North Africa raised our concerns about the death penalty with Deputy Justice Minister HE Abdullah Al Sulaimi on 11 February. The Foreign Secretary also raised our human rights concerns with Saudi Arabia during his visit in March this year.

We will continue to raise our concerns with the Government of Saudi Arabia to promote the protection of all child defendants against the death penalty regardless of the crime committed. We will encourage the authorities to review death penalty judgements for all minors, or individuals who were minors when the crime was committed.

**■ Saudi Arabia: Security****Alyn Smith:**[\[42183\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what (a) security, (b) justice and (c) policing support his Department provided to Saudi Arabia in (i) 2018, (ii) 2019 and (iii) 2020.

**James Cleverly:**

*[Holding answer 6 May 2020]:* Saudi Arabia is an important strategic partner to the UK in tackling potential security and terrorist threats to the UK and other countries. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office does not currently run any security, justice or policing support in Saudi Arabia. The British Government has worked with the Government of Saudi Arabia on a range of mutually beneficial security and policing priorities. All of our cooperation is subject to individual rigorous human rights risk assessments (Overseas Security and Justice Assistance assessments), to ensure all work meets our human rights obligations.

**■ South Africa: Coronavirus****Alberto Costa:**[\[41518\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what plans his Department has to introduce additional repatriation flights for British citizens stranded in South Africa.

**James Duddridge:**

The British Government has helped 2,058 British nationals on ten charter flights return to the UK from South Africa. The British High Commission in Pretoria made British nationals in South Africa aware of these flights through the FCO's Travel Advice, social media, and appearances by the High Commissioner in local media. We are still working through future plans, identifying where needs are greatest, and where charter flights will have the greatest impact on vulnerable British nationals overseas.

The British High Commission in South Africa is working hard to ensure that British nationals who remain in South Africa are safe and getting the support they need.

**■ Sudan: Coronavirus****Thangam Debbonaire:**[\[41512\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether his Department plans to provide repatriation flights for British citizens stranded in Sudan during the covid-19 outbreak.

**James Duddridge:**

The Government has committed up to £75 million to help thousands of British people return home from priority countries where there is the greatest need. We have so far helped 27 British nationals return from Sudan to the UK on three separate commercial charter flights. Through our embassy in Khartoum, officials are in regular contact with those British nationals who have expressed a desire to return to the UK. Our travel advice and social media pages are also regularly updated to ensure that those wishing to return are aware of further developments. We will continue to work to bring British nationals back to the UK where commercial options do not exist, focusing on the most vulnerable. We are still working through future plans, identifying where needs are greatest, and where charter flights will have the greatest impact on vulnerable British nationals overseas.

**HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE****■ Cancer: Coronavirus****Stephanie Peacock:**[\[38551\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment his Department has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on cancer (a) treatment and (b) care.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 27 April 2020]:* The situation is being closely monitored by the Department and NHS England and NHS Improvement.

The National Health Service is adapting how it runs its cancer services to ensure the safety of both patients and staff – this includes establishing dedicated cancer hubs for urgent treatment and diagnosis.

Essential and urgent cancer treatments are continuing. Cancer specialists are discussing with their patients the potential risks to them, either through undergoing or to delay treatment at this time.

Medical staff will always have the safety of patients at the centre of any decisions they make.

## ■ Cancer: Medical Treatments

**Alex Norris:**

**[38645]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that the availability of cancer treatment pathways returns to its previous level after the relaxation of covid-19 measures.

**Jo Churchill:**

Early diagnosis and treatment of cancer will continue to be priority for this Government both during and after our response to COVID-19.

Patient safety is our top priority, NHS England and NHS Improvement have issued guidance to trusts and Cancer Alliances advising essential and urgent cancer treatments must continue in a COVID-19 free environment.

In October 2018 the Government announced a package of measures that will be rolled out across the country with the aim of seeing three quarters of all cancers detected at an early stage by 2028 (currently just over half). This is part of the NHS Long Term Plan and forms part of how the Government will achieve its ambition to see 55,000 more people surviving cancer for five years in England each year from 2028.

The Long Term Plan is available at the following link:

<https://www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/nhs-long-term-plan.pdf>

**Alex Norris:**

**[38647]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many cancer treatments considered essential and urgent have been delayed across NHS England.

**Jo Churchill:**

The National Health Service is adapting how it runs its cancer services to ensure the safety of both patients and staff – this includes establishing dedicated cancer hubs for urgent treatment and diagnosis.

Essential and urgent cancer treatments are continuing. Cancer specialists are discussing with their patients the potential risks to them, either through undergoing or to delay treatment at this time.

## ■ Cancer: Screening

**Alex Norris:**

[38976]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect on trends in the number of cancer diagnoses in the next 12 months of suspending NHS cancer screening programmes.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 27 April 2020]:* The UK National Screening Committee is undertaking work to estimate the impact of temporary suspension to screening programmes, including cancer screening. This work is currently in its early stages and the results will be reported as soon they are available.

NHS England and NHS Improvement have not suspended National Health Service cancer screening programmes at the national level. However, to protect patients and staff during this pandemic, it is acknowledged that at a regional level some clinical services are rescheduling routine invitations or appointments to a later date, including routine screening appointments. NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with service providers to ensure that plans are in place to reschedule and restore services as soon as is safely possible to do so, in order to minimise any risk to individual patients.

NHS England and NHS Improvement recommend that anyone experiencing any unusual symptoms should contact their general practitioner practice as soon as possible for advice.

## ■ Care Homes: Protective Clothing

**Robert Halfon:**

[37595]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will issue guidance to private social care providers to enable them to assist with the timely distribution of personal protective equipment to care homes.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 27 April 2020]:* Public Health England have issued guidance on the appropriate use of personal protective equipment (PPE), including to the care sector, to help social care providers respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. This guidance explains when PPE is required and can therefore support decisions around distribution of PPE. Guidance published include:

Infection prevention and control:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control>

How to work safely in care homes, and a video on putting on and removing PPE in care homes:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-how-to-work-safely-in-care-homes>

The Government has also outlined a detailed PPE plan and an Adult Social Care Action Plan at the following links:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-ppe-plan>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-adult-social-care-action-plan>

**Robert Halfon:** **[37596]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the timetable is for ensuring that private social care providers are supplied with personal protective equipment for use by care home workers during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jo Churchill:**

Public Health England have issued guidance on the appropriate use of personal protective equipment (PPE), including to the care sector, to help social care providers respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. This guidance explains when PPE is required and can therefore support decisions around distribution of PPE. Guidance published include:

Infection prevention and control:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control>

How to work safely in care homes, and a video on putting on and removing PPE in care homes:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-how-to-work-safely-in-care-homes>

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-adult-social-care-action-plan>

## ■ Coronavirus: Allied Health Professions

**Emma Hardy:** **[37760]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many of the 150,000 Allied Health Professionals in (a) the NHS and (b) social care have access to (i) personal protective equipment and (ii) testing for covid-19.

**Jo Churchill:**

We are working around the clock to give the health and social care sector and wider National Health Service, including allied health professionals, the equipment and support they need to tackle this outbreak. Between 25 February and 20 April we

delivered over 900 million items of personal protective equipment across the health and social care system within England, plus tens of millions more will have been distributed by the devolved administrations. The Government is also rapidly scaling up the national effort to boost testing capacity for COVID-19 to protect the vulnerable, support the NHS, and ultimately save lives.

## ■ **Coronavirus: Aviation**

**Ian Paisley:**

[\[40610\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure people traveling into UK airports are not carriers of covid-19.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

On 12 March 2020 the Prime Minister announced that the COVID-19 response was moving from the contain to delay phase. This phase has been initiated as there is now community transmission of the virus in the United Kingdom, i.e. transmission not directly related to travel; this has made interventions in ports of less relative importance. With the shift to the delay phase and commensurate policy changes the Public Health England port health approach has changed to a 'warn and inform focus'.

## ■ **Coronavirus: Cancer**

**Dr Luke Evans:**

[\[37781\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the number of patients presenting with advanced cancer symptoms; and what steps his Department is taking to respond to a potential increase in the number of patients presenting with advanced cancer symptoms as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jo Churchill:**

It is too soon to say whether more patients are presenting with symptoms of advanced cancer. The National Health Service continues to monitor referral rates and emergency presentations.

Many areas in England have set up 'cancer hubs' to coordinate treatment and ensure it can continue safely while other hospitals focus on treating patients with COVID-19.

NHS England and NHS Improvement encourage anyone with worrying symptoms to continue to contact their general practitioner and have issued clear guidance to the NHS to maintain urgent referral and diagnostic services for suspected cancer.

## ■ **Coronavirus: Death Certificates**

**Stephanie Peacock:**

[\[42153\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what guidance his Department has issued to NHS trusts on recording covid-19 on death certificates.

**Stephanie Peacock:****[42154]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to ensure that covid-19 is recorded on the death certificates of people that died as a result of that disease.

**Stephanie Peacock:****[42155]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to undertake a review of death certificates issued during the covid-19 outbreak to ensure the virus is correctly identified as a cause of death in cases where covid-19 was suspected as (a) a direct and (b) an underlying cause.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 6 May 2020]:* In response to the provisions in the Coronavirus Act 2020 in relation to death certification, the General Register Office and the Office for National Statistics published revised guidance to medical practitioners completing medical certificates cause of death (MCCD) for a period of emergency. Medical practitioners are expected to state the cause of death to the best of their knowledge and belief. This guidance confirms that COVID-19 is an acceptable direct or underlying cause of death for the purposes of completing the MCCD. In the emergency period the MCCD is electronically transferred to the registration office for the registrar to review and approve the MCCD, for the purpose of registering the death, and issue the death certificate to the next of kin/informant.

## ■ Coronavirus: Disadvantaged

**Alex Norris:****[38660]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to monitor levels of health inequality during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jo Churchill:**

Public Health England has established surveillance systems to collect and analyse data on COVID-19 infection by demographic characteristics.

This data can be viewed on the National COVID-19 Weekly Summary Report at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-covid-19-surveillance-reports>

**Alex Norris:****[38661]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that health inequalities are not exacerbated by the Government's response to the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Government remains committed to levelling up and spreading opportunity around this country.

We are very mindful of the impact that COVID-19 can have in different communities and we are keeping measures under review. We aim to ensure that our guidance and information meets the needs of a wide range of communities.

## ■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

**Grahame Morris:**

[28647]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what additional resources are to be made available to minimise the risk of infection from covid-19 among (a) homeless people, (b) prisoners, (c) prison staff and (d) people with drug or alcohol problems.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 17 March 2020]:* The Department is working closely with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, local authorities and providers to make sure the sector is prepared to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spreading.

On 12 March the Minister of State (Lucy Frazer MP) at the Ministry of Justice issued a public statement on preparedness in prisons to protect staff and prisoners which is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-covid-19-prison-preparedness-lucy-frazer-statement>

On 19 March the Government announced a £1.6 billion pounds of additional funding for local government to help them respond to COVID-19 pressures across all the services they deliver which includes support for adult social care workforce and for services helping the most vulnerable, including homeless people. Full details on this funding package can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/2-9-billion-funding-to-strengthen-care-for-the-vulnerable>

On 27 March, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Luke Hall MP) Minister for at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, sent a letter to all local authorities in England to update them on plans to protect rough sleepers during the COVID-19 pandemic. A copy of this letter can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/letter-from-minister-hall-to-local-authorities>

**John Redwood:**

[38404]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how long on average people with covid-19 remain infected.

**Jo Churchill:**

In the case of COVID-19, infection is most commonly detected by utilising a reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR); a test that detects viral genetic material (in this case, ribonucleic acid; RNA). The detection of viral RNA alone does not necessarily indicate an active virus infection. On average, detection of RNA in the

respiratory tract, from serial measurements on the first 16 cases in the United Kingdom showed that RNA was detectable was 11.6 days after onset of illness; this is in keeping with the findings in other countries.

Virus can be cultured from upper respiratory tract samples for about one week after the onset of symptoms. The RNA can be detected in faeces up to three or four weeks after the onset of symptoms.

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[39593\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to build capacity to secure a test and trace strategy to tackle the covid-19 outbreak.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

We are developing an integrated contact tracing and testing programme to support the next phase of our COVID-19 response.

The programme will combine innovative technology, an app which uses Bluetooth technology to detect proximity contacts between app users, with more traditional web and phone-based contact tracing techniques. Alongside this there will be swab testing for those reporting COVID-19 symptoms.

The contact tracing app is currently undergoing testing and we are recruiting 18,000 contact tracers to support the wider programme.

This integrated programme will play an important role in helping us to minimise the spread of the virus in the future.

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[39594\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the Government will implement contact tracing to tackle the covid-19 outbreak.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

Contact tracing has been used throughout the COVID-19 response. At the start of the outbreak, when we were in the 'contain' phase, we traced the contacts of every case. When the country moved to the 'delay' phase, with widespread community transmission, the contact tracing approach changed to focus on specific places such as care homes.

We are now developing an integrated contact tracing and testing programme. This includes a new app which will complement existing web and phone-based contact tracing approaches. Alongside this there will be swab testing for those reporting COVID-19 symptoms. This programme will play an important role in helping to minimise the spread of the virus in the future. The app is currently undergoing testing.

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[40555\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the covid-19 outbreak, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of requiring people who arrive in the UK to self isolate for 14 days; and if he will make a statement.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

On 12 March 2020 the Prime Minister announced that the COVID-19 response was moving from the contain to delay phase. This phase has been initiated as there is now community transmission of the virus in the United Kingdom, i.e. transmission not directly related to travel; this has made interventions in ports of less relative importance. With the shift to the delay phase and commensurate policy changes the Public Health England port health approach has changed to a 'warn and inform focus'.

**Ian Paisley:**[\[40614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans the Government has to test, track and trace people infected with covid-19.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

We are developing an integrated contact tracing and testing programme to support the next phase of our COVID-19 response. The programme will combine innovative technology, an app which uses Bluetooth technology to detect proximity contacts between app users, with more traditional web and phone-based contact tracing techniques. Alongside this there will be swab testing for those reporting COVID-19 symptoms.

The contact tracing app is currently undergoing testing and we are recruiting 18,000 contact tracers to support the wider programme. This integrated programme will play an important role in helping us to minimise the spread of the virus in the future.

**■ Coronavirus: Disinformation****Christian Wakeford:**[\[37758\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to prevent the dissemination of disinformation on covid-19.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Government takes the issue of disinformation very seriously. We have brought together existing cross-Government monitoring and analysis capabilities to provide the most comprehensive picture possible about the extent, scope and impact of disinformation and misinformation linked to COVID-19.

We are working with strategic communications experts to ensure that we are prepared to respond to disinformation campaigns where necessary. As part of this work, we are regularly engaging with the social media platforms.

We are also working with industry to support the introduction of systems and processes that promote authoritative sources and reduce dangerous advice.

## ■ Coronavirus: Drugs

**Jonathan Ashworth:**

**[32252]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support is available to people who rely on fundraising events to access private medicines that will be cancelled due to the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jo Churchill:**

As part of our concerted national efforts to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak, we are doing everything we can to ensure patients continue to access safe and effective medicines.

For those who rely on fundraising events to access private medicines, events which do not involve people gathering in one place may still go ahead provided they comply with Government policy and guidelines which can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/charities-act-2016-new-fundraising-rules>

Examples of events that could still go ahead are virtual races or meetups. Further advice on fundraising during the COVID-19 pandemic can be found at the following link:

<https://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/more-from-us/news/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-fundraising>

## ■ Coronavirus: Ethnic Groups

**Shabana Mahmood:**

**[39559]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the risk posed by covid-19 to black, Asian, and minority ethnic communities in comparison to the population as whole.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 29 April 2020]:* We are very concerned by the apparent disproportionate number of people from minority ethnic backgrounds who have died, both within the National Health Service and overall. We have asked Public Health England (PHE) to complete a rapid review to understand how COVID-19 may be having an impact on different ethnic groups, and other groups of concern. PHE has begun linking thousands of existing health records for people who have had COVID-19 in order to gather more robust data.

To complement this rapid review by PHE, the National Institute for Health Research and UK Research and Innovation issued a joint call on 22 April for research proposals to investigate emerging evidence of an association between ethnicity and COVID-19 incidence and adverse health outcomes.

## ■ Coronavirus: Local Government

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[39590]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how are (a) cases of and (b) deaths from covid-19 being recorded by local authorities; and in what format that data is being recorded.

**Jo Churchill:**

Laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases in England are reported by laboratories to Public Health England (PHE). These data are available at upper tier local authority level through the COVID-19 data dashboard, available to view at the following link:

<https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/>

Data on laboratory-confirmed deaths in England due to COVID-19 reported by National Health Service trusts and local PHE Health Protection Teams are collated and reported by PHE. The number and rate of deaths by PHE Centre area are available to view in the National COVID-19 weekly summary report at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-covid-19-surveillance-reports>

Data on COVID-19 cases and deaths for the rest of the United Kingdom are provided by the Department, based on data from the devolved administrations.

Further information on how these data are collected is available at the following link:

<https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/about>

## ■ Coronavirus: Pharmacy

**Alex Norris:**

**[38649]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of provisionally registering pre-registration pharmacists in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jo Churchill:**

The registration of pharmacy professionals is a matter for the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) in Great Britain. Temporary re-registration has been focused on those people who had previously demonstrated the required knowledge and skills to safely practise as a registered pharmacist or pharmacy technician, and who have recent experience of pharmacy practice.

Temporary registration has been given to 3,483 pharmacists and 3,020 pharmacy technicians who are now able to return to work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The GPhC is exploring whether any further categories of people may need to be registered, with a view to ensuring pre-registration trainee pharmacists can progress safely on to the pharmacy register.

**Alex Norris:** [38650]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what guidance he has provided to community pharmacies on the sale of Ibuprofen during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 28 April 2020]:* The Commission on Human Medicine's Expert Working Group on COVID-19 has concluded that there is currently insufficient evidence to establish a link between use of ibuprofen and susceptibility to contracting COVID-19 or the worsening of its symptoms.

The Expert Working Group's advice has been published on GOV.UK, and communicated to healthcare professionals including community pharmacists in a joint statement from the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, NHS England, and the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence.

The guidance is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/commission-on-human-medicines-advice-on-ibuprofen-and-coronavirus-covid-19>

**Alex Norris:** [38651]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the supply line to community pharmacies.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 27 April 2020]:* As part of our concerted national efforts to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak, we are doing everything we can to ensure patients continue to access safe and effective medicines.

The Department is working closely with the pharmaceutical industry, the National Health Service and others in the supply chain to help ensure patients can access the medicines they need, including through community pharmacies, and precautions are in place to reduce the likelihood of future shortages.

## ■ Coronavirus: Protective Clothing

**Tim Farron:** [37554]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with local authorities to determine which phase of personal protective equipment distribution they should be in.

**Tim Farron:** [37555]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the phasing system for distributing personal protective equipment to different regions of the UK.

**Tim Farron:** [37556]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the availability of personal protective equipment in Cumbria.

**Tim Farron:** [37557]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how geographical areas have been prioritised in the distribution of personal protective equipment.

**Tim Farron:** [37558]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reasons Cumbria was in phase 3 of the distribution of personal protective equipment.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 27 April 2020]:* In response to calls from a number of local resilience forums (LRFs), we arranged to extend our personal protective equipment (PPE) supply route to LRFs to help local government distribute stock to smaller social care providers and other vital services where they have been unable to obtain PPE through their usual routes and have an urgent need.

In the week beginning 6 April we issued 37 million items of PPE across 38 local resilience Forums LRFs. All LRFs would have received their allocation by 13 April which was made in two drops.

The level of PPE provided to each LRF in the original allocation, was determined by the number of people within each area, adjusted for the number of people aged 70 and over. Over 7 million more items of PPE have been delivered over the last week to the LRFs identified as being in the highest need of resupply. We will continue to make drops of PPE for distribution by the LRFs to meet some priority need until the new e-commerce solution is operational.

We are monitoring stock levels and usage and working to restock some LRFs with the most urgent clinical need. It is important that LRFs return their data reports to help us identify those in need of an urgent restock.

**Justin Madders:** [38606]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, on how many occasions since 1 January 2020 has guidance on personal protective equipment been updated by his Department; and if he will place copies in the Library of each iteration of that guidance.

**Jo Churchill:**

Since 1 January 2020, there have been 21 updates to the COVID-19: infection prevention and control (IPC) guidance. A list of the updates and details of the changes made can be viewed at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control#history>

To collate each version as a pdf copy would incur disproportionate cost.

**■ Coronavirus: Screening**

**Rosie Cooper:** [\[37529\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many covid-19 testing centres have been set up; how many of those testing centres are located in out-of-town areas; and on what date each of those centres was fully operational.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 27 April 2020]:* As of 29 April, 43 Regional Testing Sites were open. In addition, the Government had 18 satellite testing centres and 17 mobile testing units to boost testing capacity as of the same date and time. The Government will be publishing the full list and locations of Regional Testing Sites soon.

**Rosie Cooper:** [\[37530\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what criteria his Department used to determine the location of each covid-19 testing centre; what consideration was given to the distance that people might have to travel to reach such centres; and what the average distance is of each of those centres from the nearest town.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 27 April 2020]:* The broad geographical locations were selected with the aim of ensuring that as many people as possible live within 45 minutes of a centre by road. The Government aims to be responsive to local need and, where possible, consult with local stakeholders and partners before making decisions.

In determining the specific site where a centre is located, the Government typically works with a number of potential site owners to identify and narrow down sites. The primary concern when considering a site is safety. A number of factors influence that decision – including the size and layout of the site, the period for which it is available, and nearby road links.

**Rosie Cooper:** [\[37531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the daily capacity is of each of the covid-19 testing centres; and what the average daily attendance has been at each such centre during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 27 April 2020]:* The Government does not publish data broken down by test centre. As of 29 April, 43 Regional Testing Sites were open. In addition, the Government had 18 satellite testing centres and 17 mobile testing units to boost our testing capacity as of the same date and time. Across this testing programme, the Government has tested over 150,000 persons and their household members for COVID-19.

**Daisy Cooper:** [\[37946\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reasons the drive through testing facility for NHS workers who are based in Hertfordshire is located at Stansted Airport.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The broad geographical locations for all sites were selected with the aim of ensuring that as many people as possible live within 45 minutes of a centre by road. The Government aims to be responsive to local need and, where possible, consult with local stakeholders and partners before making decisions.

In determining the specific site where a centre is located, the Government typically works with a number of potential site owners to identify and narrow down sites. The primary concern when considering a site is safety. A number of factors influence that decision – including the size and layout of the site, the period for which it is available, and nearby road links.

**Justin Madders:**[\[38597\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many covid-19 testing sites are operational.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

As of 29 April, 43 Regional Testing Sites were open. In addition, the Government had 18 satellite testing centres and 17 mobile testing units to boost our testing capacity as of the same date and time. The Government will be publishing the full list and locations of Regional Testing Sites soon.

**Justin Madders:**[\[38598\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the 50 testing sites for covid-19 will become fully operational.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 27 April 2020]:* As of 29 April, 43 Regional Testing Sites were open. In addition, the Government had 18 satellite testing centres and 17 mobile testing units to boost our testing capacity as of the same date and time. The Government will be publishing the full list and locations of Regional Testing Sites soon.

**Justin Madders:**[\[38599\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the geographical availability of covid-19 testing stations.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 27 April 2020]:* The broad geographical locations for all sites were selected with the aim of ensuring that as many people as possible live within 45 minutes of a centre by road. The Government aims to be responsive to local need and, where possible, consult with local stakeholders and partners before making decisions.

The regional testing sites are supplemented by mobile testing units which can reach areas not easily covered by regional testing sites, as well as those with high rates of infection.

**Justin Madders:**

[38600]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what procedures are in place for referring (a) NHS and (b) social care workers to covid-19 testing stations.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 27 April 2020]:* National Health Service and social care workers can book test slots and order test kits online. In the case of NHS workers, NHS trusts can also refer staff for testing directly where there is capacity.

In addition, care home staff and residents are tested through the dedicated satellite programme that offers tests to all care home residents and workers whether symptomatic or not.

#### ■ Eating Disorders: Coronavirus

**Scott Benton:**

[37889]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help ensure that people with eating disorders are able to access the ingredients necessary to continue with their meal plans during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

National Health Service mental health services have remained open throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, and we have continued to support the NHS to provide services in other innovative ways, such as through greater use of digital channels. It is important that people with eating disorders are able to continue with their agreed meal plans during social isolation arrangements. People in contact with eating disorder services should discuss arrangements for their eating plans with the team in charge of their care.

We have published guidance online that explains what steps people can take if they are unable to access food. This guidance has been shared with local authorities, retailers and charities to help them respond to enquiries from those seeking help. The guidance can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-accessing-food-and-essential-supplies>

#### ■ Eating Disorders: Health Services

**Scott Benton:**

[37891]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what services his Department is providing to people with eating disorders whose (a) outpatient, (b) day patient and (c) intensive outpatient treatment has been paused during the COVID 19 outbreak.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

Eating disorder services have not been paused during COVID-19 and are working around the clock to support people with eating disorder issues through the COVID-19 outbreak and beyond. Where people with eating disorders need support, they should

contact their general practitioner or local community eating disorder service or mental health crisis service.

Community eating disorder services are deploying innovative digital tools to connect with people and provide ongoing support, assessment and treatment. They are also adapting the delivery of evidence-based therapies, where it is clinically appropriate to do so, to provide ongoing support and treatment and keep people with eating disorders engaged during this time. Guidance has been published to help services manage their capacity and demand for community mental health services during the COVID-19 outbreak.

### ■ **Foetal Alcohol Syndrome: Children in Care**

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[37925\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of (a) looked after children and (b) formerly looked after children had (i) foetal alcohol syndrome and (ii) foetal alcohol spectrum disorder in each of the last three years.

**Jo Churchill:**

The information requested is not available centrally.

### ■ **Health Services: Coronavirus**

**Grahame Morris:**

[\[32678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure continued provision of treatment for vulnerable persons with (a) chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (b) other multiple morbidities, (c) complex needs and (d) underlying health issues related to drug and alcohol misuse, during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 25 March 2020]:* The National Health Service has written to all patients with underlying diseases or health conditions identified as being at risk of severe illness should they contract COVID-19 with information on the continued provision of healthcare. In addition, NHS England and NHS Improvement issue regular guidance to general practitioners on managing patients during the pandemic. Specialty guides are also available to help hospitals continue essential care for patients, including those with respiratory conditions and people with alcohol dependences.

### ■ **Hospitals: Coronavirus**

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

[\[38424\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to ensure that (a) chemotherapy and (b) organ transplants that have been suspended due to the covid-19 outbreak are resumed as soon as possible.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 27 April 2020]:* National Health Service providers have previously been asked to maintain access to essential cancer treatments throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, in line with guidance from the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges and NHS England and NHS Improvement.

Cancer Alliances will continue to identify surgical capacity for cancer, and providers are working to make Cancer Hubs around England fully operational. Full use should be made of the available contracted independent sector hospital and diagnostic capacity locally and regionally.

NHS England, NHS Improvement and NHS Blood and Transplant have been working closely together to ensure that organ donation and transplant activity could safely continue during the COVID-19 pandemic for very urgent life-saving transplants.

**Alex Norris:****[38581]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many patients have visited covid-19-free hospital sites since the establishment of those sites; and how many of those patients were cancer patients.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 27 April 2020]:* The data requested is not currently available. The first published data covering the period of the COVID-19 outbreak for the month of March will be available through the Cancer Waiting Times system during May.

**Hospitals: Protective Clothing****Sir Christopher Chope:****[38418]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of personal protective equipment being used in hospitals where covid-19 patients are being treated can be fully sterilised after use; and what his policy is on minimising single-use products when laundry sterilisation is available.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 27 April 2020]:* Public Health England published 'COVID-19 personal protective equipment (PPE)' updated guide on 17 April. This advises that suitable decontamination arrangements for some PPE items should be obtained from the manufacturer, supplier or local infection control. This guidance also included advice on when PPE can be reused.

Public Health England's guide can be viewed at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control/covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-ppe>

## ■ Immigrants: Coronavirus

**Helen Hayes:**

**[38512]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the levels of covid-19 infection amongst migrant groups with no recourse to public funds (NRPF) status; and what steps his Department is taking to ensure that people with NRPF status have access to public health information and services.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 27 April 2020]:* Public Health England has updated its guidance on National Health Service entitlements in the migrant health guide to make it clear that people have free entitlement to care related to COVID-19, irrespective of their immigration status. The guidance can be seen at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-entitlements-migrant-health-guide#main-messages>

There are ongoing discussions across Government about the needs of vulnerable population groups. More information will be provided in due course.

## ■ Influenza: Vaccination

**Alberto Costa:**

**[37998]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the development and production of flu vaccinations.

**Jo Churchill:**

Public Health England remains in contact with all manufacturers of flu vaccines concerning any potential impact on vaccine production as a result of COVID-19. Flu vaccine production has already begun for the coming winter and there are currently no delays to schedules. Business continuity processes are in place to ensure that the flu vaccine can be delivered by manufacturers prior to the start of the next flu season.

## ■ NHS

**Dame Diana Johnson:**

**[30708]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he will take to ensure the NHS People Plan aligns with policies set out in the 2017 NHS Cancer workforce plan.

**Jo Churchill:**

The NHS People Plan will build on the progress made through the Cancer Workforce Plan, securing the National Health Service cancer workforce we need now and in the future. NHS England and NHS Improvement, along with Health Education England, expect to continue to work closely with stakeholders, such as major cancer charities, to identify cancer workforce priorities in the development of the NHS People Plan and take account of the lessons learned from the COVID-19 response.

**■ NHS: Computer Software**

**Daisy Cooper:** [\[40770\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how the new COVID-19 tracing app being developed by NHSX complies with (a) purpose limitation (b) data minimisation (c) data privacy by design, (d) freedom from bias and other data principles.

**Daisy Cooper:** [\[40771\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what user or stakeholder consultation processes are in place for the new covid-19 tracing app being developed by NHSX.

**Daisy Cooper:** [\[40772\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what data risk assessment has been carried out for the new covid-19 tracing app being developed by NHSX.

**Daisy Cooper:** [\[41173\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the purpose is of the new covid-19 tracing app being developed by NHSX.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 4 May 2020]:* The COVID-19 contact-tracing app will give the public a simple way to make a difference and to help keep themselves and their families safe. It will be one of a number of tools we use in the fight against COVID-19 but it will be voluntary. People will have the choice of whether or not to download the app and they will be able to delete it whenever they like. If users delete the app, all data stored on the phone and not shared with the National Health Service would be deleted. If users do not opt to share their data, it will be deleted on a continuous 28-day cycle within the app, on the phone. We intend to withdraw the app once the epidemic is over.

It is entirely possible for users to use the app without providing personally identifiable data or location data (unless they wish to request a test). We hope the public will opt-in to donate more data, which will help the NHS to understand and manage the pandemic.

We will always comply with the law around the use of data, including the relevant provisions of the GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

We have been consulting on our plans with the Information Commissioner, the National Data Guardian's Panel and the Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation, as well as with representatives from Understanding Patient Data and volunteers who provided a patient and public perspective. We have established an ethics advisory board for the app, chaired by Professor Sir Jonathan Montgomery from University College London who previously headed the Nuffield Council on Bioethics. This expert input, and the rigorous design process will ensure the data is free from bias and meets the highest standards. We will be publishing a Data Protection Impact Assessment in due course.

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[41447\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether it is his policy for the covid-19 tracing app that is under development to be rolled out on an opt-in basis.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 4 May 2020]:* The app will be one of a number of tools we use in the fight against COVID-19 but it will be voluntary. People will have the choice of whether or not to download the app and they will be able to delete it whenever they like. We intend to withdraw the app once the epidemic is over.

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[41448\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of what circumstances the de-anonymisation of the covid-19 tracing app would be judged to be proportionate.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 4 May 2020]:* Privacy and security remains an integral part of our approach - the user can choose to remain anonymous and their privacy will be protected as they go about their daily life. Should a user develop symptoms they will be asked for permission to donate the log of contact data. If app users choose to submit their data to the National Health Service, either proactively or when requesting a test, it will be held on a NHS database held to highest security standards. Users will at any time be able to remove the app from their phones.

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[41449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what data privacy and control standards will be required of organisations working collaboratively with NHSX on the covid-19 tracking app.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 4 May 2020]:* Companies working with the National Health Service are bound by robust contract and data processing agreements that specify what they can do with the data, how and when the data must be stored, secured, used and destroyed. Private commercial companies do not have access to personally identifiable data. If app users choose to share their information with the NHS, it will remain under the control of the NHS throughout. The Information Commissioner's Office has been working with NHSX to help ensure a high level of transparency and governance.

**Daniel Zeichner:**

[\[41475\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether data from the covid-19 contact tracing app will be uploaded to a central database; who will have access to that data; and what safeguards will be put in place for that data.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

We have built the app with privacy by default and by design. The App complies with GDPR as well as the Data Protection Act 2018 to ensure the highest level of safeguards for app users.

If app users choose to submit their data to the National Health Service, either proactively or when requesting a test, it will be held on a NHS database held to the highest security standards. In addition to the continual monitoring, review and oversight we continue to consult the National Cyber Security Centre to review and supplement our processes.

**Daniel Zeichner:**[\[41476\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with developers working on the NHS covid-19 app on creating a decentralised and anonymised contact tracing system built on (a) DP-3T and (b) other similar systems.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The contact tracing app being developed by NHSX is designed, alongside effective tracing and testing, to give our country the confidence it needs to return to normality. We have worked with a range of experts - scientists, doctors, security experts and privacy groups to decide on an appropriate model for the app - one which will save lives while maintaining the privacy of users. Adopting a 'centralised' approach will ensure we are able to react quickly to changes in scientific advice and let people know quickly if they are at risk from contracting COVID-19 more quickly. At the same time, the National Health Service benefits from vital information about the spread of COVID-19. This will play a major part in protecting the health of others and getting the country back to normal in a controlled way, as restrictions ease.

**Daniel Zeichner:**[\[41477\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what (a) distance away from and (b) length of time spent near another app user will the covid-19 tracing app be set to report a potential covid-19 interaction.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The decision of precisely which other app users are notified if you notify the app you have become unwell with symptoms of COVID-19 will be determined by a sophisticated 'contact risk model'. National Health Service doctors and scientists will continuously update this 'contact risk model' to make it as accurate as possible. The model will be based on scientific principles and it will be approved by the Chief Medical Officer.

**Daniel Zeichner:**[\[41478\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had platform providers to enable the covid-19 contact tracing app to collect data while a phone is locked.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The Department has worked with a range of experts - scientists, doctors, security experts and privacy groups to decide on an appropriate model for the app - one which will save lives while maintaining the privacy of users. The app has been designed in such a way as to allow devices to collect contact events and information regardless of whether it is running in the background or not, and while the phone is locked or sleeping.

**Daniel Zeichner:**[\[41479\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the identity of people notified of potential exposure to covid-19 via the contact tracing app will be available automatically to the relevant authorities for contact tracing.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The app has been designed for use for National Health Service care, public health management, or evaluation and research.

If you become unwell with symptoms of COVID-19, you can allow the app to inform the NHS and trigger a notification that the NHS will then send, anonymously, to other app users with whom you came into significant contact over the previous few days.

The app will be part of a wider approach that also will involve manual contact tracing and testing. We are working out how the data from the app can link to these elements.

We will always comply with the law around the use of data, including the provisions of the GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

**Daniel Zeichner:**[\[41480\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the covid-19 tracing app will be compatible with other internationally comparable covid-19 digital solutions to enable data to be shared across borders.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

Our approach is similar to that followed by Australia, France, Italy, Norway, and Singapore among others. These countries have made similar technology choices (Bluetooth Low Energy) and have a proximity cascade solution. The United Kingdom is working with other countries to exchange ideas, learn lessons and ensure these lessons are being used to improve the National Health Service app development.

**Daisy Cooper:**[\[41588\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which organisations and individuals were consulted on the data governance framework of the covid-19 tracing app being developed by NHSX.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 4 May 2020]:* We have been consulting on our plans with the Information Commissioner, the National Data Guardian's Panel, the National Cyber Security Centre and the Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation, as well as with

representatives from Understanding Patient Data and volunteers who provided a patient and public perspective. We have established an ethics advisory board for the app, chaired by Professor Sir Jonathan Montgomery from University College London who previously headed the Nuffield Council on Bioethics.

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[41589\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Information Commissioners' Office has approved the data governance framework of the covid-19 tracing app being developed by NHSX.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 4 May 2020]:* The Department recognises that users must have trust and confidence in the way personal data is used to respond to the COVID-19 crisis. We are working with the Information Commissioner's Office to help ensure a high level of transparency and governance. They will continue to offer that support during the life of the app as it is developed, rolled out and when it is no longer needed.

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[41590\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the data governance framework for the covid-19 tracing app being developed by NHSX.

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[41591\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, who is responsible for ensuring the covid-19 tracing app being developed by NHSX is compliant with data protection regulations.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 4 May 2020]:* In all stages of the app's development, we have drawn on expertise from across Government, civil society and industry to review our design and help test the app. As part of our commitment to transparency, we will be publishing the key security and privacy designs alongside the source code. A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) will be completed and reviewed at each stage of the App's development, this is subject to ongoing scrutiny, oversight and assurance. We will publish the DPIA for each stage of the App's development as quickly as we can.

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[41592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether there is a specific ethical oversight mechanism for the covid-19 tracing app being developed by NHSX.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 4 May 2020]:* We have established an Ethics Advisory Board (EAB), which is advising the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and identifying the ethical challenges that need to be considered when it comes to deploying measures to stop the spread of coronavirus. The EAB will continue to oversee and guide

development of the app to ensure key ethical considerations are examined openly and transparently over time.

**Daisy Cooper:**

[42253]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what contractual requirements have been put in place to ensure that third party providers working with NHSX on the development of the covid-19 tracing app will comply with data protection regulations.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 6 May 2020]:* Should users of the app choose to share their data with the National Health Service, it may be retained in accordance with necessary legislation, and may be used in the future for research in the public interest, or by the NHS for planning and delivering services, subject to the necessary approvals required by law.

**Daisy Cooper:**

[42254]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the retention of data collected through the NHSX covid-19 tracing app by (a) the NHS and (b) third parties for the new COVID-19 tracing app is time limited.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 6 May 2020]:* Data that app users have chosen to share with the National Health Service may be retained for research in the public interest, or by the NHS for planning and delivering services, in line with the law and on the basis of the necessary approvals required by law.

## ■ NHS: Coronavirus

**Geraint Davies:**

[37384]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the level of infection transmitted by NHS workers who have not been tested for covid-19.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

Testing is a vital part of the United Kingdom's response to COVID-19, as set out in the Government's recently published Testing Strategy. The Government is working with industry, academia, the National Health Service and many others, to dramatically increase the number of tests being carried out each day, including for critical key workers. The Government is organising a larger population study to determine what proportion of the UK have already contracted the virus, operated by Public Health England and the Wellcome Trust at Porton Down. These tests are important to strengthen our scientific understanding and inform us all on the best courses of action to address this crisis. Key workers and clinically high-priority cases will be prioritised for testing. Furthermore, a number of supporting documents for Infection Prevention & Control (IPC) have been developed to support excellent standards of IPC within trusts. All documents are available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/secondary-care/infection-control/>

**Alex Norris:**

**[38585]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of covid-19-related staff absence by (a) illness and (b) diversions on cancer treatment.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Department is monitoring the rate of COVID-19 related staff absence.

Essential and urgent cancer treatments are continuing. The National Health Service is adapting how it runs its cancer services to ensure the safety of both patients and staff – this includes establishing dedicated cancer hubs for urgent treatment and diagnosis. Cancer specialist teams are discussing treatment and care with patients, including the potential risks to them, either through undergoing or to delay treatment at this time. Medical staff will always have the safety of patients at the centre of any decisions they make.

#### ■ **NHS: Protective Clothing**

**Barbara Keeley:**

**[37552]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what evidence the Government has used to reach its decision to recommend the use of aprons rather than gowns on lower risk inpatient wards with patients who have tested positive for covid-19; and for what reasons guidance for the NHS is different from that of the World Health Organisation.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 27 April 2020]:* The United Kingdom Government and devolved administrations published clear guidance on COVID-19 personal protective equipment for health and social care workers. This has been written and reviewed by all four UK public health bodies and informed by National Health Service infection prevention control experts. The guidance can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control/covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-ppe>

The guidance is consistent with World Health Organization (WHO) guidance for protecting health and social care workers from COVID-19. The use of aprons rather than gowns for non-aerosol generating procedures, including advice on thoroughly washing forearms if there is a risk of exposure to droplets is consistent with the UK policy of bare below the elbows and evidence reviews on the risks of healthcare acquired infections. This is a longstanding policy difference between the WHO and the United Kingdom.

More information can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-personal-protective-equipment-ppe-guidance-for-nhs-teams>

## ■ NHSX: Computer Software

**Seema Malhotra:**

[\[42042\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that the NHS contact-tracing app being developed by NHSX will be accessible to disabled people.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 6 May 2020]:* We continue to work to ensure the National Health Service COVID-19 app is compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. We are committed to regular audits of the app by independent specialist assessors to conduct usability testing of the app, including dedicated research to solely focus on accessibility. We will publish an Accessibility Statement in due course which will be kept under review and updated as necessary.

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[42239\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the new covid-19 tracing app developed by NHSX meets Apple's standard of privacy in relation to the use of Bluetooth.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 6 May 2020]:* The systems built by the National Health Service are designed to limit and prevent access to personally identifiable data. They are secured to standards set by NHS Digital with input from the National Cyber Security Centre, who have worked closely with the NHS COVID-19 app from the outset to ensure the best security standards and oversight.

The app will comply with the law around the use of data, including the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018.

## ■ Northwick Park Hospital: Coronavirus

**Gareth Thomas:**

[\[37396\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 6 April 2020 to Question 30666 on Northwick Park Hospital: coronavirus, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of supply of FFP3 masks at Northwick Park hospital; and if he will make a statement.

**Jo Churchill:**

There is unprecedented, global demand for personal protective equipment (PPE) as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Government, NHS Supply Chain, and the National Health Service are working hard with industry to secure additional supplies and manufacture further PPE. For acute, mental health, community, integrated care and ambulance trusts there is a PPE dedicated supply channel delivering all core PPE products used for managing and treating patients with COVID-19 such as eye protection, aprons, gloves, gowns, masks and hand sanitiser. Pallet deliveries are being made on a regular basis.

■ **Ovarian Cancer: Diagnosis**

**Janet Daby:** [\[37853\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to address the concerns of women facing delays in the diagnosis of ovarian cancer in England.

**Jo Churchill:**

Improving faster and earlier diagnosis of cancer is a top priority for the National Health Service. To deliver the NHS Long Term Plan ambitions, we have set up Rapid Diagnostic Centres that bring together diagnostic equipment and expertise to streamline diagnostic services for cancer, including cancers that are sometimes harder to diagnose, such as ovarian cancer.

NHS England and NHS Improvement encourage anyone with symptoms to continue to contact their general practitioner and have issued clear guidance to the NHS to maintain urgent referral and diagnostic services for suspected cancer.

■ **Palliative Care: Protective Clothing**

**Mr Peter Bone:** [\[38880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will introduce the Resuscitation Council UK's guidance on the level of personal protection equipment required during resuscitation as the standard throughout the NHS.

**Jo Churchill:**

The United Kingdom's Personal Protective Equipment guidance continues to recommend the highest level of protection for health and social care teams treating COVID-19 patients. It is crucial that everyone that needs it has access to the right protective equipment.

■ **Pharmacy: Coronavirus**

**Alex Norris:** [\[38652\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of authorising pharmacists to supply prescription-only medicines without a prescription to patients who have previously been prescribed those medicines during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 27 April 2020]:* The Human Medicines Regulations 2012 outline provisions for emergency supply by a pharmacist, including one when a pandemic is declared or imminently anticipated. This specific provision has been utilised to allow NHS England and NHS Improvement to commission a local enhanced service - where one is needed - to enable pharmacists to supply medicines, which patients have been previously prescribed, without a prescription, and at the same time reducing administrative burden on pharmacies.

## ■ Protective Clothing: Barnet

**Theresa Villiers:**

**[37508]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many deliveries of personal protective equipment were made to (a) NHS and (b) social care providers in the borough of Barnet in each of the last six weeks.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 27 April 2020]:* The Government published 'Coronavirus (COVID-19): personal protective equipment (PPE) plan' on 10 April. It incorporates guidance on who needs PPE and when they need it, routes to ensure those who need it can get it at the right time and sets out actions to secure enough PPE to last through the crisis.

We are working around the clock to give the social care sector and wider National Health Service the equipment and support they need to tackle this outbreak. Between 25 February and 20 April we delivered over 900 million items of PPE across the health and social care system within England.

However, information is not collected centrally on the number of items of PPE delivered to each borough. 'Coronavirus (COVID-19): personal protective equipment (PPE) plan' can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-ppe-plan>

## HOME OFFICE

## ■ Animal Experiments: Animal Welfare

**Alex Sobel:**

**[37926]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to ensure that animals in laboratories are cared for and protected in the event that laboratory staff are self-isolating, sick, working from home or on reduced hours as a result of the covid-19 outbreak; and what steps she is taking to ensure that required inspections of animal testing facilities can be carried out safely during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Victoria Atkins:**

Establishments are responsible for the welfare of animals in their care. The Home Office has published guidance on Business Continuity Planning for Establishments, which is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/guidance-on-the-operation-of-the-animals-scientific-procedures-act-1986#business-continuity-planning-guidance>.

The Animals in Science Regulation ASRU has currently suspended on-site inspection visits. Inspection activities to assess compliance are being continued remotely, for example by telephone and email. There may be occasions where inspection visits need to be considered. Any such inspections will be planned on a case by case basis in accordance with official advice. Inspectors have specifically inspected

establishments for preparedness for the care and protection of animals during the Coronavirus outbreak.

**Alex Sobel:** [37927]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the effect of covid-19 on the running of animal laboratories, if she will hold discussions with owners of animal laboratories to ensure that an assessment of the potential merits of (a) adoption and (b) relocation of laboratory animals is carried out prior to decisions being taken to euthanise those animals.

**Victoria Atkins:**

This Government encourages all establishments that are licensed under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act (1986) (ASPA) to consider the re-homing of animals used in scientific research, whether by adoption or relocation, when it is in the best interests of the welfare of the animal, when there is no risk to public or animal health, or risk to the environment. The re-homing policy is published at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/660241/Advice\\_Note\\_Rehoming\\_setting\\_free.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/660241/Advice_Note_Rehoming_setting_free.pdf).

All establishments have been contacted by the Animals in Science Regulation Unit to be reminded of their responsibilities under ASPA, which have not changed during the covid-19 outbreak, and include the consideration of re-homing.

**Alex Sobel:** [37929]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has received reports of laboratories euthanising animals due to (a) staff working from home, self-isolating, being sick or furloughed and (b) reduced demand as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Victoria Atkins:**

Each establishment licence holder has the responsibility at all times for the welfare of the animals within their establishment, which includes ensuring appropriate level of staffing for the care of the animals held. The Home Office has made clear that establishments should continue to document the processes used and decisions made to comply with licences held under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act. Establishment animal care and welfare staff, named people and scientists are, within the Government measures, able to attend work as required to fulfil their duties.

The Home Office does not hold information of reports of laboratory animals being euthanised as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, neither is information held regarding the reduction in demand for animals.

## ■ Crime: Coronavirus

**Conor McGinn:** [38014]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on levels of (a) serious and organised crime, (b) cyber crime and (c) economic crime.

**James Brokenshire:**

The Covid-19 pandemic is already affecting how criminal networks operate across the globe. The UK and other countries' response to the pandemic has reduced some organised criminal activities. We are aware that some criminals are adapting their focus to seek out new opportunities to commit crime.

The Home Office and its operational partners will continue to monitor and respond to the threats of serious and organised crime, cyber crime and economic crime during the COVID-19 pandemic including from criminals who seek to profit from the pandemic

**■ Cybercrime: Coronavirus****Conor McGinn:**[\[38561\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department has taken to tackle covid-19- related cyber crime through false online fundraising and donation portals.

**James Brokenshire:**

However, the Home Office remains vigilant to the ongoing risks that COVID-19 poses in terms of being used as a 'hook' to commit cybercrime and fraud, including through false online fund raising and donations.

The Home Office is working closely with law enforcement, private sector partners, and the third sector, to both warn businesses and the public about COVID-19 related frauds and scams and provide advice and guidance that sets out how they can protect themselves. In parallel, the Home Office is also working closely with the Charity Commission for England and Wales, who have recently issued a safety alert to charities themselves to minimise the risk of them becoming a victim of such frauds and cyber-attacks.

The Home Office is also working with the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) to monitor fraudulent websites that are using COVID-19 related themes. In recent weeks this has led to the removal of more than 2,000 online scams related to coronavirus, including those that are fraudulently purporting to enable charitable donations.

**■ Extradition: USA****Mr David Davis:**[\[6015\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have been extradited from the (a) UK to the US and (b) US to the UK in each year since 2003.

**James Brokenshire:**

The table below provides a breakdown of extraditions between the UK and the US between 2003 and 2019.

YEAR	UK TO US	US TO UK
2003	6	2
2004	8	4
2005	14	1
2006	15	4
2007	9	6
2008	6	10
2009	16	7
2010	12	5
2011	8	5
2012	20	4
2013	11	4
2014	18	0
2015	7	2
2016	8	5
2017	8	2
2018	6	5
2019	10	3

All figures are from local management information and have not been quality assured to the level of published National Statistics. As such they should be treated as provisional and therefore subject to change. The figures do not include Scotland, which deals with its own extradition cases.

**Mr David Davis:**

**[8948]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people were extradited from the US to the UK for (a) violent and (b) non-violent crimes in each year since 2003.

**James Brokenshire:**

Since 2003, the following have been extradited from the US to the UK:

YEAR	TOTAL NUMBER EXTRADITED	TOTAL NUMBER EXTRADITED FOR NON-VIOLENT OFFENCES
2003	2	1
2004	4	1
2005	1	1
2006	4	2
2007	6	3
2008	10	1
2009	7	1
2010	5	3
2011	5	1
2012	4	2
2013	4	0
2014	0	0
2015	2	0
2016	5	2
2017	2	0
2018	5	3
2019	3	0
2020	1	1
TOTAL	70	22

We have taken non-violent offences to include:

- Fraud
- Drug related offences
- Theft
- Forgery
- Money laundering
- Handling stolen goods
- Obtaining property by deception

- Tax evasion
- Unlicensed exporting of goods
- Obstruction of justice
- Bribery
- Robbery
- Child Abduction

All figures are from local management information, and have not been quality assured to the level of published National Statistics. As such they should be treated as provisional and therefore subject to change. The figures do not include Scotland, which deals with its own extradition cases.

## ■ Julian Assange

**Tommy Sheppard:**

[\[41521\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the public interest benefit of the continued imprisonment of Julian Assange; and if she will make a statement.

**James Brokenshire:**

Mr Assange is currently held on remand in relation to an extradition request from the United States. It is entirely a matter for the courts whether a person should be granted bail or remanded in custody in these circumstances.

## HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### ■ Housing: Domestic Abuse

**Jess Phillips:**

[\[42059\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the letter issued to local authority leaders on 27 April 2020 on the use of emergency funds to house victims of domestic violence, what plans his Department has to assess local authority compliance with that letter; and whether he plans to issue further guidance in relation to the ability to use that funding to house victims with no recourse to public funds.

**Luke Hall:**

*[Holding answer 6 May 2020]:* I recently wrote to local authorities asking them to work closely with their local domestic abuse safe accommodation providers to ensure that victims of domestic abuse and their families can be provided with safe emergency accommodation and appropriate support to avoid further pressures on frontline homelessness services.

To understand how the funding is meeting local needs and pressures across the country, vital data is being provided by local authorities. This data is enabling us to

monitor the use of the funds and will inform our wider conversations within Government.

In 2018, Government published statutory guidance designed to help local authorities ensure that victims of domestic abuse in a refuge or other form of temporary accommodation have appropriate priority under their social housing allocation schemes.

On 2 May, the Government announced an unprecedented £76 million package of support to ensure the most vulnerable in society get the support they need during the pandemic.

A change to the rules will also mean that those fleeing domestic abuse and facing homelessness as a result will be automatically considered as priority by their council for housing – ensuring more survivors of domestic abuse have access to a safe home.

The Government is aware of concerns about those with no recourse to public funds during the COVID-19 crisis.

We are ensuring local authorities are supported, with £3.2 billion provided to local authorities as part of the wider Government response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This funding has been provided to help local authorities to reduce risks to public health and to support individuals on the basis of need.

The legal position on those with no recourse to public funds has not been amended.

## JUSTICE

### ■ Courts: Video Conferencing

**Alex Cunningham:**

[\[41444\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the Equality and Human Rights Commission report conclusions that virtual video trials could disadvantage people with learning disabilities.

**Chris Philp:**

HMCTS are fully committed to our responsibilities to address the barriers disabled people and those with learning disabilities face when accessing and using the justice system. We are reviewing measures to ensure any potentially discriminatory impacts are identified, so help or alternative solutions can be provided where possible. The report's recommendation is part of our considerations when exploring the use of video link in criminal cases. It will always be in the Courts' discretion having regard to all the circumstances in deciding whether a hearing conducted by video link is in the interests of justice.

**Alex Cunningham:**

[\[41445\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether his Department has made an assessment of the effect of virtual court proceedings on participating children.

**Chris Philp:**

We are clear that audio and video hearings provide an additional channel for conducting a hearing and should be as accessible as possible. The decision to hold a hearing by telephone or video is for the judge, panel or magistrate, taking into account the needs of the parties, including any disability or difficulties with access.

In the criminal courts, we are working with all 157 Youth Offending Teams (YOTs), Youth Justice Board and Youth Custody Services to ensure that the video remand hearings adhere to safeguarding principles. We have focused on ensuring the child/young person is able to receive the necessary support so that they can fully understand the criminal procedure and have a fair hearing, by engaging with YOTs to properly understand how a child's needs should be assessed.

We ensure that a defence representative can take full instructions in a confidential environment, with the parent or guardian continuing to offer support to the child/young person at the hearing.

In appropriate cases the Court will still have at its disposal special measures such as intermediaries to assist the young person in engaging and understanding proceedings, and being able to provide instructions to their representative, together with the Youth Offending Team.

Mr Justice Macdonald issued the latest advice on hearings in the family division on 17 April, including guidance on hearings concerning children.

We are also planning an evaluation of the use of remote hearings during the Covid-19 outbreak. This includes exploring how remote hearing processes were implemented and worked in practice, and how experiences varied for different user groups. We will also consider the findings of the Nuffield Family Justice Observatory, who are gathering evidence from families with children and all professionals working in the family justice system.

**Alex Cunningham:** [\[41446\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if his Department will ensure that virtual court hearings are accessible to the general public and media.

**Chris Philp:**

In all jurisdictions where there is a public hearing, we are committed to ensuring that the media and other members of the public can continue to access these hearings. A range of measures are available that will continue to support the principles of open justice. We have published more information on these measures, including observation of hearings, transcriptions and audio-recordings, on the gov.uk website.

■ **Family Proceedings: Coronavirus**

**Alex Cunningham:** [\[41439\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, If he will make an assessment of recent trends in the number of urgent court proceedings being brought before the family courts since the beginning of the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will make a statement.

**Chris Philp:**

Her Majesty's Court & Tribunal Service (HMCTS) have agreed a set of business priorities with the judiciary for the family courts and are clear that all urgent family proceedings must be dealt with during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Data on workload in the family court, including many but not all types of urgent applications, will be published in our scheduled published monthly MI and official statistics on preannounced dates. Information can be found at the following links:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmcts-management-information>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/family-court-statistics-quarterly>

**■ Parents: Coronavirus****Rachael Maskell:****[41526]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the advice is for parents who are co-parenting and live in different localities, requiring substantial travel, during the covid-19 lockdown.

**Alex Chalk:**

The Government understands the practical challenges faced by separated parents during the current pandemic. The Government's general guidance is that only essential travel should be undertaken.

Where parents do not live in the same household, children under 18 can be moved between their parents' homes to continue existing arrangements for contact, including contact specified in a Child Arrangements Order. Whether a child should move between parental homes is for the child's parents to decide after a sensible assessment of the circumstances. This includes the child's present health, the risk of infection and the presence of any individuals in either household who are defined as medically vulnerable.

Where distance or other considerations make face to face contact difficult, the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) has published helpful advice on effective co-parenting which is available at

<https://portal.cafcass.clickrelationships.org/home/all-issues/>

**■ Prison Accommodation: Technology****Ms Lyn Brown:****[41404]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if an evaluation of the pilots of in-cell technology in (a) HMP Wayland and (b) HMP Berwyn has been completed.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The University of Leicester published their *Evaluation of Digital Technology in Prisons*, (Palmer, Hatcher and Tonkin) in 2019, which covered the pilots in HMP Wayland and HMP Berwyn.

The pilots saw the introduction of laptops to both prisons which give access to prison-related notices, communication and rules, mental health advice and education materials. Prisoners also have some access to self-service tools, which helps to reduce the administrative burden on prison staff. This platform is monitored daily for usage and through digital feedback from prisoners and staff.

The evaluation found that staff and prisoners viewed the presence of digital technology as an incentive for good behaviour and the implementation of the technology, particularly the in-cell telephones, had reduced the potential for tension on the wings, and perceived levels of conflict.

## ■ Prisoners' Release: Wales

**Liz Saville Roberts:** [\[42145\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 29 April 2020 to Question 38475, on Prison Accommodation: Wales, when his Department plans to finalise the number of prisoners that will be temporarily released from Welsh prisons during the covid-19 outbreak; and how many prisoners have been released since the start of that outbreak.

**Lucy Frazer:**

On 4 April, the Government announced its intention to temporarily release risk-assessed prisoners within two months of the end of their sentence as part of the national plan to protect the NHS and save lives. Up to 4,000 offenders will be released on the End of Custody Temporary Release scheme (ECTR) on an ongoing basis during the COVID-19 outbreak, with cases reviewed weekly.

As of 1 May 2020, there have been 51<sup>[1]</sup> prisoners released under the emergency release schemes. Thirty of these were released under the ECTR scheme, while 21 offenders were released under a separate scheme for pregnant women or mothers with babies.

All prisoners released must pass stringent criteria and will be subject to strict conditions and will be electronically monitored, including with GPS tags, to assure compliance with the requirement to stay at home. Offenders released on End of Custody Temporary Release (ECTR) can be immediately recalled to prison for breaching their conditions or committing further offences.

[1] Fewer than five prisoners have been released in Wales. We do not report figures fewer than five due to data protection rules.

## ■ Prisoners: Coronavirus

**Liz Saville Roberts:** [\[42146\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 29 April 2020 to Question 38475 on Prison Accommodation: Wales, how many prisoners with symptoms have been isolated; how many vulnerable prisoners have been shielded; and how many new arrivals have been quarantined for 14 days.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The Prison Service has implemented a three-pronged approach to contain the spread of COVID-19 within jails, known as 'compartmentalisation', with an order issued by HMPPS on 31 March. Through this approach, staff have isolated those with symptoms, and many prisons have been able to shield the vulnerable and quarantine new arrivals for 14 days. Creation of these units required time and head room and were implemented at a differential pace across individual prisons, but prioritisation was given to isolating those with symptoms and shield those assessed as vulnerable. Separating those with symptoms has been taking place since early February.

As at 4 May, prisons in Wales reported 359 cases of prisoners with symptoms in isolation, and 141 cases of vulnerable prisoners shielding. Local reporting began on 10 March.

59 prisoners that have been newly received by prisons in Wales have been quarantined since central data began being collected on 20 April.

**■ Prisons: Education****Ms Lyn Brown:**[\[41405\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether his Department has commissioned a review of prison education, including the adequacy of funding available, in advance of its submission to the Comprehensive Spending Review 2020.

**Ms Lyn Brown:**[\[41406\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the adequacy of funding for prison education.

**Lucy Frazer:**

Many offenders entering prison have poor levels of education which is why our manifesto committed to create a Prisoner Education Service (PES). We are continuing with plans to strengthen the current education and careers guidance offer, creating a PES focussed on work-based training and skills.

Our budget envelope for 20/21 is sufficient to fund the current value of all education service contracts.

**TRANSPORT****■ Airports: Coronavirus****Mr Stephen Morgan:**[\[42168\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions has he had with representatives from managers of UK airports on ensuring airports are ready to return to receiving regular flights after the covid-19 outbreak.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

*[Holding answer 6 May 2020]:* The aviation sector is important to the UK economy and the government recognises the challenging times it is facing as a result of COVID-19. We continue to work closely with the sector to carry on with the repatriation of British Nationals and to maintain critical freight routes for medical supplies, whilst increasingly focusing on restart and recovery. Our transport systems are critical to support the restart of the wider economy and we are working closely with airports and the wider aviation sector on these restart plans.

**■ Aviation: Coronavirus****Sir Desmond Swayne:**[\[41877\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans to introduce a period of quarantine for people arriving at UK airports from abroad.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

*[Holding answer 6 May 2020]:* The Government continues to follow Public Health England guidance in relation to public health measures for passengers arriving to the UK. As this is a fast-evolving situation, the Government is currently working through a large number of potential measures specific to the aviation sector.

**Dr Dan Poulter:**[\[41971\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Government plans to introduce a compulsory 2 week quarantine period for air passengers arriving in the UK.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

*[Holding answer 6 May 2020]:* The Government continues to follow Public Health England guidance in relation to public health measures for passengers arriving to the UK. As this is a fast-evolving situation, the Government is currently working through a large number of potential measures specific to the aviation sector.

**Mr Stephen Morgan:**[\[42167\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions has he had with representatives from the Civil Aviation Authority on pilots maintaining their ratings during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

*[Holding answer 6 May 2020]:* The Government and the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) are doing everything possible to support the industry during this difficult period, including being flexible about regulatory requirements where possible without compromising safety. The CAA have issued four General Exemptions which extend the validity period of certain licences, ratings, and certificates which expire before the 31 st of October 2020 until the end date of the exemption (22 nd of November 2020). The references for these General Exemptions and the associated conditions are ORS4 No.1378, ORS4 No.1383, ORS4 No.1384, and ORS4 No.1385. These are all publicly available on the CAA website at the following link:

<https://publicapps.caa.co.uk/modalapplication.aspx?catid=1&pagetype=65&appid=11&mode=list&type=sercat&id=17>

The Government and the CAA will continue to monitor the situation in consultation with stakeholders and we expect to issue further exemptions in the near future to support the aviation sector further.

## ■ British Airways: Coronavirus

**Grahame Morris:** [41980]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions he has had with British Airways on (a) worker safety, (b) job protections and (c) financial assistance from the Government to that company during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Grahame Morris:** [41982]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with Ryanair on (a) worker safety, (b) job protections and (c) financial assistance from the Government during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

*[Holding answer 6 May 2020]:* The Department for Transport is engaging on a regular basis with airlines, unions and Public Health England on the application of public health measures in aviation

The Chancellor has set out unprecedented support for workers of airline companies. Measures such as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme are being used across the aviation industry to protect the sector against the Covid-19 economic crisis.

These measures, alongside other Government support measures such as Coronavirus Large Business Loan Interruption Scheme and the CCFF, are helping airlines of all sizes get through this crisis and beyond. The Chancellor has noted that under exceptional circumstances bespoke support could be provided to airlines.

## ■ British Airways: Redundancy

**John McDonnell:** [41888]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking in response to the announcement by British Airways that the company will make 12,000 members of staff redundant.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

*[Holding answer 6 May 2020]:* We recognise that this will be very distressing news for British Airways employees and their families.

The aviation sector is essential to the UK economy, and we encourage firms to draw on the unprecedented package of measures we have made available to support them through this time. This includes schemes to raise capital, flexibilities with tax bills, and financial support for employees.

**Neil Gray:**

[\[42058\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish a response to EDM 418 on British Airways job losses.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

*[Holding answer 6 May 2020]:* We recognise that the recent news regarding job losses at British Airways will be very distressing for the airline's employees and their families.

The aviation sector is essential to the UK economy, and we encourage firms to draw on the unprecedented package of measures we have made available to support them through this time. This includes schemes to raise capital, flexibilities with tax bills, and financial support for employees.

#### ■ **Flybe: Coronavirus**

**Grahame Morris:**

[\[41981\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he had with FlyBe prior to that company entering administration on (a) worker safety, (b) job protections and (c) financial assistance from the Government due to the covid-19 outbreak.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

*[Holding answer 6 May 2020]:* Government was in discussion with Flybe's shareholders and directors, exploring multiple options to find a solution that would ensure a long-term future for the company. However, keeping the company operating was not deemed viable by its directors.

#### ■ **Tourism: Coronavirus**

**Dr Lisa Cameron:**

[\[41076\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to Government advice against all but essential international travel, whether the Government has plans to support the outbound travel sector.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

Aviation is an important sector for the UK's economy and businesses across the industry will be able to draw on the unprecedented package of economic measures we have put in place during this time. This includes a Bank of England scheme for firms to raise capital, two business interruption loan guarantee schemes for different sizes of business, Time to Pay flexibilities with tax bills, financial support for employees and VAT deferrals.

If businesses across the sector find themselves in severe and urgent financial difficulties as a result of coronavirus, even following the government's cross-economy wage and financial interventions, then we remain open to discussions about bespoke financial support but only as a last resort. Any such support must represent value to the tax payer.

**WALES****■ Economic Situation: Wales**

**Nick Smith:** [\[41957\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, whether his plans for economic recovery in Wales after the covid-19 outbreak include the commencement of the consultation on the Shared Prosperity Fund.

**Simon Hart:**

The Government is committed to tackling inequality and ensuring jobs and growth in all four nations of the UK. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund will play a key role in delivering on those aims and in driving economic growth in Wales following the Covid-19 outbreak.

Government officials have held 25 engagement events across the UK, attended by over 500 representatives from a breadth of sectors, which has helped inform progress on policy design. The Government looks forward to continuing to work closely with partners as we develop the Fund.

**■ UK Shared Prosperity Fund: Wales**

**Nick Smith:** [\[41956\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what recent discussions he has had with the Welsh Government on the Shared Prosperity Fund.

**Simon Hart:**

I speak regularly with Welsh Government Ministers about a range of matters including the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. In particular, I have had regular dialogue with Jeremy Miles MS, Counsel General and Minister for European Transition, to discuss the UKSPF. My officials and those from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government are also in regular discussion with their counterparts in the Welsh Government.

**WOMEN AND EQUALITIES****■ Disability: Coronavirus**

**Debbie Abrahams:** [\[902300\]](#)

What recent assessment she has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on disabled people who are in receipt of social security.

**Mims Davies:**

DWP has made a number of changes to the benefits system in response to the pandemic to ensure the right support goes to those claimants who are more vulnerable, have a health condition or have a disability.

To provide greater financial security at this time, we have automatically extended awards by 6 months for existing claimants that were due to be reviewed or reassessed.

We have also suspended all face-to-face assessments of disability benefits for 3 months but continue to accept new claims, requests for a review where asked by a claimant and, as usual, prioritise claims made under the Special Rules for Terminal Illness.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### ■ Department for Work and Pensions: Coroners

**Vicky Foxcroft:** [41124]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will publish all prevention of future deaths reports submitted to her Department since 2013.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

DWP considers the information confidential and it is the Chief Coroner's decision whether to publish these reports. Published reports are available on the [judiciary.uk](https://www.judiciary.uk) website, and details of the procedures are set out in [Regulations 28 and 29, Coroners \(Investigations\) Regulations 2013](#).

### ■ Pension Credit: Females

**Dr Lisa Cameron:** [43054]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what discussions she has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the potential economic merits of granting 1950s-born women who are not eligible for universal credit but would otherwise be eligible for pension credit, early access to pension credit in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

**Guy Opperman:**

The Secretary of State has regular discussions with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on a range of issues.

The Government has already introduced a number of measures to help mitigate the impact of COVID-19 and is committed to providing financial support for people at every stage of their life, including when they near or reach retirement. It is important to stress that the welfare system will continue to provide support to men and women who unable to work or those who are on a low income but who are not eligible to pensioner benefits because of their age.

### ■ Social Security Benefits: Coronavirus

**Alex Sobel:** [26176]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what financial support her Department plans to provide to (a) self-employed and (b) zero-hours workers that self-isolate as a result of covid-19.

**Mims Davies:**

*[Holding answer 5 May 2020]:* The Government is committed to supporting people affected by the Covid-19 public health emergency. As part of that response, DWP is making a number of changes to ensure people who need financial help have access to the benefit system.

We are temporarily relaxing the Minimum Income Floor (MIF) for all self-employed UC claimants affected by the economic impact of COVID-19 from 6 April, for the duration of the outbreak. This means a drop in earnings due to sickness or self-isolation or as a result of the economic impact of the outbreak will be reflected in claimants' awards of benefit. We have also raised the Universal Credit Standard allowance, which means that claimants could be £1000 better off over the next 12 months.

The Department is ready to support people who are prevented from working because of a risk to public health and who need to self-isolate. For those on a low income and already claiming Universal Credit, their Universal Credit amount will adjust depending on their earnings or other income. People not eligible to receive sick pay may be able to claim Universal Credit and/or contributory Employment and Support Allowance.

These changes are part of a wider package to help self-employed which includes the new Self-Employed Income Support Scheme, with those eligible receiving a cash grant worth 80% of their average monthly trading profit over the last three years. This covers 95% of people who receive the majority of their income from self-employment.

In response to Covid-19, we have introduced new guidance about claiming benefits which can be found at: <https://www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk/coronavirus/>

**■ Social Security Benefits: Medical Examinations****Chris Stephens:****[42102]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many claimants are awaiting an assessment for (a) personal independence payment, (b) employment support allowance, and (c) the limited capability for work element of universal credit in (i) the UK, (ii) Scotland, and (iii) Glasgow South West constituency.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

The number of individuals awaiting an assessment can be found below. However, we are unable to provide data at constituency level or to separate out individuals for the Limited Capability for Work element of UC. I have therefore provided the total number of individuals claiming UC awaiting an assessment.

(a) As of the 27 April 2020, the number of individuals claiming PIP with either an assessment scheduled or awaiting scheduling in the UK was 166,630. This PIP data does not include Northern Ireland. 20,870 of these cases were in Scotland.

(b) As of the 4 May 2020, the number of individuals claiming ESA with either an assessment scheduled or awaiting scheduling in the UK was 101,910. 14,460 of these cases were in Scotland.

(c) As of the 4 May 2020, the number of individuals claiming UC with either an assessment scheduled or awaiting scheduling in the UK was 121,640. 13,510 of these cases were in Scotland.

Data supplied by Assessment Provider reports, and rounded to the nearest 10.

Please note this is unpublished data.

The latest published journey time for PIP is 8 weeks on average for a new claim assessment and 10 weeks for a DLA to PIP reassessment (based on the latest published data) and 9 weeks for ESA and we are working with our suppliers to ensure those claimants currently going through the assessment journey are seen as quickly as possible.

## ■ Universal Credit

**Lloyd Russell-Moyle:**

[\[41570\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if her Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of removing the £16,000 savings threshold for eligibility for universal credit.

**Will Quince:**

*[Holding answer 5 May 2020]:* A key principle of UC is that it supports people who do not have assets available to meet their basic needs. While it is important to protect the incentive to save for claimants on low earnings, people with substantial capital can take responsibility for their own support. This is to ensure that we can maintain our focus on getting money to citizens who need it and safeguarding the most vulnerable.

If capital exceeds £16,000 there will be no entitlement to UC, unless the capital can be disregarded, for example personal injury compensation payments. Capital above £6,000 will reduce the amount of UC paid by £4.35 per month for every £250 of capital or part thereof.

If someone has money in their account that is to be used for business purposes, for example for paying tax, it will not be counted towards their capital, but they may be asked to prove that the money is for business purposes. People should make clear in their application the savings that are business assets, and note it in their online journal.

**Seema Malhotra:**

[\[42041\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many claimants of universal credit were ineligible for the benefits cap grade period as a result of a reduction in their working hours in (a) January, (b) February, (c) March and (d) April 2020.

**Mims Davies:**

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate costs.

However, whilst the stats requested are not readily available, as part of a regular publication, new statistics for Benefit Cap Households to February 2020 are due to be published on Thursday 7th May at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/benefit-cap-statistics>

■ **Vacancies: Internet**

**Seema Malhotra:**

**[42043]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many new vacancies were posted on her Department's find a job website in (a) January, (b) February and (c) March and (d) April of (i) 2019 and (ii) 2020.

**Mims Davies:**

*[Holding answer 6 May 2020]:* The number of job adverts posted on the website are displayed in the table provided.

MONTH	UNIQUE POSTS
January 2019	212026
February 2019	180230
March 2019	190847
April 2019	181236
January 2020	197768
February 2020	175282
March 2020	142933
April 2020	75555

The Department has launched a new employment campaign signposting people to roles in critical sectors helping the country through this pandemic. The new job site also includes advice on how to apply and links to online training.